

## Ep. 3: Girls as Happy, Healthy Individuals

[00:00:00] **Trudy Hall:** [00:00:00] Hello there, you are listening to On Educating Girls: Creating a World of Possibilities, a podcast produced by the National Coalition of Girl's Schools, and I am Trudy Hall, your host for these important conversations about girls. In this episode, we will be discussing the use of social media among girls, because quite simply, it's an undeniably powerful force in their lives.

[00:00:25] Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, SnapChat, WhatsApp. We know these apps because we and our daughters use these apps. A pew research center article released in April of this year, noted that Instagram, Snapchat and Tik TOK are especially popular with young adults with at least 70% of 18–29-year-olds happily claiming they access Instagram daily with 6 out of 10 admitting they check it multiple times a day. We cannot not talk about this as it is almost all the teenage girls are talking about.

[00:01:05] **Maddie:** [00:01:05] *I think that like social media is like such like a big part of like my life. Like I like when I'm bored, I go on TikTok and I think like that's really bad sometimes. Um, but I think like the days that we don't have, our phones are similar, like the most memorable days, because you're not worrying about what people think you look like.*

[00:01:23] **Alexa:** [00:01:23] *I have grown up with two sisters, so we're like an all-girls household, and then I'm here to an all-girls school. And so, I definitely see the side of social media that is harming too, like how you view yourself and how you feel about yourself. But I also think that social media, if used in the right way is really important because it's such a fast way to spread knowledge and information,*

[00:01:48] **Lizzie:** [00:01:48] *social media, um, uses algorithms and chooses photos to show their users next that, um, could potentially like make someone more interested or more addicted to social media. So, I'm one of those, like an example would be like a model and then in the next you may see a model on your page. And then in the next photo, it could be like a weight loss supplement or something like that. And you're like, oh, that's I need to lose weight.*

[00:02:19] **Trudy Hall:** [00:02:19] *The girls' voices you'll hear during this episode are those of Maddie, Lizzie and Alexa. As we listened to them, we are reminded that girls growing up today have no before, social media has always been a part of their lives as they are the second generation to come of age with smartphones in hand, as recently as 2017, according to pew, 95% of teens, 13 through 17 reported having access to a smartphone with 45% admitting they were online nearly, constantly.*

[00:02:57] *Yes. Social media tools and user are constantly evolving and accurate data is elusive, originally imagined as helpful social networking tools. A number of apps have been misappropriated to spread misinformation or have become marketing engines that identify and target unsuspecting users who don't understand how search algorithms work, the bullying of peers and efforts to negatively impact body image are worrying reality as well. So, we wonder how can parents create boundaries for how social media will be used? How can the adults in young girls' lives intersect and intervene with this mind-boggling ever-changing larger than life force that touches so many elements of their daughter's social life.*

[00:03:44] **Maddie:** [00:03:44] *I don't know if you know about people's like Finstas, they're like your Instagram, a second account that you only let, like your close friends follow, um, Finstas have been like kind of a dangerous thing for my friends, because you know, like you think like only your friends will see it and then all of a sudden, like*

*your parents have it, or like the school administration has it and then you're in trouble for something you posted. And so, I think like when, when you don't follow, like being posted, when you didn't give permission for yourself to be posted, it's, it's really like uncomfortable. And yet, like, it's just kind of like, it's a reminder that like there could be a camera on you at any time.*

[00:04:32] **Lizzie:** [00:04:32] *So I go on Snapchat, when I post like a picture on my story, up to 400, 500 people view that, and that's not like a big, like, it's just kind of like people will swipe through and passing. But if I posted something mean about someone, which I never would for four or 500 people would see that and have that opinion of that person before I even flagged before they even knew that I didn't like them.*

[00:04:58] **Trudy Hall:** [00:04:58] *Without giving away my age, let's just say that, I do remember a time before social media. In fact, social media only became a force in my work as an educator in the last few decades, early on, we were scrambling to find calm voices of wisdom that had done the research and knew how to counsel us in our work with girls.*

[00:05:18] *Today I am privileged to host a conversation with one such wise professional, a woman who has been in the trenches, if you will, leading the charge with educators and parents as the social media forces have swirled around our girls. I am joined now by Dr. Catherine Steiner-Adair, a clinical psychologist, author and practitioner who has committed herself for over a decade to minimizing the substantial social media risks for teenagers.*

[00:05:47] *Author of the Big Disconnect, she cares deeply about ensuring children have what she calls, "the tools of our humanity" even as she understands that their ability to master technology will play a crucial role in their success. Catherine, I have*

very intentionally let our listeners hear the opinions of girls on social media before welcoming you. As I know this is your world, you have heard girls voices articulate these opinions and share their stories. So let me welcome you to the conversation and let's jump right in if that's okay with you.

