



# The Common Thread: Mothers, Daughters, and the Power of Empathy

*Martha Manning*

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## **The Common Thread: Mothers, Daughters, and the Power of Empathy** Martha Manning

There is no relationship more fulfilling, infuriating, emotional, and problematic than that of a mother and daughter. Psychology has traditionally regarded as inevitable -- and, in fact, necessary -- a female child's eventual separation from her mother as adulthood ensues. Now renowned psychologist and author Martha Manning offers mothers and daughters of all ages a revolutionary new way of understanding each other and their relationships, and challenges the accepted thinking that this powerful bond must ultimately be severed. In a work of intelligence, wit, heart, and scholarship, Manning examines this important link and concludes that it is a precious attachment that is never outgrown -- that, while the differing, ever-changing needs, conflicts, and obligations of two distinct women may create a chasm between them, bridging the gap will serve to strengthen a lifelong commitment, love, and identity, while fostering essential independence. The key is empathy.

Through empathy -- the ability to perceive the other's actions as an aspect of individual behavior -- even a troubled relationship can become gratifying and beautiful. Exploring the developmental stages of the mother-daughter union from infancy through old age, Manning provides potent tools to help us build stronger ties, enabling us to celebrate rather than eschew the twists and turns, joys, secrets, and surprises inherent in this most glorious of life connections. She also focuses new attention on the parts played by cultural, historical, psychological, and biological influences, areas often ignored in previous works on the subject.

Drawing on her personal experiences as a mother, daughter, and "champion eavesdropper," combined with scrupulous research and intriguing insights culled from today's headlines, literature, pop culture, and extensive clinical experience, the author casts a fascinating new light on what can -- and should -- be a dynamic, fluid, and mutually empowering relationship. For everyone who is, and always will be, a mother, a daughter, or both, this important, inspiring book will guide the reader toward a new love and respect born of understanding and the enriching ability to find the common thread.

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