

— DISCOVERING GOD'S PLAN —
FOR MAKING GOOD FRIENDSHIP CHOICES

TALKING WITH
YOUR DAUGHTER
ABOUT

best friends
&
mean girls

DANNAH GRESH
FOUNDER OF TRUEGIRL

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I am forever in his great love.

—*Dannah*

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Preface

Hi, friend—

In your hand is one of the easiest-to-use resources you'll ever find. Let me give you a few key pointers about how to find things in this book. (In just a few pages, I'll explain how to use it and how to plan your mom-daughter dates.) But here's a quick look at what you'll see inside. (If you're a True Girl pro who is familiar with our 8 Great Dates, you can fast-forward past this part!)

Part 1: Getting to Know Each Other. This is a hearty “hello” and “welcome” to True Girl. The first two chapters contain some self-reflection on our own quest for true friendship as moms, and then a dose of truth about the relationship culture your daughter is growing up in. Skim them if you want, but don't skip the third chapter. It tells you how to use the book!

Part 2: 8 Great Dates. Here they are in all their glory—the True Girl 8 Great Dates that teach your daughter about best friends and mean girls! Glance through them and you'll see that each one is easy to use... and very fun. (What mom wouldn't want to go on a shopping spree with her daughter?)

Part 3: Devotions and Other Good Stuff. This section is full of things you'll refer to as needed. Don't worry—I'll let you know when you

need to dive in. The first part is the True Girl Devotions. You'll use these fantastic daily devotions after date 7, and I'll explain how at that point. The next section contains some frequently asked questions. I added this as moms wrote in with their most perplexing problems about best friends and mean girls. Finally, you'll find the Girl Gab pull-outs for your daughter. These are similar to the Girl Gab pages you'll find in part 2, 8 Great Dates. They're perforated so you can pull them out and give them to your daughter.

Enjoy!
Dannah

PART 1

Getting to Know Each Other



A Mother's Relationships

Here we are.
You and I.

How ya been?

If I could take a pulse on your relationships right now, how would you fare? Is the heartbeat of friendship in your life strong and steady?

Or would you have to confess you have a little clogging of the arteries in that department?

Nearly comatose?

Or, worse yet, is there carnage all through your life because relationships have been a difficult business for you?

I have to confess that there's a little carnage in my path right now. That's not very common for me. It's been a painful year in the relationship department.

Trust was broken.

Accusations pierced my heart.

Territory was divided.

Tears continue to fall.

Can you identify? Just over a week ago, I was in bed having some kind of a seventh-grade pity party over all this friendship mess, when the thought actually ran through my head, "No one really likes me."

(Yes, I fully acknowledge that I was reverting to adolescent angst.) Specifically I thought, “Laura doesn’t really like me.”

Now, my friend Laura *loves* me. I *know* she does. We’ve walked through some of the ugliest things together, rejoiced at miraculous victories in our lives, prayed our blonde heads off, and laughed equally as hard—usually at just how blonde we can be. I don’t know why she happened to be the one who ran through my mind, but she was.

I begged the Lord to tell my heart Truth and let me sleep. I soon drifted off.

But the next morning he brought me full circle to Truth. You see, my friend Laura is deeply connected to the Lord, and he spoke to her in real time. When I got to my office, I found a handwritten note from her confirming her love for me. I could not believe it. What are the odds? Well, I’d never had a note from Laura in my office before!

I reached out to her and confessed how wrecked my heart was feeling.

I kid you not...20 minutes later there was a knock on my door. And Laura’s sweet face and very pregnant belly were soon filling the door frame.

“I thought maybe you could use a hug,” she said.

My lips quivered and I felt so silly, but I leaned right into her round belly and received the embrace like a little child.

“Let me take you to lunch,” she said.

Oh, how she rescued me that day!

Proverbs 17:17 tells us that “a friend loves at all times.” Laura loved me when I wasn’t very lovable. She listened to all my hurt and spoke strong rebukes to me because she knows that “faithful are the wounds of a friend” (Proverbs 27:6). I left lunch with homework to do in the relationship department assigned by my truth-filled friend, Laura.

