

40/40

Denise Lin Photography
Edition #4

MEET THE WOMEN

of the 2025/2026
40 Over 40 Photo Campaign

page 10

The 2026 Issue

DL

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GLOWING BEYOND

CELEBRATING WOMEN - 40 OVER 40

in support of Midlife + Mature Women's Health
in partnership with BC Women's Health Foundation




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Seeing Women Fully :
The Story Behind 40 Over 40

page 8

On the cover:
Hair by Pierreelyn Arcega & Makeup by Vivian Jun
Dress by Ouma Atelier
Jewellery by Lolo Jewellery

MEET THE TEAM



Denise
Lin

Founder & Chair

Denise Lin is a portrait photographer and the founder of Glowing Beyond, a movement that celebrates women through storytelling, connection, and art.

She is best known for her 40 Over 40 campaign, creating portraits that highlight confidence, beauty, and strength at every stage of life.

Passionate about shifting the narrative around aging and visibility, Denise also advocates for women's health research.

When she's not behind the camera or curating events, she enjoys exploring local cafés, practicing yoga, and hiking BC's scenic trails. She finds inspiration in meaningful conversations, travel, and celebrating life's everyday moments.



Nada
Chan

Vice Chair

Now in her third year on the committee, Nada is passionate about raising awareness of women's health and wellness and empowering women to prioritize their wellbeing.

With a risk and project management background, she brings strategic expertise and thoughtful leadership to her role as Vice Chair, helping expand the impact and reach of Glowing Beyond.

Nada also embraces the healing power of music, finding joy and inspiration in K-pop as a reminder of resilience, community, and connection. She believes awareness and shared experiences are vital to helping women thrive and is proud to advance this mission through Glowing Beyond.



Jessie
Kumagai

Operations &
Logistics Director

Jessie Kumagai is an experienced event planner with a passion for creating unforgettable weddings. She is also a dedicated piano teacher and Director at the Jean Lyons School of Music, Vancouver's longest established music school.

In early 2025, Jessie joined the Glowing Beyond team, where she brings her enthusiasm for supporting women's health and wellness.

Outside of work, Jessie stays busy with her husband and two sons, and she enjoys going for nature walks, practicing pilates, trying new recipes, and discovering new restaurants - always finding joy in meaningful experiences, both at home and in her community.



Amari
Yu

Creative Director

Amari is a seasoned wedding stationer, helping clients add memorable details to their events. She is also the office administrator for her church.

Amari and Denise have known each other since Denise's wedding photography days, and Amari is honoured to be part of Glowing Beyond for the 4th year.

Being a wedding vendor and helping clients with their wedding for so many years, Amari finally got to experience the other side - she said "I do" in November 2025.

Amari loves travelling, photography and walks with her dog, Jarkko.

Supporting Team: Jenny Boivin, Mahsa Mokhtari, Natasha Raey-Soo

Ambassadors: Deborah Drummond, Kal Grewal, Kanwal Trehan, Lynae Schemenauer, Phyllis Liu, Sally Thibault

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Are you ready for 2027?



A Message of Gratitude

Welcome to the Beyond Beauty Gala, presented by Glowing Beyond Foundation.

Tonight is more than a celebration. It is a powerful reminder of what happens when we come together to lift one another up.

On behalf of everyone at BC Women's Health Foundation, thank you for joining us for this extraordinary evening. We are especially grateful to the incredible Glowing Beyond Committee, whose passion, dedication, and countless hours of work have brought this event to life. Your commitment to celebrating women while advancing women's health is truly inspiring.

A special thank you goes to Denise Lin, whose vision for *40 Over 40* created something far greater than an event. She recognized that everyone has a story worth celebrating and that leadership, resilience, generosity, and impact deserve to be recognized at every stage of life. That vision beautifully reflects the values we hold dear at BC Women's Health Foundation.

Every day, we witness remarkable women breaking barriers in research, transforming healthcare, caring for their families and communities, and inspiring future generations. Recognizing these achievements isn't simply about recognizing success. It helps build a future where every woman is seen, valued, and empowered to thrive.

That is why tonight matters.

As we honour everyone who was part of this year's 40 over 40 portrait project, we also celebrate the broader impact of philanthropy. Together, we are investing in groundbreaking research and care that are helping close the women's health gap and ensuring better health outcomes for women and newborns across British Columbia.

Thank you for being part of this inspiring evening and for standing with us in support of women's and newborn health. Together, we are creating a healthier future for generations to come.

With gratitude,



Cally Wesson
President + CEO
BC Women's Health Foundation



Who are we?

THE 40 OVER 40 PHOTO CAMPAIGN

What began as a portrait series has grown into a platform that celebrates the beauty, confidence, and stories of women aged 40 and above. Through photography and storytelling, the campaign highlights their strength, achievements, and journeys, redefining what it means to age beautifully. Each year, these stories are preserved in a commemorative magazine as a tribute to 40 remarkable women.

THE COMMUNITY VISION

We believe every woman deserves to be seen, valued, and celebrated at every stage of life. Glowing Beyond Foundation builds a supportive community through networking events, social dinners, educational workshops, and meaningful gatherings where women connect, learn, and uplift one another. By sharing stories and creating genuine relationships, we empower women to grow with confidence while promoting wellness, friendship, and positive change.

THE BEYOND BEAUTY GALA

The Beyond Beauty Gala is an annual celebration honouring the women featured in the 40 Over 40 Photo Campaign while bringing our community together for an evening of connection and inspiration. Through storytelling, recognition, and fundraising, the gala celebrates beauty beyond appearance and supports initiatives that uplift women's health and well-being.

DENISE LIN

Photographer / Founder of Glowing Beyond

46

Makeup by Vivian Jun
Hair by Pierrelyn Arcega
Dress by Ouma Atelier
Jewellery by Lolo Jewellery

Seeing Women Fully: The Story Behind 40 Over 40

There is a question I have carried with me for most of my life.

What does it mean for a woman to truly be seen?

Not just seen for how she appears on the outside, but seen for what she carries, what she endures, what she survives, and what she continues to become.

This question began long before I became a photographer.

It began at home, watching my mother live with ongoing illness. Her pain was real, but often invisible to others. Over time, I witnessed how easily women's health can be misunderstood, minimized, or dismissed. People sometimes assumed she was exaggerating her symptoms, when in reality she was living with something deeply unresolved. As a child, I did not have the language for it, but I felt the weight of it. I learned early that women's health is not always fully heard, and not always fully believed.

It shaped my understanding of women's health long before I had the language for it. Today, I understand more clearly how important it is for women to be heard, believed, and supported in their health journeys. Even now, in my mid 40s, I find myself more aware of my own body. Symptoms that come and go, sleepless nights, headaches, and the lingering effects of a minor concussion from a car accident in July 2025 have reminded me that health is not something we can take for granted. It is fragile, and it is deeply human.

That understanding stayed with me.

Years later, I came to Canada at 19 as an international student. I lived in a homestay for two years, while occasionally meeting my aunt and cousins on weekends, adjusting to a new country, a new language, and a completely unfamiliar way of life. I remember eating lunch on my own at school, riding my bicycle through cold mornings, later switching to buses, and slowly learning how to navigate everyday things that once felt foreign and overwhelming.

In that time, I learned independence, but I also learned something just as important: how much kindness matters. The care and warmth of a homestay family can shape how safe a person feels in a new world. Those early experiences taught me that belonging is not something you are given. It is something you slowly grow into through connection, courage, and openness.

These two parts of my life, witnessing my mother's health journey and rebuilding my own life in a new country, became the foundation of everything I do today.

They shaped how I see women.

They shaped how I listen.

And they shaped the creation of the 40 Over 40 Campaign.

I started this project with a simple intention: to create space for women to be seen fully. Not only for their outward beauty, but for their stories, their resilience, their achievements, and the quiet strength that often goes unnoticed.

What I did not expect was how deeply this work would change me.

Every woman I have photographed has given me far more than a portrait session. They have shared stories of resilience, reinvention, loss, leadership, motherhood, survival, and transformation. These conversations stay with me. They continue to shape how I understand womanhood, aging, identity, and strength.

They have taught me that beauty is not static. It is lived. It is layered. It is earned through experience.

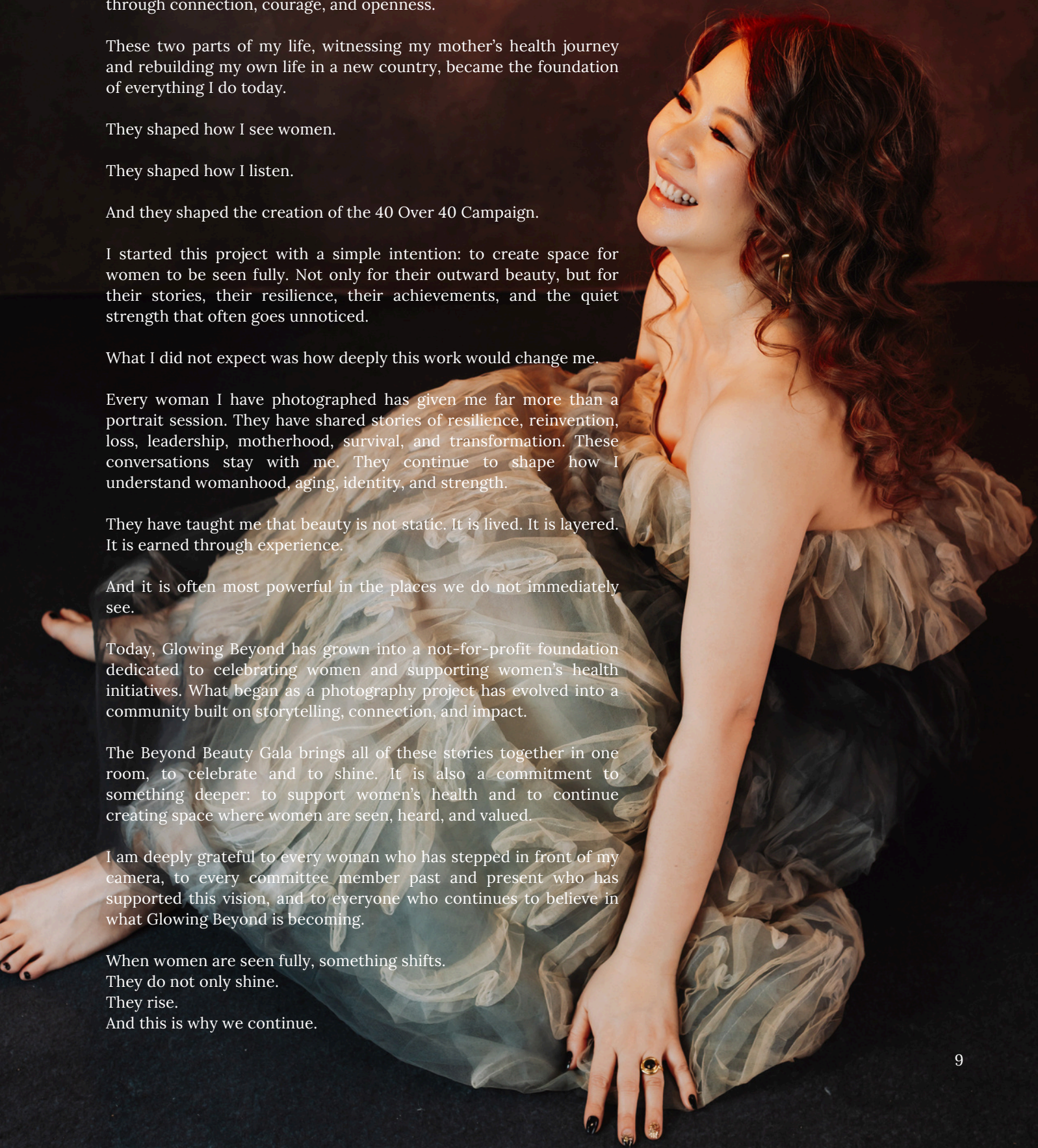
And it is often most powerful in the places we do not immediately see.

