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Women share 'Secrets of a Jewish Mother'™

Jewish mothers believe in the power of women. They are strong, independent and loving.

Moreover, they speak their mind honestly and unapologetically.

This credo -- which one need not be a mother nor Jewish to embrace -- is at the heart of Lisa Wexler's recently published book, *The Secrets of a Jewish Mother*.

Co-written with her mother, Gloria Kamen, and sister Jill Zarin, star of the Bravo television series, *The Real Housewives of New York*, Wexler explores some of the timeless gems of wisdom that guide the multi-faceted life she leads today.

A mother of two, Wexler is an award-winning radio personality as well as an esteemed Fairfield County attorney. In *Secrets of a Jewish Mother: Real Advice, Real Stories and Real Love*, she and Zarin share personal insights that they gleaned while growing up in their family's Jewish home on Long Island.

"The essence of the book is my mother's wisdom," Wexler said.

Wexler shared the red carpet with her mother and Zarin at a gala invitation-only book release cocktail party that took place in Manhattan Tuesday night. A rising media star, Wexler held her own amidst the celebrity guests, including cast members from *The Real Housewives of New York* and *The Jersey Shore*, as she warmly greeted family and friends in between posing for paparazzi photos.

A radio talk show host on WNLK Fairfield County, Wexler offers listeners lively, informative



discussion on topical events that bridge National Public Radio and a commercial radio show format.

In less than three years, The Lisa Wexler Show has grown from a weekly, 90-minute broadcast on Saturday morning to adding Live with Lisa to the airwaves in prime time, Monday through Friday, from 4 to 6 p.m.

In 2009, Wexler won the title of "Best Radio Personality" of Fairfield County from Moffly Media publications as a result of a reader survey.

"I have found what I was born to do," she said, smiling. "And, it's only the beginning."

In *Secrets of a Jewish Mother*, Wexler writes about finding a second career -- and a passion -- in the broadcasting industry. "As soon as I got behind the mike on live radio, I knew that I had finally found the thing at which I was a 'natural.' It was the easiest thing I had ever done, and by far the most fun," she writes. "Radio has given me an excuse to talk to fascinating, interesting, accomplished people."

Her goal is to not only become a national radio show host but to also continue to record her shows locally.

Wexler also helped to start a networking organization for women, called Women in Power. Its first conference was sold out. "We had no idea there is such a pent up demand for women to get together and help each other," Wexler said.

On May 20, Women in Power will sponsor another informational program at the Westport Woman's Club called, "The Book is Your Hook." For more information, go to www.livewithlisaradio.com.

Wexler's intelligence, focus and perseverance are all attributes she absorbed under her mother's tutelage. In fact, there is an entire chapter devoted to education in *Secrets of a Jewish Mother*, and it is clear that the young girls were as encouraged to excel in learning as young boys. They are taught to have a way to earn a living because, as Kamen frequently reminds her daughters,



"Whoever payeth, sayeth."

Always a straight-A student, Wexler was admitted early to John Hopkins University, which is where she met her husband, Bill. Upon graduation, the couple got married and moved to New York City and Wexler enrolled in New York University's School of Law.

"The message of the book is that we are here to love each other," she explained. "My parents did a very good job of teaching us what a healthy marriage looks like and what healthy parenting looks like."

However, Wexler noted that her mother, whom she still affectionately refers to as "Mommy," never hesitated to dispense words of wisdom and admonish her children as many times as was needed.

"We are a very verbal, dramatic family," she said. "Mommy was very forthright and she told us the same thing 1,000 times. She believed that there is nothing that we learn by osmosis."

The idea for formulating her family's "secrets" into a book came while Wexler was watching her beloved mother offer advice on camera, during an episode of *The Real Housewives of New York*.

"There was a scene where Mommy is sitting in Jill's house and giving heartfelt advice to Bethany," Wexler recalled. "She was telling her that the time from Rosh Hashanah to Passover and back to Rosh Hashanah goes by in a blink of an eye. You need to find a way to have some kind of meaningful life so you are always moving forward."

Each chapter of *Secrets of a Jewish Mother* contains a lesson, or "secret," and personal reflection from its three authors.

Wexler pointed out, though, that the voices of the men in their lives -- Sol Kamen, Bill Wexler and Bobby Zarin -- are also evident throughout the book's 300 pages.

"The secret of a good Jewish mother is to marry a good Jewish father," Wexler said.

Now retired and living in Boca Raton, Fla., with Gloria, Sol worked as an entrepreneur, attorney



and stock broker. However, the book is riddled with stories that demonstrate his unwavering commitment and unconditional love for his family.

"There is always a lot of laughter in our house," Wexler mused.

The family continues to get together regularly, especially during the High Holidays in the fall and at Passover in the springtime. Wexler and Zarin also stay in touch with their mother with a daily phone call or e-mail. (Take note: The book clearly states, though, that phone calls are the preferred method for communicating with close family members and friends.)

At the end of the book, there is a glossary of Yiddish words and expressions found in *Secrets of a Jewish Mother*.

A special chapter, called "A Coda from the Kinder" -- which is a Yiddish word for "children" -- is written by Wexler's children, Jonathan and Joanna, and Zarin's daughter, Allyson. They poignantly capture an appreciation for their family's continuous love for each other. They also affirm that they have benefitted well from the generations of wisdom, which is part of their heritage.

"So even though we complain a lot and we resent our mothers for their 'sage' advice, much of it really does seep in," they write.

A book-signing for *Secrets of a Jewish Mother* will take place at Border's Bookstore in Fairfield on Thursday, April 22, at 7 p.m.; Friday, April 23, at 5:30 p.m., and on Saturday and Sunday, May 1 and 2, at the Women's Expo, Stamford Plaza Hotel, Stamford.

