



**EVERYTHING YOUR TEENAGE DAUGHTER WANTS
YOU TO KNOW BUT WILL NEVER TELL YOU**

DEAR MOM

MELODY CARLSON



**WATERBROOK
PRESS**



WATERBROOK MULTNOMAH PUBLISHING GROUP

A DIVISION OF RANDOM HOUSE, INC.

Excerpted from *Dear Mom* by **Melody Carlson**.
Copyright © 2009 by Carlson Management Co. Inc.
Excerpted by permission of WaterBrook Press, a
division of Random House, Inc. All rights reserved.
No part of this book may be reproduced or
transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or
mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or
by any information storage and retrieval system,
without permission in writing from the publisher.

For more information, please contact WaterBrook
Multnomah Publishing Group at
Info@WaterBrookPress.com or 800-603-7051.

CONTENTS



Mom to Mom: Why I Wrote This Book	ix
<i>A Note from the Author</i>	
Introduction: Why You Shouldn't Read This Book	xi
<i>A Note from Your Daughter</i>	
1 Things I Don't Like	1
<i>About Me</i>	
2 Things I Don't Like	13
<i>About You</i>	
3 Relationships Confuse Me	25
<i>Sometimes</i>	
4 I Need You	39
<i>But You Can't Make Me Admit It</i>	
5 You Say You Listen	53
<i>But Sometimes I Just Need to Be Heard</i>	
6 Why I Need Secrets and Privacy	65
<i>And Time to Myself</i>	
7 Your Lectures Don't Work	77
<i>And Here's Why</i>	

8	Just Because I Said, “Nothing”	83
	<i>Doesn't Mean I Actually Meant It</i>	
9	I'm Watching You	95
	<i>Even When You're Not Looking</i>	
10	I'm Not as Confident	107
	<i>As Maybe I Appear to Be</i>	
11	I Already Have Friends	119
	<i>I Need a Mother</i>	
12	We May Have Similarities	129
	<i>But I Am Not You</i>	
13	I Need Rules	141
	<i>But They Need to Make Sense</i>	
14	I Want to Know About Guys	153
	<i>Not About You and Dad</i>	
15	I Fight Back to Remind Myself	165
	<i>My Opinions Count!</i>	
16	I'm Afraid	175
	<i>Sometimes</i>	
17	What I Need	187
	<i>More Than Anything</i>	
18	Last Words	197
	<i>Because You Knew I'd Get the Last Word, Right?</i>	



WHY YOU SHOULDN'T READ THIS BOOK

A NOTE FROM YOUR DAUGHTER

DEAR MOM,

Maybe it's already too late to tell you to put down this book, because I know you don't like to waste your money. At least you don't like *me* to waste your money. Anyway, I know you want me to believe that you would never intentionally waste your money—not that I'm totally convinced of this, but never mind about me. It might not be too late for you, Mom. If you're still in the bookstore, trying to decide whether or not you'll like this book, wondering if it will be worth your time (oh, did I mention your money?), it's not too late to just set it down and walk away. Just walk away, and no one will get hurt, because, seriously, what is there about parenting me (your sweet, innocent teenage daughter) that you don't already get?

You're a cool mom—you can handle this, right?

Even if someone gave you this book, that doesn't mean you need to read it. Who cares if Grandma or Aunt Sue thought it was just the ticket to help you work out things with your beastly teenage

daughter. We know Grandma and Aunt Sue aren't that smart about this stuff.

Oh, maybe they've heard you complain about me, or maybe they even heard me mouth off to you (that one time) or saw me freeze you out (I was irritated, okay?), so they decided you need this how-to book to straighten me out. Well, you know as well as I do that they just need to get a life. They obviously don't realize that you really do know what you're doing, Mom. They just can't appreciate that you already have things under control (everything but me, that is, and we both know that's not gonna happen). So why waste your time with this book?

You're still reading, aren't you? You're still not convinced? Fine, Mom, I'll make it easy for you. Here are six reasons why you should toss this book right now.

