

## **BOOK PROPOSAL**

### ***Timeless Women Speak: Feeling Youthful at Any Age***

Co-authored by

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## BOOK OVERVIEW

Lisa, 33, is so busy with kids and home and community that she meets herself coming and going. She married at age 28, determined to have her babies before she got too old. Now, life as a stay-at-home mom with two children under three takes all her time and energy.

“I know I am at one of the best ages yet,” she acknowledges, yet she can’t stop thinking about the passage of time and she is afraid of growing older. “What is creepy is I know that time is running out and I am beginning to see changes in my skin and hair, and my energy levels have dropped, and I am fighting added pounds that do not want to come off.”

Although her husband tries to reassure her, deep down Lisa feels afraid she won’t be desirable any more. This creates problems in their relationship that bewilder him. She wonders, “Will I be able to keep my wonderful mate? Will he still love me even if I’m not as cute and sexy as I once was? What if he meets someone out of town?”

“I’m afraid that men won’t do things for me as they did when I was young,” she says. “When I was younger I didn’t think much about getting older. Now I am older and wiser and know a lot more of the things that can happen later in life.”

Lisa focuses on improving both her physique and her emotional wellbeing by trying to maintain a youthful appearance. “I use a lot of skin care products, and keep waiting for them to deliver on the promises of making me lose 10 years in seven days,” Lisa says. “Not to mention the pills that were supposed to bust the fat right off my body.”

“Aging to me means all the things I will not be able to do and how my health will be when I’m older,” says Lisa. “I don’t want my children to have to take care of me.” Lisa’s mother worships beauty and youth, and that has affected how she feels about aging. “She doesn’t talk about this attitude,” Lisa says, “but I know that it affects her because she always tries to look younger.”

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*Timeless Women Speak: Feeling Youthful at Any Age* targets the millions of women who feel guilty and suffer emotional and physical pain because they are growing older in a society that idealizes beauty and youth. This book reassures them they are not alone and provides the resources and motivation they need to claim their identities as Timeless Women.

The huge population of women who are currently moving through and out of the loosely-defined category of “middle age” are more interested in holding onto their feelings of youthfulness than they are in transitioning into “aging adults.” The result? Inner conflict, dollars wasted on beauty treatments, and much hidden fear and anxiety.

These middle-aged Baby Boomers (born 1946–1964) form the largest birth cohort in US history. However, despite this group’s strong interest in this topic, *this is not just a Baby Boomer book*. Nearly half of the 1200 women that Dr. Nancy O’Reilly surveyed said they feared growing older, including women from their 20s through their 80s. The age groups with the *very highest* rates of fear were women in their 20s and 30s. Today, there are over 90 million women age 20-64 in the United States. Another 22 million are ages 65 and older.

Initially concerned about her own aging process, Dr. O’Reilly started the WomenSpeak Project to investigate the aging concerns women develop at various stages in their lives. She found dramatic differences in women’s attitudes. On one end of the spectrum are women with aging anxieties who often rationalize, hide, or even lie about their feelings to family and friends. They tend to suffer more from physical illness and depression. They feel isolated then are embarrassed by their thoughts. They believe that outside support will help them age more successfully, but they lack the skills and resources to address their fears.

On the other end of the spectrum are those Dr. O’Reilly has christened “Timeless Women.” They are women who do not let age and circumstances define how they feel, who they are or who they want to be. They aren’t willing to sit back and be written off. Instead, these vibrant, amazing women find resources and connections with others to take charge of their lives and create their best possible journey through life. These women have much to offer their more fearful sisters.

The potential for a positive relationship between these two groups fueled the authors’ passion to tell stories from both sides, so fearful women would see they are not alone, and so Timeless Women could share their secrets, attitudes and techniques of empowerment. The resulting book profiles women across a full range of attitudes and experiences of growing older and offers extensive advice, self-help information and resources.

