

David
Hey, Lynn. How are you doing today?

Lyn
I'm doing well, thanks. Having a good one? The sun is shining. It's warm, so it's a good day.

David
Where does this podcast find you today?

Lyn
I'm in Peekskill, New York. It's actually a city on the Hudson River, about an hour north of New York City.

David
Oh, and when did you move there?

Lyn
Almost four years ago. We were sort of the post pandemic refugees from New York City and primarily to be closer to family. Oh.

David
I'm sorry, is that where you're from?

Lyn
Well, I was actually raised in Westchester County in Dobbs Ferry, a little further south, but my daughter and grandchildren live about ten minutes away from me and my sister and nieces and nephew and my brother continue to live in Dobbs Ferry. And when I moved here, my mom lived there. She's since passed away, but after being in quarantine, really wanting to be close to my family became the overriding desire of my life.

Lyn
So we did it.

David

I want to take a moment and just sort of talk through the trajectory of your life. Talk to me about what you were doing before. Accidental icon.

Lyn

So I have been a social worker for 47 years, and, prior to starting Accidental Icon, I was a professor at Fordham University. I worked in both our School of Law and our School of Social Work interdisciplinary education and practice was my specialized area. And so, yeah, that's pretty much what I did. I retired in 2019 from teaching after 20 years of it and started to do Accidental Icon full time, which when I was writing my memoir, How to Be Old, I was reflecting back to that moment.

Lyn

And that, I think, was when things started to go off the rails and for an accidental icon.

David

So talk to me a little bit about the accident of the accidental icon, how that began. And then you say off the rails. I'm curious about that.

Lyn

So because I, I was a social worker and, I worked in fields that often involved violence and trauma and institutions that were not always helpful. I would really need a remedy sometimes in order to continue my work, because burnout is a very prevalent occupational hazard. And for me, I would address it by going outside of my profession and immersing myself in some kind of creative experience.

Lyn

A creative writing class. I've taken improv classes. I would just need to go out and away and into an experience where I was just in it, and it would give me a different way to express all of the things I was experiencing and feeling. So it really was a lifelong pattern. I did it as a kid. I was always writing plays and putting myself outside of ordinary life.

Lyn

I always had a big imagination. And so the year before I started An Accidental Icon, I was starting to feel very constrained in academia. Lots of rules about how you can write. And it was becoming more and more about mass or syllabi and required texts and feeling like a lot of my academic freedom to be creative was sort of going away.

Lyn

And so I started to take classes at the Fashion Institute of Technology, just very random things like jewelry fabrication, fashion design. And I ended up in a class called Building a Vintage Business. And the professor and a lot of the people I went to school with, and in these rooms, I was often the oldest in the room because I was 16.

Lyn

And they would say, you know, you just have a unique style. You should start a fashion blog. And so I was like, you know what? I know how to write. I know how to research. I have a partner who could take photos of me. I know how to make a website, and this could be really fun. And I was very interested in fashion, not as more sociologically interested in fashion, how it could be used to express identity, how it could be used in subversive ways, the power that is often attached to it when others look at what we wear.

Lyn

And I began to use my blog, my website, as a way to begin to examine some of these questions. And so people would say to me, oh, do you have a what's your target market? And I would say, I don't have a target market. It is anyone who likes to think and talk about fashion. And I have to say, I at that moment, I was never one to be focused on age.

Lyn

I'm not sure why that was, but when I turned 49, a thought in the world turning 60, I didn't think about it. And it really, when I started Accidental Icon, it had absolutely nothing to do with age. It was a woman who was exploring something and expressing herself in a new and different way, and being creative. And what ended up happening is the media began to make it about my art.

Lyn

And so, you know, it wasn't just that I had reinvented myself or started something new that was very different from what I did in my everyday life. It was, oh, she's 62 and doing it. It wasn't that I was incredibly successful utilizing social media. It was, oh, she's 60 something and she knows how to be good on Instagram.

Lyn

So you know, it really to me was never about my age. I was never trying to confront ageism, and I was never trying to promote a view of aging. I was really just doing something that was quite interesting to me. And the thing that happens when you put yourself out there is, you know, in a grandiose way, you think you're going to maintain control over it.