Today, Glowing Beyond has grown into a not-for-profit foundation dedicated to celebrating women and supporting women's health initiatives. What began as a photography project has evolved into a community built on storytelling, connection, and impact.

The Beyond Beauty Gala brings all of these stories together in one room, to celebrate and to shine. It is also a commitment to something deeper: to support women's health and to continue creating space where women are seen, heard, and valued.

I am deeply grateful to every woman who has stepped in front of my camera, to every committee member past and present who has supported this vision, and to everyone who continues to believe in what Glowing Beyond is becoming.

When women are seen fully, something shifts.
They do not only shine.
They rise.
And this is why we continue.





AMARI YU

Wedding & Event Stationer & Office Administrator

42

Hair by Pierrelyn Arcega

Dress by Little Pink Dress Design

Q: Tell us about your career and the roles that have shaped your life.

Working alongside wedding and event planners, as well as couples, for over 15 years has given me the pleasure of creating meaningful and memorable details for countless weddings and special events. Every client brings their own unique style, vision, and needs, which has made the creative process incredibly rewarding. Over the years, this journey has allowed me to continuously grow creatively, strengthen my commitment to exceptional customer service, and bring each client's vision to life through beautifully crafted final products.

In 2025, I went on staff at my church as the office administrator. It is the complete opposite of what I do as a stationery business owner – I almost have to rewire my brain to work in this setting. I never thought I would be stepping into this role, but I am very thankful that I am able to serve my church and its people in this capacity.

Through this, I am learning how to manage my time even more strictly, so that I am able to be 100% at both roles, but also protecting time that I have for myself, family and friends.

Q: What does turning 40 mean to you?

Now that I'm in my 40s, I've come to realize that life does not have an expiration date on dreams, milestones, or new beginnings. There are no fixed timelines or goals that must be achieved by a certain age. I feel incredibly blessed to have met my husband at 39 and to have gotten married at 42. Now, we are looking forward to starting a family together.

I understand that there may be challenges and uncertainties ahead, but that does not mean we should close the door on hope or possibility. When I was younger, I often felt pressured by timelines and expectations, believing I had only certain years to accomplish specific things. But with age has come a deeper understanding that life is still expansive, beautiful, and full of opportunity. I've learned that I should never place limits on myself or box my life into someone else's timeline.

Q: What's your beauty secret?

Having a sister that is very knowledgeable about skin care! Sunscreen every day, even when it's cloudy!

Q: How do you balance career and personal life?

I honestly think there is no balance, because life constantly changes. There will be seasons when you'll need to sacrifice your time for others, and there will be moments of life that you need to take back for yourself. It's important to be aware of your physical and mental capacities, no matter what it is that you are in and take it one day at a time.

Q: What drew you to this project and what do you hope to gain from it?

Denise Lin had been encouraging me to participate from the very beginning. While I've always enjoyed taking photos, I've never felt completely natural in front of the camera. At first, I wasn't really thinking about what I might gain from the experience beyond simply supporting Denise. In fact, I kept finding excuses to postpone the photo shoot.

Over the past few years, I had gained weight and wasn't feeling very confident in my body. I kept telling Denise, "Once I lose the extra 10-20 pounds, then I'll do the photo shoot." During that time, I was diagnosed with Disordered Proliferative Endometrium, which helped explain the weight gain and also forced me to slow down and take my health more seriously.

This became a turning point for me. It made me reflect on why I was speaking so negatively about my body and continuing to make excuses. I realized I should embrace my body as it is right now, because it does not change who I am on the inside.

When the day of the photo shoot finally came, I stepped in feeling nervous, but also confident in a new way – knowing that I am beautiful, and grateful for the body God has given me in this season of life.



AMBER BRADWELL

Organizing Designer

45

Dress by Little Pink Dress Design

Q: Tell us about your career and the roles that have shaped your life.

I became a mother at 18 years old, and since then I've been a barista, clothing store manager, bookkeeper, card dealer, traffic control person, and National Sales Manager for a medical distribution company focused on women's health.

When I finished high school, I wanted to become an accountant and discovered I had a knack for bookkeeping while attending college. I worked various jobs until I landed a position at an accounting firm. When I moved to Vancouver to access better medical care for my son, the firm referred me to another accounting firm in Burnaby.

After recovering from a car accident, I decided to pursue my dream of becoming an interior designer, which can be a tough industry when you don't know anyone. A couple more odd jobs followed until a friend hired me as a Sales Manager. Eventually, I became their National Sales Manager. Growing up in French Immersion turned out to be a huge asset and gave me a chance to relearn French, which I never thought I would use. After seven years and six months of stress leave, I decided not to return.

I am now focused on helping others become more organized. I strongly believe that the more organized people are in their daily lives, the easier and less stressful life becomes. Simple hacks like keeping spices near the stove, dishes by the dishwasher, and having a KEY BOWL at the front door can make a surprising difference.

All of this gives me the freedom to care for my family while pursuing a career as a Medical Office Assistant. My amazing, smart, beautiful sister, Dr. Saelle, and I have big plans. We want to open a mobile lumps and bumps clinic (I drive, she cuts, I handle the paperwork), and eventually invest in homes for our children, setting ourselves up to become philanthropists.

Then we'll become yoga instructors, open a studio, and retire in the best shape of our lives, in mind, body, and spirit, while building an empire for our children to follow, if they so choose.

More About Me...

I'm in love with a man who is covered in tattoos, takes me on motorcycle rides, and is an absolute gentleman. We live in a beautiful home that I designed, with a landscaped yard and a quaint little vegetable garden. Sunny days are spent working and playing outside, and colder ones are for puzzles, books, and card games. I feel safe and loved. He's strong, grounded, and the kind of man who makes me better without trying to change me. We support each other's passions, show up when life gets hard, and are building something meaningful together. I practice yoga daily, and am in the best shape of my life.

None of which is true...yet.

I'm happily single, my adult children still live at home (Let's be honest, life is expensive), and we share our space with three cats who run a tight ship. I manage to keep a few plants alive. I'm organized, lacking in self-discipline, and still working on building a life that's felt a little all over the place these past few (or ten) years.

I've cared for a sick child (and wish I'd done it better), navigated abusive relationships, overcome addiction, and experienced the kind of loss that changes you (the death of my best friend). Those experiences broke me in ways I didn't think I'd recover from, but they also rebuilt me. They made me more compassionate, more aware, and sometimes a little tougher than I need to be. Growth, as it turns out, isn't always gentle and some lessons have needed repeating.

My family keeps me grounded; sometimes sane, sometimes insane. I have loving parents, even if I didn't feel that way growing up, I now see they were doing the best they could with what they had, and that understanding has brought a different kind of peace.

Perfectionism is something I wrestle with; it's unrealistic, and yet there it is, pushing, pulling, and derailing my time management. I'm better than I used to be, which counts for something. I'm learning to work with my body instead of expecting it to keep up with every standard I set.

I have a strong sense of style, and won't pretend I don't enjoy the compliments. The ones that stay with me are about my energy and how people feel in my presence, which I think matters more. I'm drawn to anything that makes me feel alive: dancing, motorcycle rides (I say I want to stop being a "backpack", but I'm not entirely convinced), paddleboarding, beach reads, hiking, dancing, music, and helping people (did I mention dancing?).

For years, I thought my love language was physical touch. Maybe it still is, but these days, I recognize myself more in acts of service. It's how I show up, why I care so deeply about helping others, and why my ultimate dream is philanthropy; everyone deserves love and to be free of suffering. I admit some suffering teaches, but there is far too much of it in this world that serves no purpose at all.

I'm still becoming, learning, and figuring it out.

I do know where I'm going and I plan to get there with intention, resilience, and just enough flair to keep it interesting.



ANNE-CAROLINE DAMNON

43

*Hair by Pierreelyn Arcega & Makeup by Vivian Jun
Dress by Little Pink Dress Design*

"Most importantly, love yourself fully – not conditionally..."

Q: Tell us about your career and the roles that have shaped your life.

My background is in international relations, which gave me an early foundation in communication, cultural awareness, and understanding complex human dynamics. I chose to step away from a traditional career path relatively early to focus on raising my two sons and supporting our life across different countries.

Since then, my "day job" has looked a little different. Managing a household with two active teenagers has turned me into a highly efficient organizer, part-time logistics expert, and full-time negotiator. If anything, teenagers are excellent training for diplomacy. Living as an expatriate has also strengthened my adaptability and resilience, teaching me how to build stability and connection in constantly changing environments.

And if there's one thing I've learned along the way, it's that sometimes the most important work we do doesn't come with a title, but it shapes everything that follows.

Q: What advice would you give your younger self?

If I could speak to my younger self, I would begin with something simple, yet challenging and life-changing: be kinder to yourself. You don't have to earn your worth through constant effort, achievement, or perfection. You are already enough. For a long time, I believed that movement—doing more, pushing harder, filling every space—was the path to growth and success. But what I've learned is that true strength is not built in perpetual motion; it is cultivated in stillness. I would tell her to give herself more grace. Not everything needs to be optimized, solved, or improved immediately. Life unfolds in seasons, and there is wisdom in allowing things to breathe. The pressure to always be productive, especially as a woman balancing expectations from every direction, can quietly erode joy and self-worth. Slowing down is not falling behind; it is choosing to be intentional.

To the next generation of women, I would say this: embrace your life with elegance—not as something external or performative, but as a way you treat yourself and others. Elegance is found in how you speak to yourself in difficult moments, in how you carry yourself through uncertainty, and in how you extend compassion without losing your boundaries. It is a quiet confidence, a grounded presence.

Motherhood, in particular, has deepened this understanding. Loving others so fully can make it easy to disappear into their needs, to measure your value by how much you give. But I would remind any woman walking this path that you are not meant to lose yourself in the process. Your children do not need a perfect version of you; they need to see a woman who respects herself, who honors her own needs, and who models what a full, grounded life looks like. It teaches them, quietly but powerfully, that love and self-respect can coexist.

Build a relationship with stillness. In a world that constantly demands your attention, your energy, and your output, choosing moments of pause is a radical act. It is in those moments that you will hear your own voice more clearly, separate from the noise of expectations. Inner peace is not something you find once everything is perfect; it is something you practice, daily, in small choices—stepping back, breathing, reflecting.

Strength, I've learned, is not always visible. It is not only in resilience or endurance, but in softness, in self-respect, in the courage to rest when needed. It is in saying no without guilt, in honoring your limits, and in trusting that your value does not diminish when you slow down.

Most importantly, love yourself fully—not conditionally, not someday when everything aligns, but now. That love becomes your anchor. From it, you will make better decisions, build healthier relationships, and navigate life with more clarity and calm. You don't need to chase a life that looks impressive from the outside. Build one that feels peaceful on the inside.

ASHNEY REBELLO

Managing Director, Univan Sales Ltd. | Founder, Ashney's Artisan Company
Food Columnist | Writer | Social & Cultural Director, GOA Vancouver

49

Hair by Pierreelyn Arcega & Makeup by Vivian Jun



Finding Purpose Through Community, Culture, and Courage

Life has taught me that growth has no expiration date. Every chapter brings new lessons, opportunities, and the chance to become a more authentic version of ourselves. My journey has been shaped by resilience, faith, family, and a deep desire to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others.

What drew me to this project was its celebration of women who continue to grow, contribute, and inspire. I believe that every woman has a story worth sharing, and I hope my experiences encourage others to embrace their own unique path with confidence and purpose.

One of the greatest passions in my life has been building community through food, culture, and storytelling. Professionally, I serve as the Managing Director of Univan Sales Ltd., am the founder of Ashney's Artisan Company, a food columnist, writer, and Social & Cultural Director for GOA Vancouver. Through these diverse roles, I have discovered that true fulfillment comes from creating connections and bringing people together. Whether through business, community initiatives, cultural events, or a shared meal, I believe we have the power to make others feel seen, valued, and connected.

