

April 15, 2010

■ BOOK REVIEW: SECRETS OF A JEWISH MOTHER BY JILL ZARIN, LISA WEXLER AND GLORIA KAMEN



Book Description:

The Jewish Mother knows what she wants. And what you should want too. In Secrets of a Jewish Mother, you'll learn how to make her methods your very own, and as result you'll give and get of love and happiness in great amounts. In what could be thought of as the Jewish Mother's Guide to Life, Jill Zarin, the breakout star of Bravo's hit series, The Real Housewives of New York, teams up with her sister, Lisa Wexler, award-winning host of daily radio program The Lisa Wexler Show, and her mother, the estimable Gloria Kamen who made a splash on Jill's series last year. Secrets of a Jewish Mother shows readers that being clear about what you want is the best policy, and standing up for yourself and your family is always the right way to go. Using real life examples, stories from Jill, Lisa and Gloria, this mother/daughter trio reveals their secrets to life, love, and happiness.

Some of their Jewish Mother tips include:

- Dating: "A good man is hard to find, but so is a good woman. Don't settle for less than you deserve."
- Parenting: "Fair is not always equal; equal is not always fair."
- Family: "Bar mitzvahs and weddings: The grudge starts here."
- Money: "Don't wait 'til you're dead to give it away."
- The clichés that matter: "Bring a gift." And, remember, a lot of love and a little matzoh ball soup never hurt anyone.

Momsword.org Review:

Recently, I was sent **Secrets of a Jewish Mother: Real Advice, Real Stores, Real Love** by Jill Zarin, Lisa Wexler and Gloria Kamen. I was honored to have received this book to read and review

from Dutton Adult, because I was curious why type of advice Jewish mothers would give in this book. A little background about me. I grew up in Michigan and the city I grew up in was 95% Jewish, I always called myself an 'Unofficial Jew' because most of my friends were Jewish and the guys I had crushes on were Jewish (and they are still good looking!). I learned how to celebrate the Jewish holiday's from my neighbor and from then on I knew that I wanted to be Jewish.

So, when I moved to Europe, I became British Protestant and later I converted to Judaism. I am a mother and I teach my daughter both about Judaism and Christianity because I want her to have a choice in what religion she wants to be when grows up, like my family did for me. Now here I am, watching Housewives of New York City and love to hear the advice Gloria Kamen gives (Jill's mother) on the show. You see, Gloria reminds me of my grandmother, in fact they are both very much alike – and that is a good thing! I love my grandma and she gives the best advice!

After reading this book, the advice I had learned, was pretty much similar advice my grandma gave to me over the years. For example on page 45, Gloria's Must-Have Qualities in a Husband: Kindness, Ambition, violence of any kind (not tolerated, not negotiable) and more. I really liked that because my grandma has said those things to me since I started dating. On page 127, Jill says "A Jewish Mother Pushes—It's either work or school, but preferable work and school. Lazy is not an option in a Jewish house"

Jill speaks the truth. Lazy isn't an option in a Jewish house, and being pushy is. I know that for a fact. When I was in high school a guy friend of mine's mother came into school with a gift for me. She wanted me to marry her son (my friend). I didn't have interest in him and I was only 16 at the time! Besides the guy I was interested in was Jewish, had ambition (he is a doctor now), great in sports, was a funny guy, but even then I wasn't thinking about dating him or marrying him. I just enjoyed having a crush. But when I went to that guy friend's house, the mother was pushy as ever. I loved it though ,because I was always motivated to keep on doing what I want to do in life. Back then it was band. Now it is being a mother and still thinking about my future dreams and goals!

Although my grandma is a pushy person to, she always says to me that "laziness is a disease." (I wish someone would tell my husband not to be lazy. Really bothers me!).

Lisa's story on page 173, the story about going to a bridal shower for her best friend in Mexico. They had to play a game by throwing bits of pieces paper with advice to the married couple into a hat. Her best friend's mother had written "Communicate". A word that speaks for itself. When relationships goes down the gutter, it is because they didn't communicate very well with each other.

All-in-All, I love everything that the three mothers had written. I did learn quite a bit of things from each and every one of them. I liked the fact they each gave their own advice and stories in each chapter. From friendship, dating, beauty, marriage, parenting ,money and more, this is a great book and a keeper! Another part I liked was in the chapters there was a section called 'Ask Yourself', because I do find myself answering the questions.



This book makes me think about where I am at life right now and it also makes me want to fly home to see my grandma to give her a hug and say "thank you". To me, my grandma is the best person on this planet. In fact she would love this book.

You don't have to be Jewish to read this book. This book is for everyone no matter what religion you are. Because each of these ladies have a lot of excellent things to say. After reading this book, I feel much more knowledgeable with the different advices each mother has given.

So I would like to say Mazel Tov to Jill, Lisa and Gloria. Toda. Thank you for letting me read this wonderfully written book and thank you to *Dutton Adult* for letting me read this treasure.

I highly recommend this book for anyone who either loves Housewives of New York or wants to learn something. This is for people who are dating (yes teens, this is a book to read too!), marriage, parenting and much more. This is a type of book to own and keep on your shelves for generations to come. I will be purchasing a copy too all of my Jewish and non-Jewish friends and family.