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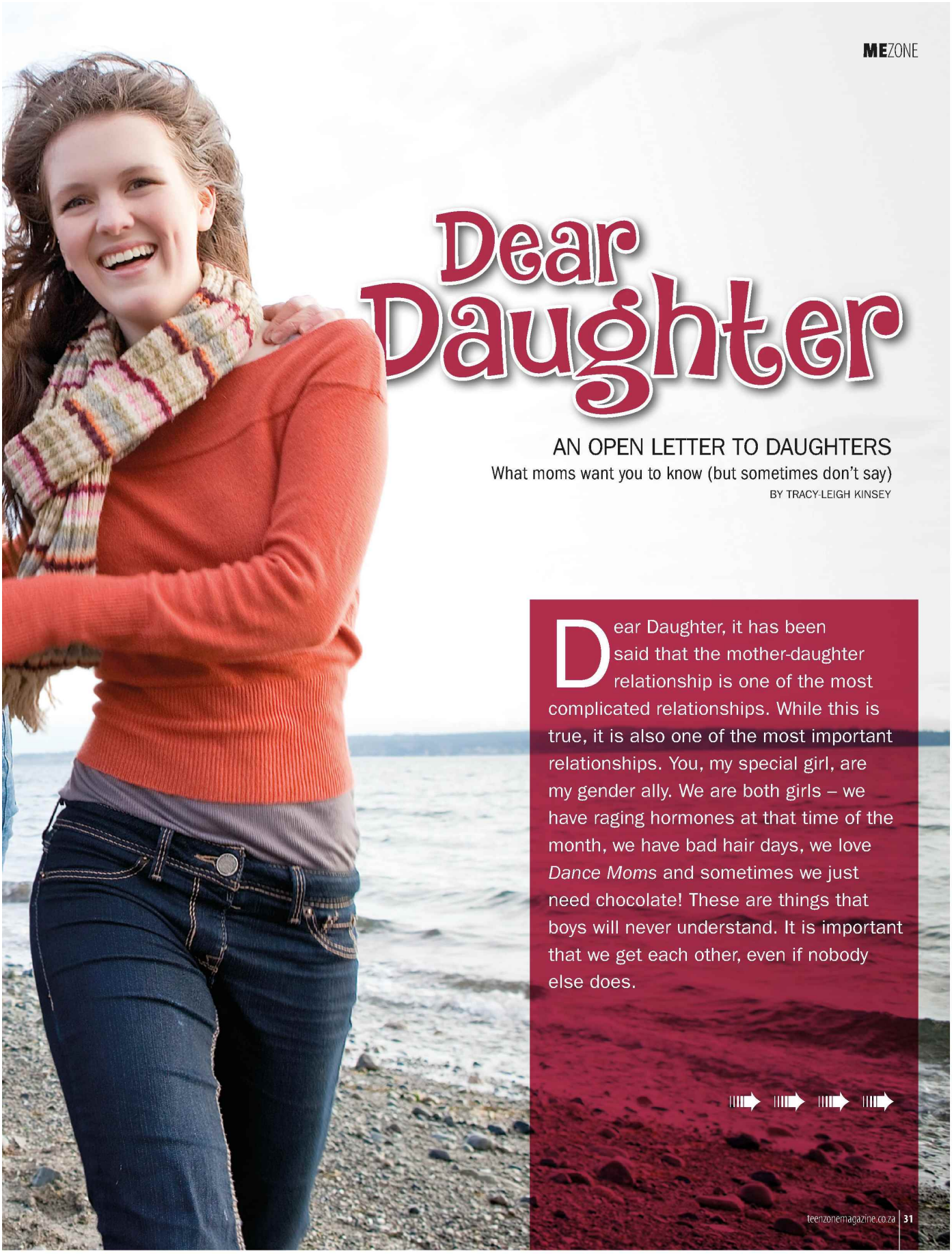

# Dear Daughter

## AN OPEN LETTER TO DAUGHTERS

What moms want you to know (but sometimes don't say)

BY TRACY-LEIGH KINSEY

Dear Daughter, it has been said that the mother-daughter relationship is one of the most complicated relationships. While this is true, it is also one of the most important relationships. You, my special girl, are my gender ally. We are both girls – we have raging hormones at that time of the month, we have bad hair days, we love *Dance Moms* and sometimes we just need chocolate! These are things that boys will never understand. It is important that we get each other, even if nobody else does.



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"KEEP LAUGHING, KEEP DREAMING AND KNOW THAT YOU CAN ACHIEVE ABSOLUTELY ANYTHING THAT YOU SET YOUR MIND TO!"

