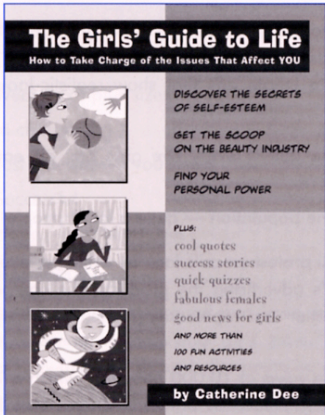




Educators' Guide

A bestselling guide now updated
and revised with a new cover!



THE GIRLS' GUIDE TO LIFE

*How to Take Charge of the
Issues that Affect YOU*

by Catherine Dee

Illustrated with black-and-white
illustrations and photographs

Second Edition

Paperback

\$15.99 (\$22.99 in Canada)

ISBN: 0-316-73628-7

8½ x 11 • 160 pages

Ages 8-12 • Grades 3-7

ABOUT THE BOOK

This lively collection of real-life stories, female firsts, advice, poems, and more than a 100 activities and resources is perfect for young girls learning about what it means to be female in the 21st century. Dynamic women of the past and present from all walks of life offer practical advice and inspirational stories about personal life, school, careers, politics, and many other intriguing topics. With selections from famous women such as Jamie Lee Curtis, Maya Angelou, Ann Richards, Sally Ride, and Whoopi Goldberg, this book is more than just a handbook; it is a thought-provoking guide to a girl's happiness and success.

REVIEWS

"A friendly, common-sense approach for girls who are learning and exploring the basics of life...like having a best girlfriend for every activity you can think of."
—Gloria Steinem

"Fact-packed and thought-provoking...enthusiastic support for girls in many areas."
—Kirkus Reviews

"This book provides girls with advice, reassurance, and empowerment... If you know any girls, especially ages 10-13, buy it."
—Los Angeles Times

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

After attending an all-girls high school (Santa Catalina in Monterey, California) and getting a B.A. from Pomona College, Catherine Dee became an advertising copywriter. However, it wasn't long before she fell in love with the idea of writing books to help people and the planet.

Catherine realized that there were very few books available to help girls develop strong self-esteem and deal with the effects of gender bias. To fill this gap, she wrote THE GIRLS' GUIDE TO LIFE: *How to Take Charge of the Issues That Affect YOU*, which became a *San Francisco Chronicle* bestseller and "Best Bet."

Catherine offers empowerment workshops for girls and speaks to groups, and also works as a copywriter in the San Francisco Bay Area. She lives in Orangevale (near Sacramento) with her husband, Jonathan. You can contact her at cate@deebest.com.



LITTLE, BROWN AND COMPANY

Books for Young Readers

Engaging ~ Educating ~ Entertaining

Time Warner Book Group

CHAPTER 1: LOOKING OUT FOR #1

Discussion Questions

1. What is "self-esteem"?
2. How can you tell the difference between true self-esteem and inappropriate "me first" self-centeredness?
3. How do you know if your self-esteem is strong?
4. What steps can you take to raise your own self-esteem?
5. How can you help a friend raise their self-esteem?

CHAPTER 2: GO FIGURE

Activity: Quiz on Beauty and the Media

Read this true-or-false quiz aloud and have students call out the answers, or alternate asking each person for an answer. Discuss the correct answers as you go along.

1. True or false: Ads in magazines generally show women and girls as they look in real life.

False. Models are often elaborately posed, such as with their bodies twisted, to make them seem thinner or curvier. They may be photographed using unnatural camera angles. In addition, after the shoot, a photo may be "airbrushed"—or retouched—with computer software.

2. True or false: Seventy-five percent of the female population looks like a fashion model.

False. Reading magazines may give you the idea that most people are beautiful, but the truth is that only 5 percent of women and girls in the United States look like models. And even that small group isn't perfect; the images of them are often retouched.

Cindy Crawford says: "Women see me on the cover of magazines and think I never have a pimple or bags under my eyes. You have to realize that's after two hours of hair and make-up, plus retouching. Even I don't look like Cindy Crawford."

3. True or false: 80 percent of girls have been on a diet.

True. This indicates just how much pressure girls feel to fit into a society that values only thin women. A large number of women and girls are naturally the opposite—pear shaped—which is a look rarely seen in the media.

4. True or false: the average model today is shorter and weighs more than models did in the past.

False. The average model today is the opposite: taller and thinner than in the past. In the 1950s, healthier-looking models like Marilyn Monroe were the norm.

