
Passionistas Sis Tips

10 Sisterly Secrets
for Building
Unbreakable Bonds



AMY & NANCY HARRINGTON

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INTRODUCTION

Sisterhood is our superpower

We're the Passionistas, Amy and Nancy Harrington, and we value our sisterhood above everything else. In fact, it's our superpower. The family lore is that when Nancy learned she'd be going to kindergarten, she asked our mom to have a baby so she wouldn't be lonely during the day when Nancy was at school. Coincidence or not, Amy came along about nine months later.

Since our childhood, we have been virtually inseparable. We shared a bedroom as kids, played together all the time, watched endless hours of TV and spent our summers in the pool. We grew up with three older siblings who were all pop culture addicts just like us. We were surrounded by creativity — art, books, music, games, cooking, theater, dancing and did we mention television?

As we got older we still hung out as much as we could and even when we lived 3,000 miles apart for 10 years, we would find ways to talk on the phone and meet for vacations.

During that 10 years when we were on opposite coasts, we were each pursuing our individual dreams. Amy quickly rose up the ranks to become Vice President of Post Production and Visual Effects at Warner Bros. working on blockbuster movies like the *Batman*, *Matrix* and *Harry Potter* franchises. Nancy founded her own graphic design firm and had a successful theater company in Boston before joining Amy in Hollywood and working on Academy Award ad campaigns for Miramax.

We had dream jobs. We were honing our creative skills at the highest levels. We were following our passion for pop culture. But even though we had achieved success, the spark had gone out. We had a lot of great friends and colleagues at work, but



we were spending our 12-hour workdays with a lot of people we couldn't trust. And we never felt the bond with anyone at work that we have with each other. So, we both decided it was time to join forces with the one person we trusted and relied on most in the world — each other.

We walked away from our big Hollywood careers and found ourselves on a path of self-discovery that led us to the world of celebrity interviewing. Helping people tell their stories became our new passion. Together, we have conducted and produced over 1500 celebrity interviews for our own website, The Interviews for the Television Academy Foundation and The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Not only had we transformed our careers, but we were having a blast because we were doing them together.

In 2016, we found ourselves once again examining the focus for our company. While we loved interviewing Hollywood royalty, we couldn't ignore the changing world around us. The #MeToo and Time's Up movements were in full swing, and we were in awe of the brave women stepping forward to share their very personal stories.

We knew that we needed to do something to help lift up these women, too. Now we shine a light on the positive stories of self-identified women and non-binary people through The Passionistas Project with our podcast, Power of Passionistas women's equality summit and our online sisterhood.

Our goal is to inspire women to embrace their authenticity, pursue their passions and support one another along the way. We believe that by creating a space where women can connect, tell their own unfiltered stories, and empower each other, they can transform their lives and change the world.

And we know that our decades of commitment to our own relationship, can help other women forge more meaningful connections that can last a lifetime. In the following pages, we'll share our Sis Tips to building unbreakable bonds... just like ours.

TIP ONE

Your sisters will always be your best friends

Our mother Betty (the OG Passionista) had lots of words of advice for us growing up but the one that rang true the most was “Your sisters and brother are your best friends.” Any argument among us kids would quickly end with mom dropping the best friends bomb on us.

It was true when we were kids and it’s been true our whole lives. We had no better playmates when we were little than our siblings. Our older sisters and brothers introduced us to rock music, musical theater, tap dancing, filmmaking, standup comedy, cooking, sitcoms, documentaries and so much more.



We’ve been there to cheer each other on during graduations, plays, musical performances, movie releases, weddings and births. And we have carried each other through the darkest moments of losing jobs, rough break-ups and the deaths of our parents.

There has never been a moment when we’ve had to wonder if we could count on our siblings. And there isn’t anything in the world we wouldn’t do for them.

Knowing that you have unbreakable ties to a few people, makes getting through the day a lot easier. And being able to put their needs before your own, even when you share the struggle, gives you an entirely different perspective on how to navigate adversity.

When people find out that we are not only business partners but sisters, they always say, “I wish I had what you have.” And believe us, we don’t take it for granted.

