

Praise for *Creating Magic in Midlife*

A licensed clinical social worker, Freeman has put together a guide to help baby boomers navigate the rest of their lives with ease and confidence. Key areas of love, work, money, and health are addressed via Q&As; the answers all revolve around using one's own instincts and intuition through the three "syns"—synchronicity, synergy, and synthesis. Freeman believes that readers should follow their dreams but also build a sound financial portfolio and a good medical team. As enjoyable to browse as it is to read from cover to cover, this book is recommended.

LIBRARY JOURNAL

Karla Freeman, a therapist, draws on her many years in practice to address the issues aging boomers face.

PUBLISHERS WEEKLY

Addressing the key areas of love, work, money and health, Freeman skillfully guides readers on a journey toward fulfillment in the second half of life. She offers well-researched advice with humor and sensitivity. A list of resources is included, as well as an invitation to readers to relate their stories and experiences.

BOOKREPORTER.COM

Creating Magic in Midlife is one of those books you want to refer to often. Karla Freeman offers a compassionate

yet life-opening guide. I love this book because she shows us exciting ways to embrace fulfillment now. Karla takes you on a road to your highest self. You can be assured of solid information and uplifting ideas.

BARBARA MARX HUBBARD

PRESIDENT, FOUNDATION FOR CONSCIOUS EVOLUTION

AUTHOR OF *CONSCIOUS EVOLUTION, EMERGENCE, AND THE REVELATION*

If you are at midlife and want to ride a positive wave to your future, I recommend reading Karla Freeman's book. *Creating Magic in Midlife* gives many empowering messages and is filled with practical ways to have an even better life in the second half.

KEN DYCHTWARD, PHD

AUTHOR OF *AGE WAVE, HEALTHY AGING, AND AGE POWER*

Written with insight, wisdom, and humor, this book is an indispensable companion for our journey through midlife. Rarely have I found a voice so authentic, helpful, and encouraging. Karla Freeman gives us heart for the journey ahead.

DIANNE SKAFTE, PHD

PAST ACADEMIC DEAN, PACIFICA GRADUATE INSTITUTE

AUTHOR OF *LISTENING TO THE ORACLE*

Creating Magic in Midlife is a clear, concise guide to finding fulfillment and meaning in the second part of our lives. Addressing the key areas of love, work, money, and health, Karla Freeman skillfully addresses how midlife offers a rich opportunity to actualize dreams with our feet firmly on the ground. This book is very readable and offers helpful examples and exercises that can move us

toward a more satisfying, meaningful life.

JOHN AMODEO, PhD

**AUTHOR OF *THE AUTHENTIC HEART: AN EIGHTFOLD PATH TO
MIDLIFE LOVE AND LOVE & BETRAYAL***

I recommend this book because it asks and answers important questions while it guides you in discovering your own path. *Creating Magic in Midlife* is a book you will use a lot. Filled with information and inspiration, it can be your guide to facing the future with confidence. Karla Freeman gives you the tools you need.

DR. VINCENZO CONIGLIARO, MD, PSYCHIATRIST

**MEDICAL DIRECTOR, TRAINING INSTITUTE FOR MENTAL
HEALTH, AND PROFESSOR EMERITUS, FORDHAM SCHOOL OF
SOCIAL SERVICE**

Karla Freeman takes us on a pleasurable, illuminated walk through the rich terrain of midlife. She points out the treasures and opportunities on the way. Her wisdom and awareness will give your journey a magical touch. A trip worth taking.

SIDNEY LANIER

**COFOUNDER OF CONSCIOUS EVOLUTION COMMUNITY
EPISCOPAL PRIEST, POET, AND FOUNDER OF FINCA GROWTH
CENTER, SPAIN**

I find your style very comfortable, very helpful, and engaging. You make me interested in what you have to say and provide many useful tips and guidelines without being preachy. Thanks again for sharing it with me!

RABBI STEVE COHEN

B'NAI BRITH CONGREGATION

I was in one of the inevitable slumps we all experience, read some of Karla's book, and found myself reenergized and lifted right out of the blues. This work is easy to read, wisely written, filled with meaningful exercises, and is most encouraging of guiding us to become what we all want to be: fulfilled, happy, and accepting and at peace with ourselves and our world.

HALLIE ANDERSEN
COUNSELOR, MOTHER

This book succeeds in making our approach to the threshold of midlife smoother and more conscious. I was particularly moved by the compassion that kept coming through in her searching questions and passionate answers.

