
Career Changes at Midlife

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Career Changes at Midlife - Finding the Career You Were Meant to Have

Women finding themselves at the stage labeled "midlife" (read 40 and up) may be in a tumultuous period of transition that can be confusing and scary. Menopause, empty nest syndrome, divorce, aging parents, downsizing, etc. can come hand in hand with yet another transition: a career challenge.

Midlife women should first realize that they are not alone. The MacArthur Foundation study "Midlife in the United States" found that 36% of women have experienced a midlife crisis by age 50. Many of them are looking to new careers as part of their solution to how life is unfolding at this time.

Divorce often adds to the need to find a career because of distressing financial realities. The MacArthur study found that the divorce rate for women in their 40s is higher than that of those in any other age range. And if they have spent years at home raising their children these women find themselves without "marketable" skills and are likely to panic.

Another reason women change careers at midlife is because they are looking for fulfillment. Some may have already had a successful career or finished putting the kids through school. They are ready for more: possibly work that gives back to their community or expresses more of their creative spirit.

- How to Make a Successful Career Change During Midlife

Remember that you are a veteran: you have been through several life transitions before reaching this one. Like any growth period in your life there is bound to be fear, stress and confusion. Here's the great part about getting through this one: you get to use all the life skills and wisdom you have been accumulating to make it work.

Therefore, it is important take the time and space to reflect on this life-altering decision. Let your choices be less driven by financial need, and be more about your talents, desires and life purpose; in short a decision that makes you feel great.

Again, remember that you are not alone. The Pathfinder Center reports that more women over 40 change careers than those in their 20s and 30s combined. And because of the demand for career transition services, there are many resources to explore: books and tests about aptitude, interest, values, style and personality. The possibilities can be overwhelming.

Here is where Career Transition Coaches come in. At minimum they will help you with a thorough evaluation of the physical, emotional, financial and professional aspects of your life. But if you want the best, you want a coach who will help you discover what hasn't worked for you. And that coach should be a guide to help you ingrain the beliefs, attitudes about life and yourself that will lead to the kind of prosperity you deserve.

You will want someone at your side as you consider taking huge risks in order to step into a bigger idea of yourself. It means creating new habits and a new self-image. Imagine someone standing with you who sees the greatness in you that you cannot yet believe in.

- Why Midlife Career Changes are Working

While women at midlife may face obstacles in returning to the workforce or starting a new career, they are making it work. The number of women making more than \$100,000 has tripled in the last decade. And women in their midlife years are poised to add to these numbers because they have the skills, confidence and desire to pursue their dreams.

Statistics show that women's ability to fulfill their dreams increases after age 50. So there is a lot of reason for optimism. Take heart and embrace the challenge.

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