5. True or false: Women of different ethnic backgrounds are well represented in ads.

False. Tyra Banks is a good start, but very few African American women look like her. Can you think of anyone else in this category?

6. True or false: In some civilizations from the past, overweight women were considered the most beautiful of all.

True. Food was scarce, and since heavier people obviously had plenty to eat, they were admired, while thin ones were seen as malnourished.

7. True or false: Half of all ads depict women in a degrading way, for example, as a "dumb blonde," a victim, or a sex object.

False. It's generally more than 50 percent. One study found that 97 percent of ads did this. However, a few advertisers are making real efforts to create ads that show realistic-looking people.

8. True or false: One out of every five girls has an eating disorder.

True. That's 20% of the population — quite a lot of people!

9. True or false: If you protest an ad's look by writing a letter to the company that's advertising the products, the company will view your letter as representing the opinions of 10 people.

False. It represents the views of 10,000 people. . . which is why it's important to write letters to companies when you find their ads offensive.

CHAPTER 13: SELLING US SHORT

Activity: Critiquing Magazine Ads

MATERIALS

A stack (10–15) of assorted women's magazines with ads showing women who appear to be:

- Underdressed (for example, going to work in an unbuttoned blouse)
- Bored, or as if they have nothing to do but lounge around (inactive)
- Dumb (for example, toes pointed in, sucking thumb)
- Victimized (for example, with a black eye) or scared
- Objectified (for example, morphed into an object such as a pair of scissors)
- Physically distorted or truncated (for example, with head cut off at the top of the page)
- Whining
- Obsessed with men
- Overly sexualized
- Homogenous (for example, a group of only blonde, Caucasian women)

And for contrast, provide additional magazines with ads showing women who appear:

- Strong
- Doing something important
- Ethnically diverse
- Smart
- Real—like a neighbor or aunt
- Making a contribution
- Independent
- Average
- Competent
- Wearers of plus sizes
- In charge
- Just like women you know
- Successful
- Happy with themselves

WHAT TO DO

Pass the magazines around and have the girls tear out a few ads showing women and girls posed either negatively or positively (use the above bullet points as a guide).

Discuss the girls' observations about how the women are posed and dressed, what they're doing, and the expressions on their faces. Point out what you notice if they don't pick up on it.

ALTERNATIVELY . . .

Have the girls pair up and each choose an ad (two ads per pair) to critique with their partner. Ask them to determine three things:

1. Is there anything about the ad that affirms females?
2. Is there anything degrading/insulting?
3. How would they like to see the ad changed?

Have the girls share what they see with their partners and ask them for additional observations. Ask each pair to present their critiques to the group.

CONCLUSION: SECRETS OF SUCCESS

Activity: Creating a Plan of Action

MATERIALS

Flip chart and markers, pens or pencils, paper

WHAT TO DO

Part 1: Ask the girls to suggest ways they could take action in their own lives or for the good of all women and girls. Write these on the flip chart. Add some of these ideas if they aren't mentioned by the girls:

- Speak up for something you believe in
- Stop criticizing your appearance to your friends
- Run for student council
- Organize a "girlcott," a protest against a company whose policies or products are offensive or unfair

- Take a self-defense class
- Write a letter to a company about its advertising
- Learn a new skill or hobby
- Work to achieve a dream
- Volunteer to help a local woman running for office
- Stand up to someone who is harassing you
- Organize a beach cleanup
- Start a small business

Part 2: Explain that it's easier to accomplish a goal when you can break it down into smaller steps. As an example, write on the flip chart the stages involved in girlcotting a company.

ORGANIZING A GIRLCOTT

1. Identify the company you want to protest, and why.
2. Create a flyer saying why you are girlcotting and ask people to sign your petition.
3. Make a petition with lines where people can sign their names.
4. Hand out copies of the flyer and petition at school and community events.
5. Get as many people as possible to sign.
6. Collect the petitions and send them to the company.
7. Don't buy the company's products.
8. If the company responds to the petition by telling you it has stopped running the ad, celebrate!
9. Write the company a thank you note.

Part 3: Have the girls team up (preferably not with their best friend or someone sitting nearby).

Ask them to think of a project they'd like to pursue.

Have them write down the steps towards realizing their projects, then review and revise with their partner.

Ask them to commit to supporting their partner on the follow-through (have them exchange contact information). Have each complete the sentence:

To support my partner, I will follow up by _____ (for example, call her in two or three weeks, send e-mail reminding her about her goal in a month).

Part 4: Closing

Have each girl share her partner's plan of action with the group.

