



## Dr. Gilda Carle

**Teen Talk with Dr. Gilda**  
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### **Why did you write *Teen Talk with Dr. Gilda*?**

My book, *Don't Bet on the Prince! How to Have the Man You Want by Betting on Yourself* became what women continue to call their Bible. Translated into many different languages, it was even a test question on the world's #1 game show, "Jeopardy!" Its audience consists of adult readers. But as the former "Love Doc" for MTV Online and columnist for *Teen Magazine*, I was finding that teens were e-mailing me with the same relationship questions as those I was receiving from my adult fans. So my goal became to give girls a tell-it-straight guide to healthy romance to avoid relationship pain later. That's how *Teen Talk with Dr. Gilda* was born.

### **I've been watching you give advice on TV for years. How did you get started?**

Actually, a few years ago, I tried to get on TV, but since I didn't have a track record on that medium, producers discarded the material I sent them. But when something is truly meant to be, it happens regardless of the obstacles. One day, a local TV producer read an article I wrote called, "How to Project a Power Image." He thought the piece would make a good segment for his TV show, and he asked me to appear. He said his segments ran as public service announcements on the Home Shopping Network. Incredibly, the same producers who had discarded my media material earlier saw this little segment and called me to appear on their nationally syndicated shows like "Sally Jesse Raphael." They said I was "telegenic." I didn't know what that meant, but they said it was good. The first year, I appeared on six national talk shows. By the second year, I had appeared on over 100 — and *The New York Times* wrote a huge article about me in the Sunday Arts and Leisure section! After that, producers called me regularly.

### **What is the most difficult thing about your job?**

I receive thousands of e-mails a day from men, women and teens of all cultures, ages, ethnicities, and economic levels. I read every single e-mail — and I respond to as many as I can. The hardest thing about what I do is hearing the sad stories of people who have given away their power — and are suffering deeply as a result. Sometimes I want to jump through the computer screen and shake these people into reality, then hug them. It upsets me that they allowed themselves to be so taken in by others. In "Teen Talk with Dr. Gilda," one of my Gilda-Grams (my memorable feel-good statements) is, "Don't put out to fit in." I talk about letting your internal control dominate the external influences others try to hang on you. As an educator, I have made it my life's goal to get people to make wiser decisions to avoid entering relationship hell.

### **Before you became a famous relationship guru, what did you do?**

I started my career as a teacher in New York City's South Bronx. I taught impoverished elementary school students and teens in junior high. While I was teaching during the day, I received a Master's degree from City College, New York, and a Ph.D. from New York University, both at night. During vacation time from public school, I ran management training programs in Fortune 500 companies and other organizations. My programs included Interpersonal Communications, Anger Management, and Caring for Yourself while Caring for Others for burned out employees in the helping professions. These were all relationship-oriented programs for business. When I finally left the public school system, I became a full time professor at Mercy College, New York, where I still teach adult college students returning to school at night for their degrees. Although my management training business grew — and I still do motivational speeches across the country — my TV appearances began to consume the majority of my time. When audiences began stopping me on the street for autographs, I had nothing to sign. So I progressed to writing books. I adore my job as a college professor. My adult students have lived life, picked up warts along the way, and are anxious to excise them. As I guide them through positive life changes, their desire to succeed keeps me grounded. Meanwhile, I have expanded my skills in organizational relationship-building to audiences in the pop culture. I actually learned that I could do this from one of my clients. He had applied the advice he had gleaned from me in his company to his relationship at home. He taught me, "It's the same work." I am grateful to learn as much from my fans as they do from me!

### **What is the one question that teens ask the most — and what do you tell them?**

The most often-asked question is, "How can I take my relationship to the next level?" The next level means different things to different people. If a guy and girl are best friends, one of them often wants to push the relationship off the platonic plateau and into romantic radiance. Yet there is the fear that if their friend rejects them, they will lose the deep union they currently enjoy. Unfortunately, no one can move and not move at the same time. And there are never guarantees about anything in life. The old expression, "No risks, no rewards" means that if you don't have the guts, you'll never get the glory. The alternatives for pushing toward next-level love are: 1) take a chance to give it a shot, or, 2) remain where you are and never know what might have been. *Teen Talk with Dr. Gilda* guides girls to make the appropriate decision uniquely right for each reader.

### **Why is *Teen Talk with Dr. Gilda* considered a "parent-friendly book"?**

This book is a truthful, in-your-face read. I honestly tell kids that their parents DON'T offer unbiased advice. They always have a hidden agenda — and it is for their safety. So while parents might appear to be competitors, "snoopervisors" and control freaks, they are really enacting two distinct roles: the first is a sometimes-overprotective ruler, and the second is an unpaid guardian angel. Sure, the first role can be a real pain, but should you need the second one — and who doesn't need an angel occasionally? — you get this added bonus. I tell kids either to reject the interference — which will add to conflict between them and their parents — or accept the benefits that accompany unsolicited love. By letting parents in on your friends and activities, they can assist when you suddenly do need them. I also tell kids that making decisions is a part of life, and even adults become perplexed when they have to choose between two equally appealing possibilities. So learning early to choose wisely is a handy skill for the future. Open dialogue generates enhanced communication and trust. The mutual respect that follows provides big payoffs. I speak to parents and teens throughout the country. The testimonials from those who communicate openly is proof that these benefits are within reach.