But as most of us have learned throughout our lives, families don’t have to be blood relatives. You can choose your family. So, think about who those people are for you. Who are the women in your life that have been there for you through thick and thin? The ones who really know you? The ride or dies and ones that always have your back?

These are your sisters.

TIP TWO

Love Unconditionally

Now that you've identified your sisters and are ready to embrace Betty's advice to hold onto your best friends forever, let's get real. Nobody's perfect. But we've found it's the imperfections that make our sisters the unique and lovable people that they are.

We all have our own quirks and idiosyncrasies. We may look at the same topic from completely different perspectives and draw wildly different conclusions. And in most close relationships there are times where we have to watch as our best friends make choices that wouldn't necessarily be the ones we make.

But being sisters isn't about fixing each other or forcing the other person to conform to our ways of thinking. Instead, we need to learn to love unconditionally and cherish each other entirely for the imperfect beings that we are.

Knowing you're loved unconditionally allows you to show up as yourself authentically — ugly crying, dirty sweatpants, unfiltered thoughts, and all. It's not about glossing over the rough edges but letting your sister's truth reflect through those raw shards of her true self.

In this vulnerable space, we can simply be ourselves and find a sanctuary from the harsh

judgment that we often face on social media and in the modern world. Our imperfections become steppingstones to deeper connection rather than stumbling blocks.

And it allows us to see the beauty in our own imperfections and have the confidence to show the world who we truly are.

We always feel a little smarter, a little funnier and a lot more confident when we enter a room with our sister — our built-in audience, our number one fan and our biggest cheerleader. She helps us remember the power that we possess just by being who we truly are.

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TIP THREE

Don't mess with my chickens

Working together adds an extra level of complexity to any relationship — especially when you're sisters. People love to pick apart the relationship and try to figure out who's funnier, who is more creative, which one contributed more to a given project.

When we started our first company, Pop Culture Passionistas, we made the decision to present everything we did using the “Royal we.” There was no “I” or “me” used in an email or article. If a client asked, “Who did this part of the job?” We would say, “We did.” Neither one of us individually took the glory or the blame. We shared the highs and lows — and the salary — 50/50. No questions asked.

By doing so we eliminated any natural feelings of sibling rivalry that might be bubbling under the surface now and again. The Smothers Brothers may have lived by the catchphrase “Mom always liked you best” but we Harrington sisters don't play into the competition. Although we have different temperaments and personalities, we share core values and a work ethic that make our working relationship unflappable.

And above all else, we always have each other's backs.

Having worked in the entertainment industry, we've seen our fair share of people throwing their co-workers under the bus or deflecting a problem of their own by shining the light on someone else's flaws. There's no room for that in our sisterhood.

Our mother, who was the kindest, gentlest soul who ever lived, would only get touchy when someone came after one of her kids. “Don't mess with my chickens,” she'd say.

And we've carried that lesson throughout our lives. No one messes with our chickens. We always have our sisters' backs. You can be sure we'll sit with them later and give our opinion about the situation and come to some mutual conclusion about the best path moving forward or ways to avoid similar pitfalls in the future.

But our sister knows that we're not going to let anyone mess with her on our watch.

TIP FOUR

Learn the art of listening

Growing up we shared a bedroom so we would talk for hours about our days, share our secrets, reveal our biggest dreams to each other as we drifted off to sleep. To be a good sister, it's important to learn the art of listening. It doesn't mean you can't share your opinion and be honest with your own reflections on the issue at hand. And it certainly doesn't mean that every get together or phone call should be solely a monologue by one person.

But one of the many skills we've learned from our siblings over the years is that we are their first line of defense, their most trusted sounding boards, and the non-judgmental filter their thoughts can go gushing through.

Psychologist Carl Rogers coined the phrase "active listening." He observed, "We think we listen, but very rarely do we listen with real understanding, true empathy. Yet listening, of this very special kind, is one of the most potent forces for change that I know."

It's difficult in a world jam packed with so many distractions to truly give someone our focus. It can be equally challenging to rush to a conclusion or impose your own beliefs on someone else. But to truly listen, ask the questions that help dig deeper into the



intricacies of the dilemma or celebrate the joyful aspects of the experience, that's a real skill.

