

Too Young to Be Old: How to Stay Vibrant, Visible, and Forever in Blue Jeans

Diane Gilman

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Too Young to Be Old is the inspiring memoir of a determined, audacious fashion icon.

In her compelling memoir *Too Young to Be Old*, legendary home shopping diva Diane Gilman reveals her new mission: to show the world just how cool aging can be.

Now in her mid-seventies and still rocking her blue jeans, Gilman writes that her real success as a trailblazer in the fashion industry only came after she had turned sixty. And she is not alone. Her book relates the surprising fact that, of the top fifteen women on *Forbes*'s 2021 list of "America's Richest Self-Made Women," all but one were over sixty, and number eleven on that list was ninety-five.

Gilman's raw and edgy memoir includes chilling details of childhood abuse and death threats by her alcoholic father, beginning when Gilman was just four years old. The narrative is also filled with lively descriptions of people, places, and items, as in its description of her mother's decorating style as Early American facing a potential nuclear apocalypse. The book brings the wild excesses, exuberance, and dangers of the 1960s and 1970s to life in colorful stories of Gilman's hippie days making jeans for Janis Joplin, Grace Slick, and Jimi Hendrix, then partying all night at New York's exclusive Studio 54. It also gives an insider's look at the harsh realities of trying to make it in the fashion industry, and the grueling but rewarding years of selling Gilman's clothing line, DG2, on the Home Shopping Network.

Gilman's stories collect to form a gripping narrative in which major setbacks did not impede her passionate, driven nature, hard work, and resilience. It evinces a sense of destiny, as with Gilman's early awareness that the nation was on the brink of a cultural revolution. In a moving flashback to what she called the most dangerous place for a middle-aged woman—the dressing room of a major department store—Gilman describes her dismay that the fashion industry had declared her too old for jeans and, even worse, that her midsection agreed. A critical look at her aging body coupled with an overwhelming need to look the way she felt—alive, energized, and cool—led her to declare a denim revolution and design stretchy, sexy jeans that fit the bodies of real women over forty. Those women loved the jeans and their creator, and her followers soon grew into a sisterhood of over seven hundred thousand.

Gilman shares how years of denial and ignoring her body's danger signals brought her to a confrontation with mortality. Diagnosed with breast cancer, she underwent surgery to remove both breasts. The narrative shares her fears and her firm decision to be in control of her treatments, to accept the love she was given rather than isolating herself, and to find ways to live with flair and self-confidence even when wearing a wig instead of flaunting her iconic, exuberant mane. And, in support of other women as they face their own challenges, the book shares twenty-five secrets to a meaningful, vibrant, and relevant third act of life.

Too Young to Be Old is the inspiring memoir of a determined, audacious fashion icon whose lifelong love affair with denim showed generations of women that the third act of life can be the most powerful, enlightened, and coolest time of all.

KRISTINE MORRIS (August 30, 2022)

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