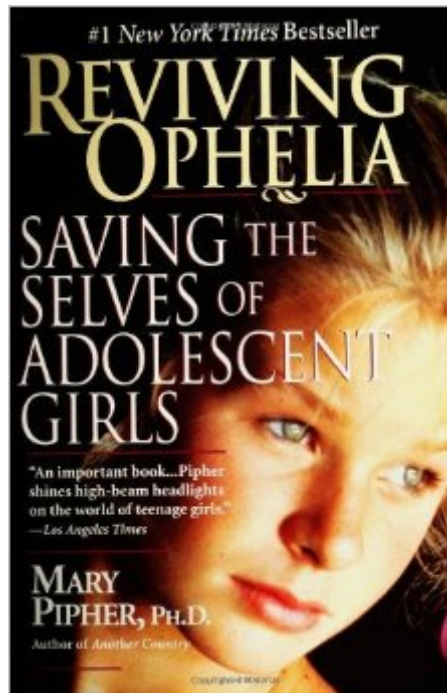


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# Reviving Ophelia: Saving The Selves Of Adolescent Girls



## Synopsis

#1 New York Times Bestseller  
The groundbreaking work that poses one of the most provocative questions of a generation: what is happening to the selves of adolescent girls? As a therapist, Mary Pipher was becoming frustrated with the growing problems among adolescent girls. Why were so many of them turning to therapy in the first place? Why had these lovely and promising human beings fallen prey to depression, eating disorders, suicide attempts, and crushingly low self-esteem? The answer hit a nerve with Pipher, with parents, and with the girls themselves. Crashing and burning in a developmental Bermuda Triangle, they were coming of age in a media-saturated culture preoccupied with unrealistic ideals of beauty and images of dehumanized sex, a culture rife with addictions and sexually transmitted diseases. They were losing their resiliency and optimism in a girl-poisoning culture that propagated values at odds with those necessary to survive. Told in the brave, fearless, and honest voices of the girls themselves who are emerging from the chaos of adolescence, *Reviving Ophelia* is a call to arms, offering important tactics, empathy, and strength, and urging a change where young hearts can flourish again, and rediscover and reengage their sense of self.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I read this book two years ago, but I feel I can still add to this debate. I encourage the teenage girls who read this book and were offended by the not-so-pretty picture it paints to go back in a few years and read it again. When I was 15 and 16, I also had no doubt that I was absolutely in control of my life. I could not see the larger forces at work, influencing the way I interacted with my friends, my

parents, my boyfriend and the unrealistic demands I placed on myself. When you drive yourself to be perfect, you set yourself up to fall. By the time I read *Reviving Ophelia* my junior year in college, I was coping with anorexia, depression, obsessive-compulsive behaviors and sexual promiscuity. *Ophelia* showed me how my experiences in junior high and high school had left scars on my soul that manifested themselves when I was 21. I dealt with it. Girls, examine your lives and your motives. Learn from your past. Love yourself. And to those who bemoan Pipher's lack of neat little answers: Life is not a 30-minute sitcom. There are no hard and fast answers to problems as complex as these. Awareness is the first step, and that's what Pipher was trying to do in this book, not solve a centuries-old problem in a few pages. And if you think this book was repetitious, then you weren't paying attention.

A recent college graduate, I am not so far away from adolescence as I would like to think! I was motivated to read this book after writing an extensive journal entry on my standard-yet-traumatic adolescence (a time which I have worked to forget!). I now understand my own adolescence more than I ever did before. I have come to terms with issues in my own life, as well as recognizing the phenomenal job my parents did in raising me. I have identified potential areas to watch for in my own (future) daughters. I have been instilled with the desire to positively impact adolescent girls in any way I can now -- whether that be through babysitting, teaching, or just treating them with respect when they show up at the store in which I work. I am grateful to Pipher for her interest in this subject, and the sensitivity which she exhibited in dealing with the clients who illuminate the pages of the book. I was moved to anger for the injustices our daughters are forced to endure, and fought back tears at the lack of love that many of them experience. I was made aware of situations that I was not previously aware of: persistent yet quiet misogyny in the classroom, the self-detachment many girls undergo in order to be socially acceptable, and the simple persistence of terrible attitudes regarding sex & sexuality in our junior highs (and I was IN junior high in the early nineties!). I was reminded of cultural situations which HAVE bothered me: lookism, sexism, physical/emotional/sexual abuse. Mostly, I have been moved from a state of defeated, dispassionate indifference to an inferno of anger against society's "junk values". Please, if you deal with adolescent girls, read this book. It may save their lives.

despite being a bright girl who read extensively, when i was in middle school i felt dead inside like would never be happy again. i wanted to know what was wrong with me but there was no name for what i was feeling. i felt miserable, i felt ugly, i felt unworthy of anyone's attention, i felt crazy and out

of control. thankfully i could write it out. i showed some of my work to my english teacher (whose is male by the way) and he told me to read this book. finally it all made sense, me and my friends and everyone around me (church, parents, school ETC.) was buying into the feminine myth which was only perpetuated by the intense media with junk values. i started working on myself slowly. everyday i would focus on a piece of me and try to accept that piece of myself. EX: one day i would focus on accepting my hair, then the next day i would focus on my eyes, then my ears, and so on. as i began to accept the outside i grew and could accept the inside. i went from a weak girl who was eager to please and trying to be perfect to a secure young woman who could express myself in "un lady like" ways. basically i gave larger society the finger and found myself. I WAS OPHELIA! i see them everyday in school even though i'm a sophomore now. This book is truth plain and simple. It should be required reading for all adolescent girls.

Reviving Ophelia, a book written by Mary Pipher, presents an honest and open look at adolescence. For the first time young girls' voices are allowed to be heard, unmuted, --the front lines of adolescence. She presents each girl's story in a strikingly candid way that inspires the reader. Throughout her book, Pipher often discusses the effects of the silent war that is raging in America. She believes that every day young girls are forced to fight to maintain their true selves in the face of societal pressures. Pipher offers herself up as an example of what may happen if one loses this daily battle. This brings a feeling of maturity and empathy to the information and guidance that she imparts in her book. The book's limited view-point on issues can be viewed as its flaw. Pipher's book presents clearly the negative issues teenage girls are forced to deal with, yet it leaves out the many positive aspects of an adolescent girl's life. This makes the book difficult to read because of the depressing and other painfully honest flow the book assumes. Mary Pipher has a point to make and she does it very well. She brings to the attention of a nation the burden of injustice and violence that its young women bear. I would recommend this book to anybody who wants to sit down and read a good book, full of insights and advice. This book is among my favorites because it helps me find different ways to view the world around me.

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