

# WOMEN STARTING OVER:

## *Six Ways to Step into a New Vision of Who You Are*

By Charlene Proctor, Ph.D.

Last week a friend invited me to lunch at her house. This was no ordinary lunch venue. The setting was her perennial garden next to a 40-acre bog, lovingly grown with hoards of bee balm, shasta daisies, and bundles of lazy clematis climbing up trellises nearby. Not to be outdone by the foliage, the butterfly kingdom made a colorful appearance, as if it had been ordered with the entrée. It was an unfettered canvas of summer painted on a perfect Michigan afternoon, complete with Pimm's, good wine and 15 creative and insightful women who were as empowered as they come.

As easily as the Pinot, stories poured forth about triumph from experiencing family life in war-torn Europe, metaphors on life from a penguin's point of view, and how to survive the current real estate market. These women, ages 40 to 75, were a powerful bunch. Many had started new careers. One woman worked for a government agency focused on providing energy alternatives to increase women's productivity and survival in struggling world economies. Others left the corporate environment to become yoga instructors, manufacture luggage tags, or start home-based businesses.

What makes women like this succeed in the second half of their lives?

By watching empowered women in my own community, I've learned something about staying on purpose and having the courage to define your own life, especially after the age of 40. Here are six ways to "stay on purpose" and step into a greater vision of who you are:

### 1. MANAGE WORK AND LIFE LIKE A POWERFUL WOMAN.

Manage work and life like a powerful woman. Drop your meek little girl voice and open that throat chakra to showcase your wisdom and intelligence. Use your intuition regularly in your decision-making. Don't let anyone convince you that right-brained activity is without merit. See the value in being female! If you've been the head of human resources in a Fortune 500 company and want to knit for a living, then do it. If shifting tracks pours your joy into what you love, feel good about it and make no apologies.

### 2. BE A STRATEGIC PHILANTHROPIST.

Be a strategic philanthropist. Do something for yourself and for women everywhere. Involve community service in your idea. Spend some time leading from the heart, not just your head. Break away from those command-and-control or patriarchal-dominated work cultures. If you've been operating in the shadow of male-oriented work values, create a new work environment that is refreshing and female oriented. Be firmly seated in female values. You'll be glad you did. (To learn more about female-centered values, see [www.thegoddessnetwork.net](http://www.thegoddessnetwork.net) and click on Goddess Values!)

### 3. SHED THE OLD STORY.

Many of us picked our careers to please Dad and the men in our life. The New Story: after 40, we finally embrace our unique capabilities. We're wiser and figure out where our talents are best served. Don't be afraid to go for it!

### 4. HAVE COURAGE TO SHIFT GEARS BUT STAY IN BALANCE.

Everyone will tell you you're nuts to leave a sure thing for the unknown. Follow your intuition—it's what women do best—but channel an equal amount of mental energy and be mindful of balance. When in doubt, surrender to the unknown and don't push too hard to find an answer in 20 minutes or less. You'll eventually have a soft landing as long as you have faith.

### 5. MAKE SPACE FOR NEW OPPORTUNITY BY MOVING FORWARD MENTALLY AND EMOTIONALLY.

Personal growth happens when we make space for new opportunities. Let go of the past. Stop making wallpaper out of rejection letters and turndowns. Make peace with everyone and stop allowing old, nega-



tive programs to dictate your current reality. Have a positive vision of who you are and affirm it regularly!

### 6. DEFINE A HIGHER PURPOSE AND STICK TO IT.

Changing the world takes time, but develop the discipline to do it. Get up every day and allow your inner light to blast forth, whether it is in front of a yoga class full of children or through written articles about how we are more like nature than we think. The energy of purpose is like a garden—it grows within us but we must give it direction and attention. It's a gift given to us before we even get here. It's our own special rendition of an individual spark of divine power.

Empowered people have passion. Getting there takes having confidence to embrace what we know...and making a conscious choice to enlighten others with our experience, knowledge, and observations. We reach inner peace when we understand that we help everyone consciously evolve by embracing our own perspective. Our purpose, when we're comfortable with its simplicity, is to inspire others to step into a better rendition of life. A vision that cultivates our own wonderful and unique purpose in the process.

Fill yourself with purpose today, and remember you can enrich your own experience and change the world, too. Today in your own life, celebrate your talents. Allow more mental and emotional space to express your purpose, power, and peace that come from accumulated wisdom. When you allow these ideas to drive your life, you will expand your own vision of what you can become. Be of purpose. Remember: believe in who you are and what you can do!

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