



## Girls Gone Mild: Young Women Reclaim Self-Respect and Find It's Not Bad to Be Good

*Wendy Shalit*

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At twenty-three, Wendy Shalit punctured conventional wisdom with *A Return to Modesty*, arguing that our hope for true lasting love is not a problem to be fixed but rather a wonderful instinct that forms the basis for civilization. Now, in *Girls Gone Mild*, the brilliantly outspoken author investigates an emerging new movement. Despite nearly-naked teen models posing seductively to sell us practically everything, and the proliferation of homemade sex tapes as star-making vehicles, a youth-led rebellion is already changing course.

In Seattle and Pittsburgh, teenage girls protest against companies that sell sleazy clothing. Online, a nineteen-year-old describes her struggles with her mother, who she feels is pressuring her to lose her virginity. In a small town outside Philadelphia, an eleventh-grade girl, upset over a “dirty book” read aloud in English class, takes her case to the school board.

These are not your mother’s rebels.

In an age where pornography is mainstream, teen clothing seems stripper-patented, and “experts” recommend that we learn to be emotionally detached about sex, a key (and callously) targeted audience—girls—is fed up.

Drawing on numerous studies and interviews, Shalit makes the case that today’s virulent “bad girl” mindset most truly oppresses young women. Nowadays, as even the youngest teenage girls feel the pressure to become cold sex sirens, put their bodies on public display, and suppress their feelings in order to feel accepted and (temporarily) loved, many young women are realizing that “friends with benefits” are often anything but. And as these girls speak for themselves, we see that what is expected of them turns out to be very different from what is in their own hearts.

Shalit reveals how the media, one’s peers, and even parents can undermine girls’ quests for their authentic selves, details the problems of sex without intimacy, and explains what it means to break from the herd mentality and choose integrity over popularity. Written with sincerity and upbeat humor, *Girls Gone Mild* rescues the good girl from the realm of mythology and old manners guides to show that today’s version is the real rebel: She is not “people pleasing” or repressed; she is simply reclaiming her individuality. These empowering stories are sure to be an inspiration to teenagers and parents alike.



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