

The VICTORIOUS WOMAN PROJECT

You CAN have more of a life you'll LOVE LIVING!

Victory Tips for Your Marvelous MidLife Makeover



Do you feel like you're running out time?
That it's almost too late to fulfil those dreams of yours?
Don't give up yet!

No matter what's happened, you can still **take control of your life** and stretch into the fabulous-ness that your soul is yearning for. Here's where you can get you started ...and keep going!

TRANSITIONS: SEASONS OF GROWTH

Are you one of the many midlife women who is in transition because you are:

- Bored and/or frustrated and want to breathe new energy into your life
- Suddenly or unexpectedly single
- Going back to school or reviving a dormant career or
- Downsizing so you can have more time for yourself
- An empty nester looking for a new purpose or adventure

If you are, then you are in the growing season called **transition**. And, *you aren't alone*.

You're like so many women who have gotten to this stage of your life and have started looking around and wondering, "is this all there is? You've done all the right things, and maybe you've been fine so far. But now you have that gnawing itch that's telling you there's more out there for you – and you want it!

At the same time, more and more, I find myself talking to women who are juggling jobs, careers, education, and parenting with the unexpected but growing needs of their parents.

As you work your way through this hectic time, here's something you need to know: though we often refer to change and transition as the same thing, *they aren't*. Understanding the difference will help you get through this time in better shape.

Change is a specific external event like marriage, divorce, new job or promotion, moving, or retirement.

Transition, however, is the process that occurs *around* an event. Your last child's graduation, for example, is an event, but the transition begins long before their ceremony and extends well past it. Though the graduation ceremony is over in a couple hours, the transition (theirs *and* yours) might last for several years.

While **change** is usually something you can pinpoint exactly, often right down to the day and the hour,

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transitions have no set beginning or end and no exact length of time. They sort of sneak up on you.

When my mother decided to move to a retirement community and my mother-in-law fell, my spouse and I stepped in to help. At first, and without too much consideration, we just added our mothers' needs to our to-do list. Frankly, it didn't work very well. Maybe we weren't paying attention or just preferred denial, but we didn't recognize how our mothers' transitions were also forcing us into transition. As a result, life got pretty stressful. Maybe you know how it feels.

Day after day and week after week, you think you're taking it all in stride. That's what we did – big time. *Then you discover you're in over your head.* I'm not sure with us if it was the exhaustion, the missed returned business calls or the arguments that were getting more and more frequent.

One day my spouse and I took a long drive. We started to calm down and, by the time we got to our beach destination, we were having a good and honest conversation. Through that communication, we came to grips with our changing reality...our changed reality.

Once we understood the situation in its actuality, we got better at dealing with it.

That's what you can do too. Start by acknowledging, "I thought this [job, lifestyle, parenting, health] was going to last forever. Now things have changed. That time is over. Done. Now I need to refocus and put my energy toward adapting to my new lifestyle."

Saying the words out loud (and maybe several times a day) will be a signal to yourself to stop dwelling on yesterday and start moving forward. As your mind accepts your new reality, it will let go of emotional or physical stuff that is outdated and adjusts to your new reality. As it does, you will notice that your thoughts will start moving toward the future instead of dwelling on the past. Soon your behavior will follow and you'll get on your midlife victory path.

Here are **SIX TIPS** to get through your transition:

1—Be patient.

I know...who wants to do *that*? Do it anyway. When you are in a transition, be as lovingly patient with yourself as you would be with a child or other loved one, without babying yourself. You may not be at your best, or your sharpest, but that's only temporary. When things settle down, you'll get back to your full mind. Patience will help you find the right path and give you confidence to take the next step.

2—Do one thing at a time.

If you're like most of us, when you feel overwhelmed by a transition, you cannot think and multi-tasking is impossible. However, even in transition, you can probably manage to solve one problem.

So, get out paper and pen. Sit quietly while you do a mind dump. A mind dump is writing down every to-do, stress pressure, fear and all the yama-yama stuff that's cluttering up your brain. Then, pick *one item* from your list. If it helps to number them in order of importance or deadline, do that too.

Next, brainstorm a solution (and maybe get help - see tip#3) and then take action. When you cross that one off your list, do another. One by one, you'll whittle your list down and move ahead.

3—Get help. Sometimes we can't find our way out the front door, let alone through a transition. That's when it's time to find someone to help.

The day I helped my mother dismantle her china closet started badly for her. She was so overwhelmed by the memories of fifty years of holidays, and the realities of the end of it all, that she

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just sat in a chair, half-dazed. When I asked her to pick out what she'd take to her new home, she couldn't think.

So I took her dinnerware and set it out on the table in front of her, suggesting what she might need if she had company in her new apartment; she picked the pieces. I did the same with silverware, glasses, etc. After a while, it no longer looked to my mother like a confusing maze. It started to make sense. Soon my mother could focus on the task. Then together we packed, and it was done.

That's what it means to get help during a transition. A friend or relative, a life coach or a therapist can help you sort out items that are cluttering up your house or your mind. Family is good for remembering, friends are good for venting, therapists help with problems, and coaches give you direction and encourage you to move forward.

You don't have to go through your transition alone.

BTW: Since that day with my mom, I've used the same method for myself when cleaning out closets or the basement or my office. Sorting helps reduce the feeling of overwhelm.

4—Get over your anger. There are few things that will hold up a transition like being angry. If anger is getting in your way, find a way to release it. Try something physical, like a carpentry project where you have to hammer something. Or, write down all your angry thoughts and then burn them. Personally, I like to write my most horrible thoughts, burn the page(s) and then flush the ashes. To me it feels like a kind of cleansing; it's a good release. For some women, cooking or gardening or running or some kind of sport takes the edge off anger. **WARNING:** avoid self-sabotaging behaviors like overeating, overdrinking, drugs, etc. Those are self-sabotaging and self-destructive behaviors that will only make you angrier – at yourself. That's counterproductive.

5—Use the experience to get better.

Ask yourself, "What am I supposed to learn from this experience?" and "What good can I get from this?" Grow from your mistakes and experiences.

6—Escape...briefly. My father once gave me a great piece of advice about the stuff that we can't do anything about: "Put your mind in neutral and coast." It works. These one-day coasting suggestions will re-energize you.

- **Getaway Day:** Drive to the country or the beach for some fresh air.
- **Movie Marathon:** Rent 2-3 missed or loved movies; watch them all day.
- **Laughter Party:** Invite a few friends over for wine, cheese and jokes...no negativity allowed.

One last tip: the chaos of transition will last just about as long as it takes for you to feel comfortable and safe in your new environment or lifestyle. You can expect doubts, fears or questions, like "*Will I be successful?*" or "*Will I fit in?*" and even "*Will I be safe...or happy?*" Transitions bring up those concerns for everyone. You can handle it. Remember this: ***your true power resides within you.*** Find it, use it and grow your transition into a victory!



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About Annmarie Kelly



Annmarie Kelly is an author, motivational speaker and radio talk show host. She is the CEO of SkillBuilder Systems and founder of The Victorious Woman Project. Her work focuses on management and communication skill-building for talent management and personal performance improvement. Kelly is the author of *Victorious Woman! Shaping Life's Challenges into Personal Victories* and *Victory by Design: The Mid-Life Woman's Reinvention Guide to Designing a Life You'll Love to Live*. Annmarie is a member of National Speakers Association (NSA), Toastmasters International, and is a licensed distributor for Everything DiSC® the Time Mastery® Profile and other behavioral assessment tools.

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