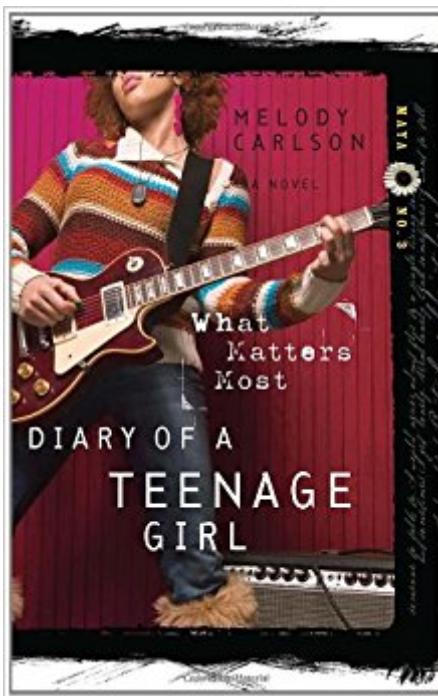


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# What Matters Most (Diary Of A Teenage Girl)



## Synopsis

Maya's Green Tip for the Day: Recycled fashion is one of the most fun ways to go green. A pair of jeans could be transformed into a denim skirt. A sweater into a vest. A bunch of old ties into a dress. A blanket into a poncho. Accessorize it in new ways with beads, buttons, appliqués, buckles, stencils, or ribbons! Your imagination is only the limit. (65 words) Sixteen-year-old Maya Stark has a lot to sort through. She could graduate from high school early if she wants to. She's considering it, especially when popular cheerleader Vanessa Hartman decides to make her life miserable and Maya's ex-boyfriend Dominic gets the wrong idea about everything. To complicate matters even more, Maya's mother will be released from prison soon, and she'll want Maya to live with her again. That's a disaster waiting to happen. And when Maya plays her dad's old acoustic guitar in front of an audience, she discovers talents and opportunities she never expected. Faced with new options, Maya must choose between a "normal" life and a glamorous one. Ultimately, she has to figure out what matters most.

## Book Information

Series: Diary of a Teenage Girl (Book 3)

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## Customer Reviews

"Maya is a fun character! It's not even possible to read It's a Green Thing and not relate to her questions, her challenges, and her struggles as a teen and Christian. And I found myself jotting down her awesome eco-friendly tips!" Jenny B. Jones, Award winning author of In Between

and The Charmed Life series. "As Maya Stark pours her heart out in her journal, readers are treated to an inside view of a life that is at times exotic and unfamiliar, and at other times hauntingly similar to our own. Maya's struggles become our struggles, her pain our pain, and her successes, therefore, even sweeter. A Not-So-Simple Life is another triumph for Melody Carlson." Virginia Smith, author of *Sincerely, Mayla* and *Stuck in the Middle*. "Fantastic book! Maya is so easy to like" "this is a hard story to put down!" Erynn Mangum, author of *Miss Match*. "Melody Carlson has proven her skill once again at writing gritty stories about characters in difficult situations. In *A Not-so-Simple Life*, Maya Stark seeks to escape life under the controlling hand of her drug-addict mother by acting on a plan for independence with admirable determination." Michelle Buckman, author of *Maggie Come Lately* and *My Beautiful Disaster*. "I just finished Melody's book and loved it! The journal format makes the story, and Maya, so real and believable. Readers will easily be able to identify with the realistic approach to a prevalent situation." Patricia Rushford, author of the *Max & Me* Mysteries

Melody Carlson is an award-winning, best-selling author of nearly two hundred books for teens, children, and adults, including the *Diary of a Teenage Girl* series, the *Secret Life of Samantha McGregor* series, the *True Color* Series, and *Notes from a Spinning Planet* series. Melody has two grown sons and lives in central Oregon with her husband, where they enjoy skiing, hiking, gardening, camping, and biking.

I recently received a book entitled *What Matters Most* from Waterbrook Multnomah publishers. As part of their blogger review program, they send books to me free of charge, and I agree to read the books and review them on my blog. This book is actually book #3 in a series. The series is called *Diary of a Teenage Girl*. The books are written by Melody Carlson. If you are interested in purchasing this book online, go here: [...] The book is actually written for a teenage audience, and I think most teenage girls would enjoy it. As an adult, some of the "teenage" topics that the characters in the book deal with and talk about (such who-likes-who) were a little tedious for me to read, but, as I stated before, I think most teenagers would find the book fun to read. The story is about a girl named Maya who has family problems which basically cause her to have to make many decisions about her life without the input of her mother and father. The decisions she must make are often decisions that will affect the rest of her life. In other words, Maya is not just dealing with issues such as what clothes to wear or if she should go to the movies over the weekend. These are "real"

decisions. In fact, the book gets its title because Maya is having to make decisions about "what matters most" in her life. Maya is, I think, a good role model for teenage girls for several reasons. One is that she prays before making decisions. Also, she is mature and sets a good example of how to treat others and how to use/have good morals. Since so many books aimed at teens contain such bad examples of teenage behavior and morals, it was wonderful to read a book in which the teenager sets an example that is positive! That reason alone makes it, in my opinion, worth reading and recommending. One of the fun things about the book is that one of Maya's jobs is to write a column about being "green." At the end of each chapter, one of Maya's "how to be green" tips (a real one--not just something made up for the book) is included. If I had to summarize the entire book in one sentence, I would say this: The book is about a teenage girl learning to make adult decisions and doing a good job of it.

Okay, for starters let me say that I have read all of the previous DOATG books and adored them. I was so excited when Melody Carlson decided to continue the series with Maya... and even though, throughout Maya's first two diaries, there were quite a few contradictions from Kim's books, I still enjoyed them. But how can Melody Carlson end the series with this book? Warning: the following contains spoilers. First of all: there were way too many blatant contradictions. Mike and Jill own the Paradiso again- but in Kim's last book, *Than Was Then...*, *Redemption* owned it. Secondly, there are far too many unfinished plot lines. What was the whole point of the issues with Wyatt and Vanessa? It never goes anywhere. Ditto for Siobhan... and by the way, that was one plotline that really interested me. I felt like it had a ton of potential... but it fell flat with merely a few mentions here and there- literally. And Chloe and Jeremy (it was implied in previous books) would end up together, but they apparently broke up (although it's also hinted that they are getting back together, which was a total relief.) And why on earth would Laura quit the band for college when in *Face the Music* (Chloe book 4) she said something along the lines of "I wouldn't care if I just had to drop [my college classes] if it meant we could hit the road again." And why isn't Willy *Redemption*'s manager? Very few things are explained. This book just created many questions that, apparently, are never going to be answered, seeing as it's the final DOATG book. I loved the Samantha McGregor books, Carter House Girls, TrueColors... and all of the other DOATG books. Melody Carlson is by far my favorite author (even after this book). I don't understand what happened with *What Matters Most*- it felt like she threw a fantastic, powerful series under the bus. I mean, I liked certain elements like the relationship between Dominic and Maya, but basically, I wanted to cry when I finished. And, although this sounds harsher than I mean it to be, I wish I had opted never to read the book, so that

I might preserve only good memories of this series in my mind.

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