DAVID RICHO
AUTHOR OF *HOW TO BE AN ADULT*

Creating Magic in Midlife

101

QUESTIONS
& ANSWERS
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RELATIONSHIPS,
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Karla Freeman,
MSW, LCSW

PHILOGENESIS PUBLISHERS
SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA

Creating Magic in Midlife: 101 Questions & Answers
to Reinvent Your Work, Relationships, & Life!

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Profile of
Karla Freeman,
MSW, LCSW

Since 1972, Karla Freeman has devoted her career as a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW) to raising awareness and developing programs on cutting-edge psychological themes of our time—including personal empowerment, body-centered psychotherapy, and conscious and joyful aging. She maintains a private practice in Santa Barbara, California, focusing on individual, group, family, and couples therapy as well as serving on the psychology faculty at Santa Barbara City College’s Adult Education division. Karla facilitates workshops and seminars nationally and internationally on topics such as *Midlife and Beyond*, *Surviving the Elder Crisis*, *Mind-Body Therapy*, *Healing From Trauma*, and *Joyful Living*.

As a native of Brooklyn, New York, Karla received her Bachelor of Arts in Education from Brooklyn College. She served as an elementary schoolteacher for four years before undertaking postgraduate work at Fordham University. She was awarded a Masters in Social Work from Fordham’s prestigious School of Social Service. Additionally, her advanced training includes five years of psychoanalytic psychotherapy coursework at the Training

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Institute for Mental Health in New York City as well as gestalt therapy training at the Esalen Institute in Big Sur, California. Karla obtained her body-centered psychotherapy certification from the Radix Institute in Ojai, California, and completed training in the Somatic Experiencing training in healing trauma.

In 1995, Karla traveled to India and spent two months studying and videotaping interviews of Tibetan Buddhists exiled there. Upon returning to the United States, she produced a video, study guide, and lecture series titled *Who Are Tibetan Elders and What Do They Have to Offer Us?* She also produced an internationally viewed video titled *My Challenge with Alzheimer's Disease,* the first video produced from the point of view of a patient. Karla was a radio talk show host for two years on KCSB public radio discussing current events in psychology.

Karla's professional memberships include the National Association of Social Workers, National Speakers Association, and American Society on Aging. She has served on the educational committee of the Alzheimer's Organization. Karla is committed to providing compassion and enlightenment to everyone she interacts with—both personally and professionally.

Introduction

I declare midlife to be magical. I invite you to join me and many others living a midlife of high energy and fulfillment even better than the first half. Ready?

Since you have this book, you have begun! You are ready for a positive shift. You have taken the first step in opening up to exciting, new ways of making choices. What will the shift in your life look like? That's hard to say. Finding out is part of the adventure. The important thing is, you are not alone. This book can be your companion and guide as you discover how to live with more grace and gentleness.

I suggest you read Section One first, but after that, flip around to any questions that interest you. Section One explores the “syn” theory of creating magic. The syn theory introduces you to the parts of yourself that guide decisions and leads you toward a new, energizing way of being. I propose a way to approach making choices that goes beyond the simply mental. Once you begin to use the tools in Section One, you will feel more connected to your inner wisdom. You will know more clearly what is right for you.

Take your time. This is a book you can return to again and again. You will find out which questions are impor-

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tant for you and how to pace yourself. If you feel lighter at heart and more energized, you will know you are in the magic. You will be on the path toward your highest dreams, unfulfilled visions, and new, expansive vistas.

I wish you a magical journey.

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Diane Skafte's guidance went beyond the ordinary. Thank you for the times you saw more than I did why this book was important to write.

Everyone should have a neighbor and friend to run to for a word or a walk to keep you going. For me that person was Erica Wylie. Erica's husband, Todd, was a kind friend too, as were their dogs, Calvin and Sophie.

I will try to name everyone who contributed along the way, but I know the list won't be complete. I am grateful to Hallie Andersen, Gloria Arenson, Al Beyerle, Brock Brockway, Ann Cameron, Vincenzo Conigliaro, Eldon Edwards, Esteban and Tressa Hollander, Barbara Marx Hubbard, Jocelyn Kramer, Norma Kutzner, Rita Langman, Sidney Lanier, Melanie Lathim, Marta Martine, John Norris, Mary Sheridan, Arlene Stepputat, Judi and Harry Weisbart, Leslie Westbrook, and Roberta and Eli Zimmerman. Thanks also to Santa Barbara Adult

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SECTION ONE:

The Magic of Your Mission

1. How do you define midlife and why bother?



This question has a simple answer, but I've found that it takes many people by surprise: midlife is the time in the middle of our lives. No, I'm not kidding! Since we usually look at the numbers to tell us how long we have left, let's start there—defining midlife by the numbers.

