

Author Q and A

Kathleen Vestal Logan and E.L. (Betsy) Smith, Ph.D.
Second Blooming for Women: Growing a Life That Matters After Fifty

What do you know about women over fifty? What makes them special?

They feel educated, experienced, talented, wise, and confident. They know they have much to contribute. However, they start feeling invisible and devalued by a society focused on youth and beauty. As a nation, we cannot afford to ignore this vast resource of talented women with decades yet to live.

When did you start writing on this topic?

We met for lunch April 11, 2006, and started the writing process immediately.

*How long did it take to write *Second Blooming*?*

Three and one-half years from first meeting to publication.

How did you do research for your book?

We'd go to bookstores, looking especially at self-help and women's sections. We read dozens of books and hundreds of magazine articles. The internet was a useful resource, too. We also met regularly with a wonderful, small group of women over 50 who shared their thoughts and experiences with us.

What makes this book different from others written for this age group?

It's neither a memoir nor a book about other women. Instead, *Second Blooming* is a book to *do*, not just to read. In it, we coach women step by step to consciously and purposefully plan their future through guided reflection, personal assessments, and action plans. It engages every aspect of a woman's being, setting her on her own path to an abundant stage of life. We want her to be able to say, "My life matters."

What was the 'accident of history' that you feel precipitated the need for this book?

1920 – 19th Amendment gave women the right to vote; 1960 – birth control pill; 1963 – Betty Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique*, starting women's liberation movement; 1964 – Civil Rights Act; 1972 – Title IX promoting equality of opportunity in schools and athletics; 1973 – *Roe v. Wade* passed. Collectively, these historic events redirected the trajectory of women's lives, leaving them with expanded opportunities but without their normal role models for this stage of life.

Why do you use a gardening metaphor for addressing this issue?

Women over fifty are often treated like annuals, pulled out and tossed on the compost pile when they're no longer young. Actually, they are perennials, a permanent, colorful, and vital part of our nation's garden, capable of a *Second Blooming* or what some call a "second life." They want to contribute their experience and wisdom for the betterment of their community and culture.

How large is your intended audience?

About six thousand women turn 50 every day. Altogether, they make up 22% of the adult US population and 41% of the adult female population. Put another way, every fifth adult in the US today is a woman over 50. That's a huge population to discount. A secondary audience comprises their sons and daughters who love their mothers and want them to continue to flourish.

What else have you written?

We have had articles on Second Blooming published in *On the Coast* (Navarre/Ft. Walton Beach, FL, area) and *Coming of Age: Lifestyle Magazine for Seniors* (Council on Aging of West Florida). Kathleen has had articles published in *Toastmaster Magazine* and Navy Institute *Proceedings*. Betsy's articles have appeared in *Climate Business Magazine* and *Pensacola Business Journal*; she also contributed a chapter to the book *Diversity in Technology Education*. Additionally, Kathleen is now writing a monthly blog for The Transition Network (TTN) which is a national organization for women over 50.

Do you also give presentations and conduct seminars?

Both of us are active speakers and have conducted scores of seminars, workshops, focus groups, and teleclasses for businesses, community and civic organizations, and women's groups. Kathleen won first place, Division E, in the 2007 Toastmasters International Speech Contest with "Prime Time for Women." Betsy is also active in Toastmasters.

To whom have you spoken?

Together or separately, we have presented *Second Blooming for Women* content to:

- Women's groups (e.g., Scenic Hills Garden Club, Pensacola Beach Woman's Club)
- Professional associations (e.g., Sertoma Club, Pensacola Women's Alliance, American Business Women's Association chapter)
- Retirement centers (e.g., Veranda, The Villas, Tranquil Villas)
- Special venues (e.g., 4th Presbyterian Church's book group in Chicago, Bay Yacht Club and Corpus Christi Athletic Club in TX, Koelbel public library in Denver)
- College classes (e.g., Betsy taught classes at Meredith College, Wake Tech Community College, and Calm and Sense in NC; Kathleen is scheduled for classes at Pensacola State College in spring 2011)
- Once a month in 2010, Kathleen has hosted an informal gathering for a general book discussion open to interested women
- We conducted a *Second Blooming* seminar at sea on Carnival Cruise Lines in January 2010; 31 women attended from OH, NC, VA, and FL

What media exposure have you had?

We have been interviewed by the Council on Aging of Northwest Florida for the University of West Florida (WUWF) television channel. We were also interviewed by Sue Straughn of WEAR-TV (ABC affiliate) and Lois Benson for BLAB television in Pensacola, FL, for 30-minute programs. Kathleen was interviewed on ABC news in Ft. Walton Beach, FL. Betsy did a radio interview with Deidre Hughey on Blogtalk radio and was interviewed on the local NBC affiliate My Carolina Today. Kathleen was interviewed by Wendi Summers on a local (Pensacola) CAT Country "Ask the Expert" radio show. The *Emerald Coast Magazine* did a feature story on us in the February/March 2011 issue.

What feedback have you received?

Comments include: your book changed my life...terrific information... encouraging...inspirational...I needed to be reminded there's a purpose for my life...it's helping me avoid wasting time...it's good hearing I am not selfish for wanting to do something different...it convinced me my life matters, regardless of my age...it's every woman's story...I don't feel alone anymore...I'm going to read the book again and again because it uplifts me.

Have you received any national recognition?

Our article in *Coming of Age* was awarded Bronze in the 2009 National Mature Media Awards program. The *Second Blooming for Women* book was awarded Merit in the 2010 National Mature Media Awards Program.

How can you be reached for more information?

Kathleen Vestal Logan, M.S., M.A.
129 Chanteclair Circle
Gulf Breeze, FL 32561
phone: 850-934-8056
fax: 850-916-1012
Kathleen@secondbloomingforwomen.com

E.L. (Betsy) Smith, Ph.D.
326 Bridgegate Drive
Cary, NC 27519
phone: 919-521-4734
cell: 850-384-4874
betsy@secondbloomingforwomen.com