

Breaking Stereotypes: Women Over 50 Shine Brighter Than Ever

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Women over 50 are defying age stereotypes, showcasing exceptional accomplishments across various fields. From keynote addresses to founding tech startups, these women prove age is but a number. Their stories highlight the importance of visibility, purpose, and breaking barriers in every aspect of life, inspiring others to embrace their potential fully.



(PHOTO: From left to right: Susan Brownfield, Carrie Aikman (back row), Jennifer Cain Birkmose, and Suzanne Lucas)

The other day my friend Susan Brownfield told me about an article she read in the Huffington Post about how women over 50 are invisible.

We laughed about this, as we are both over 50 and more visible than we have ever been.

In fact, I just had my 51st birthday, and in the past year, I have:

- Given keynote addresses in Romania, Poland, Croatia, Connecticut, Missouri, and Texas, as well as several virtual addresses
- Published almost 200 articles
- Trained more than 3,000 people on how to use ChatGPT in HR
- Performed improv comedy to sold-out crowds
- Taken a class on stand-up comedy and performed at multiple open mic nights (and only completely bombed once!)
- Conducted over 50 webinars

- Performed in a community theater production of Sleeping Beauty

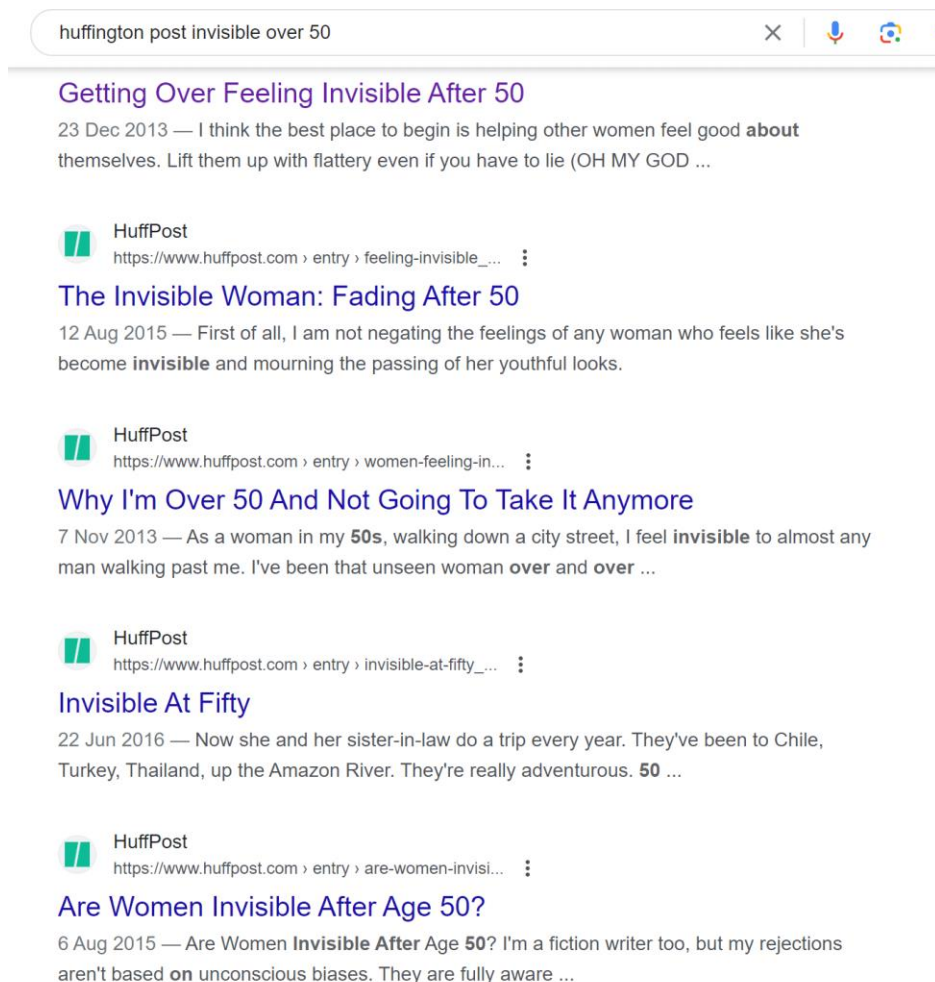
And that's just my first year of being in my 50s! I have every intention of making this year even better.

As for my friend Susan, since turning 50, she's founded a [theatre company and performing arts school](#), taught hundreds of students music, produced multiple plays, starred in numerous plays, and sang in major productions.

Oh, and she also performed improv comedy with me to sold-out crowds.

There's also the story of Diane Nyad, who set an audacious goal for herself to swim from Havana, Cuba, to Key West, Florida, when she was already in her 60s. Her story is told in the film, "Nyad". **Women feel like they are disappearing.**

On the other side, when I tried to find the article, I found this:



huffington post invisible over 50

Getting Over Feeling Invisible After 50
23 Dec 2013 — I think the best place to begin is helping other women feel good **about** themselves. Lift them up with flattery even if you have to lie (OH MY GOD ...