One of the milestones I am most proud of is building my entrepreneurial journey while establishing myself in a new country. Starting over came with uncertainty and self-doubt, but every challenge strengthened my resilience. Over time, those experiences opened doors to leadership opportunities, community involvement, media features, and the privilege of celebrating my Goan heritage while contributing to the community I now call home.

A defining lesson in my journey has been understanding that confidence is not the absence of fear; it is taking action despite it. Stepping outside my comfort zone, embracing new opportunities, and trusting my abilities transformed not only my career but also my sense of self. Today, confidence comes from knowing that my value is not determined by perfection, but by the impact I make and the relationships I nurture.

To women everywhere, I would say this: never allow anyone to define your limits. Your experiences, challenges, and achievements are the foundation of your strength. There is beauty in authenticity, wisdom in lived experiences, and power in embracing exactly who you are.

Balancing family, career, and community begins with gratitude and faith. My husband, daughter, family, and community keep me grounded. I prioritize moments that nourish my spirit, time in nature, prayer, meaningful conversations, and acts of service. These moments remind me of what truly matters.

If I could share one piece of wisdom with the next generation, it would be this: believe in yourself even before the world does. Pursue your dreams with courage, lead with kindness, and never underestimate the power of lifting others along the way.

My purpose is simple: to create, connect, and contribute. If my journey inspires even one person to believe in themselves, celebrate their heritage, or pursue a dream they once thought impossible, then every step of the journey has been worthwhile.

“...never allow anyone to define your limits.
Your experiences, challenges, and achievements
are the foundation of your strength.”



CARMEN THAM

Civil Litigator

48

Hair by Jeremy Janes from Chemically Addicted Hair Salon

“...it’s important to challenge yourself
and step out of your comfort zone
every once in a while...”

Q: Tell us about your career and the roles that have shaped your life.

I graduated from UBC Faculty of Law in 2003. I have been practicing law since my call to the BC Bar in 2004. My current area of practice focuses primarily on personal injury litigation.

Q: What drew you to this project and what do you hope to gain from it?

Being featured in a magazine was a new and fun experience. I wanted to support the cause behind the magazine, celebrating women over 40 and my friend Denise Lin, the photographer and creator of the Glowing Beyond campaign. I enjoy dressing up and having my photos taken, so why not do so for a good cause? I’m honoured to be part of this group of accomplished and inspiring women.

Q: What personal passion has shaped your journey and sense of self?

I have many passions, however I would say the one that has really been a significant source of strength and happiness in my life is my passion for developing and maintaining friendships. Over the years, my female friends have provided me with emotional support, lifelong memories and fun adventures.

Q: What does turning 40 mean to you, and how has it influenced your perspective on life?

Honestly, I don’t feel like I’m in my 40s. I can’t believe I will be turning 50 in a couple of years! Since turning 40, I have tried to live life with intention and reduce stress in all areas of life. I practice daily meditation/prayers, gratitude and appreciation for what I presently have, whether it’s my health, family, friends or time. These are precious commodities that money cannot replace. My mother has also been a very significant influence. She was a stay-at-home mother who taught me that it is important to be financially independent and to stay humble. As I mature, I appreciate my mother’s wisdom and advice even more.

Q: How has confidence shaped your journey?

I feel that as I mature, I care less and less what other people think. I have learned to trust my intuition, to love myself and surround myself with good friends and family that support me and give me the confidence to be myself and live life the way I choose to.

Q: How do you balance career and personal life?

Time management, being well organized, planning ahead and finding ways to relieve stress are all important skills I use to balance the various parts of my life.

Q: How did this photo experience impact you?

This photoshoot was an amazing experience and I would do it again. I think it’s important to challenge yourself and step out of your comfort zone every once in a while, not only for personal growth but also hopefully to inspire others to do the same.

Q: What message do you hope to share about women’s health?

Turning 40 is not necessarily something to dread; it is a milestone to be embraced and celebrated.

CC ROA

CFD, CAFA, WFC, Founder

64

Outfit by Karis The Label



The Face Behind the Flora: Stepping Out of the Shadows

For twenty-nine years, I have let my designs take center stage. As the founder of ROA Floral and Event Designs, I've always allowed my work to speak for me: the bouquets, the installations, and the quiet details that bring a space to life. I believed my role was to reveal beauty, not to be seen within it. Now at 64, as part of the 40 Over 40 Campaign, I am learning that there is a different kind of strength found in stepping into the frame.

My journey has been defined by a stubborn persistence. As a woman of colour starting my business in 1996, I often found myself needing to prove myself to businesses and corporations. I spent fourteen years as a single mother and eventually returned to school to formally study floral arts, building a future for my family while holding everything else together. It was during this period that my unwavering faith became my bedrock. I reminded myself that it wasn't about the colour of my skin, but about asserting my voice and believing in my worth.

This resilience became my anchor when I faced a different kind of uncertainty; one that didn't involve blooms, but my own body. In my early forties, I entered menopause while managing a chronic blood disorder. There was very little information and even less conversation around it. I found myself searching for answers in the dark through a period of ambiguity that eventually fueled my desire to support the BC Women's Foundation. Access to care should never be a mystery; we all need a stronger support system as we age.

I've learned that holistic health shouldn't be a solo pursuit; it requires community. I have been blessed with a village that keeps me upright. My husband, Bruce, has been my Number 1 support system alongside my mother. When I feared I might fall while pursuing this path, Bruce promised to catch me (and he has) through every baseball game, dance rehearsal, and business milestone.

That same spirit of family has quietly shaped ROA from the very beginning. Today, my daughters, Jamie and Sarah, have become an integral part of ROA's story. Watching them bring their own strengths and perspectives into the business has been one of the greatest privileges of my life. Alongside our incredible team, they continue to challenge me, inspire me, and remind me that growth has no age limit. While I may have decades of experience, I remain a student of their creativity, energy, and fresh perspective.

As ROA has grown, so has my sense of responsibility. I've always believed that success should extend beyond the walls of our studio. Whether we're creating florals for charitable galas, supporting local organizations, or contributing to causes close to our hearts, giving back has become woven into the fabric of our business. Flowers have given me a livelihood, but they've also given me a platform to serve others.

Participating in this campaign has pushed me far outside my comfort zone. I've spent my life creating for others, often hiding behind the walls I decorate. But as I stood for this shoot, in a minimalist ensemble that reflected my true, simple style, the essence of who I am beyond the business finally had a chance to shine through.

It is time we stop hiding behind the beauty of our work and start realizing that we are the real masterpiece. I am no longer afraid to show the face behind my company. I now know that standing in my own light with fierce radiance is the most beautiful arrangement I've ever made.



CHARLENE LAL

Certified Coach & CPA

50

Hair by Raisa Hryhoriak & Makeup by Natalia Tatevosyan

Q: Tell us about your career and the roles that have shaped your life.

I've spent over two decades in leadership roles within the public sector, building a career rooted in responsibility, service, and achievement. I'm a Chartered Professional Accountant, and over time, my work expanded in a more personal direction as I became a certified coach — bringing together financial insight with a deeper, human-centered approach.

Outside of my professional roles, I am a daughter, sister, wife, aunt, grandmother, and friend — navigating the same expectations, responsibilities, and relationships many women quietly carry.

For much of my life, I followed the path I believed success required. I checked all the boxes: career, stability, responsibility, but beneath that was a growing sense of exhaustion and disconnection. Navigating my own health challenges became a turning point, leading me to redefine success to include not just achievement, but well-being, meaning, and alignment. Today, I bring both perspectives, finance and coaching, to support women ready to live in a way that feels more honest, sustainable, and true.

Q: What challenge in your age group have you overcome and how?

A defining moment of resilience for me wasn't a single external achievement, but an internal shift: the willingness to stop performing and start listening. Listening to my body, my emotions, and my truth.

As a high-achieving woman, I had learned to push through, to carry on, to meet expectations. But my body eventually asked for something different. That experience taught me that resilience isn't always about pushing forward, sometimes it's about pausing, recalibrating, and choosing a new way.

Q: What drew you to this project and what do you hope to gain from it?

I was drawn to this project because it celebrates women not just for how they look, but for who they've become. There's something powerful about being seen, not for perfection, but for truth, growth, and resilience. I hope to contribute to that by sharing a story that other women can recognize themselves in, and by reminding women that their worth isn't defined by how they appear, but by how they live and who they are.

Q: What personal passion has shaped your journey and sense of self?

My passion is helping women redefine their relationship with money, success and identity. For years, I believed success meant achievement, stability, and being everything to everyone. But beneath that was exhaustion and a constant feeling that "enough" was always just out of reach. That experience, along with navigating my own health challenges, became a turning point. It forced me to pause and ask a different question: not "How do I do more?" but "What actually matters?" That question changed everything.

Q: What is your purpose or path in life?

Today, as a certified coach, I support women who look successful on the outside but feel misaligned on the inside, women carrying invisible pressure to hold everything together. The work I do, and the book I've written, *The Currency of Self-Worth*, is rooted in a simple but powerful truth: many women don't have a money problem — they have a worth problem wearing a money mask. We've been taught to measure ourselves by what we achieve, earn, or provide, often at the cost of our well-being. My purpose is helping women come back to themselves and redefine success in a way that doesn't require self-abandonment.

Q: What advice would you give your younger self?

You don't have to earn your worth. You don't have to prove your place. And you don't have to carry everything to be enough. To women navigating similar paths, especially those balancing cultural expectations, professional pressure, and personal responsibility, you are not behind, and you are not failing. You are outgrowing a definition of success that was never designed for you. This chapter of my life is about alignment over achievement. About living in a way that reflects who I truly am — not just what I can accomplish. And that, to me, is real wealth.



COLLEEN KARAVIDAS

Owner, Bisou Bridal & Stepstone Entertainment Inc.

58

Hair by Pierrelyn Arcega & Makeup by Vivian Jun

Q: Tell us about your career and the roles that have shaped your life.

I've spent over two decades starting, building and running Bisou Bridal, a boutique that has grown into more than just a business — it's a space where women feel seen, celebrated, and supported during one of the most meaningful moments of their lives. Alongside that, I've been involved in entrepreneurship through KARIS. Beyond my professional life, my most important role has been being a mother. Balancing business ownership with raising my daughter has shaped who I am — teaching me resilience, adaptability, and the importance of leading with both strength and heart.

Q: What drew you to this project and what do you hope to gain from it?

This project felt like an opportunity to pause and reflect. Life moves quickly, especially when you're running a business and supporting others. I wanted to step into something that was just for me — to celebrate this stage of life, to be seen, and to connect with other women who have their own powerful stories. I hope to gain a deeper sense of appreciation for how far I've come and to inspire others to embrace where they are.

“There is so much strength in experience. We've lived, learned, loved, and persevered.”

Q: What message would you share with women over 40 about aging?

There is so much strength in experience. We've lived, learned, loved, and persevered. Instead of trying to hold onto youth, I believe in embracing evolution. This chapter can be one of the most powerful — where confidence replaces doubt, and authenticity becomes your greatest asset.

Q: What moment best reflects your strength and resilience?

Like many small business owners, the past several years have been challenging. Navigating uncertainty, changing markets, and increased competition tested me in ways I didn't expect. There were moments of real doubt — but I kept going. Leaning on my team, staying creative, and refusing to give up reinforced my belief that resilience isn't about avoiding hardship—it's about moving through it.

Q: What does turning 50+ mean to you?

Turning 50 — and now approaching 60 — has been incredibly grounding. There's a clarity that comes with age. You care less about outside expectations and more about what truly matters. I feel more confident in my decisions, more comfortable in my own skin, and more intentional about how I spend my time and energy. It's not about slowing down — it's about focusing on what brings meaning and joy.

Q: How did this photo experience impact you?

This experience pushed me outside my comfort zone in the best way. It reminded me that it's never too late to try something new or to see yourself differently. I would absolutely encourage other women to do it — you might be surprised by how empowering it feels.

