

Becoming Peers - Mentoring Girls into Womanhood

By DeAnna L'am

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Book Extract:

The book starts with the story of DeAnna's own journey from experiencing menstruation as "the curse" -- to being profoundly empowered by her menstrual flow.

It is based on extensive research into menstrual traditions of indigenous cultures around the world, and on 13 years of experience in leading menstrual empowerment work with women and girls in the US and internationally.

Rooted in the realization that most mothers/ mentors, who aim to celebrate their girls'

Coming Of Age, have not been themselves celebrated, the book guides women in healing and celebrating **the Maiden Within** as the first step to celebrating their daughter or the girl in their lives. It is never too late to be welcomed into womanhood...

The elements of ceremony are explained, and women are encouraged to engage in ceremonial work individually, or gather in circle with other women. Sample ceremonies are delineated, such as: Healing the Maiden Within and Connecting with our Mothers' Line.

Once a woman's own healing is on its way, she is ready to assume the exciting responsibility of *Eldering* and mentoring the girl in her life.

Considering the lack of Rites Of Passage in our culture, the book spells-out the concept of Eldering as mindful modeling of womanhood to girls. A spectrum of circle activities for mothers and daughters/ women and girls is presented, followed by guidelines for mothers and mentors in calling their girls to new levels of maturity.

The book presents the concept of the Coming-Of-Age-Year as a transition and growth period, in which a girl's Menarche (first menstrual period) is a pivotal point. It presents an array of tasks, increasing in their level of challenge, through which women are encouraged to mentor their girls, culminating in a ceremony of Welcoming Girls into Womanhood.

For those who wish to go deeper, the book offers guided visualizations, which can be used individually or in a group of women and girls.

The book concludes with an account of DeAnna's work with Jewish and Palestinians women in Israel/Palestine, where women bonded as cyclical beings, beyond all political bias or artificial divides.