[00:06:23] **Dr. Catherine Steiner-Adair:** [00:06:23] Absolutely, let's go.

[00:06:25] **Trudy Hall:** [00:06:25] You wrote the Big Disconnect almost a decade ago, and yet so much of that remains relevant. Um, if you were to write the book again or make an addition to the book, what would you do? What would you say to parents now that might be different or value added than where you understood the situation, 10 years ago?

[00:06:46] **Dr. Catherine Steiner-Adair:** [00:06:46] What a great question. Well, 10 years ago, there weren't nearly as many sites and opportunities for kids to connect both with each other and with the world at large and 10 years ago, we did not see or have the same kind of communities online that are so toxic and dangerous for children. And 10 years ago, we didn't have the multiplicity of options for children to actually do wonderful things online, create code, you know, share what their work was. The world has, has multiplied exponentially. And of course, for parents, that's exponentially more challenging because none of us grew up with this.

[00:07:31] I think the issue of privacy and safety and ethics are bubbling up to the surface in extremely important ways right now. And they weren't considered when social media developed. And now of course, we're in some very, very difficult situations, particularly when it comes to keeping our girls safe online and also the political reality, we live in.

[00:07:56] And the fact that none of us imagined 10 years ago, that there would be five tech industries that together were actually more powerful than Governments. So, we are living in a completely different world.

[00:08:11] **Trudy Hall:** [00:08:11] So as you think about that different world, um, a couple of days ago, I spoke with a number of girls about their own social media use, and they were schooling me on apps that I had not yet heard of. So we think of, you know, Twitter and YouTube and TikTok and Snapchat and Instagram, you know, how do parents stay ahead of this curve? Uh, it seems like the students know so much more than, than we do. And yet as parents, I know, they're curious about getting out in front of that curve.

[00:08:41] **Dr. Catherine Steiner-Adair:** [00:08:41] Well, there are several things' parents can do to stay ahead of the curve. There are certain websites that common sense media that you can turn to or parent ology that really give you the download on a lot of, actually some of the less commonly named, but nonetheless, very popular apps like tumbler, GroupMe, kick discord, house party, disco. And the reason you don't hear about them very often as parents is the research suggests that 70% of teens do not tell their parents what they are doing on social media.

[00:09:13] So here we go, right. I mean, it's all the more challenging. So, the other thing that I think is really important and obviously, if you can start this at 5, 6, 7, and 8, you're ahead of the game, but it's never too late to do this now, to have ongoing family conversations about your family values, the values of the online different worlds, um, and really get some, have some very tactical conversations with your kids. Uh, really have a family responsible use agreement, much like schools have students sign responsible use agreements, families need to do the same thing and they need to be open conversations in that scary conversations, but where you're really thinking about two main aspects of your daughter's life online, two main risk factors.

[00:10:04] Actually. I mean, what you want to do is make sure you're you, as well as parents and your kids have a tech healthy, like a health and wellbeing approach to technology and ethical approach to technology. And then you also want to pay

attention with your daughters, to the social and psychological and neurological fallout of technology. And when I wrote the book, there was very little research on that. And yet I was seeing it in my work in schools with girls and in my work as a, as a therapist and private. Now we have tons of research and we also have excellent apps just within the last few years to make it much easier for parents to, to know what their kids are doing.

[00:10:51] I think it's also really important question for all parents, particularly in girls' schools, because we know there's a very different vulnerability for girls on social media to really ask yourself what's the right age to introduce your children to social media and which are the right apps to use to introduce your girls to social media and how are you going to stay connected to them in a honest and trustworthy way about what they're doing on social media.

