

Mothers and Daughters in the Digital Age

As mothers and their daughters become strangers in a high-tech world, many have found re-connection in Mother-Daughter book clubs. Benefits: strengthens mother-daughter bond, creates a caring community of friends, and develops life skills. Resources.

By: Amy C. Spaulding, Sleepy Hollow Books

April 20, 2011 - [PRLog](#) -- Mothers and Daughters: How to Stay Connected in a High Tech World

(April 19, 2011) DURHAM, North Carolina -- How do we connect with our daughters when the eyes of the digital generation seldom stray from monitors, TVs, and texts? A screen is only a jeans pocket away as smartphones become instant providers of information, entertainment, and modern relationships. While we, as parents, may find ourselves busier, our daughters continue to face struggles that kids have always had – bullying, peer-pressure, issues of self-esteem, and loneliness.

“What I have observed is that around the middle school years,” says Susanne Liebich, founder of Dancing Wellness of Concord, Massachusetts, “girls experience self-esteem issues regarding their appearance, their accomplishments, and their social situations. They are constantly being judged or ranked on how well they perform.”

How do we support and reconnect with our girls, now that they have unprecedented – and often unfiltered – access to information from a host of unseen sources? Earlier generations of mothers and daughters shared cooking, childcare, or handicrafts, such as quilting. Many modern moms now share sports and scouting trips with their daughters, but that isn't always a mother's cup of tea.

Luckily, another method has emerged -- mother-daughter book clubs are an increasingly popular way to strengthen the mother-daughter bond, while simultaneously building a caring community of friends.

Because a book club requires setting aside time to read together, it ensures regular one-on-one time and opens up a space for dialogue. “Talking about experiences as they happen to characters in a book is safe way to broach the subjects that you may both be reluctant to tackle head on,” says Cindy Hudson, author of *Book by Book: The complete guide to creating mother-daughter book clubs* (Seal Press, 2009).

Many reading experts recommend continuing to read with a child even after they have learned to read for themselves. Dr. Joanne Meier, a research consultant with Reading Rockets, says reading aloud “is a great opportunity to model for your child what good fluent reading sounds like.” She recommends books slightly above a children's reading level as the best for reading aloud. With mom by their side, girls can ask about challenging vocabulary, more complex story lines, and social issues, allowing them to learn to read at a higher level.

Participating in a mother-daughter reading group can also help girls develop life skills that will last. “Mother-daughter book clubs provide a safe environment where a girl can practice articulating her thoughts,” says Hudson. Many books address difficult topics that encourage and facilitate open dialogue among mothers and daughters in a protected, supportive environment. Speaking in front of groups and expressing one's opinions allows daughters to develop the public speaking and critical thinking skills they will need to succeed in high school and college while promoting self-confidence and leadership.

Mother-daughter book clubs can help provide a safe haven for girls as they face their teen years. “A mother-daughter reading group is a great way to build a community of caring friends while also developing a close bond with your daughter as she grows,” author Cindy Hudson says. “When you create a mother-daughter book club, you build [a] community that will see you through life's ups and downs.”

Maureen Wartski, a children's book author from Raleigh, North Carolina, wrote Yuri's Brush with Magic, with mothers and daughters in mind. Her novel explores the complexity of family relationships and how misunderstandings can create family rifts that affect the children -- and how to heal those rifts. Yuri's Brush with Magic also shows children they can make a big difference in the world, no matter how small their gesture, such as when characters Tammy and Ken visit their mother in the hospital and sing her a song.

Wartski hopes her book can be used to open a dialogue between preadolescent daughters and their moms about their own family stories and how to find support. Featuring Japanese folklore, the power of nature, and the longing for home, Yuri's Brush with Magic can help girls and their mothers learn more about Japanese culture and facilitate discussion about current events.

Wartski has written a reader's guide with book clubs in mind, which can be downloaded from publisher's website (sleepyhollowbooks.com). Reading groups who choose Yuri's Brush with Magic as a selection can send Wartski questions of their own through her blog (<https://maureenwartski.wordpress.com/>) -- and can invite the author to visit their book group or classroom, in person or via Skype.

A mothers' book group in North Carolina recently hosted a mother-daughter tea and invited Maureen Wartski to speak. All the girls and their moms had read Yuri's Brush with Magic and gathered to ask Maureen questions about the book. Deb Ogburn of Raleigh said that she had been having trouble getting her eight-year-old interested in reading for pleasure. "Then we decided to read a chapter of Yuri's Brush with Magic together at bedtime. I would read a few pages, and then she would read a few pages. Back and forth... This is the first book my daughter ever said, 'Mom, can we read another chapter... and one more.'"

To invite Maureen Wartski to talk at your book club or to send her a question, visit her blog at: <http://maureenwartski.wordpress.com/>

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