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A place for women to share from the heart.



BWS Stories - "If I Could Save Time In A Bottle"...Embracing Our Authentic Selves

"If I Could Save Time In A Bottle"...Embracing Our Authentic Selves - Aging Is Not What I Want It To Be ... WAAHHHHHH!!!

Nancy O'Reilly, PsyD, (drnancy@womenspeak.com) is a clinical psychologist who has worked with women in a strategic, problem-solving fashion for more than 25 years. She founded the WomenSpeak Project so women could share the experience of growing older in a positive atmosphere. After more than 10 years of research she targets and discusses key women's issues. †She is passionate about sharing her thoughts regarding women growing older in a society that does not reward aging and is writing a book, You Can't Scare Me: Courageous Women Speak About Growing Older in a Youth Oriented Society. The web site www.WomenSpeak.com offers ongoing research, e-newsletters, and "Ask Dr. Nancy" an online free consulting service, and a wealth of resources about Health and Wellness, Relationships, Finances and Aging itself.

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Aging Is Not What I Want It To Be ... WAAHHHHHH!!!

I was talking to my brother-in-law Charlie about aging. Charlie and I happen to have birthdays two days apart but he is nine years older than I am. We each have our own perspective on the subject and he shares my qualms about getting older and not being as physically agile and attractive as we used to be. He reflected on wishing he were my age and he shared that his father who is 90+ years said he would like to be 80 again. It seems we are all yearning for a smaller number as we grow older. We look back with nostalgia at someone who is at the number we once shared.

My own mother is in her 80s but will not admit it. Each year she has what Alice In Wonderland calls an "un-birthday." I might try this approach for my coming birthday and the many that I will continue to have (yes, I do want to live forever).

Isn't aging an interesting process? Oprah turned 50 in the same year that we lost Mr. Rogers. Why can't we "have our cake and eat it too?" Well, I have decided that I will face my aging with a pro-active approach.

As a Baby-Boomer, I will take advantage of all that health and beauty care professionals have developed for us. I am on the new South Beach Diet. I have recently been Botoxed. Did you know they charge by the unit (the professionals call it "a shot")? I had so many I quit counting and only knew the number when I handed them my credit card. I could hardly believe I was handing someone my MasterCard for Botox!

I now know what others have known for years: you can eat right (I have), exercise daily (I have) and do marathons (I have), ride your butt off (I have), and take a lot of vitamins (I have) -- and you know what? You will still look older.

I don't think it is fair at all, do you? Inside my 50-something body is a young, vibrant woman who is still ready to conquer the world, to seek out all the adventure I can find.

Am I alone with these thoughts? I know I'm not.

I have gathered information from more than a thousand women. One of the most important findings of my research is that nearly half of women are afraid of getting older. To put that in perspective, around 30% say health is their greatest concern and less than 5% worry about dying. Other researchers have found that women are afraid they will

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become "invisible" as they get older. Well, I am here to tell you that this woman is not going to let herself become invisible to others, and I hope you won't allow it, either.

OK reader. Let's be honest. How do you feel about getting older? Please e-mail me your thoughts and I will share your ideas with our fellow women on this same path of life.

Let us never give up the good fight to becoming great, beautiful, smart, fantastic, happy women.

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