1. You won't like what you read, and you know the saying—ignorance is bliss.
2. You think you already know what's up with me. Why trust someone else to fill your head with nonsense?
3. You already know how to fix what you think is wrong with me.
4. Maybe you think I'm perfect as is... At least that's what I'm hoping.
5. Get real! You don't really have time for this. What mom does these days?
6. And finally, whatever happened to just leaving well enough alone? Things eventually work out, don't they?

I see you haven't given up yet. You're still reading. Well, don't say you weren't warned, and don't think that just because you're reading this book, written by a so-called teenage girl, that you're reading about me. I am a one-of-a-kind book and cannot be read or understood in a single volume.

ELEVEN

I ALREADY HAVE FRIENDS

I NEED A MOTHER





Yeah, I know I've already mentioned this, but just in case you weren't listening or forgot, I do not need my mother to act like she's my friend. Okay, I don't want you to act like you're my enemy either. I just want you to be my mom.

To be fair, maybe this whole idea of being the mom to an ornery teenage girl leaves you cold or you think it's hopeless or you're worried that you might fail or maybe you feel you've already failed. Well, join the club, Mom. I'm pretty sure there are millions of moms out there who feel just like you.

To be honest, I can't imagine how I'd feel if I were in your shoes, how hard it would be to parent someone like me. Admittedly, it's a thankless job, and I don't think you get combat pay. I guess the good news is that it won't last forever. I might grow up someday.

In the meantime, you need to realize that, although I'm telling you I need a mom and I need you to act like a mom, I probably won't show a whole lot of appreciation when you do.

On the other hand, that doesn't mean I won't notice. Trust me, I see some of those sweet little "mom" things you do for me. I know I'm not a six-year-old, but I still love it when you leave me a quick you-can-do-it note or maybe even a special treat (just not out where my friends can see it). And I appreciate it when I walk into the

kitchen to be greeted by warmth and good smells—as well as a cheerful greeting. And sometimes I even like to go shopping with you—especially when you listen to my opinions on style. Okay, you don't need to take fashion advice from me, but I like it when you show me some respect, and that's when I'm more likely to listen to you when you gently suggest that those black leather pants might not be the most practical addition to my wardrobe.

The Jealous Mom

One of my friends, Fergie, has an interesting mother dilemma. Since she's an only child and her parents are divorced, Fergie's mother assumes that Fergie should be her best friend and do everything with her. As I mentioned before, this worked when we were little girls. We loved hanging out with our moms and drank up all the attention they poured on us, but all that changed when we entered adolescence. Unfortunately for Fergie, her mom did not get that memo, so poor Fergie plays a game. She tries to placate her mother by hanging with her and going shopping or to the movies or to lunch. She still wants time to be with her friends, so sometimes, to kill two birds with one stone, she includes her mom with her friends. Big mistake.

For one thing, her friends don't like it. I mean, what teen girl wants someone's mom hanging around while they talk about boys and dating or who did what with whom? To make matters worse, Fergie's mom tries to act cool in order to fit in, as if she thinks we're all glad she's there. Not! Poor Fergie. I can tell she's dying inside.

Fergie doesn't act like herself when her mom's around. She used

to be funny and fun to be with, but when her mom's with us, Fergie becomes a ghost girl—she's there, but she's not really there. I feel sorry for her. When her mom's not there, it's not much better because her mom calls her a bazillion times every hour. Fergie is not allowed to turn her phone off. When her mom calls, we can tell she's making Fergie feel guilty for having fun without her. A lot of times, Fergie will just give up and go home so she can be with her pathetic mom.

This saga gets even worse, because her mom says mean things

TEN WAYS YOU COULD RUIN MY LIFE

1. Act like you're just one of the girls when I have friends over.
2. Flirt with my boyfriend.
3. Tell my girlfriends details about your honeymoon.
4. Make fun of me or belittle me in front of my friends.
5. Show my friends my baby photos.
6. Ask my friend if you can try on her new jacket.
7. Try to sound cool by using the latest teen jargon.
8. Send weird text messages to me at school.
9. Tell my friends an off-color or dumb joke.
10. Ask my friend if your jeans make your butt look big.