Lyn

But I found out, no, you don't.

David

Talk to me about going off the rails.

Lyn

So in the early days of doing it, you know, I was working as a professor. I started the blog in 2014, and I just kind of went, I'm in a new experience. I just dive in, I immerse myself in it. I don't have an outcome. I don't have an intention. I am just in it for the process. And I've always been that way.

Lyn

And when that happens, when I'm in that state, all of these interesting opportunities come into my life that I probably would not see if I had been outcome oriented. And so I just followed some of those fun things. I worked a lot with independent fashion magazines, doing really creative shoots. I did some music videos, I played Charlotte Gainsbourg's All Yourself in a music video, and it was through just following these serendipitous things that were coming to me that I ended up landing a, I went to a casting that one of my friends had sent me, like show up in Tompkins Square Park.

Lyn

At this time, and they said, okay, you're chosen. Sign this. Which I did not read because I was not even thinking that this was a business, that you could make money from it. And it turns out that I had my photo taken by Terry Richardson, and the ad was for Valentino. And a couple months after they said, okay, we're going to use your photo.

Lyn

And my photo appeared in every major fashion magazine in the world in a Valentino eyewear ad. And it was the same time that Joan Didion was in the ad for Celine. And I think unlike now, that was a real moment for older people in fashion, because, number one, we hadn't been represented before. But number two, Joan Didion and I were not models.

Lyn

We were not these older women who are full, still maintaining the look of youth and beauty. You know, neither of us were attractive. We're a substantial, but we're not classical beautiful. I'm five foot two. We both had gray hair. We both had tons of

wrinkles. But those ads excited young women and for the first time they were like, wow, I don't have to be afraid of being old.

Lyn

And then over time, that moment passed and then it began to be. And it is very much now in fashion, older women who very much are still upholding in their appearance of being tall and thin, usually white, of that classic youth and beauty standard. And so that was the exciting moment for me. In 2017, I was signed by a modeling agency that made my story go viral.

Lyn

I think part of why it did was because I was an ordinary woman, and so a lot of ordinary people saw me and said, wow, if she could do that, maybe I could too. And so that was the time I was getting like 100,000 followers in a day. And it just, you know, my phone was like going crazy.

Lyn

And so shortly after that, things started to change on Instagram and I started to do much more of my work on Instagram. And I started, I guess the word influencer came about. And so I went from being the fashion blogger sort of personality to being an influencer, and I started to make a huge income, primarily on Instagram. And the problem that then happened, how it went off the rails was number one, you know, I was now a brand.

Lyn

I wasn't a person, I was commodifying myself. And it's very controlling. You know, the brands, they send you a briefs and they say, here's photos that we would like you to emulate. Here's what you should put in the caption. Here's the required hashtags. And so it really had nothing to do with creativity anymore. It was not me doing this as my passion project, as my mode of expression.

Lyn

And I found myself becoming more and more and more sort of depressed and not happy. And right before the pandemic, I was really thinking about how much more could I do this? And it's not feeling great to me. And then the pandemic hit, and that's when I everything stopped. Because when you're working on Instagram, you are going 24 seven because it's not just that you're posting your own content, but you have to be engaging and you have to like, look at your followers and you, you know, I became, you know, someone I didn't recognize.

David

What did you do?

Lyn

I started to write. I still continued to work on Instagram, but I started to change how I was working on Instagram, and I started to do what I call mini blogging, where I would write long captions. I would take you know, post a photo, write long captions about something completely different than anything I had written about before. And one of the things that happened when I went to working primarily on Instagram was I stopped writing my blog, which had been very popular, which had gotten a lot of engagement.

Lyn

But as I was doing Instagram, I, I really the amount of time I had to write was negligible. So this gave me the opportunity. I started to write on my blog again during the pandemic. I started to engage again with followers who were not just following me for fear of missing out. They were real followers who genuinely were wanting to read what I was writing and to hear what I wanted to talk about and was really relating.