[00:11:23] **Trudy Hall:** [00:11:23] So I know that oftentimes, um, or at least I would hope that parents see schools as they're partners in this work. Um, I hope they do. And, and I would ask you given all the work you've done with schools, um, how can parents work with schools or how can schools work with parents? What programs have you seen that are successful? What ideas might you have as adults in girls' lives come together on this topic?

[00:11:52] **Dr. Catherine Steiner-Adair:** [00:11:52] Well, I think the most successful partnering between parents and schools happen when the schools offer really good content and are very transparent about what they can and cannot do. So often parents want schools to do more than they actually can-do, schools can't regulate your kids at home. And I think the other thing that's very important is for parents to show up when schools are offering really good programming. One of the things I hear from schools a lot is frustration. The parents just don't come or they don't join the zoom meetings and then, you know, it takes unfortunately something bad to happen.

[00:12:32] And then they realize, oh yeah, I missed that webinar, or I missed that back to school. I think it's really important for schools to in their back-to-school night or before kids are given a Chromebook or, you know, access to their email account at school to have a conversation. I mean, obviously in COVID, this is hard, but I'm a huge fan of schools having a part of either the back-to-school night or a separate night work, kids and parents show up and they each go through a workshop, looking at what responsible use looks like, problem-solving and role-playing, it's great to put girls in groups, people who aren't their parents. Um, how would you respond to cyber bullying? How would you spot to an inappropriate text request? How do you respond to girl drama? and really let the parents work with the girls to see how hard this all is online and how central it is to their sense of themselves and their own social, emotional development and a mental health and wellbeing. And then end the night with parents and children and their daughters thinking about, you know, given the research on sleep, should we really let you have, you know, your iPhone in your bedroom at night when we know it's so highly correlated with depression and sleep loss and increased anxiety.

[00:13:54] I mean, if you were the mom here, what would you do? So those conversations are really valuable. And when it's an all-school approach, one of the great things that happens is you get a higher percentage of parents making the same decisions with their daughters. which mitigates against the anxiety girls feel that everybody else has online in their bed at 10:30 at night and they're the only ones not.

[00:14:21] **Trudy Hall:** [00:14:21] Let's jump to that great word anxiety. I know, uh, when I talk to girls about their social media, that pops right to the front of mind, and what you just mentioned is exactly what they say. I'm missing something I'm being left out. Um, can you talk a little bit about some of the special concerns you have as regards girls and social media? And of course, you know, on my mind is body image, as well as some of the other things I know you'll talk about.

[00:14:50] **Dr. Catherine Steiner-Adair:** [00:14:50] Well, you know, FOMO, fear of missing out, is excruciating for so many girls, it's not for all girls. They're sort of the 20 percenters who are so self-directed, and, and just on their own path and really not impacted by this. But, you know, we know from the research on girls' development, the girls develop their identity, particularly in middle school, on from comparing themselves to others and there are strengths in that, but they're also huge vulnerabilities. And the kinds of anxieties that we see, um, you know, are often called comparing despair where girls will compare themselves either to a classmate or some star or a TV person they're following or an ad and girls magnetize to the negative instead of saying, oh, I've got, you know, great, this, this and this. Okay. Maybe my hair is not so good. They go to, oh my God, everything about me is awful, except this one thing. And nobody would notice anyway. So, the comparing to despair phenomenon can really lead girls down a rabbit hole and that's just in terms of their own identity and their own body image, and one of the problems with social media and the way it's set up, which is extremely unethical. And you know, now Facebook is admitting to it.

[00:16:06] We've all known this for several years, is that when girls Google search, you know how to lose weight, you know, better skin, uh, whatever the most popular, you know, uh, boots are this year, they will get their data will be used and sold and it will be used to keep them engaged in the art and drama of seeking perfection.

[00:16:32] So, you know, the world of social media is a perfectionistic society in terms of body image and beauty. And whether you're protecting yourself for the boy gaze or you're protecting yourself to be competitive with other girls. The notion that you, the most important thing you could do in all your free time is work on perfecting your image is pernicious, always has been for women, but it is extremely pernicious when it comes to social media. And of course, we've seen a huge spike in not just eating disorders and body dysmorphia and unhealthy eating, but social anxiety and social

avoidance and girls being afraid to show up with things in your life because they're afraid they don't look right.