Q: What advice would you give your younger self?

Trust yourself sooner. Don't second-guess your instincts or wait for validation. Everything you need is already within you. And don't forget to enjoy the journey — success isn't just about outcomes, it's about the moments along the way.

ELIZABETH LESZTAK

General Manager, Pure Integrative Pharmacy

50

Dress by Little Pink Dress Design



Q: Tell us about your career and the roles that have shaped your life.

For more than 11 years, I have had the privilege of serving as General Manager at Pure Integrative Pharmacy, building on over 26 years of experience in natural health, retail operations and wellness. Throughout my career, I have become increasingly convinced that the future of healthcare lies in thoughtful integration — bringing together the best of conventional allopathic medicine with evidence-informed traditional natural approaches to support lasting health and well-being.

That philosophy extends beyond my professional life. I have long been fascinated by the relationship between mind, body and spirit, and by the understanding that each influences the others in profound ways. My own well-being has been shaped by practices such as yoga, breathwork, meditation and dance, all of which encourage presence, resilience and self-awareness. Dance, in particular, has remained a constant source of joy, creativity and renewal throughout my life.

It was through these shared values that I discovered photographer Denise Lin and her remarkable work. Her photography captures far more than an image; it celebrates the confidence, wisdom and individuality that emerge through life's experiences. In doing so, she has created a welcoming community where women feel seen, valued and inspired, while championing an important cause close to many hearts.

That connection naturally led me to the BC Women's Health Foundation. The Foundation's commitment to advancing research, education and innovation is transforming the future of women's healthcare. Equally powerful is the way it brings women together — not only to raise essential funds, but to share their stories, encourage one another and contribute to something larger than themselves.

What begins as a portrait session with Denise often becomes something far more meaningful. It becomes a collaboration, and an opportunity for women to celebrate a new stage of life with authenticity and confidence, to connect with an extraordinary community, and to invest in a future where women's health receives the attention, understanding and research it deserves. There is something profoundly hopeful about women coming together in this way: celebrating one another while helping create lasting change for generations to come.

“There is something profoundly hopeful about women coming together in this way: celebrating one another while helping create lasting change for generations to come.”

GURPREET ARORA

Co-owner, Wellgroomed Inc.

45

Hair & Makeup by Catherine Li



Embracing 45, Culture, and Balance

My Indian heritage is the cornerstone of my identity and the foundation of my confidence. It taught me the value of family, community, and an unshakeable work ethic. Moving across continents meant adapting to new environments, but my roots kept me grounded.

Turning 40, and now being 45, has brought a profound sense of clarity and empowerment. In a society that often overvalues youth, I see this stage of life as a time of blooming, not fading. For me, balancing a multi-location business and the beautiful chaos of raising two active children — managing school schedules, sports, and home life — is an ongoing dance. It isn't about achieving a flawless, static balance every single day; it is about being entirely present in whatever role I am occupying at that moment, whether I am acting as a businesswoman or a mother cheering from the sidelines.

My message to other women over 40 is to fully embrace their timeline and own their worth. We harbor a unique strength that can only be forged through years of weathering challenges, shifting identities, and building dreams from scratch. Stepping outside my comfort zone for this "40 Over 40" photo session is my way of celebrating that resilience. I hope to inspire other women to realize that it is never too late to reinvent yourself, celebrate your achievements, and stand proudly in your own beautiful skin.

Q: Tell us about your career and the roles that have shaped your life.

I am a Healthcare Professional Turned Full-Time Mom & Business Owner.

My journey began in Punjab, India, where I was born, raised, and trained as a registered nurse, graduating in 2002. I dedicated the early years of my career to cardiac nursing and teaching the next generation of healthcare professionals. After a brief chapter working in the historic town of Stratford-upon-Avon in the UK, life took a beautiful turn. I got married, and in 2008, my husband and I migrated to Vancouver, Canada, to start our lives anew.

The early days of being a new immigrant were defined by sheer grit and hustle. While I worked demanding night shifts as a nurse in a Vancouver hospital, my husband and I launched an Indian bridal clothing brand called Wellgroomed straight from our rental home. I would finish my hospital shifts and immediately pivot to helping him build the business. In the midst of this whirlwind, we were blessed with our daughter in 2010 and our son in 2014. After our son's birth, I made the conscious decision to step away from nursing to become a full-time mom and fully immerse myself in managing our growing business. Together, we have expanded Wellgroomed from a small rental space into a thriving brand with six locations across North America.



JACCI SANDLER

Director of Development

54

Hair by Monica Min & Makeup by Hayley Miller
Dress by Little Pink Dress Design

“Giving back not only strengthens our communities, but also helps repair parts of our own souls.”

Q: Tell us about your career and the roles that have shaped your life.

I hold a degree in Political Science from Cape Town, South Africa, where I developed a strong foundation in critical thinking, communication, and an understanding of global and community dynamics.

I later pursued a career in real estate, obtaining a qualification in Real Estate Leasing and working in the industry for over 20 years. My career evolved from office leasing into property management, and for a decade in Canada I worked with Austeville Properties, an arm of the Diamond Family. In this role, I managed six commercial office towers across Vancouver, overseeing a diverse portfolio of tenants including Starbucks, Treloar Physiotherapy, and the BC Cancer Agency.

Following the birth of my second child and without extended family support in Canada, I made the decision to step back from my professional career to focus on my family. During this time, I became deeply involved in the charitable sector, initially supporting community events and galas in volunteer capacities.

Over time, my role expanded into leadership positions. In 2024, I served as Creator and Chair of the Golden Thread Gala. Building on this experience, I went on to create the “I’m Still Standing” Gala in support of epilepsy, helping to raise nearly one million dollars for epilepsy initiatives. I also served for six years as a Director on the Board of the BC Epilepsy Society. In addition, I have been involved with the VGH & UBC Hospital Foundation through the VHG Vitality Gala, later supporting individual fundraising initiatives for Vancouver General Hospital. Alongside my husband, I also helped raise funds for Simon Fraser University to support a MEG brain health study, with the backing of TD Bank.

Above all, I am a dedicated mother of two and am deeply committed to my family and community. When I am not working or volunteering, I enjoy spending time with my children and our miniature schnauzer, who keeps our household lively.

Q: What personal passion has shaped your journey and sense of self?

I have always had a deep sensitivity to people in need. Growing up in South Africa, I was surrounded by stark disparities in wealth and opportunity, which shaped my desire to help repair the world. In Hebrew, we call this Tikkun Olam.

After moving to Canada and building a career in the business world, particularly in real estate, my focus on Tikkun Olam began to fade. However, once my two children were older, I felt a strong pull back to that purpose. I returned to my passion through fundraising, supporting causes that hold deep emotional meaning for me – especially in healthcare, education, and community.

By reconnecting with this passion for helping others, I have found a renewed sense of purpose and self-worth. Giving back not only strengthens our communities, but also helps repair parts of our own souls.

JAS RAI

Founder, Rise & Thrive

49

Dress by Little Pink Dress Design



Q: Tell us about your career and the roles that have shaped your life.

I am a high performing entrepreneur and mother. I spent years in the corporate world before making the deliberate choice to build something of my own. I became a Chopped Leaf franchisee, growing my portfolio to multiple locations and learning every layer of what it takes to run a successful business: operations, people, numbers, and growth. I then co-founded Creekside Millworks, expanding into the trades, an industry that demands precision, trust, and execution. Through it all, I have intentionally designed a life centered on family and freedom.

Today, I channel everything I have gained, including the wins, the hard lessons, and the business instincts I developed along the way, into Rise & Thrive. As a Certified Canfield Success Principles Coach and founder of Rise & Thrive, I create the space I once needed: a supportive community where women in business strengthen their mindset, build confidence with their finances, and believe that achieving bigger goals is possible.

Q: What drew you to this project and what do you hope to gain from it?

What drew me to this project is simple. I believe deeply in the power of women lifting each other up, especially during seasons of life that are not always celebrated. Midlife is a rich, transformative time, full of wisdom, reinvention, and hard-won confidence, yet it is often overlooked or spoken about in hushed tones. When I heard about *Glowing Beyond* and its partnership with BC Women's Health Foundation, it felt like exactly the kind of conversation I want to be part of.

Empowering women in my community has always been close to my heart. I hope that by showing up and being visible, I can be part of a chorus of women saying this chapter is worth celebrating.

What I am most looking forward to is connecting with women who are living boldly and generously at this stage of life. There is something powerful about community, about seeing yourself reflected in someone else's story. I hope to find my people and become a familiar face for a woman somewhere who needs to see that she is not alone.

Q: What is your purpose or path in life?

My purpose did not arrive all at once. It has unfolded layer by layer, like something that was always there, waiting to be uncovered.

Becoming a mother and an entrepreneur reoriented everything. When you are responsible for other lives, your children, your team, your community, you are called to dig deeper than you ever imagined. It is in that depth that I found my why.

I spent years in the corporate world before choosing to build something of my own. I became a Chopped Leaf franchisee, grew a multi-location portfolio, & co-founded

Creekside Millworks, learning every hard and beautiful lesson that comes with building real businesses. Somewhere along the way, a purpose crystallized. I wanted to open the room I once needed.

That is how Rise & Thrive was born. A community built on three pillars: coaching, community, and connection. It is grounded in Jack Canfield's *Success Principles* and designed for women ready to trust their own authority and define success on their own terms.

My path has never been straight. It has bent, paused, and doubled back, but every season added something essential. I am still evolving, and I hope I always will be.

My purpose today is simple: to widen the table, show up fully as myself, and create space for other women to do the same, while continuing to rise and reach back for others.

What resources or support systems have you found most helpful in managing your health?

Honestly, the most powerful resource I have found is the simplest one: talking to other women, and not being embarrassed about it.

The first time I understood what was happening to me was through a TV show. I was watching a character describe her symptoms and thought, wait, that is me. The brain fog, sleep disruption, and night sweats. I had been experiencing it without a name for it. It took a storyline on screen to hold up a mirror.

That moment was a wake-up call. If I had no idea I was in perimenopause, how many other women were sitting in the same confusion, quietly wondering if something was wrong with them?

So I started talking to friends, to women in my community, to anyone who would go there with me. Every time, I was met with me too. Women carrying the same symptoms, the same silence.

That is the resource that changed everything: community. Real, unfiltered conversation with women who are in it too. I also began educating myself, seeking practitioners who specialize in women's midlife health, asking better questions, and refusing to accept this is just part of aging.

It is no coincidence that this is also at the heart of what I built with Rise & Thrive: a space where women can bring their whole selves and find both support and strategy.

Talk to the women around you. Ask the uncomfortable questions. You will almost always find someone who has been waiting for that exact conversation too.



JENNY BOIVIN

Inventory Clerk... but easing her way into retirement!

53

Hair & Makeup by Catherine Li

Q: Tell us about your career and the roles that have shaped your life.

I am currently in my 35th year with Loblaws. I started right after high school as a cashier and gradually worked my way up to Assistant Supervisor for the Front End. After getting married and starting a family, spending time raising my children became a priority. With each of my three boys, I chose to step back and take on roles that allowed me to focus more on family.

Once my children were in school, I was ready for a change and decided to move into a different department. Today, I work in Inventory, where I handle receiving invoices, generating reports for out-of-stock items, implementing planograms, and much more.

Outside of work, I am a strong believer in volunteering wherever I can. Over the years, I have served on the Parent Association at my children's school, the Pastoral Council at my church, and supported numerous fundraising events, including Glowing Beyond. I love being part of the community and enjoy contributing to projects that make a positive impact on the lives of others.

Q: What's your beauty secret?

Softsoap hand soap! I know, I know. I often receive compliments on my skin and get asked what products I use. People are usually shocked when I reveal my Softsoap secret!

