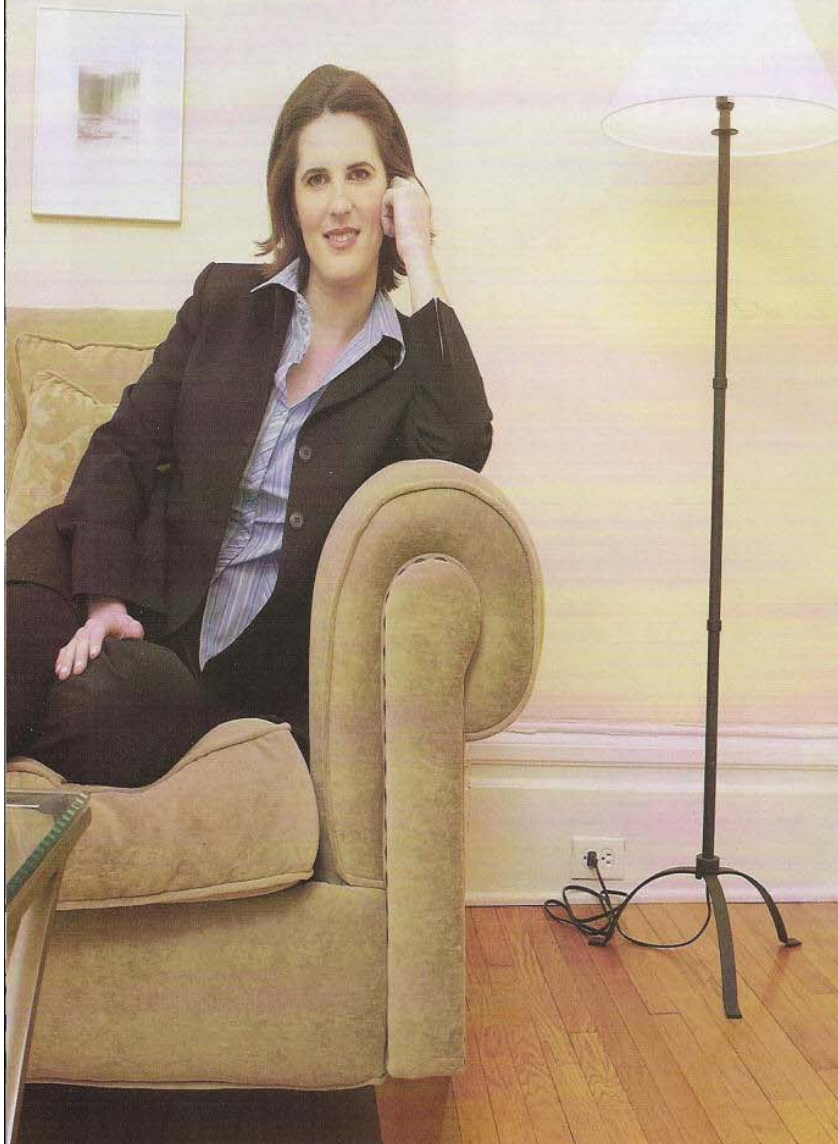


Midlife Magic: Your Call to Greatness

Donna Daisy, Ph.D. shares the up-side of getting older and giving back.

“Everybody can be great because anybody can serve. You only need a heart full of grace and a soul generated by love.”

~ Martin Luther King, Jr.



Have you noticed your hair seems to be getting a little thinner? Your face a little more wrinkled? Do you find you don't multi-task as well as you used to? Or you walk into a room to get something, but can't remember what it was? Do state troopers look younger than your son? Welcome to midlife!

It's been a while since I experienced this rite of passage — a period of time when I was more aware of what I had lost (including my waistline) than what I had gained. With our many negative cultural stereotypes, it's easy to get focused on the downside of aging. In the arrogance of our youth, we seldom appreciate any possible benefits there might be to growing older. On the bright side, however, with the increase in life expectancy, age 50 has become the new 40, and 60 is the new 50. Midlife no longer has to be a time when everything goes downhill. Instead, it's a time to blossom and fully open your heart to new possibilities and experiences.

At midlife, we often realize just how precious and fragile life is. With this



realization often comes a shift in values and priorities. You may find that you're seeing things with a new perspective, and recognize that midlife is an opportunity to take charge of your life as never before. You begin to match your talents and intellect with compassion, humility and wisdom. As strange as it seems, the fact that we're no longer young seems to give us a new commitment to our own potential and to the process of life.

Midlife is the time to recognize the magic of your own personal greatness. It's a time to let go of the self-centered, entitlement attitudes of our youth and begin making the transition to the role of caretakers of the world. It's about embracing the role

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of teacher and mentor to those coming behind us. It's about the strengthening of compassion and a sense of connectedness with one another. As Mahatma Gandhi said, "We must be the change we want to see happen in the world, because otherwise, the change will not happen."

There is a beautiful hymn that begins with the words, "Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me." I believe that peace truly does start in the hearts of each and every one of us. It starts each time we interrupt a mean-spirited thought and hurtful word and replace them with kindness. It starts when we replace hitting with a tender touch. It starts with forgiveness, good will and respect for one another.

I'll be the first to admit that I don't have this peace thing mastered, but I believe these things that I have learned from my dog are a good starting point: live simply, love generously, care deeply and speak kindly.

As we begin a new year with the promise of a higher vision for ourselves, may we all join together in this heartfelt wish for the coming year: Let there indeed be peace on earth and let it begin in the hearts and actions of each of us.

Donna Daisy, Ph.D., has spent 25 years as a therapist, life coach, and author. More recently, she has pursued research into the topic of aging consciously. Donna lives in Naples with her husband.