

[PDF] Ophelia Speaks: Adolescent Girls Write About Their Search For Self

Sara Shandler - pdf download free book

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Description:

Ophelia Speaks by Sara Shandler is a clever response to Mary Pipher's bestselling . Shandler reveals telling portraits of teenage girls in this book, a compilation of essays, poems, and true-grit commentary from a cross section of teenage girls (or Ophelias), throughout the country. The book succeeds because it gives voice to their deepest concerns and their too-often frenzied lives. Because she's a college student, Shandler considers herself a peer of these adolescent girls, able to tap into their collective consciousness.

Shandler is as determined as she is a sharp reporter in chronicling the lives of these young women. To research the book, she sent out a mass mailing of 7,000 letters to high school and junior high

school principals, counselors, and teachers explaining her book project and urging them to encourage teenage girls to contribute.

The topics covered run the gamut, but they include parental expectations, racial relations, and faith, among others. Sadly, eating disorders are an all-too-popular topic. The good news is that Shandler's contributors offer up some real insight for their peers. In one essay titled "Food Is Not My Enemy," Elizabeth Fales "calls us to a new feminism. In the old feminism, our mothers fought for the right to choose abortion. In our generation, we must fight for the right to eat."

The book also gives practical insight for parents who may find it hard to relate to their teenage daughters. In a nutshell, it appears that adolescent girls want unconditional love from parents who can be confidants without being overly critical. --*Peg Melnick*

From Publishers Weekly Inspired by Mary Pipher's 1994 bestseller *Reviving Ophelia*, which shed new light on the problems of contemporary female adolescence, Shandler, currently an undergraduate at Wesleyan University, set out to give voice to the real Ophelias, America's teenaged girls. Herself included. Just 16 years old when she started this project, Shandler enlisted the help of hundreds of educators, counselors, pastors and administrators to find other girls who wanted to write about the issues most important to them. Ranging from problems with body image and self-mutilation to difficult relationships with parents and other family members, to intense academic pressures, the book is organized by subject and includes entries from dozens of girls across the country. We see girls in distant communities facing similar struggles as they attempt to navigate the pressured and competitive world of adolescence. Judging from the hundreds of contributions Shandler received, the issues these girls raise are weighty ones that our whole society needs be concerned about. Many of the girls write in an intensely personal style, but their concerns should not be written off as diary angst. Shandler has done an admirable job of shaping the disparate pieces into a disturbing mosaic that reveals the seriousness of teenage problems.

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