

Zest – The Girlfriends’ Guide for Grown-Up Women

Where the experienced woman leads, America follows. – Vicki Iovine

For most girls, school and early adulthood find a natural fulfillment in the family-making years. But their wedding day and first pregnancy draw a veil across an undefined future; they can't quite imagine those delicious and delirious years beginning in their early thirties, and continuing for three and four more decades. As their children mature, young mothers wonder, "Who am I now?" Yet millions are being led, by the Baby Boomers, into a new kind of maturity in which they are at their most confident, capable and energetic in the frontier beyond diapers and playdates. These *grown-up women* are healthy, fit, and experienced enough to recommit to careers, or begin new ones. Statistics show that they are the wealthiest segment of American society, and they choose their families' investments, cars, travel and lifestyle. Though advertisers may be reluctant to admit it, the mature woman is their ideal customer; they are incredibly productive, with great earning capacity. Where the experienced woman leads, America follows.

Having "crossed over" into the territory of empty nests, hot flashes and freedom, Vicki Iovine, the author of the bestselling *Girlfriends' Guide* book series, is ready and eager to explore the life that awaits women *after* fulfilling the biological imperative of having babies and raising them, having mates and raising them, and having parents and trying to raise them. Before Hillary Clinton found her 'village', before anyone knew what a BFF was, the *Girlfriends' Guide* was an established brand. Now, Vicki is bringing her wit, wisdom, and her signature insight – girlfriends know best – to television as a daily, one-hour talk show, *Zest – The Girlfriends' Guide for Grown-up Women*.

Drawing from years of research and writing, and her own storybook life as a wife and mother, Vicki and her Girlfriend guests target high-profile topics on health, appearance, career, family, love and sex. Everything is on the table. What's the latest in surgical self-improvement? How about labia lifts and boutique botox? Favorite color of pubic hair? How about pink with silver highlights? What's up with dating after divorce in the 21st century? Are spa treatments more satisfying than sex? What about the Internet and everything, from teen suicides to sexting and cyber-bullying? No subject is too serious or too silly, and nothing gets swept under the rug. Vicki's trademark honesty, with intelligence and irreverence, is everywhere on display.

Leaving behind confrontational talk TV, *Zest* is straight talk aimed at solving problems. Faced with unprecedented choices, and challenges, the growing audience of *fully-grown* Girlfriends often find themselves unprepared for this new and undefined time in their lives. They may be reluctant, or slightly embarrassed about defining themselves as more than wives, mommies and caregivers. When faced with these pressures, a Girlfriend's greatest relief can be the time she shares with other women in her shoes. As frank and informative as hanging out with homegirls, *Zest* provides a virtual neighborhood, or sorority, for viewers looking for answers from supportive and candid friends who won't judge. Expect humor, expect surprise, expect the totally uncensored opinions of hyper-informed and well connected ladies, determined to help their Girlfriends.

Biography – Vicki Iovine

Throughout her career, Vicki Iovine has steered an extraordinary path through personal accomplishment, celebrity, and service to others. While still in school, she was Miss September in Playboy Magazine's classic issue, *Women of the Ivy League*. Vicki graduated summa cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa from the School of Journalism at the University of California, Berkeley. She then proceeded to receive an LL.B degree in Public International Law from the University of Cambridge in England. Returning to California, she entered the University of California, Hastings College of Law where she earned her J.D. She is currently a member of the California Bar Association.

The author of five books in the *Girlfriends' Guide* series, Vicki's first, *Girlfriends' Guide to Pregnancy*, has been reprinted 41 times in 12 languages. Keeping pace with her own reproductive timeline, she followed with *Girlfriends' Guide to Surviving the First Year of Motherhood*, *Girlfriends' Guide to Toddlers*, and for her peers attempting to reenter the working world, *The Girlfriends' Guide to Getting Your Groove Back*. A chronically overwhelmed mother of four, family issues are always close to Vicki's heart. Her latest book in the series, *Girlfriends' Guide to Teenagers*, is on its way to bookstores now. Today, there are more than 4 million copies of the *Girlfriends' Guide* books in print.

Vicki has been widely published as a columnist for newspapers, magazines, and online publications. Her writing appeared in a weekly advice column in *The Los Angeles Times*, and a monthly column for *Child Magazine*. For *Redbook*, she contributed a bi-monthly column as an expert on personal relationships, and her work regularly appears in Oprah's *O Magazine*, *Working Mother Magazine*, and *George*. Her frequent commentaries are a welcome feature of the online news website, *The Huffington Post*. In the entertainment arena, Vicki's screenplay, *Ghost Wife*, co-written with Academy Award winner Ron Bass, was sold to 20th Century Fox studio.