HuffPost
https://www.huffpost.com/entry/feeling-invisible_...

The Invisible Woman: Fading After 50
12 Aug 2015 — First of all, I am not negating the feelings of any woman who feels like she's become **invisible** and mourning the passing of her youthful looks.

HuffPost
<https://www.huffpost.com/entry/women-feeling-in...>

Why I'm Over 50 And Not Going To Take It Anymore
7 Nov 2013 — As a woman in my **50s**, walking down a city street, I feel **invisible** to almost any man walking past me. I've been that unseen woman **over** and **over** ...

HuffPost
https://www.huffpost.com/entry/invisible-at-fifty_...

Invisible At Fifty
22 Jun 2016 — Now she and her sister-in-law do a trip every year. They've been to Chile, Turkey, Thailand, up the Amazon River. They're really adventurous. **50** ...

HuffPost
<https://www.huffpost.com/entry/are-women-invisi...>

Are Women Invisible After Age 50?
6 Aug 2015 — Are Women **Invisible After Age 50**? I'm a fiction writer too, but my rejections aren't based **on** unconscious biases. They are fully aware ...

Page after page of women talking about their invisibility. If you branch out from Huffington Post, you'll find these headlines, including [Why Are Women Over Fifty Invisible in the Workplace?](#)

In this one, Gisele M. Michel writes:

"I started to speak to other women in their fifties and beyond, at all stages of those age ranges about their experiences with aging and began hearing some common themes. For example, in the workplace, some women of a certain age were being overlooked for promotion or special projects in favor of younger and less experienced staff members.

"In an effort to avoid bringing attention to their age, other women were taking time off around their birthdays to circumvent the common practice of office birthday celebrations. While others, like my friend, were having to make do with being ignored at department stores and other such spaces only to have the sales assistants run to assist younger buyers. Everyone has a story."

Now, [age discrimination](#) is real and incredibly problematic – for men and women. According to an AARP study from 2022-2023, two-thirds (**64%**) of workers aged 50 or more think [older workers face age discrimination in the workplace](#). And it's worse for women.

And, I suppose it is true that you are less likely to be considered attractive as you age. Hollywood does seem to phase you out, but let's face it: most of us were never phased in.

You don't have to be invisible over 50

[Debbie White](#), founder and CEO of brand strategy and coaching entity Frankly Deb, says that the stereotypes of older women not being tech-savvy or uninspired are false.

And she says with age comes clarity, and with clarity comes purpose, and with purpose becomes attractive businesses. She says:

"I find most 50-plus women want to make a difference in the world with their own company. This purpose-driven combination is highly attractive to a buying female audience because women are seeking products and services that not only solve a problem but also serve a larger purpose."

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Another friend of mine (and fellow improv ensemble member – are you sensing a pattern?) has also taken control of her life after 50. That's Jennifer Cain Birmose.

Jennifer is currently the co-founder and CEO of [VivaValet](#), a tech company that helps seniors stay in their homes or get the support they need while in senior communities, filling precisely one of those causes White talked about.

And it's not just about supporting seniors – it's about relieving the burdens on women who are in their 40s and 50s who are taking care of aging parents.

This isn't an accidental landing for Jennifer. Her mother, [Darlene Cain](#), watched family member after family member struggle with diabetes and decided, in her 50s, that she wanted to stop diabetes.

And what did she do? She worked her way up to head the American Diabetes Association, raised millions for diabetes clinical research, and worked on a global scale to establish World Diabetes Day.

With this example before her, Jennifer planned her life for what she calls her “third act.”

“I remember interviewing for a VP position in pharma at 45. I started realizing other women in the pharma industry reached their expiration date around 50 and were disappearing,” she says.

“I was interviewing for a high-level VP job that I eventually got, and I said that I noticed that high-level women had disappeared, and I needed to plan for what to do when the industry no longer wanted me. She looked at me quite blankly and said I’m 49 and not going anywhere. Within six months, she was out.”

Jennifer was also reorganized out of a position in pharma at 50, and that’s when she and her cofounder, Mariam Parineh, started VivaValet. She also made very clear goals around her career, family, and visibility, completing the competitive Second City Conservatory program to polish her improv comedy skills.

“By creating VivaValet, we not only provide essential services to support Olders to live at home independently, we also provide a support to adult children, often adult daughters who are also in their 40s-60s who have dual care burdens on their radar – raising children and caring for older adults,” Jennifer says.

“As we enter our 50s, many of us start to experience empty nesting as our children move out of the house and then the requirement for caring for Older relatives also begins. We are serving both sides of this generational equation by supporting the Older, and alleviating the some of physical and psychological care burden on the adult daughter.”

While the reality is society may wish to treat older women differently, it’s also a choice to disappear. I’m not going anywhere anytime soon. And neither are other women. Take control and make plans. And be loud and visible. There is a lot of runway left!