

Chapter 1

It's Your Turn

I have enjoyed greatly the second blooming that comes when you finish the life of the emotions and of personal relations; and suddenly find--at the age of fifty, say--that a whole new life has opened before you, filled with things you can think about, study, or read about....It is as if a fresh sap of ideas and thoughts was rising in you.

- Agatha Christie

Karen had been coming to me for about a year before I finally asked. A tall, conservatively dressed high school teacher, she colored her thick, unruly hair almost black and liked it cut blunt, like Cleopatra, with heavy bangs. It worked for her, she said.

We spoke infrequently during her appointments, but I liked her. She wanted to look younger but thought she was in a losing battle. I explained that softening her hair color would help, but she seemed intent on keeping her dramatic style and was obsessed with complete gray coverage. Her whole look had a hardened sadness about it and gave the impression that something was missing.

Finally, I asked.

“What’s going on, Karen? You’re holding on to something that isn’t working anymore, and although you seem to know it, you’re afraid to change.”

“I’m going through a divorce,” she confided.

Having been married for more than thirty years, Karen was now, at fifty-six years old, soon to be single. We discussed anti-aging techniques, what she could do to look and feel better, and I couldn’t help but notice that she seemed intrigued by the options.

Months later, I walked into the salon and noticed a young slender woman with great legs wearing a short black straight skirt, black opaque hose, heels, and a burgundy turtleneck sweater. She looked poised, assured, and vivacious.

“*No way!* Karen--you look *great!*” If it hadn’t been for that black hair, I wouldn’t have recognized her. Her eyes widened, indicating “Shut up and don’t draw attention to me,” but the transformation was too amazing, and I was, well, too me. I looked her up and down, noticing for the first time an amazing figure. After finalizing her divorce, Karen got in shape, lifted her face, and revamped her wardrobe. I watched a woman change from dowdy to dazzling, and it struck that chord that makes me tick.

It’s a new world. Women today have unlimited options and choices to look and feel young and attractive throughout their entire lives.

At age forty-nine, Luellen, having never set foot in a gym, decided it was time. She had gained more than thirty-five pounds through the years, and she felt frumpy. Finally, she took control. After finding a personal trainer, she changed her diet, and in seven months she had transformed from a size 10-12 to a 2-4. I’ll let her tell you what happened next.

While working out with my trainer in the gym one day, another trainer who works with figure competitors noticed me and asked if I would be interested in doing a fitness show called the Fitness America Pageant. The shows are held all over the United States. So I trained with him, ultimately doing five competitions all over the country. The younger women often said I was their role model. This gives me great motivation to keep setting an example that it is possible to be fit and have a good shape at any age.

Today, at fifty-eight, Luellen waltzes into the salon in sleek jeans, sexy fitted tops, and kitten heels. The woman she was has been replaced by the woman she became. Since then she has also coauthored three books and although she has been asked out by much younger men, she prefers those at least within her own decade. Luellen’s glass is more than half full in her second act.



Luellen before, 48



Luellen after, 56

We have been programmed to believe that something outside our control is responsible for how we look: genetics, aging, time. But now more than ever, we have the power to change and improve what Mother Nature handed us and continues to hand us. Anyone can look, feel, and live better than ever before. Opportunities for a new love, a new career, and a new life are literally at our fingertips. Who would have imagined that Raquel Welch would become the face of MAC cosmetics at age sixty-six, or that a first-time mother would birth twins at age sixty-seven? What was once unheard of is now common, and what was once accepted now seems archaic. For women today, anything is possible. By preparing yourself for the part, you can create the scene, however you want it played. You're the star in your own show. It's your turn.

Making the Effort

Forty is the old age of youth; fifty, the youth of old age.
-Victor Hugo

It is better to be prepared for an opportunity and not have one than to have an opportunity and not be prepared.
-Whitney M. Young, Jr.

Often I hear women say to me, “I used to. . .”--“I used to wear makeup when I was [fill in the blank: working, younger, single, thinner], but now [fill in the blank: I’m just at home all day; work where no one sees me; don’t have time, energy, or inspiration].”

Okay, so what? You *used* to be invested in the world, and now you’re done? You wait until you go out to look good? How often is that? And what is *out*? To dinner? You’re not *out* at the grocery store? When it comes to making an effort, “used to” is used up. Go and do, don’t wait and see. No one is naturally motivated to get up in the morning and put on a face, do her hair, and wear something attractive, but we become our best in part by looking our best. The act of making the effort tells everyone that you’re still in the game and keeps you interested in playing.

Jayne says the following:

I am surprised how often I actually leave my house in a state of “momness” that I never thought would happen. Come on, I became a mom at forty; I had had a system in place for years. Now, wrangling the children to get them out of the house is a production. I find that I need to get myself ready first early in the day, because when that moment hits when we say, “Let’s go, get the girls ready,” there is no time for me to slip away and get myself ready. It’s not like my prechildren days, when my husband would say, “Let’s go grab sushi,” and I could look fabulous ten minutes later--because in those days it was “all about me”!

You have this book in your hand because you want to look better. Maybe you used to look better. You will again. You are in control of how you face the day and how it will affect you. Begin this journey with a sense of positive expectation.