



# On Women Turning 70: Honoring the Voices of Wisdom

*Cathleen Rountree*

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On Women Turning 70 is a celebration-of success, love, relationships, self-of life. Its sixteen intimate portraits of women in their seventies are a testament to women everywhere that life can and must be lived to its fullest. The artists, social activists, actors, scientists, journalists, academics, poets, and novelists we meet are wise, vital, and impertinent, and all are disarmingly honest. Through their stories, these vibrant women share a depth of wisdom and knowledge acquired after more than seventy years of experience and living. And they haven't stopped living yet. Liz Smith, the acclaimed newspaperwoman, achieved her extraordinary success just as she was about to retire. Leah Friedman started work on her Ph.D. the year before she turned seventy. Harvard professor Elinor Gadon claims to have more energy than women forty years her junior. Betty Friedan, the mother of the feminist movement, keeps her spirit and curiosity alive by trying something new every week. Artist Betye Saar remarks on her colorfully dyed hair, "If I want my hair purple, it's purple." Sociologist Lee Robbins fell in love and married again when she was seventy-five. Just as were her previous best-selling books on women turning forty, fifty, and sixty, this newest addition to the decade series of books from Cathleen Rountree is proof that aging is a passionate, powerful, and transformative process to be honored and celebrated. We are reminded that age is not about getting old, but about growing older-and seizing every moment in life. "We define age. Age does not define us." These inspiring personal portraits celebrate friends, mothers, grandmothers, neighbors, sisters, leaders, lovers-women turning seventy. If Marilyn Monroe were alive today ...she would have been seventy-two years old the summer during which I completed the writing of this book," begins visual artist, photographer, and writer Cathleen Rountree. Like her previous bestsellers, this inspirational book is a wonderful collection of intimate and revealing interviews with women who share their thoughts, accomplishments, current interests, and the great secret that aging is a powerful, transformative process to be honored and celebrated. On Women Turning 70 makes an ideal gift for grandmothers, mothers, sisters, and friends. "About this issue of aging, I want to make a terribly important point. People decide to get old. I've seen them do it. It's as if they've said 'Right, that's it, now I'm going to get old.' Then they become old. Why they do this, I don't know. Maybe they like to be dependent. But I do think it's terribly important that people not make that inner decision. Because then they sit around and they're old. It's easy not to do it, in fact. It's not about staying young but about not getting old."Doris Lessing "Do what interests you, but also try new things. Maggie Kuhn had a motto: 'Do something outrageous every week.' And then she changed it to 'every day' at the end of her life. I've got to do that, something outrageous every week, and I've got to do something new, you see."Betty Friedan "It makes me impatient when people worry about getting old or looking old. Just seems very odd to me. It's really a pleasure to be living beyond seventy. Maybe one shouldn't be too greedy."Mitsuye Yamada "I find it easier to believe in the impossible now in my seventies than I did when I was in my rational midlife. I'm back to believing in the impossible ..." Madeleine L'Engle "Basically, I don't think people should act like they're old. I think they're just as old as they act. Old people aren't exempt from having fun and dancing and having sexual desires and frittering away their time and enjoying their leisure and playing. I don't know why so many of them give up."Liz Smith

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