Lyn

And right before the pandemic, I had acquired a literary agent because when you have a massive platform of almost a million people across all your platforms, you automatically start getting literary agents and publishers interested in you, because that really is where publishing is out right now, right? They want you to have the platform. And at that point I signed, but I had no idea it was not my intention to write a book.

Lyn

So I didn't know what I wanted to write a book about. And everybody wanted me to write a book about, oh, look at this bad ass woman who's on Instagram. And she has all these followers, and she's putting yourself in fashion. This whole world that's supposed to be for young people and at the time, I didn't feel that way because I was really feeling burnt out.

Lyn

And so it took me a long time to really think about and come up with a book that I really wanted to write, which really was more of a memoir and not a how to be a badass old woman. And so it took me really until 2021 to really sit down and bang out a good book proposal.

David

And the book is called How to Be Old. Yes, I love what you're saying. So from what you just described to me about the book, it's less of a how to it's a more of this is what I did.

Lyn

Yes. And sharing the lessons that I learned, you know, along the way which may or may not have relevant, you know, to you but what I'm finding from, you know, the events I've been doing and the feedback I've been getting is that it does have relevance to a lot of people and that they are being inspired by it because it really, you know, I'm very I'm a critically reflective person and I take responsibility, you know, in the book for some of the decisions that I made that really were compromising my values and also understanding that my vision as society positioned me, which was in that realm of what I call idealized stage, is that, you

Lyn

know, when you get positioned as someone who's an idealized ager, they also do not name the privilege that comes with your being able to do so. And so for so many of the women who reached out to me after I did that commercial, you know, they were basically helping me to understand that the vision of aging I was promoting was not inclusive, and possibly because of my background as a social worker.

Lyn

And that bothered me. And so I really decided that I needed to, you know, ease out of that influencing. I have not done a sponsored post in almost three years, and I have been spending my time writing and being connected to my family and my local community, and that's kind of where my book ends up. But I think it shows that over a decade of a life that so many things can happen that you can't even anticipate or plan for, or some of them you can.

Lyn

But whoever thought there would be a pandemic, you know, in that decade. So I think doing the decade that's started as accidental icon and ended with me writing a book and being a writer is sort of an interesting trajectory.

David

What's the effect that you want the book to have?

Lyn

I want people to feel that it's really okay to take risks, to experiment. So I talked to a lot of older people and they have a lot of anxiety. What am I going to do after, you know, and and it's connected to what I have sort of recently had an epiphany about as

I'm starting to think about what is life after this book is that we have such a compulsion to strive.

Lyn

And I've had that my whole life. And once I realized that that is what was driving me, I just felt this enormous exhaustion. And the times in my life that have been enjoyable and when I have been healthiest, it it was like the beginning of when I did Accidental Icon, when I was just doing it and being in the moment and not having an outcome and not doing the striving.

Lyn

and ironically, throughout my life, whenever I'm doing that is when I'm most successful, when I try, when I plan, when I have all these outcomes and Smart goals, it never happens for me. So I think I would like people to feel that it's okay to not know that you can just think about what you're interested in, put yourself into some experiences around that.

Lyn

Take a class or, you know, whatever it may be, and to just allow your life to kind of evolve and see what comes your way. And the other thing I hope people realize from my book is that it's not the worst and most horrible and terrible thing in the world to acknowledge that you've lost your way, that you know, perhaps that you weren't thinking about your privilege, that it's okay.

Lyn

It's not going to kill you to own up to these two things that, in fact, you know, they help you become a better person and have better ideas for the next thing that you want to do. So I think, and I would like people to be inspired, that you can change and grow no matter what your age is.

Lyn

And I think, I think age is I'm really getting crazy about it now because people are making such a big thing about it. And I think if we're thinking about how to live life, that being old is like any other time in my life. When I think about it, there's challenges and opportunities, there's losses, there's games, there's sickness, there's health, there's unanticipated occurrences, and you somehow figure out how you're going to respond to all these things.

Lyn

If you allow yourself to think of yourself as a creative person, that response is going to be creative and will help you to move through that experience. The difference between

when all those things happened to me during my 20s is that I probably had a toolbox, a toolbox that had a hammer in the nail, and but at 70, I have so many skills, so many experiences, so many assets that I can bring to the challenges of age, to how am I going to deal with the fact that my knees are becoming arthritic, right?

