

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF BRAVE

Mother-Daughter Conflict, Repair, and Seeing Each Other

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Use this guide to explore autonomy, expectations, being truly seen, and the work of repair in important relationships.



1 BEFORE WATCHING

Set the stage and open hearts and minds.

- Have you ever felt like someone important in your life wanted something for you that was different from what you wanted for yourself?
- What does it mean to feel understood by another person?
- Can two people love each other deeply and still struggle to see each other clearly?



2 WHILE WATCHING

Pay attention to expectations, misunderstandings, and turning points.

- What does Elinor believe she is preparing her daughter for?
- What parts of Merida does Elinor struggle to recognize as valuable?
- When does conflict seem to become about something bigger than the immediate disagreement?
- What changes once their usual ways of interacting are interrupted?



3 AFTER WATCHING

Reflect together and make meaning.

- Was the conflict really about marriage, or was it about something deeper?
- What did Merida most want her mother to understand about her?
- What did Elinor most want for her daughter?
- When did each begin to see the other more fully?



4 FAMILY REFLECTION

Go deeper with empathy, honesty, and connection.

- When have you felt that someone only saw what you should do rather than who you are?
- What expectations are passed down in your family without anyone consciously choosing them?
- What is one thing you wish an important person in your life understood about you?
- Try this: Each person shares one strength they see in another family member that may not get acknowledged often.

DR. Z TAKEAWAY

“The deepest conflicts between parents and children are rarely about the issue being argued. More often, they emerge from the growing gap between who each person truly is and who the other has been able to see.

Repair begins when we become curious enough to see each other again.”



DR. MICHAEL ZAKALIK, PSY.D.
Psychologist for Parenting | Z Psychology



Understanding minds.



Strengthening connections.

Repair starts with being seen, and with the willingness to see.