## **ABOUT THE BOOK**

*Timeless Women Speak: Feeling Youthful at Any Age* (working title) was originally self-published to garner feedback for final editing and to support Dr. O’Reilly’s fall speaking engagements including the graduation at Forest Institute of Professional Psychology; the Healthy Woman Retreat for St. John’s Regional Health Center; and the Most Influential Women Awards, all in the Missouri Ozarks region. Only 500 were printed with the intent of finding a publisher

and going mainstream within a year.

As it stands today, the book comprises 332 pages. Revisions for the published edition could include more complete sections on women in their Eighties and Nineties, broadening the audience. However, it could also be reduced within current sections if the page count does not meet popular readability guidelines. There are also plans to add value through the website and seminars in the form of supplemental workbooks and discussion manuals.

The book combines enlightening stories with professional commentary. Quantitative research, along with focus groups, was used to explore the depth and breadth of the subject and to develop the composite profiles of four women in each age group. They represent women's thoughts and feelings while reflecting the statistical proportions of women in each age group that work outside the home, are married, and have children. These stories give voice to women's normal fears so they no longer feel alone and can feel more comfortable in openly expressing their concerns and accepting help.

Practical tools that appeal to different age groups help encourage women to be confident in making changes in their lives. Every chapter includes:

- Inspiring stories
- Snapshots of typical emotions
- Things women wish others understood about them
- Suggestions for overcoming challenges
- Practical keys for vibrant energy and healthy emotional balance
- Secrets for staying mentally sharp
- Activities to build more rewarding relationships with self, family and friends

Additional resources in the book include a self-assessment quiz, details on becoming and finding a mentor or role model, ways to teach girls about women's history, a discussion guide, and more.

Another unique feature of this book is that each 10-year age cohort fills a separate chapter. Age-specific profiles allow readers to closely identify with their current experience, and assure them of the authenticity of the stories. Looking back to earlier decades helps readers remember past issues that may still be impact their feelings today, and to understand the experiences of younger friends, siblings and daughters. Stories of future years offer readers encouraging road maps for the years to come. For mothers and daughters, the book provides a

bridge to greater understanding between generations of women.

When women obsess over what's wrong with their lives, regardless of their age, they lose self-confidence and insight for what they can change. For example, no matter how carefully they diet and exercise, nip and tuck, age will eventually show. The reality is that appearance is far less important to most women than health, finances, relationships, and other age-related issues impacting the future. *Timeless Women Speak: Feeling Youthful at Any Age* helps put life's concerns into perspective and provide resources that can lead to a more enjoyable journey.

## TARGET READER

When women feel fearful, they read to validate their feelings and find solutions. *Timeless Women Speak: Feeling Youthful at Any Age* speaks to all women leading ordinary lives.

The target reader is age 20+ based on research with over 1200 women; nearly half admitted to fears of aging. Surprisingly, the percentage was higher for the under-40 group and lower for the over-40 women. In addition, more women acknowledged fear of aging than any other single concern such as health or money, except in the 60-69 group.

The stories grew out of the research and were separated by age decade – 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s, 70s, and 80s. Most women who read early copies said they turned first to their current age group, then read earlier and later chapters. They have also used it as a road map, thinking about where they've been and what is ahead.

The media and marketers bombard women relentlessly with the message that the ideal woman is young and beautiful. This makes most women uneasy and creates fear and a loss of self-confidence in many. Predictably, Baby Boomers are working to re-define aging as they begin moving out of the middle years. This book serves as a guide for how that can be accomplished.

Additional uses include:

- Supplemental reading for university Women's Studies and Gender Studies programs to provide a verité aspect to student experiences. University faculty may see this as a major read and encourage students to continue this very important research about women's perception of their aging processes. Drury University, Dr. O'Reilly's alma mater, has

recommended the book to adjunct professors in its Behavioral Sciences Department, has included it on a recommended research reading list for a summer class at Vanderbilt this summer, and has invited Dr. O'Reilly to become a guest lecture in the Psychology of Gender class

- Book groups will also find the stories engaging and a stimulus to interpersonal discussion. Focus group participants said, "No one has ever asked before," and continued talking with each other long past their scheduled meeting times. The Women Speak Project will encourage the formation of focus groups of both men and women sharing their views on aging in a society that does not reward or appreciate life experiences.
- Professionals who treat women that have concerns about their aging process are a secondary audience. Psychologists and counselors will find this book helps them to understand the women they treat, and its accessible writing style will encourage them to recommend it to their clients.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHORS**

Nancy D. O'Reilly, Psy.D. is a clinical psychologist who has worked with women in a strategic, problem-solving fashion for more than 25 years and has researched their perceptions and attitudes for 10 years. She captures her audience with humor and real-life stories to help women find the information they need to fulfill their potential.