Lyn

How am I realistically going to keep enjoying the things that I have in my life when certain things happen to me? Which means I have to think about a modification and and I'll use the example. I always love to run primarily for that feeling of, you know, like when you get in the zone and the wind is blowing your hair and you're just feeling so free, and when you know, you start not being able to run for various reasons, whether it be a bunion or bad knees, I started riding a bike.

Lyn

And the fact is, I get the same feeling of the wind and the feeling of movement and the being in the moment from riding a bike that I got from running. So I think if we think of aging in that way as an opportunity for creative practice, that it becomes something that is interesting and something that could be exciting and that is my major objection with us not being honest when we're having these idealized images of aging, that the reality is there's things about aging.

Lyn

I absolutely love. There's things about it I hate, but we have the opportunity to respond to the things that we dislike. But if we don't name them, then policymakers and designers are not going to innovate to help us live that kind of a life. Like if I get one more pitch from a medical equipment outfit or another pitch for a medication management set up, like those are not the kinds of innovations and technology I want.

Lyn

Like if I get arthritis in my hand, what are you going to invent for me that I can keep painting? So the danger for me is if we act like we need nothing and we're completely independent, or on the other end, that we need everything and it's all about medicalization, then we're not going to be generating the innovations and the the stuff that the majority of us need to really make this interesting, same but different time of our life.

David

I'm really on board with this idea of age is a number. It has impact, but it is only one number. And that, as you said, all of life is problem solving, right? We had to solve problems. We were 20, 30, 40. Okay, so I have, you know, I had a lot of problems in my left knee and it's requiring problem solving.

David

And I similar to you, I probably could run, but my doctor would shoot me. You know, I have to sort of modify what I do. And I there was an interesting line in Sherry's interview in your profile that we're, we're publishing tomorrow where you talk about, I believe you, you were at a doctor's office or something, and somebody asked you if you knew how to use the web or something.

Lyn

Yeah, yeah.

David

I love that. And what did you respond?

Lyn

I said to the person, I'm wondering, what made you ask me that question?

David

Yeah, exactly.

Lyn

And and I think, you know, this has been my approach to dealing with ageism. I don't talk about ageism. I don't, you know, a lot of people when I was on social media, they wanted me to be part of these anti ageism initiatives. And I found probably from being a professor where I had to teach social justice to a lot of different kinds of students, that battering people over the head is not an effective technique.

Lyn

And so I used fashion really to engage people in a different kind of conversation about older age and in those conversations. Right. These implicit biases come out and they can be addressed, but you're addressing it within the context of a relationship, which in all my work with all of the isms for 47 years, that it is only through relationship that one moves past that kind of bias and, and is able to confront it.

Lyn

And so, I mean, I there's a lot of women in particularly who talk about this issue of becoming invisible.

David

Oh yeah. Oh, I'm fascinated by this. Tell me, let's talk about that.

Lyn

Well, you know, I think I think my question to them, first of all, is who do you really want to be visible to and why. Right. And a lot of people can't necessarily answer that question right away. And I also think about, you know, one of the things I've learned in my career is that I worked in a lot of systems that exerted power over people, and I found that within every system of power, there are little nodes where there can be resistance.

Lyn

And you have to kind of put, you know, your little tool in there and kind of creak and open. And so I wonder how much of this invisibility we sort of passively accept, or we decline the invitation to be made visible. And I think a great example is, you know, a friend of mine went to the doctor and her daughter was with her.

Lyn

And during the exam, the doctor spoke to her daughter. And my friend was very annoyed by this. And I said, well, what did you do? And she said, I didn't do anything. And so in that moment you're accepting, right? When I'm walking in New York City and some person acts like I'm not a person and is pushing me, I turn around and I look at them and I say, excuse me, because I am not willing to accept invisibility, but it also means I have to challenge it when I see it.

