

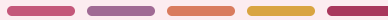
Pretty Sisters

FOR MOTHERS, DAUGHTERS, AUNTS, AND THE WOMEN WHO RAISE GIRLS

The Mother-Daughter Guide

Gentle questions for the conversations that matter, and the ones that are hard to start.

Age-appropriate prompts for tweens, teens, and grown daughters, plus conversation starters for confidence, comparison, and the parts of growing up nobody hands you a script for.



BEFORE YOU START

A note for the grown-up

You are not going to get this perfect, and perfect was never the assignment. The assignment is that she knows she can talk to you.

Girls do not open up on command. They open up sideways — in the car, doing dishes, walking the dog, at eleven at night when you wanted to go to bed. Most of these pages are built for those moments, not for a formal sit-down across a table with two waters and an agenda.

FIVE RULES THAT MAKE HER TALK

- **Go first.** Answer your own question honestly before you ask it.
- **Do not fix.** Ask “do you want ideas, or do you want me to listen?” and honor the answer.
- **Let silence sit.** Count to eight in your head. She is deciding whether it is safe.
- **Do not react to the first sentence.** The first sentence is a test. The real one comes after.
- **End before she wants to.** Short and good beats long and thorough.

FIVE THINGS THAT SHUT IT DOWN

- Turning her answer into a lesson
- Repeating it later to someone else
- Comparing her to a sibling or to yourself at her age
- Looking alarmed, even for a second
- Asking a question when what you want is a confession

The best places to have these conversations

Side by side beats face to face. Try the car, a walk, folding laundry, painting nails, baking something, the drive home from practice, or the last ten minutes before bed with the lights off. Eye contact raises the stakes; shoulders-parallel lowers them.

ONE MORE THING, AND IT IS THE IMPORTANT ONE

She is watching how you talk about yourself far more closely than she is listening to what you say about her. The way you narrate your own body, your own mistakes, and your own worth in front of her is the actual curriculum. This guide will help. That will matter more.

Gentle note: Think Pretty resources offer encouragement and reflection, not therapy, medical advice, or crisis care. If you are in crisis or immediate danger, contact your local emergency number or a licensed professional. In the U.S., call or text 988.

FOR BOTH OF YOU

Gentle prompts to start with

Ask these together. You answer first. Some nights you will get three words back, and three words is still a conversation.

BELIEF 1 Getting warm

Low stakes on purpose. Use these in the car.

1. What was the best two minutes of your day?
2. What made you laugh this week?
3. Who was kind to you recently, and what did they do?
4. What is something you are looking forward to?
5. If you could redo one hour of this week, which one?

BELIEF 2 Going a little deeper

Only after the warm ones have been easy a few times.

1. What is something you wish people knew about you?
2. When do you feel most like yourself?
3. Who do you feel safest with, and what makes them safe?
4. What is something hard you are carrying that you have not told anyone?
5. Is there anything you have wanted to tell me but were not sure how?

BELIEF 5 Turning it around

Let her interview you. Answer honestly, at an age-appropriate depth.

1. What do you want to ask me that you have never asked?
2. What was I like at your age? What did I get wrong?
3. What is something you think I do not understand about your life?
4. How do you want me to respond when you tell me something hard?
5. What would make it easier to talk to me?

IF SHE SAYS "I DON'T KNOW"

She often means "I do not know if it is safe to say this yet." Try: *"That's okay. If you did know, what would it be?"* Or let it go and try again next week. A question left open is an invitation. A question pushed is an interrogation, and she can tell the difference instantly.

AGE-APPROPRIATE QUESTIONS

Ages 10 to 13

This is the year the comparing starts, usually quietly, usually about bodies and friend groups. Your job right now is mostly to be unsurprised and easy to talk to.

BELIEF 1 About kindness and worth

She is learning what she is valued for. Say it out loud before the world does.

1. What does it mean to be a good friend? Are you one?
2. Who at school seems left out? What is that like for them?
3. What is something you like about yourself that has nothing to do with how you look?
4. Has anyone said something unkind to you lately? What did you do?
5. What is the kindest thing you have ever seen someone do?

BELIEF 2 About friendship

Friend drama at this age is not small. Treat it like it matters, because to her it does.

1. Who do you sit with at lunch? Is that a good spot?
2. Has a friendship changed lately? How did that feel?
3. What do you do when two friends want different things from you?
4. Who makes you feel most like yourself?

BELIEF 3 About trying and failing

This is where perfectionism gets installed. Normalize being bad at things.

1. What is something you tried this year that was hard?
2. What do you do when you are not good at something right away?
3. Would you rather get a good grade on something easy or learn something hard?
4. What is something you want to get better at?

WHAT SHE NEEDS TO HEAR AT THIS AGE

"You are allowed to change your mind." · "That happened to me too." · "Being left out says nothing about your worth." · "I like who you are becoming." · "You can always tell me, and I will not freak out."

AGE-APPROPRIATE QUESTIONS

Ages 14 to 17

She has an inner life you are not in anymore, and that is developmentally correct even though it is lonely. Ask fewer questions and stay available longer.

BELIEF 1 About identity and worth

She is deciding who she is. Do not answer for her.

