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姐妹缘

Chicken Soup for the Sister's Soul

Jack Canfield

Mark Victor Hansen

Patty & Nancy Mitchell

Heather & Katy McNamara

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We are truly grateful and love you all!





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Introduction

"She's always there for me," "I can call her day or night," "I can tell her anything," "I'd be lost without her." These are just some of the phrases we found repeated in the thousands of inspiring, heartfelt and humorous stories that were submitted to us for *Chicken Soup for the Sister's Soul*. Whether connected by genetics or the heart, our sisters know us in a way no one else can. We're cut from the same cloth, molded by a unique shared experience. Our sisters know what it was like to grow up where we grew up, when we grew up and with whom.

We are at once girlfriends, shopping companions, confidants, rivals, sounding boards and more. These invisible ties stretch and bend through times of closeness and distance, yet, in all but the fewest cases, we remain inextricably connected.

We conceived of this book as a gift to our own sisters; however, we hope that it inspires you to recognize the essential role your sisters play in your lives. You've probably noticed that when you're going through a challenging time, your natural inclination is to reach out to another woman. When we talk with our biological sister, or a chosen sister of our heart, we feel less alone. Knowing that we can count on our sister in a time of crisis or to celebrate good news brings great comfort. With our sisters, we can ramble through our internal landscape—no agenda, no



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planned outcome—just to listen and be listened to.

What's more, our sisters are a storehouse of our most treasured memories: snuggling under the covers in the middle of the night, taking baths together, rehearsing for school plays and piano recitals, experiencing family vacations, shared secrets, first bras, first menstruation, first boyfriends.... These collages of memories create the foundation upon which every sister relationship rests.

Sisters share. We share the joy of a first love, the pain of rejection. We often entrust one another with our most private thoughts: to them we can confess to ludicrous things we've done, along with never-uttered aspirations and dreams. Our connection with our sister is strengthened because we share the gifts that are reaped from having survived a family's darkest hours. Sisters often share our burdens as well as our joys; the pain along with the triumphs.

And let us not forget our brothers. Even though we can rarely discuss uniquely feminine issues with brothers in the same way we can with women, we still share a unique biological and emotional connection. So we've devoted a chapter especially for brothers, those special souls who first helped teach us about the opposite sex by showing us how to climb trees, how to wrestle as well as any boy, and how to follow instead of lead on the dance floor.

The stories in *Chicken Soup for the Sister's Soul* are all about love, overcoming obstacles, family, growing up, moving away from home, becoming parents, losing parents and the bond between generations. We hope that you will cherish these stories as much as we do. We're thrilled to celebrate this unique relationship. We hope this collection will reveal the magic of sisterhood and inspire you to appreciate how truly blessed you are to be and have a sister.





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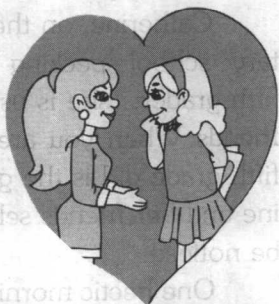
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A SISTER'S LOVE AND SUPPORT

Where we love is home,
Home that our feet may leave,
But not our hearts.

Oliver Wendell Holmes





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Revenge of the Fifth-Grade Girls

An older sister helps one remain half child, half woman.

Anonymous

A mother cannot force her daughters to become sisters. She cannot make them be friends or companions or even cohorts in crime. But, if she's very lucky, they find sisterhood for themselves and have one true ally for life. My daughters did not seem likely candidates for sisterly love. They are as different as night and day, and as contrary as any two girls living under the same roof can possibly manage.

My youngest daughter, Laura, is smart, athletic and good at most everything she tries. But for her, friendships are tricky. When, at seven years old, she was thrust into the world of lunch pals and sleepovers, she struggled to survive.

Catherine, on the other hand, sits at the top of the elementary school pecking order. A bright, popular and beautiful fifth-grader, she is usually surrounded by a bevy of adoring girlfriends. When you are in second grade, a word or nod from a fifth-grade girl is the greatest thing that can happen. But Catherine and her friends seldom noticed her sister's valiant attempts to be noticed.

One hectic morning, while getting ready for school, both girls



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began begging for a new hairstyle. Sighing, I gathered brushes, combs and pins and quickly created new looks. I braided Laura's wispy locks into a snazzy side-braid. I combed Catherine's shiny black hair into a sleek, French twist. They twirled in front of the mirror, pleased with what I'd done.

Laura bounced out the door, swinging her braid proudly. But at school, one girl pointed at her and whispered to the other girls. Then the girl walked up to Laura and asked in a scathing tone, "What's with the stinking braid?"

Laura crumbled. After getting permission from her teacher, she went to the bathroom, where she sat and cried in an empty stall. Then she splashed cold water on her face and bravely returned to the classroom—braid intact.

That afternoon, she broke my heart with her sad tale. *How could I have sent her out wearing a stinking braid? How could I have set her back in her meager attempts to fit in with the other girls?* I fought back my tears as I drove my girls home. Hearing her sister's sorrow, Catherine sat in stony silence, and as I often do, I wished they had the kind of bond that would allow them to reach out to each other. I barely noticed Catherine spent more time on the phone than usual that evening.

The next afternoon, when I pulled to the front of the carpool line, I discovered a small miracle had occurred. There stood Laura, surrounded by the smartest, cutest, most popular fifth-grade girls. My tiny daughter glowed with utter astonishment as they twirled her around, complimented her and focused a brilliant light of attention upon her. And, to my amazement, every single one wore a side-braid, exactly like the one Laura had worn the day before. *Ten stinking braids*, I thought, as I tried to swallow the lump lodged in my throat.

"I don't know what happened!" exclaimed Laura, clambering into the van. "I looked up, and all the girls were wearing my



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braid.” She grinned all the way home, arms wrapped around skinny knees, reliving her short life’s happiest moment.

I glanced at Catherine in the rearview mirror, and I think she winked at me. I’m not sure.

Carolyn Magner Mason

