



Research - Executive/Professional Women Leaders in the Prime of Their Lives - 40s, 50s, 60s and 70s

This study will explore the experiences of women in professional, corporate, business, social and political leadership who are in their 40s, 50s, 60s and 70s.

What's in it for you?

I want to tell you a bit about me and why I am doing this research, but first let me tell you the answer to your "What's in it for me?" question that we all have when we are asked to participate in something.

Your participation will provide two things for you: First it will open your head and heart to your own experience giving you insight into who you are and what you are experiencing at this time in your life. It will provide an amplification of your authenticity and your power as a woman in the middle third of your life with all of your experience, wisdom and influence. It will invite self-compassion, an embrace of your womanhood and inspire action as you move forward at this profoundly female time in your life.

Secondly, it will give you the opportunity to share your experience, wisdom and influence as a guiding light to women coming along behind you.

Thank you for sharing yourself with me and ultimately with the women who will read the work once it is completed.

Please note: I will keep your identity private by anonymizing your personal details.

My Why: Why do I want to do this research and write the book?

I have a few great professional loves: working as a coach with senior executive women is one. Why? Because I believe that the world is a better place when we have women's voices at leadership tables, because women are intelligent, empathetic, collaborative and bring significant value to the conversation as leaders.

Women, all women, face enormous opportunities and not a few challenges at this midlife time in their lives. I am passionate about partnering with these women and empowering them to reach even greater professional and personal satisfaction and fulfillment.

In our youth obsessed and (in most environments and institutions) male dominated culture women are discouraged from bringing attention to themselves as midlife women. Women in midlife and women experiencing perimenopause/menopause are self-labeled and labeled by others, either consciously or unconsciously, as “old”. And, *old* for women can mean being marginalized and invisible. In this day and age of people living longer and living healthier, the middle of our lives is *anything but old*. I want to help women reframe this part of their lives and embrace the power and influence that they have.

Another love is research. Why? Because I enjoying following my curiosity, learning, getting excited, connecting dots, and then passing along the information and helping my clients and other women using what I have learned.

And yet another love is the study of the psychology of adult development, especially the middle third of our lives, otherwise know as midlife. Why? I fell in love with understanding it when I was in my 20s. Learning about the psychological, emotional, spiritual, sociological, and physical aspects of the midlife journey for women has occupied much of my time and interest over the past few decades. Now being old enough to have experienced a good piece of my own midlife journey, I enjoy helping women understand what they are experiencing and providing guidance and motivation to explore the impact of their experiences on their lives and careers - to help them get clarity and make good choices.

At least once every few weeks a woman will tell me that she feels she is losing either her mind or her mojo. She feels confused, frustrated and sometimes a little afraid. She also feels excited, empowered, and ready to take on the world.

Midlife is can be a complicated time for women. Women often feel that they are running out of time to accomplish all that they want to accomplish. The internal message is often that, “I have not done enough, I am not enough.” It is further complicated by menopause, by our ageist culture that makes embracing this profound time of life anathema to most women, and by the fact that women in professional positions of leadership and influence often just don't have the luxury of taking the time or have the internal and external resources to fully embrace what is happening beyond simply surviving it. This time of life spans about 30 years and encompasses five distinct and important stages of development. An understanding of these stages and internal changes opens doors to greater options and possibilities.

There are a bazillion books about, for, and by women in midlife. I have read just about all of them; at least most of the ones written in English. There is very little research and writing that focuses specifically on women leaders in midlife. I have managed to find almost a half-dozen articles, many of them about transition and one about the impact on women's professional development. There are some books about midlife that include a brief mention of senior executive women. Alternatively, much has been written by male authors about male leaders confronting midlife and how it impacts their leadership journey. Some of these male authors claim that there just aren't enough senior women leaders to do a significant study. Others ignore the question all together.

I want to fill this gap.

What impact do I hope to have?

I want to be able to understand first-hand women's experiences to further empower the women having these experiences and to share them as inspiration and guidance for other women. I get questions like: "How is that I love my job and hate my job at the same time and that I want to run away to a cabin on the beach all alone?", "How do I deal with hot flashes in the boardroom?", "How do I deal with my mood swings and my sometimes inexplicable, out-of-proportion anger or rage?", "Something in me is shifting and I am not sure what it is - but it is an itch that I really want to scratch!", "I have a longing to do something more purposeful and meaningful and I am not sure what that is for me", "My manager says I need to change my attitude or my position will be in jeopardy", "My husband wants to know where his wife has gone!" Have you had these thoughts and experiences? I would love to hear about them.

I want to more deeply understand how women in visible and influential positions of corporate, social and political leadership navigate this terrain and arrive at - or don't, a feeling of fulfillment and satisfaction. I want to share this deep understanding with other women so that their journeys are easier and more comprehensible. I want to provide a source of information that is helpful, that is inspiring, and that gives women permission to acknowledge these developmental milestones and fully embrace themselves.

As of late, I have also been communicating with a group in the UK who are discussing with and offering training to companies to address menopause in the workplace. Many companies are taking them up on it. The group is had their second annual "Menopause in the Workplace Conference" this year. I would love to hear *your* thoughts on this topic.

The topic of menopause is now being addressed by US and UK television and radio. A recent week long special on Good Morning America discussed the impact of menopause on women's experience of self as well as relationships and the workplace. It is finally a topic whose time has come. Please join me in this important research!

The process:

The research will include an online survey, one-on-one interviews and some discussion groups. I plan to include about 200 - 250 women in my research. I am looking for women in leadership or executive positions in any industry and sector who are in their 40s, 50s, 60s and 70s. I very much appreciate your participation.

If you are ready to begin here is the link to the survey: <https://form.jotform.com/72405564184154> (If this link doesn't work for you please copy and paste it into your browser.) In the survey you will have the opportunity to opt-in for an interview.

I will keep your identity private by anonymizing your personal details.

Thank you,

Barbara Mark, Ph.D.

barbara@atimeofmyown.com

415-608-2324

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