Dr. O'Reilly writes frequently for a variety of publications, appears on radio and TV, and speaks at conferences nationally. She has presented her research at the *American Psychological Association Conference* and published it in the highly respected scientific magazine, *American Journal of Health Behavior*.

She continues to expand the WomenSpeak Project with a newly redesigned website that reaches thousands of women with free advice and a wealth of A-to-Z resources.

WomenSpeak.com, received nearly 70,000 hits per month in 2009. The site provides up-to-date information and self-help for the areas of Feeling Youthful, Health, Relationships and Finance, identified in the research as the major categories of women's concerns.

In the fall of 2008, Dr. O'Reilly began hosting a weekly Internet radio show on Web Talk Radio that was downloaded by nearly 100,000 listeners in March and is being promoted on more

than 400 terrestrial stations. Each week she interviews expert women who share inspiring stories and practical advice on everyday problems. This show tackles different issues and helps listeners laugh at their fears with candid answers about the full range of women's concerns.

Margaret Castrey is co-author and editor of *Timeless Women Speak: Feeling Youthful at Any Age* and also co-authored Dr. O'Reilly's published journal article and poster presentation. As an award-winning 30-year veteran journalist with experience in public relations, marketing, and writing for national print media, Castrey continues to work closely with Dr. O'Reilly on all of the Women Speak projects. She has spent a lifetime mentoring and advancing women through her membership in several women's organizations.

## **MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES**

As a nationally known women's issues expert, Dr. O'Reilly has been interviewed over the last two years by reporters from such publications as *Cosmo*, *aol.com*, *MSNBC.com*, *WebMD*, *For Women First*, *Woman's World*, *Women's Health*, *Better Homes and Gardens*, *USA Today*, *AARP.com*, *Figure Magazine*, *Real Simple*, *Self*, *Prevention*, *Balance*, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Baltimore Sun*, *Quick and Simple*, *Parenting*, *Real Simple*, *The Business Journal Online*, *Health Crossing*. The exposure in on-line articles and quotes has given her name recognition as an authority on women's issues nationwide, and Dr. O'Reilly will use these venues to promote the book.

Dr. O'Reilly's website, [www.WomenSpeak.com](http://www.WomenSpeak.com), received nearly 51,000 unique visitors in 2008, and is becoming a significant community for women on the subject of aging. We will use the website to announce the book's availability and to network with guests on the timeless WomenSpeak Radio show.

Each Timeless Women Speak Radio Show currently airs at four scheduled times each week in addition to unlimited Internet access as a Podcast. Listenership has climbed to over 28,000 per show and continues to grow, and the book will be promoted in every show. Importantly, the network has pledged \$15,000 worth of 30-second advertisements to promote the book on the company's 400 terrestrial radio stations, which Dr. O'Reilly is saving to for the commercial publication. Listenership on these stations averages 350,000 per quarter hour.

In addition, Dr. O'Reilly will seek radio interviews on the largest of the Web Talk

Radio's 400 terrestrial affiliate radio stations to promote the book. In addition, she travels regularly to Florida, New York and California for conferences and speaking engagements and will schedule personal appearances in bookstores when she travels as well as give interviews to radio and print media. She has been invited to speak at the Sons of the American Revolution Regional Conference in Nashville, Tennessee; the Business and Professional Women Missouri State Conference in St. Louis; the Women In Business Expo in Rogersville, Missouri; and the Everest College Graduation in Springfield. Planning for 2010 is underway and Dr. O'Reilly will seek to maximize her speaking opportunities. Dr. O'Reilly will also blog regularly on the WomenSpeak.com site as well as select additional women's websites.