Honestly, I am a little lazy and sometimes a little cheap. I rotate between three different drugstore brands and occasionally splurge on a luxury product. But there is one thing I have done consistently for the past 30 years: I wear sunscreen every single day.

Follow me for more beauty tips!

"I love being part of the community and enjoy contributing to projects that make a positive impact on the lives of others."



JESSIE KUMAGAI

Wedding Planner & Music Educator

50

Hair by Pierrelyn Arcega & Makeup by Vivian Jun
Dress by Ouma Atelier

Q: Tell us about your career and the roles that have shaped your life.

A love for music led me to become a piano teacher more than 30 years ago at Jean Lyons School of Music. Over the years, it has been incredibly rewarding to watch my students grow — not just musically, but in confidence as well. As a Director at the school, I also help to oversee operations and manage the finances and bookkeeping.

About 20 years ago, I also found my way into the wedding planning industry. It began as a small side business with a friend of mine, but over time that passion grew into something more, and since 2016 I have been an Associate Planner with DreamGroup Weddings + Events.

Alongside my work, I'm also a wife and mother of two teenage boys. Like many women, I wear a few different hats in life, and over the years I've learned that the key isn't trying to do everything perfectly — it's being present and giving your best to whatever role you're in at the time.

Q: What is your cultural background and how has it shaped you?

I'm Canadian-born Chinese with parents who immigrated from Indonesia. My husband is Japanese Canadian, so our family reflects a blend of cultures and traditions. Growing up in an immigrant family, I learned values like hard work, humility, and perseverance. At the same time, being raised in Canada encouraged independence and the confidence to find my own path. Over the years, I've come to appreciate how those influences have shaped who I am and the way I approach my work, family, and life in general.

“...there's a sense of freedom that comes with age.”

Q: What drew you to this project and what do you hope to gain from it?

When I first heard about this project, I loved the idea and felt that it was incredibly meaningful to celebrate women and their stories. Having just turned 50, it felt like the perfect moment to capture this stage of my life. Another aspect that appealed to me was the project's connection to a fundraising gala in collaboration with BC Women's Health Foundation. Knowing that the experience also supports awareness and research for mid-life and mature women's health made it even more meaningful to be part of.

Q: What does turning 50 mean to you?

Turning 50 has brought a greater sense of confidence and perspective. I know myself better now — what matters, what doesn't, and what I'm willing to spend my energy on. I've learned to be more comfortable with who I am, and there's a sense of freedom that comes with age. I care less about outside expectations and more about living in a way that feels authentic and intentional.

Q: What are the biggest health challenges facing mature women today?

One of the biggest challenges is that many aspects of women's health — especially in midlife — have historically been under-researched and underfunded. That's why initiatives like the fundraising gala in support of BC Women's Health Foundation are so important. Greater awareness and research can help ensure that women have access to better information, care, and support as they move through different stages of life. For me, participating in this project isn't just about celebrating age — it's also about bringing attention to issues that impact women's long-term health and well-being.

Q: How did this photo experience impact you?

This photoshoot was such a positive and uplifting experience. I would encourage other women not to be afraid of stepping outside their comfort zone, as sometimes those moments allow us to see ourselves in a different light. Every stage of life deserves to be celebrated, and this experience reminded me that confidence and beauty truly don't have an age limit.

KANWALPREET TREHAN

Trauma-Informed Life Coach & Founder of sheBIZ

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Q: Tell us about your career and the roles that have shaped your life.

I am a certified trauma-informed coach, multipreneur, event producer, and women's leadership advocate. I am also the founder of sheBIZ and The Soirée Company. For over 15 years, I have built businesses rooted in creativity, connection, and community while navigating motherhood, personal rebuilding, and the many transitions women quietly carry throughout life.

Q: What drew you to this project and what do you hope to gain from it?

Participating in the 40 Over 40 project felt deeply aligned with the season of life I'm currently in. So much of society celebrates women in their youth, but there is something incredibly powerful about women over 40 who have lived, endured, rebuilt, and continued showing up with grace. I wanted to be part of a project that celebrates women not just for how they look, but for who they have become.

Q: What does turning 40 mean to you?

Turning 40 shifted my perspective in many ways. In my younger years, I focused heavily on achievement, proving myself, and surviving difficult seasons. As I've grown older, I've become more intentional about peace, purpose, authenticity, and meaningful impact. I no longer believe success is measured only by productivity or external accomplishments. I think true success is being able to remain soft, grounded, and compassionate after life has tested you.

Q: What moment best reflects your strength and resilience?

One of the experiences that has most defined my resilience as a woman has been learning how to rebuild during seasons where everything felt uncertain. There were moments where I was balancing business pressures, motherhood, emotional hardship, financial stress, and personal loss all at once while still trying to lead others with strength. Those experiences taught me that resilience is not about perfection or always appearing strong. Sometimes resilience is simply continuing to move forward with honesty, humility, and hope.

Q: What is your cultural background and how has it shaped you?

As a South Asian woman, my culture has deeply influenced who I am. I was raised with strong values around family, responsibility, perseverance, and community. At the same time, many women in our culture are taught to carry silent pressure and put themselves last. Over time, I've learned the importance of balancing strength with self-worth and understanding that women deserve to take up space, pursue leadership, and honour their own dreams without guilt.

Q: What advice would you give your younger self?

If I could give advice to my younger self, I would tell her not to confuse survival with self-worth. I would tell her to trust herself sooner, rest more often, and understand that softness is not weakness. I would also remind her that life is not a race and that becoming the woman you are meant to be takes time.

"This experience reminded me that every line, every lesson, every setback, and every new beginning tells a story worth honouring."

KAREN WONG

68



“Those formative experiences shaped the values I still hold closely today: the importance of family, perseverance, sacrifice, and intelligence, both practical and academic. Along with kindness, I believe these are among the most beautiful qualities a person can have.”

Q: Tell us about your career and the roles that have shaped your life.

When I was invited to be part of this series, I was truly thrilled. I never imagined that at 68 years old, I would be adding “model” to my resume.

I was born in Zhongshan, China, into a large family with six daughters and two sons. When I was eight, my father passed away after a workplace accident, leaving my mother a widow with an uphill battle. My two eldest sisters set aside their own dreams and began working to support our family.

In 1968, my maternal grandfather gave us a gift that changed the course of our lives: he sponsored our family to immigrate to Vancouver, Canada. Those early years were not easy. My siblings and I, except for my two eldest sisters, were fortunate to receive a formal education. As soon as we were old enough, we also began working, and every dollar we earned went back to our mother.

Those formative experiences shaped the values I still hold closely today: the importance of family, perseverance, sacrifice, and intelligence, both practical and academic. Along with kindness, I believe these are among the most beautiful qualities a person can have.

I met my husband at a young age, and together we began building a life. I had the privilege of being a stay-at-home mother, present for the simple, everyday moments that often feel small at the time but pass far too quickly.

Becoming a mother to two daughters and one son made me realize that I was the heart of my family. It also made me want to be proactive about my health so I could enjoy a long life with the people I love. Drinking water, exercising, a proper diet, and prioritizing sleep are some of the ways I have cared for myself, and continue to do so today.

In 1996, I joined my husband in his business, where we worked side by side for 20 years. We were fortunate to build relationships with loyal customers and dedicated employees. Financially, we had the opportunity to support several charities within our community for the past 30 years. Donating to women’s hospitals is something I feel a deep responsibility toward, and reinvesting in my community has brought me confidence, purpose, and joy.

Now, as a grandmother to seven beautiful grandchildren, ranging from eight months to 16 years old, I feel incredibly blessed to watch my family continue to grow.

If I could speak to my younger self, I would tell her to stop worrying so much about the small details and to enjoy the journey. I would remind her that true, supportive friendships will come, that there are many kind and wonderful people in the world, and that there is more good than bad. Most importantly, I would tell her that prioritizing family, working hard, and keeping an open heart and mind can lead to the most amazing results.

A full-page portrait of Linda Mah, a woman with long dark hair, smiling and wearing a strapless, multi-layered ruffled dress in shades of light green and white with a red sash. She is standing with her hands on her hips against a dark grey background.

LINDA MAH

Insurance Advisor, Entrepreneur, & CEO of BiiG Financial Company Ltd.

57

Hair & Makeup by Farrah Sanei
Dress by Ouma Atelier

Q: Tell us about your career and the roles that have shaped your life.

After earning a Bachelor of Commerce from the University of British Columbia, I entered the industry in 1991 and quickly discovered a passion for helping people navigate important life decisions. By the following year, I had become an independent advisor, laying the foundation for a career defined by personalized guidance and genuine connection.

This vision ultimately led to the founding of BiiG Financial Company Ltd. in 2007, a firm grounded in the belief that people deserve thoughtful, dependable support when making their “big” financial decisions. Helping families build financial security for more than three decades has been one of the most rewarding parts of my journey.

Q: What drew you to this project and what do you hope to gain from it?

I was inspired by the opportunity to celebrate women and challenge society's ideas about aging. I hope my story encourages others to embrace themselves and recognize their worth, beauty, and accomplishments at every stage of life.

Q: What personal passion has shaped your journey and sense of self?

Bringing people together has always been a passion of mine. I enjoy creating connections and sharing experiences with others. I also love food, wine, gardening, golf, travel, fitness, and fashion. These interests remind me to stay curious, continue learning, and appreciate the beauty in everyday moments.

Q: What does this stage of life mean to you, and how has it influenced your perspective on life?

This stage of life represents confidence, gratitude, and perspective. I have learned that success is measured not only by professional accomplishments but also by the relationships we nurture and the positive impact we create. I have also learned to trust myself, worry less about others' expectations, and define success on my own terms. Confidence grows with experience, and every chapter brings new opportunities to learn and grow.

Q: What accomplishment makes you feel most empowered?

Building BiiG Financial and helping families achieve financial security for more than three decades has been deeply rewarding. I am also proud of supporting women, animal welfare, and environmental causes. For me, empowerment comes from creating a positive impact, helping others thrive, and knowing that the work I do contributes to something bigger than myself.

Q: What is your cultural background and how has it shaped you?

I am a second-generation Chinese Canadian, born in Montreal and educated at the University of British Columbia. My upbringing taught me the importance of hard work, humility, perseverance, respect, and giving back to the community. These values continue to guide my personal life, my career, and the way I support others.

Q: What have you learned about prioritizing women's health and well-being?

Many women spend years caring for others while putting their own needs aside. Stress and burnout are common challenges, and prioritizing our physical, emotional, and mental health is essential to living well and aging well. I hope to remind women that beauty, confidence, and wellness do not have an expiration date. Every experience, challenge, and achievement contributes to the strength and beauty of who we are.

Q: What advice would you give your younger self?

I would tell my younger self to trust herself, worry less about others' expectations, and have confidence in her own journey. To other women, I would say: believe in yourself, stay curious, embrace new experiences, and remember that some of life's most fulfilling chapters can come later. Age does not diminish our potential. It enhances our wisdom, strength, and authenticity.

LIYING LUAN

Former Official of the United Nations

70

Hair & Makeup by Catherine Li



“...do not let society’s definition of beauty or success limit your choices.”

Q: Tell us about your career and the roles that have shaped your life.

Before joining the United Nations, I was not a homemaker; I had been working in another professional field. At the age of 43, I made a conscious decision to transition into international service. It was a highly competitive process, and many people thought it was too late for me to start something new. But I succeeded.

During my years at the UN, I specialized in areas that are close to my heart, particularly women’s empowerment and community development. These were not just policy topics to me; they represented real challenges faced by women and families around the world. That experience shaped my belief that when women are given the opportunity to work and lead, entire communities benefit.

Although I have retired from my former duties, I remain active; continuing to learn, reflect, and engage with life in new ways.

Q: What message would you share with women over 40 about aging?

With age comes not only more experience, but also more confidence. Since retiring, I have made a conscious effort to stay curious, to keep learning, and to maintain a positive, optimistic outlook on life. That mindset helps me embrace change, and stay open to new possibilities.