At The Passionistas Project, we've created a safe space for our sisterhood at large to share their stories. Many of us are from marginalized communities — women with disabilities, those from the Black, AAPI, Indigenous, Latina or LGBTQ communities, women over 50. We don't speak on their behalf. We let them tell their own unfiltered stories. We learn from their truths. We focus on ways that we can be agents of changes to ease their burdens. We celebrate their wins. We fight beside them shoulder to shoulder. We bring about change.

When we listen to our sisters, we will also find that we are heard in a way that we never dreamed imaginable.

TIP FIVE

Celebrate each other's strengths

We are lucky. As our careers have evolved, our passions have remained in tune. We love the work we do as interviewers; we thrive on connecting people within our community and beyond and we are laser focused on our mission to make the world a better place for women everywhere.

But we also have different backgrounds and complimentary skills unique to each of us. For example, Nancy's background is in graphic design, so she always makes us look good from a visual perspective. Amy has a training in film post production, gives her a strength in navigating tricky conversations that has helped us get out of a tough spot or two.



One of the keys to what makes our sisterhood work personally and professionally is our ability to play to each other's strengths. When one of us isn't firing on all cylinders or needs a break, the other can pick up the slack. When someone has just simply run out of small talk at a networking event, the other can dive in to keep the conversation going. And when one of us has hit a wall and feeling frustration on the path to achieving a major goal, the other can jump in with a quick pep talk or a small win to keep the momentum going for the team.

We know that we're lucky that there are two of us and we can give each other the boost we need at just the right moment. But many solopreneurs, small business owners, artists and activists often feel like they have to do it all alone.

Yet, if you look to your sisterhood, you'll find that you are not alone. You may be looking for some specialized advice or support that seems beyond your grasp. Don't give up. Ask for help. There are women around you who want to be there for you. You probably have someone in your inner circle who has the skill set to help you accomplish that next seemingly insurmountable task — or who at least knows someone else who does.

TIP SIX

Communicate openly and honestly

There will be times where even the closest sisters need to have a tough talk. They aren't always fun, but they are critical.

We grew up in a family where the unpleasant topics mostly went unspoken, so we didn't learn how to talk about the less rosy topics until we were older. But we're so grateful that we did. Coupled with that good old unconditional love, true sisters can stand on a solid foundation to speak from their heart without the fear that the whole house will come crashing down around them.

There's real stability in knowing that you can express your deepest concerns, your least popular opinions, your well-meaning advice without being judged for it or punished because you spoke up. If you can't hear the truth from your most trusted ally, then you're probably not ready to face the facts that anyone has to dish out.

And we always find that once we've navigated through those moments of disagreement, our commitment to transparent communication has made our relationship even stronger. Remember, sharing and being vulnerable isn't a sign of weakness but a medal of honor for the strength of your unflappable bond.



TIP SEVEN

Respect is non-negotiable

One of the cornerstones of an unbreakable sister bond is respect. We express to each other every day how grateful we are for the hard work we both do to move our common agenda forward, for the talents that we bring to bear in realizing that vision and for the empathetic way in which we embrace our community.

We were raised to follow the golden rule of “do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” So, we learned at an early age to treat each other with admiration and patience. We carry that beyond our interactions with our immediate family to our sisterhood and world at large.

We live in a time of great division in the world. There are so many forces at play that pull people apart. We respect everyone’s rights to have their own opinions. After all, different points of view can be great springboards for a graceful dialogue.

As we do with each other, we encourage people with differing beliefs, aspirations and values to see their commonalities of purpose rather than looking for ways to weaponize their varied viewpoints. But for this to be a successful endeavor, we believe we must show support to those living life on the fringes — the marginalized, the outsiders, the rebels, the rabble-rousers. The heart of mutual respect isn’t just about acknowledging differences; it’s about celebrating them.

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TIP EIGHT

Keep each other's secrets in confidence

Nothing bonds two sisters like sharing secrets. It's critical to have that one confidante that you can tell your wildest dreams or most embarrassing thoughts too. Most often they'll remind you that you can achieve any goal you set and that those inner thoughts aren't as embarrassing as you think they are.

On the flip side, there's nothing more shattering than feeling betrayed by a sister who breaks your confidence and shares your secret without your consent.