[00:17:16] And that, that shows up in college as well. The other kind of anxiety that is so painful. I mean, truly, I don't know about you, but I'm, I'm really glad in some ways I was protected growing up from the kind of drama that goes on online. I mean, when we went to school, at least when I went to school, all the drama happened at school.

[00:17:39] And then when you went home, home was kind of boring. You know, you could talk to your best friend on your phone, but it was one to one, girls today tell me that school is actually more of a sanctuary because there isn't as much, you know, drama they're in class, they're being productive, they're engaged is that teachers beaming on them, reminding them to be their kind of self, but then they go home. And they're on social media and different screens for an average of six hours a day where they are so afraid of either missing out on something that's trending, not knowing what's cool or who is actually being teased or gossip about because they're afraid they'll be the next person. And that is excruciating the anxiety provoking.

[00:18:30] And it's the, one of the main reasons that girls, when they're doing their homework are also on YouTube or on their phones texting. And of course, that has huge ramifications for their brain development because constant tasks switching leads to very poor sustained individual focused attention. And it's really, you know, their brains are developing, it's not like us at our age, when we do lot of, you know, being on three screens at once. We see that just the very process of going from reading work, watching YouTube, switching to a text, your mom texted you to come to dinner, going back to the YouTube, checking on, who just posted that Insta, making sure you have likes all of that excites the part of the brain, that is the same part of the brain that gets excited with gambling. It is addictive. Its lowercase a, not

capital a most often, but you have to understand that when you are task switching, you are craving the hit of a dopamine release that makes you feel energized and these algorithms are designed to keep you hooked.

[00:19:46] So it's not just the psychological or social anxiety. There is a physiological and neurological anxiety that also comes with a lot of texting and being gone three different screens at once. And that's something we need to teach girls much more about, and that's something parents need to understand a lot more about, I love talking to girls about, this is your brain on tech.

[00:20:12] **Trudy Hall:** [00:20:12] As you think about, um, what you just said, which if I were a parent listening in might, might terrify me because I would not imagine what I would say to a girl, I stumbled into her bedroom, It's, uh, 11 o'clock at night, and, uh, you know, the books have been cast aside and she's pouring over her social media. And I clearly understand that she's obsessed or anxious or, uh, you know, she's into the drama. Can you offer some scripts or offer some phrases or offer some techniques for how I intersect with that as a parent?

[00:20:45] **Dr. Catherine Steiner-Adair:** [00:20:45] Sure. Well, first of all, um, you know, I would, I would hope that as a parent, at least for kids all the way through eighth or ninth grade, you have a policy that phones come out of the room at least a half hour before bedtime, because she'll be around and you won't fall asleep, but let's say you walk it on that regardless.

[00:21:08] I think the thing, the first thing I would say is, oh, sweetie, you look miserable, how are you feeling? What's going on? You look so upset and hold a mirror up just to help her understand and articulate what she's feeling, because one of the things we have to help girls understand is what makes them feel good about themselves in social media at one, does it make themselves feel good about themselves for social media and make smarter choices. The next thing I would say,

or I often say to kids, um, is, you know, hey sweetie, you are the boss of your brain and you're the boss of your health and then the boss of your sleep and you're the boss who decides whether you're going to get eight hours of sleep because I think you told me you had big exam tomorrow or a game.

[00:21:54] And, you know, you know, as well as I staying on your phone, does it help you sleep? So, you know, that kind of stuff, you really want to give them the research and the understanding that they have to make choices. And it's so hard, they have to self-regulate in ways that grown-ups have a hard time self-regulating. But I think the most important thing is to empathize with your daughter's upsettiness and then maybe the next morning say, you know, if you were in my shoes and you walked in on me at 11 o'clock at night, and I was just a basket case, what advice would you give me?

[00:22:30] **Trudy Hall:** [00:22:30] I love that because, uh, what we know about this particular generation is that it's the second generation of, uh, children to be raised on social media and I often wonder, is that a good thing or a bad thing? You know, there's a value add to that, but then there's also a negative to that. And as you've worked with parents of this particular generation value-add or not, not so much value add?

