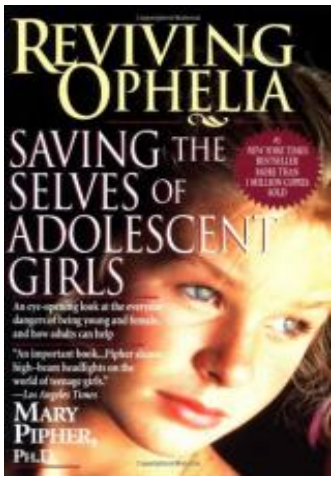
ReadingGroupGuides
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Reviving Ophelia

by Mary Pipher, Ph.D.



About the Book

Why are more American adolescent girls prey to depression, eating disorders, addictions, and suicide attempts than ever before? According to Dr. Mary Pipher, a clinical psychologist who has treated girls for more than twenty years, we live in a look-obsessed, media-saturated, "girl-poisoning" culture. Despite the advances of feminism, escalating levels of sexism and violence--from undervalued intelligence to sexual harassment in elementary school--cause girls to stifle their creative spirit and natural impulses, which, ultimately, destroys their self-esteem. Yet girls often blame themselves or their families for this "problem with no name" instead of looking at the world around them.

Here, for the first time, are girls' unmuted voices from the front lines of adolescence, personal and painfully honest. By laying bare their harsh day-to-day reality, Reviving Ophelia issues a call to arms and offers parents compassion, strength, and strategies with which to revive these Ophelias' lost sense of self.

Discussion Guide

1. Why are kids having more trouble coming of age in 2000?

2. Discuss the differences in childhood and in parenting between your era and today. What was better, or worse? How can we preserve the best of both eras for our children?

3. How do we build a sense of community in our neighborhoods today? How can we help other people's children? What institutions can help us?

4. How do we balance the need to protect our children with the need to raise them free of unnecessary fear?

5. What useful work do we have for children in our community?

6. What can we do to fight violent and sexualized media and the omnipresence of marketing to children?

7. What experience in adolescence are mostly girls' experiences? What experiences are mostly unique to boys? What issues are shared by both genders?

8. What do you think a typical school day is like in the life of your child? (Your students?)

9. How can schools and families protect girls from eating disorders? How can we hold advertisers and media more accountable for their images of young women?

10. How has our culture changed for girls since Reviving Ophelia was written? Discuss both negative and positive changes.

11. How do computers affect girls' social and emotional development?

12. How can we help girls hold on to their true selves?

13. What role do sports play in girls' development?

14. Why do girls argue so much with their mothers and what can be done about it?

15. How can fathers help their daughters through adolescence?

16. What are the signs of depression in teens and when should a family seek professional help?

17. What guidelines and policies should parents have about their children's friends?

18. How can we keep our teens connected to older and younger people and not isolated in peer culture?

19. What is a good school harassment policy?

20. How do we teach boys to respect women and girls?

21. What are some differences in adolescence across ethnic groups--specifically African-American, Asian, and Hispanic?

22. What is your policy about movies, television, music, and computers? How do you enforce it? What are the relative merits of protecting children from media versus exposing them to media but processing it with them and helping them understand it?

23. How can we teach children to behave properly?

24. How do we teach values to our children?

Author Bio

Critical Praise

"An important book...Pipher shines high-beam headlights on the world of teenage girls. "

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