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Jill Zarin Spills 'Secrets' on 'Toxic' Bethenny



While her feud with Bethenny Frankel heats up on Bravo's 'Real Housewives of New York City,' off-screen Jill Zarin has pushed the backlash aside to promote her debut book, 'Secrets of a Jewish Mother.' Co-written with her mother, Gloria Kamen, and sister, Lisa Wexler, 'Secrets' shares practical advice on everything from fashion and dating to money and motherhood.

This season of 'Housewives' has taken the fight between former best friends Bethany and Jill to a new level. "I keep getting judged on behavior I may have done already. I sort of wanted to let people know I have tried and I've been trying for six months. Should I bawl my brains out? What do you want me to do?" says Jill.

Jill sat down with **PopEater** to spill her thoughts on being snubbed from Bethenny's wedding, celebrity parenting and what to expect from the rest of this season of 'Housewives.'

You've just released your book, 'Secrets of a Jewish Mother,' a compilation of advice and stories you co-authored with your mother, Gloria Kamen and sister, Lisa Wexler. What celebrity moms are doing a great job raising their kids?

Oh, there's so many, but it's hard to know. We say this in the book, 'You can't take all the credit, and you can't take all the blame.' So the product of a parent doesn't mean they were or weren't a good parent necessarily. Like, my daughter has turned out to be a great kid. Do I get all the credit for that?

Well, is there any celebrity you feel could really use a Jewish mother in their life?

I think we all could use a Jewish mother. Because what a Jewish mother really is, is an advocate -- an advocate for everything in a child's life. I think that's what makes the difference from other moms, is being very proactive and aggressive in our ideals. We believe if it's worth saying once, it's worth saying a thousand times -- 'Clean up your room, clean up your room, clean up your room; finish your homework, finish your homework, finish your homework,' whereas maybe other parents may be more passive and let their kids either figure it out on their own or just do it differently. I always lived in a Jewish house, so it's hard for me to compare.

I have a Jewish mother and you're dead on.

You'll get a kick out of the book and so will she! It might give her some ideas. Because as a mother, you're never done. I'm 46 and my mother is still my mommy and still telling me exactly what to do, and her mother did the same for her until she died. You're gonna laugh your ass off at this book.

As far as this season of 'Housewives' is concerned, you're feuding with Bethenny Frankel and we're simply not used to seeing this side of you. How have your fans reacted?

No one's happy with this season, but I've had a lot of fans who have been unbelievably supportive. I don't have much control, but it's what I signed up for -- don't hate the player, hate the game. I feel bad. I'm sorry about a lot of things I did and the way I did them. This is the truth, and I'm not trying to complain, but I didn't know things that were going on around me. I didn't know [Bethenny's] father was sick. Even though Alex said something to me like, 'Bethenny needs you right now, it's her father,' I asked if it was medical, and she didn't say yes. I should have picked up on the body language. When I walked out and saw [Ramona] sitting talking to Bethenny on the sofa, I'm horrified by my reaction because I didn't even see her. All I saw was an ambush, because I was going there to do a clothing thing and not expecting Bethenny. I



wasn't prepared, so all I was thinking to myself was, 'I can't believe Ramona did this to me.' So I wasn't even paying attention to what was coming out of Bethenny's mouth, and now that I'm hearing it, I feel really bad about the way I reacted. If I had to do it over again, I would. But I can't take it back. All I can do is say I'm sorry, which I have, and beg forgiveness.

In true 'Housewives' fashion, let's get to the drama! We've read in the press that you were hurt you weren't invited to Bethenny's wedding. Did you reach out to Bethenny at all?

I did. And it wasn't that I was hurt, I was sad. I think I used the wrong word. I wasn't hurt because I don't blame her. I wouldn't want the problems with her and I to be at her wedding; I wanted it to be all about her. So I was just sad. I look back and we had so much fun together, so many good times, and it just really got derailed and could've got back on track easily and quickly had it been off-camera. But because it's a TV show and there's production people involved and people setting up behind my back, you start to get paranoid. I was very paranoid, I was out of my mind. Really. I don't know how else to explain it. I'm not going to say I was right, that's for sure. So how do I handle it? I thank God I have my family and my friends and my fans to understand. Everyone who's nasty to me should look in the mirror, because if you have the answer to being perfect in life, to know outcomes in advance, please share. I'd like to know how to do that.

They say motherhood changes women. Bethenny will be giving birth soon and you've just written this book -- do you think her becoming a mother could kind of close the gap between you two?

I hope yes. I don't know if it's about motherhood, but I hope her and I can come to a place of peace. I'm not mad at her. I don't even remember what the fight was about anymore, it's been so long. You know? Who remembers?

Last Monday, you had quite the controversial Facebook status. It read, 'So... what do you do when you have a fight with a friend.. and you don't want to make up yet... then when your ready they don't want to? You write, call and send gifts. Suggestions welcome!'

The reason I wrote that is [because] so many fans are lost with where I stand. Remember, this happened nine months ago. They think what they tell me today is going to affect the outcome. What happened, happened, I can't change it. But I'll still get an e-mail or a Facebook thing that says, 'You have to forgive Bethenny. You have to call her. You have to e-mail her.' I did all that a long time ago. No one knows what I've been doing. I keep getting judged on behavior I may



have done already. I sort of wanted to let people know I have tried and I've been trying for six months. Should I bawl my brains out? What do you want me to do?

What do you hope for in the next season of 'Housewives?'

I'm looking to make new relationships and always hoping for the best. Bethenny will be gone next season, so I think it'll be much more peaceful. That sort of sucked a lot of oxygen out, and that happened in the beginning of the season, and then we didn't see each other for a very long time. But the show is making that the whole season -- it's all out of timing. What seems like a long time to you, it all happens within a week. All these little fights with Bethenny and whatever, I just needed a chance to breathe. I didn't know what was going on. It was drama, toxic. I just couldn't handle it. They kept pushing Bethenny on me. I just needed to be left alone for a minute, but it didn't work, and they made me the scapegoat, and here I am. But I've got a great book out I think people will love.