In addition, the authors will pursue public relations avenues to promote the book including writing articles for women's magazines, pitching stories to national and area media, and distributing information through the WomenSpeak.com and DrNancyOReilly.com. The book will also be promoted in the regular WomenSpeak eNewsletter, which is distributed six times each year.

O'Reilly is also a member of the board of directors for a large network of health care providers. The Primary Care Network comprises over 60,000 primary care physicians, psychologists, and other health care professionals who see thousands of patients and offer resources on a daily basis. Women's health concerns are a major focus of this nationwide network. This book will be an excellent resource for women of all ages and could be used by Primary Care Network health care providers and their female patients. In addition, Dr. O'Reilly will build on the academic uses being made by Drury University to encourage other colleges and universities to include it on suggested reading lists.

In addition, the authors will promote the book through O'Reilly's memberships in the American Psychological Association, the American Counseling Association, the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists, and the National Wellness Association. Castrey will promote the book through her membership in Women in Communications, League of Women Voters and contacts with AAUW and Business & Professional Women.

## **COMPETITION**

No other book competing for shelf space acknowledges the emotional burden of aging that women carry starting as young as 20 years old. No other is divided by age categories to

allow women to examine their peers and the other groups around them. No other spans generations to help provide perspectives and understanding for mothers and daughters and other multi-cohort relationships. In contrast to all other books, *Timeless Women Speak: Feeling Youthful at Any Age* bases its information on extensive research. It addresses a wealth of well-founded concerns about getting older in today's culture and provides a starting point for open communication, motivation, self-help, and healing.

While research on other books indicates that the concept of coping with aging has broad appeal, few speak directly to fears associated with aging. *Timeless Women Speak: Feeling Youthful at Any Age* presents these fears by uniquely combining stories from candid “girl-talk” sessions, supportive research, and the professional perspective of a clinical psychologist. Here are some examples of available books and their Amazon rankings:

***What's Age Got to Do with It?: Living Your Healthiest and Happiest Life***, by Robin McGraw, Thomas Nelson, 2008. (240 pp) \$24.99 (Hardcover) (Amazon.com Sales Rank: #372 in Books)

Robin McGraw perceived the same need from women mourning their lost youth and struggling with their fear that Dr. Nancy noticed, but McGraw's book has received disappointing customer reviews and has been criticized as egotistical and self-serving. *Timeless Women Speak*, in contrast, tells heartfelt day-to-day stories from the lives of ordinary non-celebrity women and includes tips beyond physical and beauty care.

***Younger Next Year for Women: Live Strong, Fit, and Sexy—Until You're 80 and Beyond***, by Chris Crowley, M.D., Henry S. Lodge, foreword by Gail Sheehy. Workman Publishing, 2007. 380 pp, \$12.95 (paper) (Amazon.com Sales Rank: #779 in Books)

This book focuses primarily on the physical exercise and dietary habits needed to fight back inevitable physical deterioration. Reviewers suggest it is successful primarily through the appealing “male girlfriend” tone of writer Crowley, this revision of the authors' bestselling *Younger Next Year* (which targeted men). It focuses on the fact that aging can be slowed especially when the criteria include physical wellbeing rather than just how one looks. Unlike *Timeless Women Speak*, it devotes little space to women's emotional concerns.

***You: Staying Young: The Owner's Manual for Extending Your Warranty***, by Michael F.

Roizen, Mehmet C. Oz. Free Press, 2007, (432 pp), \$26.00 (hardbound) (Amazon.com Sales Rank: #509 in Books)

This book's focus on "staying young" taps into people's desire to slow the aging process. This volume, like so many, focuses primarily on the physical self with prescriptions for exercise and nutrition. *Timeless Women Speak* broadens the focus to the psychosocial realm, which has as much or more bearing on a woman's perception of her aging process as is, after all, what women spend more time talking and worrying about.