Send the girls off with these inspirational quotes:

"Life has taught me one supreme lesson. That is that we must—if we are really to live at all. . .we must put our convictions into action."
—Margaret Sanger, activist

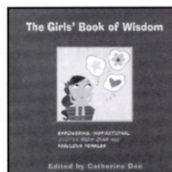
"So whatever you want to do, just do it. Do not worry about making a fool of yourself. . .you will have a great time."
—Gloria Steinem, women's rights activist

TEN EASY WAYS TO EMPOWER GIRLS

Want to do more? Whether you've only recently begun to actively affirm girls or you're a seasoned pro who's been working to combat the impacts of sexism for years, consider these tips.

1. When you ask your class or group a question, pause. In a typical classroom or co-ed group, when the teacher asks a question, boys immediately wave their hands in the air and call out asking to be chosen. By contrast, girls often quietly think through what they'd say before raising their hands. Waiting a moment gives the girls a better chance to be considered.
2. Bring girls into discussions. Don't wait for girls to raise their hands—be proactive and directly ask individuals (particularly those who are quiet) what they think. Give them time to develop their thoughts and if they talk slowly, be patient. The more they speak and feel comfortable doing it, the smoother their presentation will become.
3. Get feedback on your interaction style. Have a colleague whom you trust watch how you work with kids to determine if you're using any bias. If you feel comfortable being videotaped, this can yield even more comprehensive data.
4. Use girl-centric examples and metaphors. Girls are naturally more interested in subjects if they are familiar with them, point out Whitney Ransome and Meg Moulton, co-executive directors of the National Coalition of Girls' Schools in Concord, Massachusetts. Balance your use of male-oriented metaphors and examples with female ones (e.g., softball as well as football).
5. Supplement male-focused books and projects with those that present a female perspective. For example, if you're dealing with famous male artists in history, add material about female artists of the same time period, or contemporary female artists with a similar artistic style. Or zero in on the suffrage movement, gender stereotyping, or women's contributions in particular fields (such as science, the arts, or aviation).
6. Encourage healthy risk taking. In general, boys learn that they can succeed by trying out possible solutions, even if they make mistakes, while girls are conditioned to play it safe. When girls are instead praised and rewarded for venturing into new territory (as opposed to commended for being neat and well-behaved) their sense of self-reliance improves.
7. Set an example with gender-neutral language. Research shows that when children hear male-biased phrases like "All men are created equal," they don't picture a coed group. One way to add balance: If you're talking about a generic person, alternate using "he" and "him" with "she" and "her." If you're referring to an animal, use the pronoun "it."
8. Create welcoming space for girls. Studies show that boys often monopolize physical space, such as at the classroom computer. Set aside time when girls have first dibs.
9. De-emphasize appearance. Girls are frequently commended for how they look, when what really matters is what they think, dream, and do. It's fine to pay compliments, but the more substantive, the better.
10. Provide inspiring quotes. The right quote at the right time from a teacher, role model, mentor, or other adult can help a girl shift her beliefs and attitudes and set higher standards for herself.

MORE BOOKS EDITED BY CATHERINE DEE



The Girls' Book of Wisdom

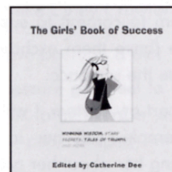
*Empowering, Inspirational
Quotes from over 400
Fabulous Females*

PB 0-316-17956-6
\$9.99 (\$13.99 in Can.)
208 pages • 6 x 6

Popular Paperback for
Young Adults Winner

Quick Pick for Reluctant
Young Readers Winner

Disney Adventures Best
Book Award Winner



The Girls' Book of Success

*Winning Wisdom, Stars' Secrets,
Tales of Triumph, and More*

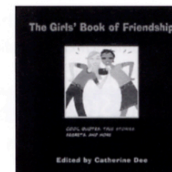
PB 0-316-73454-3
\$9.99 (\$13.99 in Can.)
208 pages • 6 x 6



The Girls' Book of Love

*Cool Quotes, Super Stories,
Awesome Advice, and More*


PB 0-316-17404-1
\$9.95 (\$13.95 in Can.)
196 pages • 6 x 6



The Girls' Book of Friendship

*Cool Quotes, True Stories,
Secrets, and More*

PB 0-316-16818-1
\$8.95 (\$12.95 in Can.)
208 pages • 6 x 6

 **LITTLE, BROWN AND COMPANY**
Books for Young Readers
Engaging → Educating → Entertaining
Time Warner Book Group

www.lb-teens.com

Educators' Guide ISBN: 0-316-05892-0 November 2004