



7 Reasons to be Grateful You're the Mother of a

tweenager

Sheila Michaels



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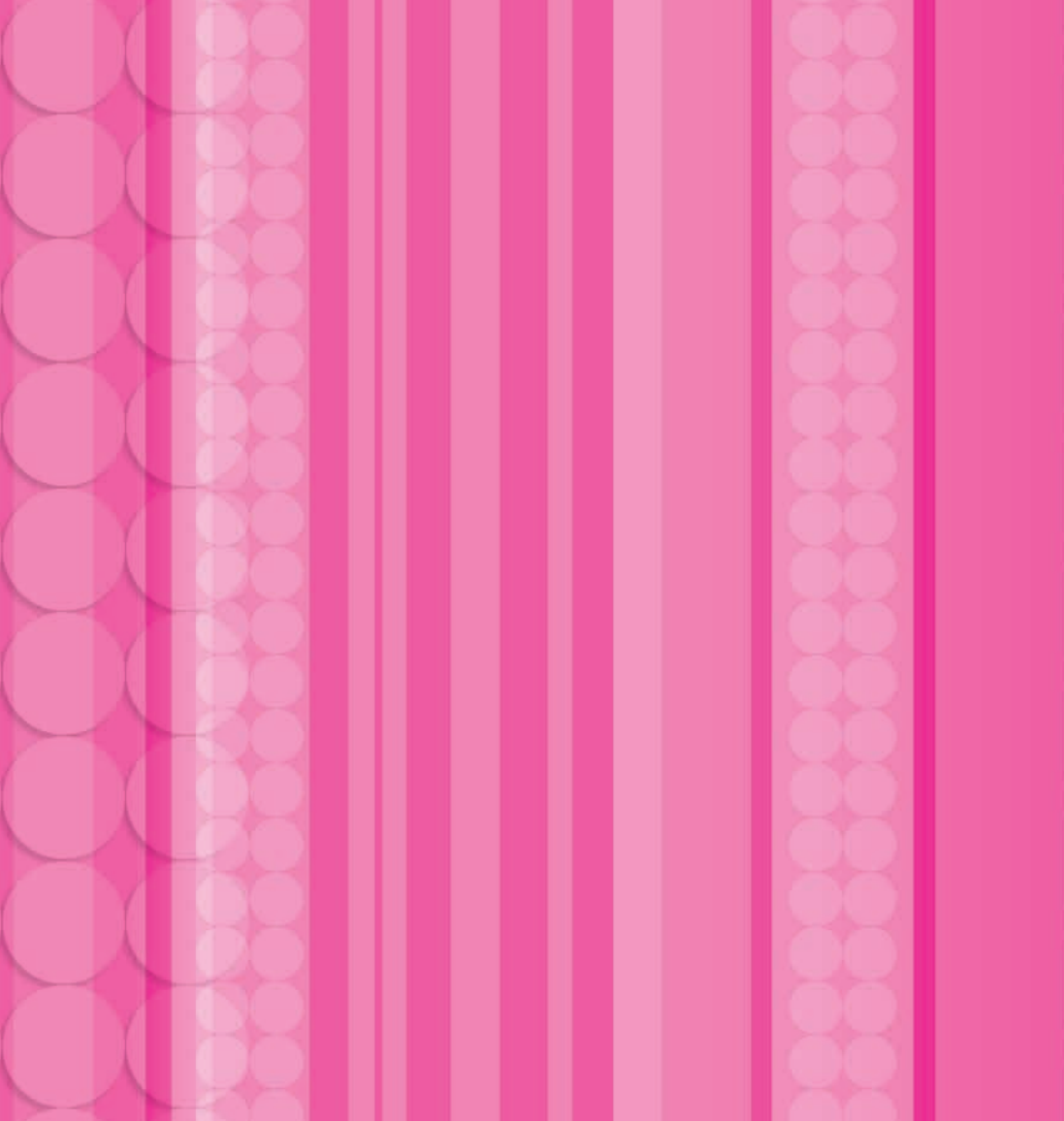
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Dedicated to . . .