THE OLD STODGY MOM RULES

- * Moms must believe that their teen daughters reflect on them personally—if we look bad, you look bad.
- * Moms must monitor whatever comes out of their daughters' mouths—keep that bar of soap handy, Mom.
- * Moms must control their daughters' choices in friends.
- * Moms must assume full responsibility for their daughters' wardrobes.
- * Moms must disapprove of their daughters' first boyfriends, especially when any sign of physical affection is exhibited.
- * Moms must take personally everything their teen daughters say in anger.
- * Moms must take full responsibility for their daughters' moral character.
- * Moms must not have a social life or pursue any activities that might distract them from their parenting responsibilities.
- * Moms must show up at every school function and be ready to engage with every person who is involved in their daughters' education.
- * Moms must express their opinions on every topic their daughters bring up—get ready to lecture that girl!
- * Moms must never trust their daughters. Period.
- * Moms must wear frumpy old clothes and orthopedic shoes—think comfort, not fashion.
- * Moms must expect the worst when raising teen daughters. You will probably get what you expect.



THE NEW AND IMPROVED MOM RULES

- * Moms will accept that teens need to experiment with hair, make-up, and fashion, without taking it too seriously or personally.
- * Moms will understand that teens are apt to say inappropriate things sometimes, but it's not the end of the world.
- * Moms will not judge their daughters' friends too harshly but instead find out what makes them tick.
- * Moms will allow teen daughters freedom to pick out their own clothes—with gentle guidelines.
- * Moms won't be too critical of boyfriends but will get to know them.
- * Moms will understand that teen tempers express opinions that teens might later regret. Give them time to apologize.
- * Moms will acknowledge that they've given their daughters good moral guidance, and their teens will eventually follow it.
- * Moms are entitled to a social life, without putting teens at risk.
- * Moms will be involved, without making a nuisance of themselves, at their teens' schools.
- * Moms will avoid lecturing and will keep certain judgments and opinions to themselves.
- * Moms will at least pretend to trust their teen daughters, while keeping their eyes wide open.
- * Moms will understand that they can still be somewhat fashionable—just not extreme.
- * Moms will expect the best from their teen daughters, and in time, they will probably be rewarded with the best.



about Fergie's friends. She puts them down and makes fun of them. I've actually heard her do this. Fergie says it's just because her mom's jealous and wants Fergie all to herself. I think her mom needs to grow up and get a life with her own friends before she ruins her daughter's life.

It wouldn't surprise me if Fergie ditches her mom someday. She'll probably head off to college and just keep going. Who could blame her?

I'm so glad you're not like that, Mom. When it comes to friends, I need you to have your own friends, and I'll have mine. If we ever share the same friends, we should both be old ladies.

Keep a Healthy Distance Without Checking Out

It probably sounds like I'm asking you to walk a fine line or pull off a balancing act. I never said it was going to be easy, but I think there are things you can do to make it easier.

For instance, you can keep a healthy distance when my friends are around. It's not that I think you'll ever be like Fergie's mom, but I confess to a little paranoia when it comes to my friends. I'm sorry, but that's just normal.

I know I've touched on this already, and I don't want to beat you up about it, but it's important, Mom. If I feel like you're crossing the line with my friends—if you're being intrusive or pushy or embarrassing or you're eavesdropping—I will probably react in one of several possible ways. You might want to ask yourself if this is the outcome you're hoping for before you step over that line.

For starters, I'll probably stop inviting my friends over to our house. That's the easiest way to remedy the problem. I won't want to stop hanging with them, so I'll spend more time at their houses. You will know even less about what I'm doing or who I'm doing it with. I'll also stop asking you for rides. That means you won't always know who is driving. I might tell you one thing but do something else. It happens.