***As Time Goes By: Boomerang Marriages, Serial Spouses, Throwback Couples, and Other Romantic Adventures in an Age of Longevity***, by Abigail Trafford, Basic Books, 2009, (288 pp) \$25.95, (Hardcover)(Amazon.com Sales Rank: #651 in Books)

Trafford draws on interviews with hundreds of people over 50 to profile the period after midlife but before old age and explain the many facets for this age group. The author describes the changing measures of satisfaction and configurations that can lead to romantic satisfaction in relationships. *Timeless Women Speak* focuses on the experience of women of all ages and expands its scope beyond relationships into career, finances, health and aging itself.

***The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty Are Used Against Women***, by Naomi Wolff, Harper Perennial, 2002, 2nd edition. (368 pp), \$14.95 (paper). (Amazon.com Sales Rank: #4,473)

This was a bestseller when first published in 1991; it had major impact on women and still rings true today. Images of women in the media are even more distorted than they were 20 years ago, and eating disorders and premature sexualization of girls are rampant. Major industry efforts continue to cast women as flawed creatures in need of multiple products and procedures to correct their beauty defects. *Timeless Women Speak* not only profiles women who fear aging and the loss of their beauty; it also profiles women who refuse to be manipulated by those concepts and who create a new "game" with new rules that enable them to succeed as they grow older.

***The Gift of Years: Growing Older Gracefully***, by Joan Chittister. Bluebridge, 2008. (240 pp) \$19.95 (hardcover). (Amazon.com Sales Rank: #996 in Books)

Chittister takes spiritual positions from within organized religion, and as a feminist

Catholic she offers aphorisms and quotations about old age that can be dipped into, like ours, in whatever order the reader chooses. It offers a similar call to action, urging readers to recreate ourselves “in the world in a different way than the boundaries of our previous life allowed.” Unlike this book, which originates from a specific religious perspective, *Timeless Women Speak* has a non-denominational, societal focus.

***How to Live: A Search for Wisdom from Old People (While They Are Still on This Earth)*** by Henry Alford, Twelve, 2009, (272 pp) \$23.99 (hardcover) (Amazon.com Sales Rank: #1,523)

Like *Timeless Women Speak*, this book does not hold back from the sometimes grim realities of life at various ages, but permits a normalization of experience when readers see they are not alone in their pain. However, this book focuses exclusively on older people, whereas our book acknowledges the long process of aging that begins early in life.

***The Wisdom of Menopause: Creating Physical and Emotional Health and Healing During the Change***, 2nd Edition by Christiane Northrup, Bantam, 2006, 2nd edition (656 pp) \$20.00 (paper). (Amazon.com Sales Rank: #56 in Books)

Northrup’s outstandingly successful series takes a medical approach (in this case to menopause) although she does incorporate some mind/body/spirit approaches. *Timeless Women Speak* broadens its audience by focusing on the mind/body/spirit issues of getting older that affect women from their twenties onward, and by dealing with the relationship and societal issues that affect women’s experience of growing older in our society.

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## **CHAPTER SUMMARIES**

### **Introduction**

In her unique conversational style, clinical psychologist Dr. Nancy O'Reilly reveals pivotal moments of her own experience as a maturing woman that led her to begin research into women's perceptions of aging. As a health-conscious Baby Boomer, she counted on her brash manner and good looks, coupled with a rigorous diet and exercise regimen, to protect her from the ravages of aging. Disappointed to discover she was getting older anyway, she sought perspective on bookstore shelves. There too, she found disappointment. What she found either insulted her intelligence or left her with a bitter taste in her mouth. She decided then to find out for herself if other women shared her concerns about getting older, and how their attitudes and perceptions might affect their experience of aging.

### **Chapter 1: Getting the Message: Stay Young and Beautiful**

With humor and a broad perspective on the history of women, O'Reilly shows why so many women fear aging. Her research reveals that about half of women of every age group admit to being afraid of getting older, and this knowledge alone enables women to feel validated. Realizing that others have similar experiences and emotions can help women awaken to their choices and recognize their own fears of aging.