Among her numerous television appearances, Vicki was a contributor on parenting issues for the *Today* show. She has been a frequent guest host on *Later Today*, appeared on *Good Morning America*, and, during its premiere week, was offered a continuing position as a co-host on ABC's *The View*, but politely declined. She has joined Oprah Winfrey as a guest on her landmark television talk show three times.

Long associated with health and lifestyle choices, Vicki is often in demand as a product spokesperson. As a mom and parenting expert, she has endorsed *Huggies* diapers, *Haines* underwear, and many other pediatric products. As a health and style-conscious female consumer, she has represented *Dove*, *Zoloff*, and botox cosmetics. She has served on the Board of Directors of Special Olympics International, the sports training program for people with mental retardation, and her ongoing humanitarian efforts on the behalf of the handicapped won her the prestigious Florence Crittendon Woman of the Year award. Married for 24 years to music industry legend Jimmy Iovine, she is the mother of two boys and two girls, a testament to her commitment to balance in all things.

Zest – Show Topics

#1 – “Bullying: What’s a Parent to Do?”

The show addresses the different forms of bullying: physical aggression, pranks, rumors and cyber-bullying. How does bullying manifest in different age groups and genders? What about teacher/coach bullying of students, parents bullying kids, or bullying by groups of kids? How do aggression and isolation become part of bullying?

What are the effects of bullying on kids? Suicide, depression, poor school performance, nervous behaviors, increased drug and alcohol use, physical illness from stress, self-loathing, all can occur. What are the effects of bullying on parents? Denial, blame on the school, blame on other parents, guilt that they should have been able to prevent it, shame that their child is not “popular” or “successful,” can cause stress in a marriage, and lead to an overreaction, or underreaction by parents.

What, if anything, do bullied children share with adults? How will parents know if their child is being bullied? The Girlfriends recollect their own episodes of bullying, or being bullied. How has it affected them in the long run? How much do their own experiences influence how they react to their children being bullied?

What can a parent do about it? Should they snoop on their child’s Facebook page? Are parents realistic when they forbid their kids to go online, or to have social networking sights without accepting their parents as friends? Should they confront the parents of the bullies or the bullies themselves? How much can they expect of the school? Of the police? What must they tell their bullied children? What happens if they counsel retaliation? Is getting the bullying child removed from school overkill, or is it the only sure way to stop abuse?

#2 – “The Thing I Hate Most About My Appearance Is…”

The show discusses the problems that women of all ages have with body image. Is this something women are born with, or does it only come with age and diminishing beauty? Do all women have a secret shame about some part of their appearance? How do little girls, ‘tweens, and teenagers talk about what they hate in their appearance?

What is a “grown-up” woman supposed to look like now? Are miniskirts and skinny jeans too desperate? Are tunics and stretch pants the uniform of the future? Is long hair youthful or too much trouble? Girlfriends compare their ideas about style and self-expression. For example, no one wants to be caught in “mom jeans” and yet what are the alternatives?

In this youth-obsessed culture, mature Girlfriends are eager to stay sexy and relevant, but often search in vain for role models to help guide them. Many are *so over* sacrificing comfort for fashion, and attempting to live up to the models and celebrities who seem to set the standards for all women. This is when glasses enter the equation, but a lot of women are loathe to be caught dead in them in public, or when pictures are being taken. Is there ever a time when Girlfriends can just relax and stop trying to please everyone

else? How to find a compromise between being victims of youth culture, and not surrendering their individual style?

Vicki can describe her stint as a Playboy Playmate, and still feeling her at most insecure about her looks. The Girlfriends can share their secrets for youthful skin, great hairstyles, and imaginative ways to distract from drooping necks or softer arms. When is plastic surgery the smarter solution? Vicki can share her experiences in that realm as well.

Are bikini waxes still essential? What about women who look 20 from behind and 50 from the front. Are they fooling anyone? What would happen if hair dye were to disappear? How gracefully (and naturally) are women REALLY willing to age? Is there ever a *right* time to go gray?

#3 – “Dating and the Single Mother”

What does a newly single woman need to know about dating? How do Girlfriends find appropriate men to date? Online? At work? At carpool? Is it all right to date the parent of your child’s classmates? What about dating the work colleagues or friends of an ex? Is it appropriate to ask the ex first?

What should be considered in dating a man who is divorced with kids? How does he get along with his ex? Does he want more kids? Do you? What does it mean to blend families with him? How does his work (and financial) situation color the relationship? Does he need to be a good father to be a good date? How much personal information can be asked without turning dates into a recurring job interview? How long after a divorce or the death of a spouse should a woman wait before dating again?