[00:22:57] **Dr. Catherine Steiner-Adair:** [00:22:57] I think it's challenging because when the current generation of parents was growing up, they didn't have so many options. We also didn't have the research we have now. Um, and it's what I observe is it's much harder for parents who grew up on social media to trust their own parental authority and set healthy and helpful limits with their kids. You know, your children don't write you thank you notes the next day when you say, okay, we're going to change things up. We're all going to dock our phones in the master bedroom, which I learned after interviewing 500 middle-school kids and hear how they sneak down to

the kitchen. So, in the master bedroom closet, um, and, and, but they have a hard time just saying, you know, I know you can hate me for this, but I'm your mom.

[00:23:46] And. Yeah, let's just, let me just tell you all the reasons why I feel like it would be completely irresponsible for me to let you do this night after night after and they have a hard time saying no, they don't understand how malleable their children's brains are. This generation is really hitting some compromised, uh, neurological development because they are not experiencing enough tech free time for a singular focus.

[00:24:21] **Trudy Hall:** [00:24:21] Um, Catherine, I want to give you a big affirmation for that comment you just made because, uh, when I spoke with the girls this week, one of the things that one of them said was in the moment, she was so angry with her mom for, uh, shutting down her social media, but now as she looks back, she is so grateful that her mom did that, that she saw that as one of the most positive things she could do. So, I just, I want to give you a shout out, um, with an affirmation on that one. And as you, as we think about, um, you know, parents' roles, I want to shift a little bit to, what's just happened in the world in the last, oh gosh, two years.

[00:25:02] And, and, uh, um, two years and on with the coronavirus and COVID and at home and, uh, being out of school and out of that social environment, you just said that the social environment in school is sometimes seen as now, the safe Haven. Um, what kinds of themes have you seen emerging that might be different or, um, need to be explored more now that we've moved into this COVID terrain?

[00:25:32] **Dr. Catherine Steiner-Adair:** [00:25:32] Um, the amount of time that kids obviously are in screens has shot up exponentially and that's been both a lifesaver and problematic and challenging. I think it's so important during COVID for teens to have a space that their, that was their own. I mean, the last thing you want to do

when you're a teenager is hang out with your parents or have your parents be aware of what you're talking about with your friends.

[00:25:59] So they need to have their own spaces where they can control sort of which part of themselves, they're putting forward and what they want to share and trying on new identities, et cetera. Um, but one thing that I'm hearing from schools that I work in, uh, or drop in on when I consult is that, um, girls are needing to relearn how to do school because they lost a year of the social skill building that happens in face-to-face partner learning and being in the classroom and waiting your turn and only being in one place at a time, not untoward these screens and you know, both the younger kids and those kids are coming back jumpy, they can't sit still for as long they're younger kids, 8 year old's are grabbing their iPads or their Chromebooks when they've been told not to. Um, they're having a hard time paying attention. They're interrupting more, they're also running up to the teacher for more instant gratification, which of course, you know, every time you hit lowercase a and match it to uppercase a on a Chromebook.

[00:27:08] If you're a five-year-old you get glitter, that's a little dopamine hit. So, the little kids are going to their tickets. I do, I do it right. Did I do it right? Because that's the experience neurologically of learning on a device. And I'd say one of the good things I'm seeing schools do, which I hope they hold onto is they're adding more recess both in middle school and high school, because kids need to move, they need to get outside, they need a break and they need to be active playing, you know, that sports-oriented games. But I love seeing 10th graders with hula hoops

playing jump rope or kickball. And it's perfectly fine that they just sit in the field like Ferdinand the bull, but they really need help coming back to school.

[00:27:51] I think the most negative impact of COVID that we saw was the exponential spike in hate speech and cyber bullying. And I saw this in the schools I work with, um, and certainly read about it in literature, in girls, as young as eight posting mean videos using hate language letter, tell her you are fat. You know, you are not a friend, um, and you know, of course this is what they are seeing in the media especially when they're home all day, seeing more media, what their parents are watching. And there's whole meme of mean girls is really horrible and we need to deconstruct it. But what we do know is that with anonymity, we all will say and do things we wouldn't do face-to-face and unfortunately on some of the social media, web apps, not all, but some the cultural values on social media are the opposite of school values.