In addition, the women who are not afraid have much to teach their fearful sisters. Learning what has worked for others can help a woman feel empowered. This forms the core belief behind this book: women do not need to suffer alone. By sharing stories, women help each other feel vital, relevant and *important*, regardless of age.

This chapter defines positive aging, briefly describes the research project upon which the book stands and explains how the women's profiles in each age group were derived from survey comments. The major concerns of each age group are outlined, and a call to action issued for

women who are struggling with their aging process.

## **Chapter 2 – The 20s: Fearfully Young and Glowing**

A Twenties Woman finds herself thrilled—and terrified—to be “grown up” at last, more or less on her own, with the reins in hand, and facing life’s many challenges. Nearly 60 percent of women in their twenties expressed a fear of getting older, more than in any other age group. Too young and fresh to be particularly concerned about their appearance, they worry most about being able to establish independence, careers and relationships. Jessica, Melissa, Stephanie and Amanda tell their varied stories of careers, school, friends and family, and the challenges of developing life skills and a healthy self-image. They struggle to be taken seriously, to overcome competition with peers and supervisors, and try to make their way in male-dominated fields. The book provides an assessment of each woman’s strengths, challenges, and opportunities.

Dr. O’Reilly summarizes the actions and attitudes that enable each of these women to feel successful in life. The end of the chapter offers bulleted lists and advice: Health Tips for Twenties Women, Steps to Financial Responsibility, Keys to Healthy Emotions, Emotions of Twenties Women, What Twenties Women Want Others To Know About Them, Reinforcing Your Sense of Self, Get Rid of Stinken Thinken: It’s Making You Crazy! and Dr. Nancy’s Kick Butt Keys for Twenties Women.

## **Chapter 3 – The 30s: A Great Balancing Act**

A Thirties Woman is perfecting her balancing act. As she drives from work to family to community to soccer field and back, she may search the crowd for her own face. Although a majority of women consider the thirties the “best” age to be, Thirties Women are nearly as afraid of getting older as are Twenties Women, and they have a greater sense of the speed of life’s passing. No longer young but not yet middle aged, Lisa, Angela, Jennifer, and Michelle recount their experiences as working mothers, stay-at-home moms, and single women wondering if they will *ever* marry and have a family. Filling their schedules to the brim, they push hard, and may for the first time begin to deal with health limitations.

Friendships that were so important in the teens and twenties fall away as their sense of self evolves. Thirties Women judge themselves and others harshly, and their fears of appearing inadequate may prevent them from sharing their true feelings with their peers. As they focus on families and career, Dr. Nancy analyzes each woman’s strengths, challenges, and opportunities.

Dr. Nancy summarizes the actions and attitudes that enable each of these women to feel successful in life. This chapter concludes with bulleted advice and tips: Emotions of Thirties Women, How to Find a Mentor, How to Become a Mentor, How Not To Feel Invisible in Your Thirties, Things Thirties Women Wish Others Understood About Them, and Dr. Nancy's Kick Butt Keys for Thirties Women.

#### **Chapter 4 – The 40s: Stop the Clock, I Wanna Get Off!**

Entering the Forties marks the literal halfway point of most women's lives. Within this decade women arrive at a distinct impression that time is accelerating changes in physical appearance, family roles, intimate relations, and career. By applying life lessons, successful women in these years evaluate strengths and believe in the ability to directly affect their own lives. This sets the stage for years to come. If change is going to happen, it must begin now.

Forties Women express less fear of aging than their younger counterparts, and their reasons are more varied. Top concerns include health and money rather than appearance and family. Reflection builds pride of accomplishment and self-confidence. However, they also express dismay that society seems to place so little value on their experience. This frustrates and enrages these women. Looking forward, they more closely start identifying with their mothers' issues such as menopause and retirement. Marlene, Julia, Louise, and Kathy represent the different attitudes and life experiences of the early Forties Woman to one getting ready to exit the decade.