I want women over 40 to know that you are not slowing down; you are becoming stronger. Please do not let society’s definition of beauty or success limit your choices.

Q: What does turning 40, 50, 60, 70 mean to you?

To me, turning 40, 50, 60, or 70 is not about decline; it is about growth. In my earlier decades, I focused on responsibility and achievement. Now, I feel a sense of peace and freedom. I no longer measure my worth by titles, but by wisdom, experience, presence, and the ability to choose how I spend my time.

Q: What was it about the project that made you want to participate?

When I was invited to be part of 40 Over 40, what immediately resonated with me was its message: that women’s value does not diminish with age; it deepens. I chose to participate because I want to help shift the narrative around aging and show that women in their 60s, 70s, and beyond still have valuable insights to offer.

Q: What is your beauty secret?

If I have a beauty secret, it is simple: live a life that makes you proud. True beauty is not about hiding your age; it is about living it fully, with purpose and self-respect.

LOREDANA MORETTI

CFO, Savoury City Catering & Events Inc.

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Q: Tell us about your career and the roles that have shaped your life.

I am a Vancouver-based entrepreneur, business advisor, and owner of Savoury City Catering & Events. With a background spanning finance, business strategy, real estate, and entrepreneurship, I have built a career rooted in resilience, integrity, and helping others succeed. I am passionate about mentorship, women's empowerment, and making a positive impact in my community. I believe some of life's most challenging experiences often become our greatest teachers.

Outside of business, I am an avid bodybuilder who challenges stereotypes around aging and believes that reinvention has no age limit.

Professionally, my background has been quite diverse, which reflects my belief in lifelong learning and reinvention. I've worked in finance, bookkeeping, business advisory, real estate, and entrepreneurship, always gravitating toward helping businesses grow, solve problems, and navigate challenges. Most recently, I became the owner of Savoury City Catering & Events, a company I had worked alongside for many years before stepping into ownership.

Personally, I've also worn many hats: partner, mother, caregiver, mentor, supporter, and sometimes simply the person holding things together during difficult seasons. Those roles shaped me just as much as my professional experiences.

I think both at work and at home, my role has often been the same: helping people move forward, creating stability, and finding solutions, while learning — sometimes the hard way — the importance of also taking care of myself.

Q: What accomplishment makes you feel most empowered?

Building a life and career rooted in integrity. I'm proud that I've been able to reinvent myself multiple times, build businesses, help others grow, and recently step into ownership of a company I helped support behind the scenes for many years.

Q: What does turning 40, 50, 60 mean to you?

Turning 40, 50, and now beyond has meant different things at different times in my life. In my 40s, I was still building, proving, and carrying a lot. Somewhere along the way, life humbled me, challenged me, and taught me that resilience matters — but so do boundaries, peace, and authenticity.

Today, I care less about titles and recognition and more about impact, integrity, and contribution. I've reached a place where I genuinely want to give back and support causes and people that resonate with me. Age has brought perspective: success means very little if it stops with you.

Q: How do you challenge stereotypes about women over 40?

I challenge stereotypes by refusing to let age define what I'm capable of. I still bodybuild, I still compete with myself, and I still walk into rooms where I know I'm likely the oldest person there — and still want to be the fastest, strongest, and best version of myself.

I think society sometimes quietly tells women over 40 to slow down, become invisible, or lower their expectations of themselves. I've never subscribed to that. Experience is a strength, not a limitation.

My mindset is simple: don't count yourself out. Keep evolving. Keep learning. Keep showing up. Age is information — not a finish line. Catch me if you can.

Q: How do you stay informed about women's health issues?

I stay informed by being proactive — reading, asking questions, listening to trusted professionals, and learning from other women's experiences. Health, strength, nutrition, and longevity are important to me, and I believe women should feel empowered to advocate for their well-being at every stage of life.



LORRAINE LI

Real Estate Agent

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Hair & Makeup by Catherine Li

Q: Tell us about your career and the roles that have shaped your life.

At this stage of my life, I see my professional journey not simply as a career, but as a reflection of who I have become.

Working in real estate has allowed me to stand beside people at pivotal moments — when they are investing, relocating, rebuilding, or redefining what home means to them. My role goes far beyond contracts and negotiations. It requires clarity in strategy, steadiness under pressure, and the ability to hold space for others during times of uncertainty. Through this work, I have learned that true professionalism is not just about performance, but about presence.

Outside of the workplace, I have embraced the role of building my own life with intention. As an independent woman navigating growth, recalibration, and change, I have learned resilience in quiet ways — through discipline, self-reflection, and the courage to make difficult decisions. Each chapter has refined my understanding of success, shifting it from achievement alone to alignment and authenticity.

Today, I see myself as someone who builds — not only homes and businesses, but trust, stability, and momentum. Turning forty is not a milestone of limitation, but one of clarity. I stand in this season with confidence, depth, and a renewed sense of purpose.

More About Me...

Through this photo shoot, I hope to gently remind women that our health deserves our attention — not only when something goes wrong, but every day.

Turning forty has made me more aware of my body in quiet ways. I notice when I am tired. I notice when stress lingers. I notice that recovery takes more intention than it once did. Years ago, after experiencing a serious car accident, I learned how fragile physical strength can be. That experience reshaped my relationship with my body. It taught me not to assume resilience, but to nurture it.

As women, we often carry many roles — professionals, partners, daughters, friends. We show up. We perform. We achieve. I have built my career with discipline and determination, sometimes pushing through fatigue because there was always one more task to complete, one more goal to reach. Ambition can be empowering, but it can also make us forget to pause.

In this season of life, I am learning a different kind of strength. One that listens. One that rests without guilt. One that understands that sustainability matters more than speed. Caring for my health is no longer something I postpone until “later.” It is part of how I honor myself.

Standing in front of the camera at 41 is not about proving that I am strong. It is about acknowledging that strength looks different now — steadier, quieter, more intentional. I hope other women see that tending to their health is not selfish or indulgent. It is an act of respect toward the life they are building.

We deserve to thrive not only in our careers, but in our bodies — gently, consistently, and with compassion.

“I am learning a different kind of strength.
One that listens.
One that rests without guilt.
One that understands that sustainability matters
more than speed.”

LOURDES ORTIZ

Founder, Luna Bay Skincare

45



Q: Tell us about your career and the roles that have shaped your life.

I work in supply chain, supporting projects that help bring communities to life. It's a role that is both structured and collaborative, and one that has shaped how I problem-solve, communicate, and stay adaptable.

Alongside my corporate career, I'm also the founder of Luna Bay Skincare, a handcrafted soap brand centered around skin-loving, nourishing ingredients and the belief that skincare can be simple, and that self-care can be a grounding ritual, even in the busiest days. What began as something I created for myself gradually grew into something more meaningful, an extension of how I care for myself and, now, something I share with others.

At home, I'm a mom of two, which continues to shape me in the most profound ways. Balancing these different parts of my life has taught me resilience and the importance of being present, even in the smallest moments.

Q: What personal passion has shaped your journey and sense of self?

Creating has always been a quiet but constant presence in my life. Luna Bay was born from that, my love for natural ingredients, the process of making something by hand, and the intention behind it. It also came from a personal need to slow down.

In the midst of a busy day, I began to appreciate the small pockets of time where everything softens, even briefly. A simple shower became more than a routine. It became a reset, a moment to reconnect. That shift changed how I see and care for myself. It reminded me that care doesn't have to be complicated or time-consuming to be meaningful.

Through Luna Bay, I've been able to translate that feeling into something tangible, something that invites others to pause, even if just for a few minutes.

Q: How do you prioritize self-care and well-being?

For me, self-care is less about finding extra time and more about being intentional with the time that already exists. It's woven into my day in small, realistic ways, whether it's going for a run, stepping outside, or simply being present in everyday routines.

I've learned to let go of the idea that balance needs to look perfect. Instead, I focus on consistency over intensity, choosing small habits that support my well-being over time.

My advice would be to redefine self-care in a way that feels accessible and sustainable. It doesn't have to be elaborate. Sometimes, it's as simple as creating a moment to pause, breathe, and reconnect with yourself.

“...redefine self-care in a way that feels accessible and sustainable. It doesn't have to be elaborate. Sometimes, it's as simple as creating a moment to pause, breathe, and reconnect with yourself.”

LYUDMYLA KORSHYNSKA

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Hair & Makeup by Catherine Li



“...worth is not something we
earn or lose with time, but
something that has always been within us.”

Q: Tell us about your career and the roles that have shaped your life.

I immigrated to Canada from Ukraine in 2005. I studied to become a teacher, and when I arrived in a new country, I was carrying with me something deeply rooted, a sense of cultural identity, inner strength, and a desire to build something meaningful from a new beginning.

Those early years were full of hope, uncertainty, and new beginnings. I was learning a new system, a new language, and a new way of life, while also holding onto the values and traditions that shaped me.

Later in life, I was blessed with two beautiful children with special needs. Becoming their mother became my full path. I stepped into that role completely, with grace, respect, and honour. Motherhood, especially of children with special needs, is not just a role for me, it is a sacred journey that I feel deeply privileged to walk. It has shaped my patience, my resilience, and my understanding of unconditional love in the most profound way.

Q: What drew you to this project and what do you hope to gain from it?

Meeting Denise felt like a moment of destiny, one that gently guided me toward my own personal healing during one of the lowest and most painful periods of my life. Through that unbearable time, I grew tremendously, not only as a woman and as a person, but also in my spiritual awareness and understanding of myself.

Denise's 40 Over 40 campaign became a meaningful part of my becoming. I was deeply moved by how she approaches every woman with such artistry, sensitivity, and care, revealing the beauty that already exists within each of us, even when we cannot always see it ourselves.

I am truly in awe of this project. I believe initiatives like Glowing Beyond are not just meaningful, they are necessary for every woman. They remind us that worth is not something we earn or lose with time, but something that has always been within us. They remind us that beauty is not defined by age or appearance, but by lived experience, resilience, and the light we carry through both joy and hardship.

Most importantly, they remind us that strength is often quiet. It lives in the women who keep going through unimaginable challenges, who love deeply, who rebuild themselves, and who continue to show up for life even when it feels impossible. Every woman deserves to be seen in her fullness, to be honoured for her journey, and to be reminded that she is already enough, exactly as she is.

LYNAE SCHEMENAUER

Nutrition & Wellness Consultant

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I am an executive leader, founder of Healthy Living with Lynae, and a wellness educator with a 27-year career in law enforcement. My work today sits at the intersection of leadership, resilience, and holistic health, shaped by both high-pressure professional experiences and deeply personal life events.

I am a Natural Nutritional Clinical Practitioner (NNCP), Certified Holistic Nutritionist (CHN), Certified Holistic Counsellor (CHC), and Certified Mindset Coach. Through Healthy Living with Lynae, I bring together science-based wellness and lived experience to help individuals and organizations build resilience, improve performance, and create sustainable well-being.

After nearly three decades in law enforcement, I transitioned into entrepreneurship and founded Healthy Living with Lynae. This leap required courage and clarity, but it aligned with a deeper calling to support others in building strength from the inside out. My philosophy, Built for Impact, reflects my belief that we do not train only for the best days; we train for the hard days.

A defining moment in my journey came in 2018 when I survived septic shock following surgery. That experience reshaped my entire approach to health and life, reinforcing the importance of proactive wellness and the connection between physical, mental, and emotional well-being. It became the catalyst for my mission to help others not only recover but rebuild stronger.

Today, I deliver workshops, webinars, and wellness programs that support individuals in high-demand environments. I have been featured as a speaker at events and retreats, on podcasts, and in Alive Magazine, while continuing to contribute to wellness publications. At home, I am a proud mother to my 21-year-old daughter and find grounding in family, nature, animals, and my lifelong commitment to learning.

