

AUTHOR BIO

For the book, **What Your Mama Can't or Won't Teach You: Grown Women's Stories of Their Teen Years**, Esther spent an entire year interviewing over 25 Canadian women of all different ages, ethnicities, sexual orientations, and socio-economic backgrounds about their experiences of being a teenager in the era they grew up in and the wisdom they have gained since then.

At the age of 35, Esther proudly and openly admits that she has over 13 years of solid recovery from an eating disorder that nearly ended her life when she was a teenager. She says, "I'm a living example that severe eating disorders do not have to be a life sentence and recovery is entirely possible and achievable. Once I had a lot of recovery myself, I made the decision to devote my career to preventing eating disorders and other self-harming behaviours in young women."

In her work as a psychotherapist who specializes in treating teen girls with eating disorders, depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and self-harming behaviours, Esther quickly discovered that teen girls are at severely high risk because they live in a culture where thinness and unrealistic beauty standards are the ideal. Because they are so young and vulnerable to outside influence as they try to figure out who they are, they look to 'plastic' "Barbie doll" images in the mainstream media and try desperately to emulate them. Because these ideals are virtually impossible to emulate, they often starve themselves in attempt to meet the 'ideal', which ends up leading them into dangerous eating disorders, depression, and other self-harming behaviours.