Lyn

And so I think that woman could have said, excuse me, doctor, I am your patient, can you please talk to me? And so the for me the question and after being a very visible person, I was more visible as an older woman than I ever was when I was young. And I have to say, it's not all it's cracked up to be.

Lyn

I very much like these moments now where I am invisible, I enjoy them. And so I think it's, you know, something it's an interesting interplay between invisibility and visibility.

David

All of us have an agency in that question, and I think that the abdication of that agency is is a decision. And, you know, people tell me they're like, oh, I'm invisible. It's like, well, how do you feel about that? And do you want to change that because you want to change that? That's very easy to do. Yes.

David

and but you may enjoy the invisibility and that's also fine.

Lyn

Right, right. And I think there are certain places and spaces where you can go where you might be more visible than others. And so, you know, one of the great things I read and I can't remember at the moment where but I talk about it in my book, is being old is a transaction between a mind, a body and a context.

Lyn

And I think that in how much of your experience of being old can be controlled through your attitude about it, number one, then there are the strengths and limitations of your body. But then there is a context, right, of society and your positionality and your, you know, race and gender and sex and genetics and the whole component, so that aging is a very uniquely individual experience.

Lyn

And I think sometimes we try to generalize it and it's you can.

David

Yeah, I think there's that. And who said this. And it was William Gibson. The future is here but it's not equally distributed. And I think aging is very much like that. It's not equally distributed. People age. I mean, my wife's from north Georgia, 65. North Georgia is of like different reality. Yes. There's nothing better or worse.

David

And I value judgment. It's just this is different. Yes. Different choices. And sort of on that topic, this idea of sort of idealized aging, which I mean, I started ages about the same time you started Accent Icon, and I remember the Selena ad and I remember your sunglasses ad and I thought, this is awesome. I also remember back then even trying to get people to do profiles with us, they're like, we have to say our age.

David

We can't do that. It was it was really hot. I mean, now people, that's what they want. But then it was impossible. Or going to a brand and saying like, hey, like we got some insights here. This might be useful to the people that actually buy your clothes. They would just we were like some kind of disease. They ran from.

David

And so a lot of that is really different now. Wondering something about what you said to me earlier was you think maybe this idealized aging has gone too far. And I'm curious, could you give me an example of what you feel idealized aging.

Lyn

Is idealized aging? Or are these people that are portraying aging as having no challenges whatsoever?

David

Oh who's that?

Lyn

Well, if you I'm talking about representation. Okay. Right. And so let's let's use as an example the recent Paris fashion shows. Okay. I have been getting all of these asks are and I so excited about all these older women that this season appeared in all of these fashion shows. Well, number one, first, they're all tall, thin and white.

Lyn

They're models. Exactly. Yeah. And there's a larger thing that's happening in fashion because it's now controlled by conglomerates. And if you look at who owns them and who runs them, it looks like the U.S. Congress. Right? So it's all white men and it's all about selling. And it has nothing to do with inclusion. It is a strategy to sell more.

Lyn

And there is a larger trend among those fashion houses where they're starting to understand that young people don't have disposable cash because of student loans, they can't buy homes. There's a lot going on for that generation. And they're no longer willing to go into credit card debt for a \$10,000 bag. And so the luxury houses are really starting to target their love to customers.

Lyn

And now I think they're pandering to older people because not because they want to include us, but because they somehow understand we might have some disposable cash. And that might sound cynical, but I really believe.

David

I don't understand what the problem is with that. I mean, that makes complete sense to me.

Lyn

Yes, but don't say that it is about inclusion, because.

David

No, no, you're selling to your customer.

Lyn

That's right, that's right. But they're they're making it be that it is. Oh, look how inclusive we are.

David

Oh that's just not fair.

Lyn

And people are getting all excited that it is inclusive. And to me it's the same thing as the Golden Bachelor. I don't know if you saw that.

David

Tell me about your.

Lyn

Everybody went crazy over that show, okay? They're like, oh look, we're being represented. Well, I watched the first episode and I got the message and it wasn't a good one because the message was, unless you're hot, unless you're fit, unless you know you want a man, you are not an acceptable older woman. And in the very first episode, you know, they all come out and the woman goes up to him and she flashes and etc., all establishing that we're hot, we're relevant, you know, all of this.