My passion for wellness is deeply rooted in my lifelong interest in human resilience. My years in law enforcement exposed me to intense environments that required strength, clarity, and emotional endurance, while my personal health journey taught me what it truly means to heal. One of the most defining challenges I have faced was rebuilding my health after septic shock, a process that required me to pause everything I thought I knew about strength and start again in a more intentional way. I did not simply return to who I was before, I evolved into someone more aware, more grounded, and more aligned with my purpose.

That experience reinforced my belief that resilience is not about pushing through at all costs, but about knowing when to pause, when to rebuild, and when to shift direction entirely. It is also what led me to create my Built for Impact philosophy, because I believe we need to prepare ourselves not only for success, but for adversity.

When I reflect on my professional journey, one of my proudest milestones is the transition from a long standing law enforcement career into entrepreneurship. Alongside that, returning to school in my 40s and building a business later in life reinforced something I now fully believe, which is that growth does not have an expiry date. Turning 50 has been less about age and more about alignment. It has given me a deeper sense of clarity about who I am, what matters most, and how I want to show up in my life and work.

At this stage, I no longer define success by titles or external validation, but by alignment, purpose, and impact. I challenge stereotypes about women over 40 by living proof that strength, ambition, and vitality do not diminish with age, they sharpen with experience. Confidence, for me, has never been something that arrived on its own. It has been built through action, through adversity, and through the discipline of keeping promises to myself, even when it is uncomfortable.

If I could offer advice to younger women, it would be to trust yourself sooner and to understand that resilience is something you can actively build. To women at every stage, I would say that your strength is not defined by how easy your path is, but by how you continue to show up through it.

In my daily life, I prioritize wellbeing through simple non negotiables, including movement, nutrition, mindset work, and boundaries. Over time, I have learned that self care is not an extra task to fit in, but a fundamental part of how I lead my life. Balance is not about perfection, but about clarity and intention, choosing what truly matters and letting go of what does not serve you.

My “beauty secret” is very simple, consistency in how I care for my body and mind. I believe that how we show up for ourselves internally always reflects externally. My love language is acts of service, both giving and receiving, which naturally aligns with how I support others in my work and in my life.

I am also deeply passionate about women’s health, particularly the impact of chronic stress and burnout among mature women. I believe that awareness starts with honest conversation, and I continue to stay informed through ongoing education, evidence based learning, and professional networks in holistic health. My hope is to see more community driven wellness initiatives that focus not only on education, but also on connection and sustainable change.

Ultimately, my message about women’s health is simple. When women invest in their wellbeing, every part of their life is elevated. Whether I am speaking about leadership, health, or personal growth, my belief remains the same. We are built for impact, and resilience is something we continue to build every day through how we choose to live.



MARYAM ZEINEDDIN

MD and Founder, Zili CARE

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Q: Tell us about your career and the roles that have shaped your life.

I have spent over 20 years as a family physician in community-based care, while also taking on leadership roles in healthcare advocacy, physician negotiations, and women's health. I am the co-founder of Ambleside Medical Centre and the founder of Zili CARE, a preventative health platform focused on helping women reconnect with their well-being in a more sustainable and compassionate way.

Personally, some of my most meaningful roles have been being a mother to two daughters, the eldest of three sisters, and the daughter of a very strong immigrant mother who taught us the importance of independence, education, and knowing our worth. Those experiences have deeply shaped both my leadership and my growing passion for gender equity and women's health.

More About Me...

Turning 50 feels less like arriving at an age and more like arriving at myself.

For so much of my life, I was moving. Building. Caring. Holding. Achieving. As a family physician for over 20 years, a leader in healthcare, a wife, a mother to two daughters, a sister among two remarkable sisters, and the daughter of a profoundly strong woman, I learned early what it meant to carry responsibility with grace. My mother raised us to believe fiercely in our independence, our intelligence, and our worth. She wanted her daughters to never shrink themselves for the comfort of the world. She taught us that women could lead, create, nurture, and still remain deeply human.

And yet, like so many women, I spent years putting myself last.

In medicine, I witnessed generations of women caring for everyone around them while silently abandoning themselves. I saw burnout normalized. Exhaustion glorified. Hormonal transitions minimized. Emotional labour expected. Women surviving rather than truly living.

Somewhere along the way, I realized my work was becoming more than medicine. It was becoming advocacy.

Advocacy for women's health.
Advocacy for gender equity.
Advocacy for reminding women that their well-being matters before crisis forces them to listen.

That understanding became part of why I created the Zili CARE framework:
Calm your mind.
Activate your body.
Reinforce your body.
Engage your soul.

Not as another checklist for women to perfect themselves, but as an invitation for women to finally return to themselves.

Because maybe this season of life was never meant to be hidden, fixed, or feared.

Maybe it was meant to awaken us.

To remind women that we were never only here to perform, produce, or endlessly hold everything together at the expense of ourselves.

There is grief in letting go of the version of you that survived through overgiving and overfunctioning. I know that grief intimately. The woman who could do it all. Carry it all. Hold everyone together. She served a purpose. But she was also tired.

What I am discovering now, at 50, is that there is freedom on the other side of that grief.

Freedom in boundaries.
Freedom in self-respect.
Freedom in truth.
Freedom in no longer apologizing for needing rest, softness, joy, or space.

And perhaps menopause is not the ending of a woman's vitality — but the beginning of her most authentic chapter yet.

Not less powerful.
But more whole.

At 50, I no longer want women merely surviving their lives.

I want us thriving in them — holding one another through every transition, reclaiming our voices and well-being, and creating lives rooted in authenticity, belonging, and care.

MAYRA TOLEDO

Human Resources Lider

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Q: Tell us about your career and the roles that have shaped your life.

I am Mayra Toledo, a passionate entrepreneur who has combined my role as a mother with my love for talent development and innovation in human resources. I hold a Bachelor's degree in Pedagogy from UNAM, with specializations in Talent Development and Human Capital Management, as well as Neuropsychology from the Instituto de Rehabilitación. Additionally, I hold a Master's degree in Human Capital Direction and Management from Universidad Panamericana, and I am certified in Recruitment and Selection by the Consejo Nacional de Normalización y Certificación de Competencias Laborales. I also completed a Talent Program at IPADE and have teaching experience at Universidad Panamericana.

In 2014, I developed my employer brand, Connecta Partners, based on a deep knowledge of talent across various areas, from sports to business, always seeking new ways to offer value to organizations. Supported by a strong team, I faced the pandemic challenge with resilience, adapting and learning as companies reinvented themselves.

My motivation lies in helping others find their professional purpose and showing organizations that they can offer meaningful job opportunities. With more than 1,000 hires and experience in LATAM, my journey led me to live in Brazil since 2020 as part of a Global Mobility program. Despite the obstacles, I have always kept empathy, communication skills, and leadership at the center of my work.

I am an active member of various female entrepreneur communities, such as Visionarias, Women Index, Victoria147, and Speakher. In 2023, I launched the podcast *Talentedo*, which is currently heard in 10 countries and allows me to speak with experts and develop valuable content on talent topics. In June 2024, I was chosen as one of the 100 entrepreneurs who inspire Mexico by ASEM.

In 2024, I launched my first book *Despega hacia el éxito, estrategia para asegurar tu empleabilidad dominando la teoría del StarSystem*. In 2025, I obtained the ECO249 Certification from CONOCER and actively collaborate as a Career Mentor at SERAJ.org.

“...it also became one of the experiences that most defined my strength and resilience as a woman.”

Q: What moment best reflects your strength and resilience?

When the pandemic began, my husband relocated to Brazil for work, and our entire family had to adapt to a completely new reality. At the time, I was pregnant with my second child at 41 years old, living in a country where I did not speak the language, far away from family and the support system I had always relied on. It was one of the most uncertain and challenging moments of my life, but it also became one of the experiences that most defined my strength and resilience as a woman.

Arriving in Brazil during such an unprecedented global crisis was overwhelming. Everything felt unfamiliar — the culture, the language, and even the simplest daily activities became challenges. At the same time, I was navigating the emotional and physical demands of pregnancy while trying to create stability and security for my family. I quickly realized that I had two choices: allow fear and uncertainty to consume me or embrace the situation with flexibility, courage, and an open mind.

I chose to adapt. I began searching for opportunities to communicate better and integrate into my new environment. Little by little, I built new relationships and created support networks that became essential during that period of transition. Through these experiences, I discovered one of my greatest strengths: my ability to connect with people and build meaningful relationships. Networking became more than a skill; it became a tool for survival, growth, and emotional support.

What I once viewed as obstacles gradually transformed into opportunities for personal growth. Living in Brazil taught me resilience, patience, and confidence in my ability to face the unknown. I learned that strength does not always mean having everything under control. Sometimes, true strength means continuing forward despite uncertainty, trusting yourself, and finding joy even in difficult circumstances.

One of the greatest blessings from that experience was the birth of my daughter, who arrived healthy and perfect despite all the fears and challenges surrounding that time. Looking back, I feel proud of how my family and I embraced change and transformed a difficult situation into a meaningful chapter of our lives.

Today, Brazil holds a very special place in our hearts. What once felt foreign eventually became home, and as a family, we now consider Brazil our second home. Living there during such historic times taught us resilience, gratitude, adaptability, and the importance of human connection — lessons that continue to shape who I am today as a woman, mother, and professional.

NARGES NIRUMVALA

Expert Speech Coach, Founder, Author, Speaker, Podcast Host

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Q: Tell us about your career and the roles that have shaped your life.

I'm the Founder and CEO of ExecutiveSpeak Coaching International, an award-winning public speaking coach, international keynote speaker, two-time bestselling author, and podcaster. However, my personal story is one of overcoming adversity, defying stereotypes, and sheer determination to get to where I am. I built everything by the grace of God from absolute rock bottom. According to AI, I'm now the #1 Executive Speech Coach in Canada and in the Top 5 TEDx Speaker Coaches in the world. I'm passionate about helping people find their voice so they can use their God-given talents and gifts to make their mark on the world. Recently, I was just named in the Top 50 Women Leaders in Business Consulting & Services of 2026 by Women We Admire. I'm also a humanitarian, community leader, volunteer, and passionate champion for women and youth.

Q: What professional milestones are you most proud of?

I'm the author of the Amazon bestselling book *"Capture the Spotlight: Improve Your Presentation Skills and Make Public Speaking Your Competitive Edge"*. I'm also the co-author of the book *"Women of the 21st Century: Women Transforming the World"*, which became a #1 bestseller in four countries. My writing on public speaking and presentation skills has been published and circulated to 106 countries worldwide.

A few years ago, I also started my own podcast from scratch called *"Power Speaks: Your Path To Powerful Communication"*. It was a steep learning curve at first and much more work than I expected. I'm incredibly proud of my team and how far we have come. We slowly built a solid following and a reputation for real thought leadership. Now it has become one of the leading public speaking and TEDx podcasts in Canada. I'm so excited to share that we are about to launch Season Two, which will focus on Trailblazing Women, but we will keep the same focus on how to level up your public speaking and communication skills that our listeners really love. It's available everywhere you get your podcasts including Spotify, Amazon Music, Audible, and Apple.

Q: What message would you share with women over 40 about aging?

As we get older society expects us to slow down, do less, shrink ourselves and fade quietly into the background. Well, I am not going to do that, and neither should you! I believe as we get older that life is just getting started and it's our time to step into the spotlight and shine. We are also told that aging is not beautiful and that's just not true. You are beautiful exactly as you are. I have worked so hard to be the woman I am today. I have earned every wrinkle and line on my face. During the pandemic, I stopped dyeing my hair and it turned completely gray — after the initial shock, because I looked so different and I was worried that I would look older, I began to really embrace it. I saw it as an opportunity to reinvent myself and step into a new chapter in my life. Now my gray hair is an essential part of my personal brand and I love it.

Q: How do you prioritize self-care and well-being?

My husband and I are devout Christians and it's our faith which keeps us humble and grounded in life. It also helps that we share that faith journey together. I journal, read, and pray for growth, self-reflection and to center myself and find peace when things get chaotic.

Q: What advice would you give your younger self?