Dr. O'Reilly assesses each woman's strengths, challenges, and opportunities and she outlines strategies that will enable each to feel successful. This chapter concludes with bulleted advice and tips: Perimenopause Symptoms, What Forties Women Want, Healthy and Oh So Hot, Emotions of Forties Women, Common Symptoms of Depression, Mirror, Mirror on the Wall, It Hurts: Surviving Love and Loss, What Forties Women Want Others To Know About Them, Career and Money, Live the Life You Want, and Dr. Nancy's Kick Butt Keys for Forties Women.

#### **Chapter 5 – The 50s: Finding Philosophy – Me, or God, or What?**

A Fifties Woman realizes she is more than halfway through her ride. The way she feels inside no longer remotely matches the way she looks on the outside. Still filled with vibrancy

and vitality, members of the Baby Boom flatly refuse to feel old and are reinventing themselves. Many have begun to relish “me” time and are cultivating their personal philosophies. They have fewer concerns with grown children, but aging parents are becoming challenging.

Sarah, Ruth, Betsey, and Jane tell their stories of menopause, changing relationships, sexual identity, and anxiety over financing retirement. Their empty nests refill, they learn to nurture their changing bodies, they find renewed joy after divorce, and they reach out to their women friends without guilt.

As each woman tells of exploring her new roles and freedom, Dr. O’Reilly analyzes her strengths, challenges, and opportunities. She summarizes the actions and attitudes that enable each of these women to regain their sense of energy, strength and success in life. This chapter concludes with bulleted advice and tips: What to Expect After Menopause, Emotions of Fifties Women, Overcoming Health Fear Paralysis, What Fifties Women Want Others To Know About Them, Financial Habits to Establish, Ways Women Can Get Together, and Dr. Nancy’s Kick Butt Keys for Fifties Women.

## **Chapter 6 – The 60s: Finally, Me First**

The Sixties Woman does not feel “older” until she catches a glimpse of herself in the mirror, and she vigorously rejects society’s negative view of older women. Although most have gotten over their fears of aging, the idea of approaching seventy fills them with disbelief. They certainly do not feel as old as their mothers were at this age. They want to continue strong and energetic, which often leads them to exercise, eat well, and achieve better health and wellbeing than ever before.

Sally, June, Evelyn and Mary tell of feeling balance and partnership with their spouses, coming into their true power and wisdom, excelling in their careers, or opting for a single life. Rather than slowing down, they are putting their lives in high gear and finding joy as they let their passion and purpose drive their choice of activities. They are less concerned about what others think and eager to say, “It’s time for me.”

Dr. Nancy summarizes the actions and attitudes that enable each of these women to feel young at heart and successful in life, and offers suggestions of strategies to meet their challenges. The chapter closes with bulleted tips and advice: How To Reinvent, Re-fire and Inspire, Sixties Finances: Making Up For Lost Time, Emotions of Sixties Women, What Sixties Women Want

Others To Know About Them, Keeping Your Mind Sharp, Age-Related Memory Loss or Dementia, Ways Women Can Get Together, Health Priorities for Sixties Women, and Dr. Nancy's Kick Butt Keys for Sixties Women.

### **Chapter 7 – The 70s+: Welcoming Wisdom and Loving Life**

Inside, a Seventies Woman knows that her value and contribution to her family and community continue to grow. But at the same time, there is a sense that society at large may be losing interest in her. Often sidelined or ignored in groups, she handles this annoying lack of respect with humor or philosophy, but wastes little energy fighting it. Despite the common stereotypes of aging, most Seventies Women still feel healthy and strong, considering. Their minds are sharp and they are interested in their lives and futures. They cherish their continually growing wisdom.

Dorothy, Virginia, Barbara, and Shirley tell of meeting the enemy of aging, surviving the loss of a spouse, and finding renewed passion and purpose to give back to the world. Interest in the younger generations, including their own grandchildren can prompt greater involvement in politics and community life. They are surprised by health challenges, their own long lives, and by how young they still feel inside despite waning energy levels. They often feel confused: Just how is a Seventies Woman supposed to act? To dress? And what about these wrinkles?