Lyn

And then a limo pulls up and a woman gets out and she's got gray curly hair, a house dress, a walker, and she's walking towards him and he very disingenuously says, oh, do you need help? And she takes a step towards him. She throws off her wig, throws off the house dress, throws away the walker. She's got a strapless dress.

Lyn

She does not have gray hair. She is fit as a 20 year old. And she says, do I look like I need help? There it is. There's the message. Don't be the woman, the older woman who needs help. Don't be an older woman who may have the disability. Do not be an older woman who doesn't have the body of the 20 year old.

Lyn

And then to reinforce the message they have Jimmy Kimmel's an all right who is being very dowdy, falls asleep all classic ages tropes. And yeah, they got many older people to believe that this was liberating for us. And that made me crazy. And I have to tell you, there were a lot of younger women who I admire who watched that show, and they were like, what are you telling us?

Lyn

That as an older woman, we are only worthwhile if we're attractive to a man. If we labor on our appearance. Because I'll tell you, my metabolism is in the mud. And for me to look like those women, I'd be put in three hours a day unfit. And you know, that's not what I want to invest in. At the moment.

Lyn

I'm doing what I need to be healthy. I love exercise, but I do it outside. I do it on my bike. I do it as pleasure, not labor. That's the difference. And so this one young woman writer, she said, where are the crowds when she wrote about that show? Where are these women with experiences and advice and can help us live a life where we're not having to do all of those things because we right now are blowing up motherhood, we're blowing up divorce.

Lyn

We're talking about all these things, and you're giving us nothing to aspire to. So I had a whole lot of stuff about that.

David

So speaking for the other gender, when I watch that show, I watched the first episode and I thought it was horrifying. I've been with my wife for 20 years, but if I was on a date with any one of these women, I would run screaming out the door like, what is wrong with you that you act like this?

Lyn

It's a reality show, but the discourse around it is what was troubling. And I think our generation is different because we were young in the 70s and we were very rebellious us, and we were challenging norms. And I think many of us are challenging norms of aging. I am very much a proponent of what I call realistic aging, which is, yes, you need to get a handle on the fact that you're going to get old, that your body will change.

Lyn

But there is so much we now know about how to mitigate some of those circumstances. And so I'm not advocating when I say I'm against idealized age that we don't give people and show them all the options. But I think the problem with idealized aging is that a lot of it requires a lot of resources and a lot of privilege to execute.

Lyn

And so I think, how do we do that same thing, that aspirational view, but within realistic parameters. How does a person and I just read this article in Business Insider, I don't know if you saw that the vast majority of people who are retired are probably living on an income of 60 K or less. And so what is a realistic version of aspirational aging look like when you're living on 60 K?

Lyn

You're right. It's very easy to do it if you've got, you know, half 1 million or 1 million tucked away, but it's a little harder, you know. And then what context are you living in? We all know that how we have to eat to prevent dementia, to continue to make our bones healthy and our bodies healthy. Are you living in a place where that's accessible to you?

Lyn

So I think we just have to drill down. And I also think we have to get younger people because again, we have that. There's five important things that we know get enough sleep, lower your stress. Plant based diet aerobic and strength. Bingo.

David

That's 95% of it right there.

Lyn

And then the other 5% is your attitude, which I'm sure you've read back back to rich stuff that how you a negative cognition about being old or getting old puts you at higher risk for cardiovascular problems and takes seven years off the end of your life. That's all within our control. Those things, and they can also be done at different levels of resources right.

Lyn

So I think we just have to be better about showing this aspirational vision in an accessible way to many people. And one of the things I've been saying, as I've been talking to younger women who are coming to the audiences around my book event, is I've been saying to them, you know what? You all have Pinterest boards about what you want your bathroom to look like.

Lyn

And I think what we need to do is have you making a Pinterest board about how you want to build, and you do that when you're 30, and then you apply what we know about healthy aging to your plan, and you will have more control over how you will be old.

David

I get in trouble with my wife when I say this. I have a vision of how I want to die.