People are living longer than ever before. The fastest growing segment of the population is the oldest: the group over 85. By 2050, some predict we will have many more 100-year-olds, almost 1 million! Would you have considered living that long when you were 20? Probably not. Contemplating life at 90 or better can make 50 seem young.

So if you were to live to 90 or 101, when would you say midlife begins? Let's say the midpoint is 45–50, then expand out 20 or so years from early to later midlife. From that point of view, midlife is 45-ish to 70-ish. The second half of your life could literally just be beginning!

Now that the numbers are out of the way, let's address the “why bother?” part of the question. What does it mean to be in midlife? If you're a 50-something baby boomer, you've had significant life experience. You can look back over your life and be happy or sad or disappointed or excited—probably depending on the day you're asked.

But seeing yourself with the potential for living another 30–50 years can empower your choices. Do you want a second career, a new life abroad, a chance to become a

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writer or an actor? You have the time. Feeling this potential and knowing there's half a lifetime ahead of you beats sitting and staring at your wrinkles.

I call it the *Midlife Return*. Midlife is a time to *return* to your hopes, dreams, longings, creative yearnings, and yet-to-be-explored self. At midlife, you can do things you haven't done yet—and because you have more life experience, you can even have more fun. You can give yourself a second chance. It might mean giving yourself a kick in the whatever to take your life seriously and get where you want to go.

You can make choices that give you strength and energy—or you can give up. Some of my clients don't know they've given up, though their conversation is filled with remarks like *What's the point? I'm over the hill. Who would want me? I had my chance and blew it*—expressions of despair and hopelessness and resentment. They tell themselves, *That's life. That's the fact. I AM over the hill. It's too late, baby, it's too late. I tried and failed. Or I didn't try because . . . yada yada yada.*

Who do you want to be: someone who is finding the way through unexamined barriers or someone who says, *Oh, well, I can't, it's too late, fulfillment isn't for me?* Become the person you want to be, and you can find magic in midlife—like so many are.

2. Is midlife different now?



This is the era when the baby boomers are turning 50. Oprah and the Beach Boys, our neighbors and friends, a tidal wave of us! Simultaneously, we are determining what midlife has to offer, and as boomers usually do, we're rebelling against the stereotypes of aging.

As we kick and scream about growing older, we haven't completely forgotten those fateful words from the '60s—"Never trust anyone over 30." Now that we are well over 30, our new rallying cry is becoming "Let's stay young as long as possible." For some of us, we're not ready to join senior citizen groups, read the AARP newsletter, or buy long-term care insurance. We don't plan to be put away in "those places" when we get older. Surely there's something better in store.

When we make decisions in life, we boomers look to our core spiritual and personal values for guidance, not to what others tell us to do. Most of us are seekers and searchers. Many of us like to figure things out for ourselves and are perennial rebels—don't tell us how to be. Seeking and doing things our own way define us and work to our benefit. We want to choose and know our options.

While some midlife people act like adolescents who don't think of consequences, some of us have found creative ways to have our cake and eat it too. We find ways to explore new territories without giving up our hard-won security and connections.

After all, we do have a plentitude of choices today that our parents' generation could only dream about. Many of

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us are involved in the adventure of reinventing ourselves, finding new careers and new loves, moving closer to children or grandchildren, and working or volunteering for groups we truly believe in. We have empowered ourselves more than any previous generation to make conscious choices that give us both excitement and contentment.

3. What do you mean by Midlife Magic?



What it is NOT is spending all your time analyzing, thinking, waiting, wishing, and putting off until you're 65. Midlife Magic is being alive and open and excited about your day, your life, your contribution, your opportunities. It's recognizing that you have the whole world before you.

By now you've spent many years climbing the ladder, uncovering your true self, finding out what you like and what you're good at. If you look in the mirror, you know who you are. There aren't too many surprises left! If you are artistic, guess what—you are artistic. If you like adventure, you will probably always like adventure. If you like simple meals, you probably won't crave gourmet cuisine. Is that okay? Why not? And besides, why waste time trying to be someone else?

Midlife Magic is about making decisions that rely on your wisdom, trusting your instincts because of what you know, proceeding in relationships because you know what to trust in others, and moving ahead with a light heart because you have faith that your dreams can come true.

In the first half of our lives, we spend a lot of time figuring out who we are through life's lessons. We had plenty of tools to help us from the field of psychology—classes, therapy, books, even radio and TV shows. But now that we have a working knowledge about life and of who we think we are, I suggest we need some new ways of growing that match our midlife selves. Besides, there have