To my mom and dad who taught me that raising children requires a strong faith in God, the capacity to have fun, and a good sense of humor as they often muddle through their lives.

To my sister Dawn who listens when I have a parental breakdown and never judges. You are truly one of my best friends.

A united front is critical as children will often attempt to divide and conquer their parents. Thank you to my husband Cal for standing with me and creating a solid foundation for our kiddos to build their lives upon—we are an “awesome” team.

Finally, to my son Jordan and my daughter Sarah; God blessed me when each of you came into my life and I was forever changed. I am so proud to be “your” mom!

I love you all for the “many gifts” you have brought to my life—thank you!





Gratefulness

means we get a

do-over day

The only real mistake is the one
from which we learn nothing.

John Powell





With so many days in a child's life and so many mistakes made as we muddle through the murky waters of motherhood, it is difficult for one to determine which day to eliminate, especially with soooooo many blunders to choose from. For me, however, the choice is simple. Don't get me wrong, I too have a myriad to choose from, but one stands out as the one time I wish I had an

eraser, a rewind, an oh-my-God-please-tell-me-I-did-not-just-say-that-out-loud. After all, *“Speak when you are angry—and you will make the best speech you’ll ever regret”*—Laurence J. Peter.

In my opinion, the individual who said “sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me” was oblivious to the phenomenal power of words. He was probably the deaf bully lumbering across the playground wielding a stick and a few stones, frightening the other children, all the while oblivious to the vicious words that they whispered behind his back. Simply put, words have the power to cut like a knife and ultimately leave permanent scars, and unfortunately, as women, many of us have mastered the art of “word-fencing.”

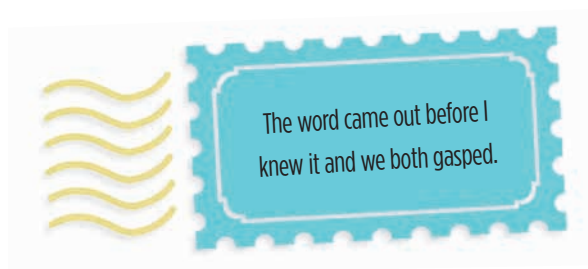
My daughter Sarah was at “the top-of-the-middle” or an

eighth grader; in the Michaels household, this grade was not a pinnacle for either child. By eighth grade, there is an egotistical, condescending, pompous attitude that manages to permeate a tweenager's entire being. However, for girls, between the verbal sparring with their friends and the child body that has grown boobs, there is an "I am now the woman of the house" attitude that follows her home each day. Their tongues are wicked, and moms often become targets where they are "blessed" to be the bulls-eye . . . woohooooo!

I remember one particular night as if it were yesterday . . . the memory is seared into my heart to serve as a reminder of the



immense power of a solitary word. I picked Sarah up from practice and she was ornery—the bull's-eye on my face must have been blinking shades of neon, because target practice had



begun! We only live three miles from town, but the ride felt like

an eternity. I let Sarah vent about the atrocities of her life for mile one, then offered motherly advice in mile two, and listened to her berate me until the end of mile three when I finally had enough. The word came out of my mouth before I knew it and we both gasped. I stopped the car and told her to walk the last 300 feet to our doorstep so I could cry and pray for God's

guidance on how to handle the gaping wound I knew I had inflicted on Sarah's tender spirit.

We were both hurting when Sarah came trudging through the front door. The words spoken to me often by my mother echoed in my mind. I could hear her tender voice saying, "Into your hands, oh God" and that's where I found the strength to deal with the aftermath. Parents make mistakes; many of them, in fact. It was a sign to me that I was raising my daughter with God's grace when she came to me with open arms and forgave me. The incident remains in my heart as a reminder of the power of one little word to permanently etch a mark on a spirit, but also the power of God's incredible sacrifice . . . his Child for our forgiveness.