Lyn

Yeah. Me too. I'm talking about it, right?

David

I want to die hiking in the Alps. I just want a massive coronary at 95.

Lyn

Yeah, and I have tons of great ideas about what I want my family to do with my body. I want to be in the ground naturally. And I want a tree to grow on me.

David

There you go. Yeah. Like, I think these are things that it's sort of thinking about this. Like knowing there's like a 100% chance I'm going to die. Yeah, I feel pretty strongly about that outcome. So. Okay. If that's going to happen. So how do we want to sort of manage everything up to that point. And I love the idea of the Pinterest board, the like the the things that you do in your 20s, 30s and 40s will have a massive impact.

Lyn

Absolutely.

David

What what's going on in your 60s and 70s and, you know, people out there who are younger that are listening to this behavior counts.

Lyn

It really counts. And I think, you know, I'm 70 and I really I'm not on any medication. I'm very gratefully quite healthy. You know, I have some of the arthritis stuff, which is unavoidable if you've lived a life that is engaged and involves, you know, hiking and

walking and other things. But what happened to me was when I was in my 30s, my early 30s, my father had a massive stroke at the age of 56, and he never spoke again, never worked again, became quite disabled.

Lyn

And it was sort of a wakeup call to me. I stopped drinking, I had already stopped smoking. I began to have regular exercise in my life. I went and did a little stint in therapy to deal with my stress and underlying issues. And I really do believe that if it wasn't for that wake up call at that time in my life, I might not be where I am right now at 70.

Lyn

And I think that is the biggest tragedy is that so much of the, you know, health problems that come along with aging, with early prevention, right, can be mitigated you by not being afraid of it, by facing it head on. You will have so much more control over it then if you continue to deny it.

David

And I feel like I've taken up a lot of your time. I know you're enthusiastic, Gardner, and I just have this vision of you, like in the back of your mind. Imagine, like, when is this going to stop talking? I say, honey, get out to my clients.

Lyn

So I love good conversations. I love good conversations.

David

Your book is How to Be old, which is something we should be like a skill we should all learn how to do, right?

Lyn

Yes, exactly. Because we are aging the moment we are born.

David

Exactly. And to not age is to die. So let's keep aging. That sounds like a better outcome.

Lyn

And again, it's funny because it is older people. They challenge me about the word old and they say, you know, you're not old, you're older or you know, all those other cliches

about it. And I say, look, in the dictionary, old means having lived a long life. I aspire to that. I love that that's a privilege. So I am reclaiming that word as a good thing.

Lyn

And that's why I put it in the title of my book. Probably it's going to mean that some people might not look at my book in the bookstore and buy it, even though there are people that should probably read it. But I really felt it was important to claim that word. And we need to claim it and not let other people put all the negative stuff on it that they do.

David

That's right, that's right. There's nothing wrong with the word. It's all the stuff that's on top of it.

Lyn

Exactly.

David

I'm on Medicare, so what does that make me? Young. No. It's me. All right. Okay. Right. So what? Get over.

Lyn

It. Exactly.

David

You know, it doesn't make me uncomfortable to use that word, but it may make other people uncomfortable if I use that word for myself. And that's their issue, not mine.

Lyn

Right, exactly.

David

Anyway, you have me all riled up when? All right.

Lyn

Well, it's good to get riled up. That's when you're going to do boots on the ground and make change.

David

Well, I love the impact that you've had. We're in this space, whatever that means. And I just want to say you're one of the the smartest, most thoughtful people out there. I'm a guy, so I don't read as much of your stuff as maybe some women do, but I find what you write to be very smart, reflective, thoughtful, and and about helping other people.

David

And that's I really respect that.

Lyn

Thank you. And by the way, I've had a couple of gentlemen DM me and say, I read this book and it's not just for women.

David

Okay. Right on, right on. Yes. Well, as we all know, anything to do in social media after about, I don't know, age 40, the women rule everything. That's what it is. Thank you so much for your time today. I appreciate it. And you know, keep up the fight. It's great.

Lyn

You too. Thanks for the good conversation.

David

Thank you Lynn.