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Web Books Blog

Hot Off the Summer Press Edition

I'm no fan of the current administration. But I have to say the expert round table convened on July 17th by the new FDA director on the subject of menopausal hormone therapy (MHT) was excellent. The experts presented evidence that the strong warnings on MHT labeling are misleading and should be removed or at least limited. They shared data showing that tens of thousands of women have died early because they were scared of estrogen and didn't use it. They talked about the protective effects of MHT on the brain, the bones, the muscles and the heart. If you have time, please [watch](#). It's worthwhile. And share the link with your daughters and the other Apprentice Crones, because starting MHT during perimenopause is more protective than starting it later, as I did.

Now, some commentators are guessing that the new head of FDA convened this panel to buy goodwill for dastardly things he may do later (like maybe getting rid of the morning after pill). It's possible. Not that this administration felt the need to cultivate goodwill before, say, gutting Medicaid. We shall see. In the meantime, if FDA gets rid of the Black Box Warning on vaginal estrogen, that will be one good thing that came from this administration in the midst of so much that's contrary to American values.

Speaking of values, I participated in the Good Trouble demonstration at the Oregon State Capitol on John Lewis' birthday, which was a Thursday. That timing meant participation was lower than for No King's Day, and just about everyone was over 65. Looking around the crowd, I was reminded once again that the stereotype of the conservative older is just that: a stereotype. Aging hippies carried signs about healthcare, deportations, education, and other causes. A man with a long white beard rode an oversized tricycle down the street, while a grey-haired woman passed out American flags urging us to help take back patriotism for the actual cause of freedom. It was a lovely peaceful afternoon.

Also this month I met with my fabulous designer, [Diana Rosinus](#), to finalize the cover of my new book, *Rock On: Power, Sex and Money after 60*. I'm giving you a sneak preview of the cover, with its badass older woman. I love the jazzy colors! This book brings together the best essays from the decade of my sixties, divided into ten topics including beauty, health, and creativity. Early reviewer [Billie Best](#) (author of *How I Made a Huge Mess of My Life, or Couples Therapy with a Dead Man*) calls my new book "the ultimate crone atlas to guide us through the decades after menopause." And [Joan Price](#), author of *Naked at Our Age*, says this one is my "best book ever." Very last edits are happening now, and I can't wait to hear what you think, when we launch in August!

I'm enjoying living near my daughter's family in Oregon. Moving meant a delay in having a breast biopsy recommended back in North Carolina in April. This week I finally had that procedure, and it turns out I do have a small cancer in the same breast as last year. Not the best news, but I look forward to meeting with the surgeon and planning next steps.

Meanwhile I'm starting August at the statewide [Willamette Writers Conference](#) in Portland. It's wonderful how we find our posse in a new place, whether that's a church community, a new gym, or a writing community. I'll have more to say about the conference, and my new pals, in next month's newsletter.

Do keep writing, my friends, and keep sharing what you write. Our stories capture our true natures and connect us one with another. And remember: There is no such thing as a bad first draft.

Keep the pen moving, or the keys clicking.

All the best,

Stella,

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From the blog this month

The Diet Industry Wants You.

Stella Fosse

If you are not yet following Debra Benfield at [Aging with Vitality and Body Liberation](#), you're missing out. Deb is a trained nutritionist who offers sage advice about loving our bodies as they are. In her [July 2025 newsletter](#) she breaks down the ways our natural increase in body size protects us:

"What If I Told You Body Changes in Midlife+ are Protective, Not a Problem?"

One of the body's remarkable adaptations in this season is

Age is not Just a Number

Carol LeFevre

One of the things that distresses me about ageism is the insidious ways it finds to undermine and disrespect the natural process of human ageing. Western culture, with its deeply embedded ageist thinking, conjures up platitudes and catchphrases that any slick advertising agency would be proud of having penned, almost always sugar-coated to appear benign and encouraging: a grandparent is '80 Years Young!', or a mother turns 95, and below her photograph on social media

storing more fat, particularly around the midsection. Here's why that can be protective, not harmful:

💛 **Supports Hormonal Health:**

After menopause, your body produces less estrogen. Fat tissue steps in to help produce small amounts of estrogen, which continues to support your heart, brain, and bone health.

💛 **Protects Bone Health:**

Higher body weight is linked to better bone density, reducing the risk of osteoporosis and fractures.

💛 **Provides Energy Reserves:**

Fat is an energy store that helps your body stay resilient, especially in times of illness or stress.

💛 **Cushions and Protects:**

That soft layer? It literally protects your vital organs as your body ages.

This isn't weakness. It's your body working for you."

Deb's points are in line with the studies documented in Dr. Carl Lavie's book, [The Obesity Paradox](#). Lavie points out that body fat shields us from certain diseases later in life and leads to a longer survival time for people with cancer; hence the "paradox" that those classified as "overweight" have a [longer average lifespan](#)

we read that *Age Is Just a Number!*

While these phrases appear to mean well, they are actually dismissive and patronising. They drain those eighty or ninety-five lived years of all their courage, experiences, joys and hardships, and the life-lessons learned. They diminish and trivialise an achievement worthy of genuine celebration. Consider the use of that weasel word 'just' in the sentence *Age is Just a Number*: Synonyms for 'just' are words like 'merely,' 'only,' 'barely,' 'hardly' – all of them capable of squeezing a sense of 'less than' into the sentence relating to old age, to old people.

The English language is endlessly subtle and we should never underestimate its power to enhance or to undermine. This is why marginalised groups have fought so hard to reclaim words that have been used against them, and to insist on certain forms of address. And if this seems a bit left-field, consider the fact that old people in our Western cultures do mostly live on the margins. Personally, I'd like to reclaim the word 'old' and see it used openly. Not as the covert insult of its current usage

than those classified as “normal” weight.

So it’s especially insidious that the diet industry is coming for us olders. And of course the industry targets older women in particular, who have been conditioned from childhood to believe that skinny is best.

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but as a descriptive term with respectful overtones.

Perhaps the strangest aspect of the ageist mindset is that, unlike other forms of prejudice, those who perpetrate it will one day join the very group they dismiss and discriminate against.

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Stella Fosse



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