[00:28:55] So at school we say, be kind we're on social media, you actually get more likes if you say something cool. It's cool to be cruel. It's you get more likes if you post a picture that's humiliating and in terms of friendship, you know, there's this whole thing that girls do, they post a sexy picture of themselves, you know, not totally sexy, but you know, they had the pose, the hand on the hip, the pucker lips, the septin, chicks. And then there's this performative kind of friendship where, you know, 50 to a hundred girls respond and they say the same things over and over and over. So sexy, gorgeous, bae, are jealous and it's just, it's, it's just endless. And what's so horrible is first of all, this is performative friendship, its not real and second of all, if a girl only gets 27, instead of 50 that she got yesterday, she will feel bad about herself.

[00:30:09] **Trudy Hall:** [00:30:09] I also want to shift as, as I, because I know that this is something you deeply believe in. You're not necessarily saying that girls should not have access to social media or the girls should not have access to technology. That's not, that's not what you think is the solution here. You talk a lot about balance

and how to achieve balance. Can you give us some hopeful language about, uh, what you see as a positive way in which girls are, uh, engaging with technology and ways that parents can enforce?

[00:30:46] **Dr. Catherine Steiner-Adair:** [00:30:46] Well, let me just say, I, you know, you asked me what's changed in 10 years. Another thing that's changed in 10 years is the brilliant way that social media helps girls become more civically engaged and exposes them to far greater diversity either through the people they hang out with the kids they know, or the ideas that they come across. And you know, about two thirds of social media sites, two thirds of teens say that social media helps them interact with people they'd never meet in their own lives and who have different points of views and the kinds of activism we are seeing girls do in social media and in their digital environments is phenomenal.

[00:31:28] And we know that for girls to see themselves as leaders, to have a vision of themselves as leaders of the future world, they're going to inherit, the more activist impact they can have in any sphere that's pro-social, the stronger their confidence will be in terms of their own ability to lead. And you know, about 60% of teenagers say that, that the time they spend with their friends online, um, uh, on a daily basis is, is positive. So, we have to really remember that the, the thing that's so tricky is one bad experience can sort of, you know, hijack a girl and the repeated ones can really hurt girls.

[00:32:18] **Trudy Hall:** [00:32:18] I wonder as I listened to you speak and I, I could listen to you for a long, long time because you just have such a depth of wisdom on this topic. I'm wondering if there are very specific key takeaways that you could offer parents or those adults listening in and I, I say this with the caveat that you've already been very specific in your suggestions. And so, I know that it's going to be a very useful conversation, um, for parents, but are there things that have just not crept into our conversation yet that need to be in this airspace with us?

[00:32:53] **Dr. Catherine Steiner-Adair:** [00:32:53] Wow, when I did the research for the book, um, I, I was really interested in who girls turn to and how we can get them to turn to their parents rather than sort of some dangerous, you know, online group, if they were in trouble. And the first question I asked was, who do you turn to? And that was the wrong question. I got nowhere with it. So, you know, in research, it's all about the question, how you phrase it. So, then the question was okay, what are the things your parents do that make you not talk to them? If stuff is going down online and it is, it's not so good and 10 years ago, and still today, the same three adjectives come up.

[00:33:35] And I'm talking about this now, because your leverage with your daughters is first and foremost, religions, talk to them and approach them about what's going on online, is so critical. So, the three adjectives that I hear all the time from girls is, Oh my God. I've never told my mom she's too scary, y dad is so scary and what scary parents do is they get very judgmental and they say things like she posted that picture on Facebook, I can't believe it. She'll never get into college or we'd be mortified with you did that. Or they just make very harsh judgements and forget that these are kids they're works in progress, every kid makes a mistake, you know, it's like, so if you're that scary, why would your child come to you? If you're that judgmental about other people's children? Of course, they think you're going to be that harsh with them and that, that will send them hiding. The next adjective that came up was crazy, Oh, my God, my parents were so crazy and my crazy net was that, you know, girls come to us when they are a wreck, when they are melting down, when they are sobbing, when they're ranting and raging.