Do you have *just one* friend like that?

If so, you are blessed!

If not, we’ve *got* to get you some, girl!

You may have picked up this True Girl kit with the intention of helping your daughter navigate through the murky waters of relationships,

but I'm praying that it also helps you take the pulse of your own relationships. And to bring them into conformity with the heartbeat of our God!

Let's start with him, shall we?

Just stop for a moment and ask the precious Holy Spirit to make your heart receptive to the scriptural truth and encouragement in the pages ahead. After all, how can we teach our daughters to have healthy relationships if we've not learned how to have them ourselves?

"There is a friend who sticks closer than a brother" (Proverbs 18:24).

His name is Jesus.

Talk to him right now.

Your Daughter's Relationships

I never really had sleepovers.

We had sleepovers—me and my mom!

I can still remember her perched on the edge of our basement stairs, that multishaded tan shag carpeting beneath her. We girls were all tucked into our sleeping bags in the dark, and the conversations began. Before I knew it, my mom was curled up right next to us answering questions about why boys are so noisy (they apparently just wanted our attention, but we shouldn't give them too much), what to do about the smelly girl in class (she was at our next sleepover), and how to handle the creepy male science teacher who was always touching our legs when we went up to his desk (he *never* did again after we told my mom). As she talked with us well into the wee hours of the morning, I often found myself wondering if my girlfriends came to spend the night with me or with my mom. I knew that they loved her.

But I never minded. Not one bit.

I was proud of my mom.

I reveled in her sleepover advice.

Little did I know that she was teaching me the delicate art of relationships.

And oh, how important that was. A little girl's relationships are critical to her overall development. Little boys like relationships. Little girls *need* them.

Friends!

Your daughter's friends are becoming increasingly more important to her. Sixty-seven percent of tween girls—those aged 8 to 12—say that “having lots of friends” is among the top three factors that give them the most confidence.¹ As your daughter ages, you'll see an increase in talking and a definite increase in usage of social media and digital communication. Don't be surprised if you're nagged because “everyone else” has a smartphone. She was created to communicate, so her relationships are going to be taking a top priority in her life!

Boy-Craziness!

Guys may become interesting to her, but she's not ready for relationships yet. Being in a dating relationship for six months or longer is a significant risk factor for early teen sexual activity.² Can you see why it might not be that “cute” for our 8- to 12-year-olds to be boy-crazy or have multiple boyfriends while they are still in the fourth grade? If she develops the pattern of “needing” a guy when she is eight or nine, she's going to be in many six-month relationships in her early teen years. That's not wise. Let's help her to slow down the boy-crazy train in her circle of friends.

Dad!

Her relationship with her daddy—or a father figure—is a literal lifeline. The *Chicago Sun-Times* reported that “reams of research show that girls who are close to their dads are less likely to be promiscuous, develop eating disorders, drop out of school or commit suicide.”³ A daddy's love keeps a girl emotionally stable. That could be a great challenge in your daughter's life depending on how and whether her daddy is involved in her life. Let me show you how to approach the issue so that you can make the daddy factor—no matter what your situation—good news.

Mom!

Her relationship with you is still one she treasures. Seventy-two percent of tween girls feel they can talk to their mom about anything.⁴ And they do. Don't miss this, Mom. In just a few years (or months), she's going to start to feel a little different about that. (She may even act as if you've had a lobotomy!) Use this time when her heart is open to prepare her and train her. *This is the time to talk about friendships, boys, and other big issues*—while her heart is receptive to your wisdom.

What she learns about relationships now determines how she'll date, marry, and build a family—with a healthy God-directed plan or with a selfish, often self-destructive plan. It'll help her or hinder her in establishing a life purpose. Your discipleship in this area will equip her to be the heartbeat of God on this earth or train her to spread the carnage of broken relationships.

Teach her well, Mom.

Let me give you the tools to do it in eight easy-to-plan dates!