We live in a world where people crave gossip, audiences thrive on the behind-the-curtain glimpses of reality TV shows and social media encourages us to reveal every aspect of our personal lives. But some things aren't meant to be shared on a bigger platform.

Being able to trust someone to keep your secret and being the person who is trusted with confidential information, is a testament to the profound depth of a sisterly relationship. Learn to cultivate a connection where openness and vulnerability are met with the assurance that confidences are locked securely away.



TIP NINE

Check your attitude at the door

Remember that old song, “You always hurt, the one you love. The one you shouldn’t hurt at all.” Sometimes it’s easier to take a bad day out on someone you know will love you no matter how cranky you are. But it’s critical in a sisterhood to check your attitude at the door.

When two people are close enough to share their most intimate thoughts and be their authentic self, sometimes we just let all our feelings out. But that doesn’t give us license to unleash a storm of emotions on our beloved best friend.

In the safe space of sisterhood, kindness should reign supreme. While we may feel comfortable letting all our emotions hang out, we should always make sure we’re not directing those frustrations or anger at the one person who’s offering you the love and compassion you need in the face of difficult situation.

If you’re feeling on edge and not letting your best self-shine through, always remember to take three deep breaths. Leave unsaid the potentially hurtful statement. Be mindful of how your words and actions might impact the person you’re talking to. And if you’re just not in the right head space to interact without attitude, gracefully remove yourself from the situation and check back in when you’re coming from a better place.



TIP TEN

Don't forget to laugh and have fun

Life can be serious business, but we get through even the most difficult moments of life by reveling in the joy of being together.

As real-life sisters, we can tap into those childhood moments of splashing in the pool on a warm day, playing cribbage until the wee hours of the morning, making our own board games and playing school (yes, we got home from school and played school).

We never dreamed that we'd be grown women chatting with our childhood hero Dr. Jane Goodall or doing an in-depth interview with our TV idols, Laverne and Shirley. We giggle like those little schoolgirls all the time recounting our favorite childhood memories and creating new ones.

Go on mini-adventures, encourage each other to take chances, find the beauty in the toughest situation and laugh — lots and lots of laughing. Happiness is not a frivolous emotion. These moments of play are the exclamation points in our long and winding story.

Sisters, like kindred spirits, embark on a delightful journey back to the carefree days of childhood, where play wasn't just an activity, but a whimsical language spoken in shared glances and laughter that echoed through the corridors of imagination.



CONCLUSION

Just The Beginning

We have so many chapters yet to write. We are the luckiest women alive to get to do that together. We always say, “I don’t know how I’d get through a day without you.” And we mean it.

Our sisterhood is our superpower. It’s what gives us strength in hard times. It’s our safe space in a sometimes-disjointed world. It’s the fire that fuels our sense of confidence, our drive, our passion. It is the true origin of our joy.

Our sisterhood has grown since we were little girls in that small town outside of Boston, Massachusetts. In addition to our lifelong best friends (our brother and sisters), we’ve expanded our families, we’ve made long-lasting connections with colleagues, roommates and allies. And we’ve created The Passionistas Project sisterhood, an inclusive sisterhood where passion-driven women come to get support, find their purpose and feel empowered to transform their lives and change the world.

We always have room for more sisters. We hope you’ll join us.



Sis Tips Checklist

- ✔ **Your sisters will always be your best friends**
- ✔ **Love Unconditionally**
- ✔ **Don't mess with my chickens**
- ✔ **Learn the art of listening**
- ✔ **Celebrate each other's strengths**
- ✔ **Communicate openly and honestly**
- ✔ **Respect is non-negotiable**
- ✔ **Keep each other's secrets in confidence**
- ✔ **Check your attitude at the door**
- ✔ **Don't forget to laugh and have fun**



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ABOUT THE PASSIONISTAS PROJECT

The Passionistas Project is a sisterhood of strong, passionate women and gender nonconforming, non-binary people dedicated to empowering others to live their best lives. Through the podcast, the annual Power of Passionistas women's equality summit, networking events, books, masterclasses and more, the community of Passionistas will inspire you to take bold steps toward creating a life that brings you joy and fulfillment.

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