[00:34:49] And sometimes we confuse being empathic with feeling their feelings. It's sort of like the urge to merge, especially between mothers and daughters. So, say, you know, your daughter shows you a party sleepover she wasn't invited, yeah, you

might think in your heart like, oh my God, I can't believe that is so mean, you don't want to say that. You know, that's joining with your daughters, you know, upset rather than help her think, you know, honey, I get you're upset, you know, let's figure out how you might approach her and talk about why you weren't invited. So, you think um, so crazy parents make it work because they get more upset than the child.

[00:35:31] The third adjective that girls use is clueless, my parents are so clueless, why would I ever go to them for advice? They never asked me what I'm doing on social media. In fact, if anything, they asked me for help with their own social media. So, you know, they're just like not the people I turn to, if something was going down.

[00:35:52] So, what do we do? What's the opposite of scary? It's approachable, friendly, not too intense. And let's the opposite of crazy, It's calm. You have to hold your own anxiety and check or your own worry and check because your daughters, you know, they will pick up on that and, um, either not tell you the truth, because that won't upset you or be scared that you're going to get even more you know, upset or angry and the opposite of clueless of course is informed. So that's a hard one, but there are really good resources available to us to common sense media, parent ology, you can Google search and the name of any app that you hear kids talk about and, and look it up, but mostly, go to your school meetings and that things are going on online.

[00:36:39] Please tell your schools because things happen at home that school doesn't always know about, and it's really important, that's another place it's really important to partner with school, go to the workshops that they offer and ask their advice and share information if you're worried about things that are going on in your school community, because you know, we've lost the battery between home and school, school happens all day 24/7. So we need to use these wonderful tools of connection to strengthen our connections, work together, keep our girls safe.

[00:37:15] **Trudy Hall:** [00:37:15] Thank you, Catherine. And as I predicted your wisdom provided a powerful reminder that engaging with girls on social media is indeed an adult team sport. It seems so right now to have our listeners enjoy advice from a girl whose parents were spot on.

[00:37:33] **Alexa:** [00:37:33] *I think one of the best, um, one of the best suggestions my parents gave to me when I first got social media is before you post anything, before you comment anything, before you do anything on social media, think about who could see it, how it could affect them in and don't click fast. They told me that they should take, that I should like see something, think about it and then think about how I want to respond and think about how, how my response will affect people in, especially in like this past, like two years when social media has almost become like another news source, you have, you should see the news and if you feel really passionate about it, like if it sparks an emotion and you really like. It's likely that someone meant for that to happen. And so go do research and make sure that it's true before you repost it, or you send it to someone because you don't, you don't want to be part of that endless cycle of false information.*

[00:38:38] **Trudy Hall:** [00:38:38] I knew you would enjoy those thoughts from Alexa and a shout out to her parents as well. I would like to remind our listeners as we conclude this podcast that NCGS commits to good work in the realm of research on relevant issues related to girls' education with me today is Natalie Demers, the director of research and initiatives at the National Coalition of Girls Schools. Natalie, it would be terrific if you would fill our listeners in, on how NCGS addresses its mission promise to be a research-driven organization.

[00:39:09] **Natalie Demers:** [00:39:09] research initiatives at NCGS primarily focused in two areas. The first being advocacy and outcomes, which include large scale

commission studies and curated research, that's already available online through journals or like-minded institutions. And the second area is practitioner-based research. And this comes primarily from the global action research, collaborative on girls' education, where teachers are trained in action research, conduct that research in their classrooms, and then share their findings with girl's school teachers from around the world.

[00:39:40] **Trudy Hall:** [00:39:40] Thanks for giving us an update on this good work, Natalie. We both know how essential good research is to creating best practice in girls' education. This has been the third episode on educating girls as always, we would love to hear from you with thoughts and suggestions to inform our conversations. After all, this is a conversation that is intended to meet your needs. As you meet the needs of the girls in your lives, please send comments or questions to [podcast@girlsschool.org](mailto:podcast@girlsschool.org) and join us next time when we explore girls as entrepreneurs and innovators. Thanks for listening. It is important to the girls in your lives that you do.