## The stages of a mom-daughter relationship

I know that our relationship will go through ups and downs. There will be times when we want to scream and shout at each other and lock ourselves in our rooms. Believe it or not, that's perfectly normal for a mother-daughter relationship. When a little girl is about 10 she says "I love you, Mom." When she gets to 14, she tells her friends "My mom is so annoying!" By about 18 she can be heard saying "I can't wait to leave this house." At age 25 she often says "Mom, you were right," and then some time after 30 she may even say "I'm sorry, Mom."

## Why does the mom-daughter relationship get so tough in the teen years?

Not very long ago I was your 'go-to girl' for everything. If you needed to know something, you came to me. If you hurt yourself or had a bad dream, you called my name. You listened to my advice, laughed at my jokes and wanted to be with me more than anybody else. But now, you're growing up. You're becoming your own beautiful person. You don't need me to kiss the booboos better anymore and your new go-to girls are your besties. You're growing up so fast! Sometimes this leaves me feeling a bit emotional. With both of our emotions all over the place it's natural to clash every now and again.

We also have totally different objectives right now. My objective is to protect you, look after you and keep you safe, while your objective is to make new friends, try new stuff and have fun. You won't get why I say "no" all the time and I won't understand why you jump into things without thinking them through. That's sure to create a little tension between us occasionally.

## My commitment to you

Over the next few years, our relationship is going to stretch and shift. We will disagree and argue and may even hurt each other from time to time. Please understand – it is never my intention to hurt you! Every now and then I may make a mistake though. Please forgive me for these mistakes.

This works both ways and I am sure that you will make mistakes too. Know this though – there is no mistake that you could ever make that would stop me from loving you! This is a time in your life when you are pushing the boundaries. You are trying new things. You're trying to find out who you are. You're supposed to make mistakes. That's the best way to learn. I will allow you room to make mistakes. It might not be easy for me to watch and I may try to stop you before you make that mistake. Don't think that means you won't be punished or grounded after you've made the mistake too. Just remember, even when I'm really cross with you, I still love you!

I will always listen to you and I will find a way to help you. I understand that being a teenager is really tough. You are going through things that I never had to deal with when I was your age – things that I can't even try to understand. You are exposed to cyber-bullying, increased violence and aggression through the media, easy access to drugs and alcohol and increased cases of depression, self-harm and suicide. If you ever have to face these or any other challenges, please talk to me. I know sometimes I may look like I'm not listening, or I may seem like I'm too busy, but at those times force me to sit down and listen. If you're a bit scared or embarrassed to speak to me face-to-face, you can also write me a letter. I want to know your ups and downs, challenges and triumphs.

## How we can stay close forever

There are some things that we can both do to build a strong relationship for many years to come:

**RESPECT EACH OTHER** – Let's strive to always treat each other with respect. There is a simple saying – "Without respect, love is lost." Respect is the foundation upon which love is built.

**TALK OFTEN** – The secret to a strong relationship is to keep talking, even when we're cross with each other. I know that it's tempting to give each other the silent treatment when we're angry but the less we talk, the less we are going to want to talk. The silent treatment is like a stream with you on one side and the other person on the other side. At first it's easy to step over the stream and stand on the same side, but over time the stream gets wider and wider and deeper and deeper until it has created a huge ravine that is almost impossible to cross. Let's take the time to talk to each other every day. Let's take time to listen to each other too.

**DO FUN THINGS TOGETHER** – I know there are so many things you love doing. You love dancing and going to movies. You love animals and music. The funny thing is I love a lot of the same things as you. So let's have fun together. Let's put on 5SOS and dance like nobody's watching. Let's go and play with the puppies at the SPCA or have a pyjama day and eat ice-cream until we're sick. Not all the time though – that's what your friends are for.

**SHOWING THAT WE CARE** – There are so many ways to show each other how much we care. Hugs and kisses would be my first choice, but I know sometimes you need your space. We can write each other little appreciation notes and leave them lying around the house. We can treat each other with a bubble bath or a hot cup of

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tea. I'm sure you'll agree – it's hard to stay angry with somebody when they are being kind and loving.

**COMPROMISE** – Sometimes we might need to meet each other half way. If I can get some of what I want and you can get some of what you want through giving in a little, then we can both be content.

My precious girl, I am so proud of you and am blessed to be your mother! You are on this earth right now to learn and to grow. Sometimes life will get a bit tough, but know that you are strong! Stronger than you imagine. You have the ability to overcome any obstacle that is placed in your path. Keep laughing, keep dreaming and know that you can achieve absolutely anything that you set your mind to! I do now, and will always, believe in you!

Love always!
Your mom

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