Dr. Nancy discusses each one's preparations to care for herself as she continues to get older and her ways of feeling successful and youthful, and she offers professional suggestions for meeting their challenges. The chapter closes with bulleted tips and advice: Keeping Your Mind Sharp, Ways Women Can Get Together, How Seventies Women Feel Useful, Maintaining Healthy Relationships, What Seventies Women Want Others to Know, Emotions of Seventies Women, Age-Related Memory Loss or Dementia, and Dr. Nancy's Kick Butt Keys for Seventies Women.

### **Chapter 8 – Older, Savoring Life, and Pursuing Happiness**

The Eighties Woman is amazed to find she is this old. Her lifetime experience of changing technologies has been matched by the changes she has seen in women's status and roles. Living through so much change has given Eighties Women a philosophical view, a self-sufficient attitude, and a willingness to speak their minds. Hard work has been their expected

norm all their lives, and they continue to improve the world through church, politics, and other service. They derive great satisfaction from feeling useful.

Mildred, Nora, Doris, and Helen tell of feeling youthful even after surpassing a woman's average life expectancy, surviving sorrow in all its forms, and overcoming their reticence about discussing personal issues. When they stay connected to friends, keep stretching themselves and avoid surrendering to fears, they remain interested in their own lives and interesting to others. Even though health challenges may cramp their style, they continue to be involved as much as they can.

The chapter ends with bulleted tips and advice: Emotions of Eighties Women, Maintaining Caring Connections, What Eighties Women Want Others to Know About Them, Ways Women Get It Together, Age-Related Memory Loss or Dementia, The Plans No One Likes to Think About, Keeping Your Mind Sharp, and Dr. Nancy's Kick Butt Keys for Eighties Women.

## **Chapter 9 - Women Living, Loving and Laughing Longer**

Women are tired of being manipulated through their fears so that they will buy products. They want to succeed at showing vitality and to feel valued at any age. A quick self-test in this chapter helps a woman evaluate her life satisfaction and identify any areas in which she wants change. This chapter includes brief, straightforward information about women's health risks, things they can do, and inspiration from other women who have decided to take control of their own health. Simply by changing their mindsets and their self-talk, they can build better health and reduce their risk.

Another self-help approach is to open up to other women to give and receive support. Prioritizing time with women friends pays off with fun as well as reducing anxiety and depression. This chapter describes a variety of strategies for building a women's network, from starting a movie or book club, finding a walking partner, joining an existing organization, finding a mentor in the workplace, becoming a mentor in the community, and volunteering. Less social options include counseling, psychotherapy, journaling, meditation and spiritual practice.

This chapter offers ways to improve self-image. It lists ways to fight invisibility by learning about women's brave history and teaching this history to their daughters, and finding and becoming role models and mentors. Dr. O'Reilly closes with key checklists for improving

the four areas that are most important to women as they get older: relationships, finances, health and visibility, which includes charisma, respect, and value).

## **Resources**

The resources section includes instructions for starting a women's discussion group, sample discussion questions, a summary of the research for the major aging concerns by age group, and an index geared toward medical professionals and educators using this as a supplemental guide.

## **SUMMARY POSITIONING STATEMENT**

*Timeless Women Speak: Feeling Youthful at Any Age* is a unique book targeting the millions of women in their 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s, 70s, and 80s who have expressed fear of growing older. This information is derived from 10 years of research with over 1200 participants and the 25 years of professional counsel from Dr. Nancy O'Reilly. Using fascinating stories gleaned from ordinary women and expert commentary, the book is both comforting and helpful.

The book stands apart from others on the subject of aging because it uncovers and addresses unspoken, life-long anxieties that women feel as early as their twenties. Chapters are separated into age cohorts for easy reading. Unlike other books, *Timeless Women Speak* does not pigeonhole aging issues into the typical categories of diet, exercise, and beauty. Instead, Dr. O'Reilly gets women to reveal true concerns that are often buried deep inside and she skillfully offers strategies for overcoming dissatisfactions in those areas.