I also might lie to you about my friends. If your interest in my friends is overwhelming or you want me to quit hanging with certain ones, I might lie to get you off my case. Short of hiring a detective, you won't know if I'm telling you the truth or not.

Why not save us both the trouble and give me space when my friends are around? That way you can keep up with what's going on in my life without hiring that detective.

Praise for
Dear Mom

“What a valuable treasure chest of insights into the mind of a teenage girl! This carefully crafted book is a must-read for any mom who desires to see her relationship with her teenage daughter move past the volley of words that pass between them and move into a new season where they can be joined at the heart. Thank you, Melody, for this superb handbook that gives us a glimpse into the teenage mind and equips us with understanding.”

—ROBIN JONES GUNN, best-selling author of the
Christy Miller series and the Sisterchicks novels

“You think this is a book? It’s really a bridge—no, a cord!—that will connect moms and daughters in a way to get through those turbulent teen years. Read it and reap!”

—DR. KEVIN LEMAN, best-selling author of *Have a New
Kid by Friday* and *Running the Rapids*

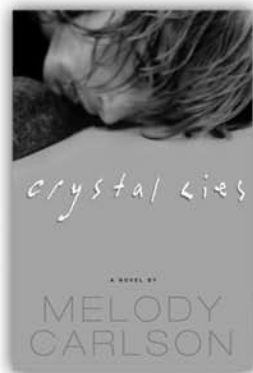
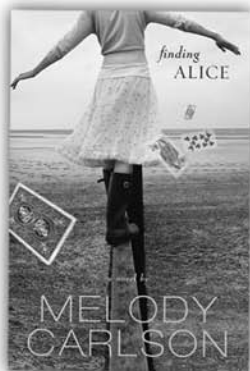
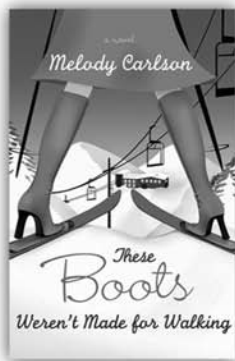
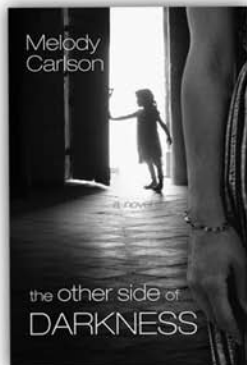
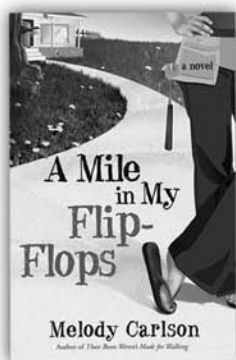
“When it comes to mom-daughter relationships, Melody Carlson gets it. In fact, I think Melody must have had our house bugged. She understands and she cares. *Dear Mom* is honest, authentic, practical, and hopeful.”

—JIM BURNS, PHD, author of *Confident Parenting*,
Teaching Your Children Healthy Sexuality, and *Creating
an Intimate Marriage*

“Ever want to be let in on the running commentary going on inside your daughter’s head? Now you can. With wit and honesty, Melody Carlson explains what every mom needs to know.”

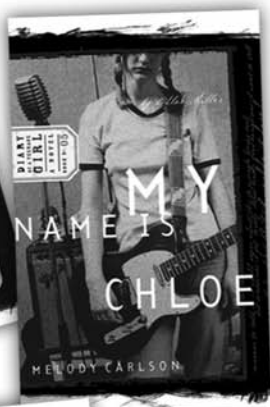
—REBECCA ST. JAMES, author, singer, and actress

Other Melody Carlson Books for You



Melody Carlson Books

Diary of a Teenage Girl series



www.waterbrookmultnomah.com
www.melodycarlson.com

for Your Daughter

Samantha McGregor series



Notes from a Spinning Planet series



Available in bookstores and from online retailers