1. Who are you when nobody is watching — and is that person allowed at school?
2. What do you think people assume about you that is not true?
3. What do you actually like about yourself right now?
4. Where do you feel like you have to perform?

BELIEF 2 About pressure and comparison

Name it without making it a lecture about phones.

1. Who do you compare yourself to most, and what do they have that you want?
2. How does your phone make you feel about yourself, honestly?
3. What is expected of girls at your school that nobody says out loud?

BELIEF 3 About the future

The pressure to have a plan is crushing girls right now.

1. What would you do with your life if nobody had an opinion about it?
2. What are you afraid of getting wrong?
3. Do you feel like you have to have it figured out? Who told you that?

WHAT SHE NEEDS TO HEAR AT THIS AGE

“I trust you.” · “You do not have to know yet.” · “I would rather you call me at 2am than not call.” · “Nothing you could tell me would make me love you less.” · “You are allowed to disappoint people.”

IF SHE IS NOT TALKING

Silence at this age is usually normal, not a crisis. Keep showing up without requiring anything: drive her places, feed her, be in the room. But if she is withdrawn for weeks, stops doing what she loved, or says anything about wanting to disappear — that is the moment to reach for a professional, not a worksheet. In the U.S. you or she can call or text **988** at any hour.

AGE-APPROPRIATE QUESTIONS

Eighteen and older

The relationship has to change from parent-and-child to two women who choose each other. That transition is awkward for about two years and worth every minute of it.

BELIEF 5 About the new shape of things

Say the quiet part out loud. It gives her permission to.

1. What do you need from me now that is different from what you needed at sixteen?
2. When do you want advice, and when do you just want me to listen?
3. What is something I still do that treats you like a kid?
4. How do you want us to handle it when we disagree?

BELIEF 2 Woman to woman

This is where the friendship starts. You have to risk being a person.

1. What are you proud of that nobody has noticed?
2. What is the hardest part of your life right now?
3. Who are your people, and are they good to you?
4. What do you wish I had told you sooner?

BELIEF 1 The things worth handing down

She will keep what you give her here longer than anything else.

1. What do you want to carry forward from how you were raised — and what do you want to leave?
2. What have you learned about yourself in the last year?
3. What do you want your life to feel like at thirty-five?
4. What is one thing you want me to say to you more often?

WHAT SHE NEEDS TO HEAR AT THIS AGE

“I am proud of you, and not because of what you achieved.” · “I was wrong about that.” · “You can always come home.” · “I like you, not just love you.” · “What do you think?”

THE TWO HARDEST TOPICS

Confidence and comparison

The conversations most mothers say they do not know how to start — openings that work, and the ones that do not.

Confidence conversation starters

INSTEAD OF	TRY
<i>"You're so beautiful, don't let anyone tell you different."</i>	<i>"I noticed how you handled that. That took guts."</i>
<i>"You should be more confident."</i>	<i>"What is one small thing you could do this week that would surprise you?"</i>
<i>"Don't worry, you're great at everything."</i>	<i>"What is something you are working on that is not easy yet?"</i>
<i>"Why do you care what they think?"</i>	<i>"Whose opinion actually matters to you, and did you pick them on purpose?"</i>

Comparison conversation starters

- "Who do you follow that makes you feel worse afterward? Why do you keep following her?"
- "What do you think her life is like when the camera is off?"
- "When you compare yourself to someone, what is the thing you actually want?"
- "Has anyone ever compared themselves to you? What would you tell them?"
- "Would you rather be admired from far away or known up close?"

THE ONE THAT CHANGES THINGS

Tell her who *you* compare yourself to, and how it feels. Not as a lesson — as a confession. The moment a girl learns that grown women do this too, the shame drops by half and she can look at it instead of hiding it.

TEA TIME, TOGETHER

Try the family practice: at dinner or bedtime, each of you answers all three in one sentence. Grown-ups go first.

T — a thought I had today

E — how I felt

A — one kind next step

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

SOMETHING TO DO TOGETHER

The letter exchange

Once a year, on a birthday or a New Year, write each other a letter. Read them out loud. This is the single thing mothers and daughters tell us they keep forever.

MOTHER, TO YOUR DAUGHTER

- One thing you admire about who she is becoming
- One thing you were wrong about this year
- One story about her you have never told her
- One thing you hope she never forgets

DAUGHTER, TO YOUR MOTHER

- One thing you are grateful for that you have never said
- One thing you wish she understood
- One thing you want to do together this year
- One thing you hope to carry forward from her

She is watching how you talk about yourself far more closely than she is listening to what you say about her.

A blessing for the two of you

*May you be a woman she can tell the truth to.
May she be a woman who knows her worth was never up for a vote.
May you both be quicker to say the kind thing out loud.
And may you each be somebody's pretty sister — starting with each other.*

Kind is the new pretty.

A gentle note. Think Pretty resources are for encouragement, reflection, and friendship. They are not therapy, medical advice, mental health treatment, or crisis care, and they are not a substitute for care from a qualified professional. You are always in charge of what you write, what you share out loud, and what you keep private — and you can delete anything you have saved in a Pretty Sisters tool at any time. If you are in crisis or in immediate danger, please contact your local emergency number or a licensed professional right away. In the United States you can call or text **988** to reach the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. Please reach for real, human help when you need it — asking is a brave and pretty thing to do.