If there’s a hotel visit to keep sex away from the children, who pays? Who brings the condoms? Who calls whom the next day? Are men today different in some essential way from the men one met before marriage? How many dates until the first kiss, how many until intercourse, how many until he meets the kids? How much should a mother explain to her kids? Is it ever right to discuss your sex life? Do they want to know, or do you just want to share?

What are women looking for in a boyfriend after a failed marriage? Must marriage always be the goal? Must he be richer, more powerful, more handsome than the ex? What is the *real* goal? Revenge? Financial security? A father for the kids? Or is it just to find someone to fill up the lonely weekends?

#4 – “My Parents Are Turning Into My Kids!”

The program discusses a Girlfriend’s responsibilities for aging parents. There is discussion of the many ways besides senility that parents can become dependent, including illness, loss of a spouse, inability to drive a car or cook a meal, depression, boredom, fear of aging and dying, insolvency. Should you insist that your aging parent take antidepressants? Stop driving? Give away their pets when they are not able to care for them?

Who pays for a parent's care? Can you help them manage their own money and social security? Is there computer software or a government agency that can help you? What about Medicare? If you have siblings, can you divide the responsibilities for aging parents equally? Why do women seem to bear the brunt of the work? If you can't provide everything an aging parent needs, where can you turn? What about losing control of your temper when parents frustrate you to distraction? Is it ever "ok" to put your parent in a home? Would you be a terrible daughter if you did?

There can be some unexpected twists with older parents. One Girlfriend arranged a romantic dinner out for her parents' 60th wedding anniversary, only to have her father divulge he was having sexual affairs, and blame her mother for the "frigidity" that drove him to it. How does a Girlfriends' childhood drama with her parents play out now that decades have passed?

What kind of silly arguments do grown-up women regularly wage with dependent parents? Is it over leaving mail in the mailbox until she can sort through it for bills? Or, "If you call 911 again to ask how to get the Gameshow Network, they're going to arrest you!" Do we set an example for our own children in how we care for aging parents? Should we expect them to help? In the triage of daily life, who comes first: Your children? Your parent? Your spouse? Your career? Your self?

#5 – "Empty Nest Invasions"

The show parses the modern phenomenon of grown-up children returning to live at home. Some old sage said, "The bigger the kids, the bigger the problems." Most Girlfriends would add, "the more *expensive* the problems. For so many parents, grown children still present financial and emotional pressures. Add to that many Girlfriends' responsibility for aging parents and you have a real Mom Sandwich.

Not only do parents live longer than ever before, but children need help for much longer than in generations past. It's not a given anymore that kids will find work when they're ready, and many of them come back to the family home for some period of time. While it may sound like an empty-nester's dream come true, the reality can be considerably more difficult. How do roles change when a child returns home? How are rules and boundaries established and enforced?

What kind of help can and should a Girlfriend offer to a son or daughter struggling in a tough economy? With public services so stretched, where does a parent turn for help? When does guiding a wayward child become interfering in their growth and maturation? How to look for signs of bigger problems with depression, drug use, and other psychological issues? Proper health care management is just as important for young dependent adults as it is for the elderly.

Zest – Guest Girlfriends

Rosanna Arquette – actress, mom of bullied teen (“Bullying”)

Patricia Arquette – actress, advocate for her niece (“Bullying”)

Nora Ephron – author, “I Feel Bad About My Neck” (“Appearance”)

Delia Ephron – author, “Love, Loss and What I Wore” (“Appearance”)

Tracee Ellis Ross – daughter of Diana Ross (“Appearance”)

Paige Geller – owner, Paige Premium Denim, body image activist (“Appearance”)

Katherine Schwarzenegger – author, “Rock What You’ve Got” (“Appearance”)

Terri Hatcher – actress, single mom (“Dating”)

Reese Witherspoon – actress, single mom (“Dating”)

Arianna Huffington – founder, Huffington Post, single mom (“Dating”)

Maria Shriver – first lady of California, Alzheimer’s activist (“Parents”)

Leeza Gibbons – entertainment journalist, Alzheimer’s activist (“Parents”)

Jenna Elfman – actress, activist for human rights and criminal reform

Holly Robinson Peete – “Celebrity Apprentice” star, advocate for autistic children

Vanna White – actress, single mom of teenagers

Malaak Compton-Rock – wife of Chris Rock, activist against child abuse

Jill Brooke – writer, expert on divorce and step-families

Gabrielle Reece – star athlete, mother of three, advocate for children’s health

Kat Coiro – filmmaker, activist for troubled teenagers

Kris Kardashian Jenner – reality TV star, mother of six

And many, many more...

Zest – One Hour Program Format

PLEASE CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION, 323-666-3969