Three things. First, set goals for yourself. You can't achieve what you don't aim for. Second, embrace failure. Failure is proof that you are making progress and moving forward toward those goals. Learn from the mistakes you made, get up and try again. Keep pushing forward and don't give up. Third, stop putting so much importance on other people's opinions of you. You are enough. You are beautiful. Be proud of who you are, because there is no one else like you.

NATACHA BEIM BOSERUP

Founder, CEFA Early Years Schools

54

Hair by Pierrelyn Arcega & Makeup by Vivian Jun



Q: Tell us about your career and the roles that have shaped your life.

I founded CEFA (www.cefa.ca) in 1996 with a vision to create an early learning school that focused on brain development, education, engagement, contribution, and fun. I personally designed the curriculum, trained teachers in the CEFA methodology, and designed and built the first school. Today, there are more than 50 CEFA schools across Canada and the United States, and the CEFA program is widely recognized for giving children an exceptional and inspiring start in life.

Throughout my career, I have not only raised two children but also dedicated my time and resources to various charitable organizations while mentoring three to five entrepreneurs each year. After marrying Christian, the love of my life, I became a stepmother to four more children. Together, we joyfully raise our six children, cherish our two grandchildren, continue growing CEFA, and remain committed to giving back to our communities through both financial support and personal involvement.

Q: What drew you to this project, and what do you hope to gain from it?

I love that this project raises funds for women's health. Having lived with Long COVID for nearly five years, I know firsthand what it means to face a debilitating illness that affects every aspect of life. I was bedridden for more than three years before gradually regaining enough strength to return to work with the help of a motorized wheelchair. Although my health remains fragile, I am deeply grateful for the doctors and specialists who supported me throughout my journey. I can think of no better cause than helping advance women's health.

Q: What personal passion has shaped your journey and sense of self?

I knew I wanted to be a teacher from the age of two, and I always dreamed of becoming a mother. I love children and believe they are especially vulnerable when they are raised by parents who lack support, parenting skills, or education. That passion inspired me to create CEFA, which today helps thousands of children and families through quality early education while strengthening family relationships. After nearly 30 years of building CEFA, I now dedicate more of my time to helping parents raise confident, resilient, independent, and empathetic children who are inspired to contribute to the world.

Q: What professional milestones are you most proud of?

- Building one of Canada's largest women-owned businesses.
- Receiving multiple business and leadership awards.
- Being a devoted mother to six children.
- Living by my core value, and CEFA's guiding principle: *I contribute to the world*. I believe in helping at least one person every day, and I make a conscious effort to live that value.

Q: What does turning 50 mean to you?

Turning 50 made me realize I was entering the second half of my life. It inspired me to reevaluate my priorities and continue living with passion and a commitment to making a meaningful contribution. It also reminded me to slow down, especially because my health required it, and, for the first time, to make myself one of my priorities.

Q: What challenge in your age group have you overcome, and how?

I was diagnosed with a severe case of Long COVID at the age of 49. My organs began shutting down, I was too weak to walk more than a few steps, I couldn't keep food down, and the brain fog was so severe that I struggled to follow even simple conversations. Although I had built my company so it could continue without me, it still suffered during my absence. My doctors told me I would never fully recover or work again.

Instead of accepting that outcome, I focused on learning everything I could about Long COVID. As I slowly regained some cognitive strength, I began teaching myself how to rewire my brain. Then, while I was still confined to bed, our CEO resigned. That night, I ordered a motorized wheelchair and returned to work the very next day.

It wasn't easy. I often worked only a few hours before exhaustion overtook me, but I showed up every day. Within six months, I hired an exceptional President, rebuilt strong connections with our team, and led the company through a new strategic direction. Looking back, it required more strength than I thought I had, but I believed the company and our schools needed me. Today, CEFA continues to grow, allowing me to focus on my health while remaining actively involved in the company and with my family.



NAVJIT SANDHU

Founder, ART of Healing & Subconscious Transformation Specialist (RTT)
Author of Nayan's Family Fruit Salad

50

Dress by Little Pink Dress Design

Q: Tell us about your career and the roles that have shaped your life.

Professionally, I am a Subconscious Transformation Specialist (RTT), working with the subconscious mind to guide my clients in breaking free from limiting generational patterns, self-doubt, and the quiet ways we abandon ourselves, so they can build the most valuable relationship they will ever have: the one they have with themselves.

Beyond that, I am a daughter, a wife, and a mother. Every role I've held has shaped me to show up with intention, compassion, and a deep commitment to serve. Through life's challenges, I've learned that when we embrace our authentic selves and the gifts we carry, we naturally elevate and expand into who we're meant to be.

I am also a self-published author of *Nayan's Family Fruit Salad*, an interactive illustrated children's book I created after 15 years in childcare, where I recognized a need for more culturally diverse stories for young children. Published in 2019, it brings me so much joy to share this work with children across the Lower Mainland through school and library visits.

In addition, I continue to serve my community as a pharmacy assistant with Fraser Health, working in the Downtown Eastside - an experience that continues to deepen my compassion, perspective, and commitment to meaningful, heart-centered care.

"With age comes agency, authenticity, and autonomy, along with a deeper connection to your true self."

More About Me...

What drew me to the 40 Over 40 project was not only the opportunity to celebrate this chapter, but also a deep desire to give back. Supporting BC Women's and Children's Hospital is very personal to me. My firstborn was delivered there via emergency C-section and spent his first week in the NICU. It was a vulnerable time, and the care and support we received meant everything. Being part of this campaign feels aligned with the work I do and the impact I hope to continue creating, and it is a beautiful way to give back to a place that gave so much to my family.

And yet, despite how meaningful it all felt, I didn't expect the internal resistance that surfaced before the shoot. There was a quiet voice questioning my worthiness to receive something so beautiful. For a moment, I tried to make it practical, turning it into a branding shoot to justify being there. But something shifted when I arrived. I allowed myself to be curious. I tried on the dresses. And in that moment, I chose to say yes - not to the photoshoot, but to myself.

That moment became a reflection of my journey. The willingness to soften. To surrender. To receive.

In a world that often celebrates youth, I believe there is something profoundly powerful about aging. With age comes agency, authenticity, and autonomy, along with a deeper connection to your true self.

My message to women over 40 is this: you are not losing anything; you are arriving. Arriving into your truth, your voice, and your power.

If I could offer one piece of advice to my younger self, it would be to trust yourself sooner and allow yourself to be guided by your intuition, knowing the path is unfolding exactly as it is meant to. Know that you are already worthy. You do not need to wait for permission to shine. You do not need to shrink yourself to make space for others. We are meant to cultivate a community where we rise together in our own unique radiance.

This experience reminded me that celebration is not something we earn. It is essential. When we embrace and celebrate ourselves, we deepen our self-trust, step into self-mastery, and elevate and expand into all that we are meant to be.



PARVIN ZEINEDDIN

Matriarch of Family

75

Q: Tell us about your career and the roles that have shaped your life.

I have a degree in English Literature, have three daughters, five grandchildren, and two grand dogs.

I have been married for over 50 years, and my biggest role in life has been to raise three amazing humans including my first daughter, Dr. Maryam Zeineddin. And to then raise amazing humans themselves who value humanity, compassion, and gender equality.

More About Me...

I am the oldest daughter of a loving Iranian family, and from a young age carried a deep sense of responsibility in caring for my siblings. I was always very studious and graduated from university in Tehran, Iran, with a degree in English Literature. Before the Iranian Revolution, I worked in television and loved the creativity and connection that work brought into my life.

Soon after, I became a mother to my first daughter, and eventually to three daughters — all strong, independent women. One of my greatest purposes in life was to give my daughters the encouragement, confidence, and opportunities to believe that they could achieve anything they set their minds to. I wanted them to know their worth, use their voices, and never feel limited by being women.

Today, I am blessed with five beautiful grandchildren, two beloved grand dogs, and a marriage of over 50 years with my husband. But perhaps what I am most proud of are the values we instilled in our children — values rooted in strength, integrity, compassion, education, and humanity.

I deeply believe that women's health is a human rights issue, and that if we are ever going to reach gender equality we need to know how to value our worth from both within and around us. To me, matriarchy is about empowering all of us to come together with a sense of safety, belonging, and care.

And that is why, in our family, matriarchy rules.

"I deeply believe that women's health is a human rights issue, and that if we are ever going to reach gender equality we need to know how to value our worth from both within and around us."

RAV GOODISON

AVP & CIO

50



Rooted in Identity, Rising with Purpose

At 50, I am stepping into a chapter of life that is not defined by titles, roles, accomplishments, or expectations, but by authenticity and a strong sense of self.

As a Punjabi woman born in the UK, I have spent much of my life navigating multiple worlds. I am a wife, mother, daughter, sister, executive leader, and entrepreneur. My journey has been shaped by culture, faith, family, resilience, and a growing understanding that we do not need to become who others expect us to be, but rather have the courage to become fully who we are. For many BIPOC women, that journey is not always straightforward. We often grow up carrying inherited expectations around sacrifice, achievement, family, and responsibility. We learn to be strong for everyone else before we learn how to be true to ourselves.

Growing up, I rarely saw women who looked like me in leadership positions. I remember asking a teacher why some people seemed to have to work harder than others. Her response stayed with me: I would likely have to work harder because I was both a woman and a person of colour. Whether she intended it as encouragement or a warning, it became a reality I would come to understand throughout my career.

Over nearly three decades, I have built a career leading large-scale digital and organizational transformation across healthcare, the public sector, and higher education, most recently serving as a Chief Information Officer. Yet the foundation of the leader I became was formed long before I entered a boardroom. My roots are grounded in Sikh values and the people who shaped my life. Love, seva (selfless service), humility, resilience, integrity, trust, honesty, and Chardi Kala, the Sikh philosophy of maintaining optimism and courage regardless of circumstance, have guided me through every season of life. My beloved Phoffer Ji taught me the importance of love, service, integrity, and remaining true to myself regardless of external pressures. My Pooah Ji embodies both grace and strength, showing me that women do not need to choose between the two. My younger sister has reminded me that healing, growth, and leadership are possible without losing connection to who we are. Their lessons have carried me through some of the most difficult periods of my life.

The most difficult period was when my son was diagnosed with Guillain-Barré Syndrome, a rare neurological condition that caused paralysis. I found myself confronting a challenge that no leadership experience could prepare me for. I watched him fight for his life and then work tirelessly to regain mobility and independence. Throughout his recovery, he embodied the spirit of Chardi Kala in a way that continues to inspire me. At the same time, I was leading major institutional initiatives and carrying significant professional responsibilities. Like many women, particularly BIPOC women, I continued to show up, lead, care for others, and meet expectations while privately navigating profound uncertainty.

That experience changed me.

For much of my life, I believed resilience meant carrying more. What I learned is that resilience is not about being unbreakable. It is about remaining grounded in love, faith, and hope when life feels uncertain. It is about continuing forward without losing yourself in the process.

Today, those lessons shape both my life and my work. They inspired me to co-found Elevate Empower Rise, a coaching and consulting practice dedicated to helping individuals, leaders, and organizations navigate change. At the heart of this work is a simple belief: growth begins with knowing who you are.

Too often, women are taught to focus on achievement before alignment. We spend years meeting expectations, proving ourselves, and pursuing success, only to discover that accomplishment without connection to self can feel surprisingly empty. Real transformation happens when we reconnect with our values, identity, and purpose.

Now entering my fifties, I have found something I did not think was possible: liberation. After years of striving, proving, and carrying responsibility, I have become less interested in fitting in and more committed to living authentically. The confidence I feel today does not come from having all the answers. It comes from knowing I no longer need permission to take up space and from understanding that I do not have to carry more than everyone else to be seen.

This is the lesson I hope other women, especially BIPOC women, embrace much earlier. Our ambition is not selfish. Our intelligence is not intimidating. Our softness is not weakness. The experiences, perspectives, and stories we carry are sources of strength.

At 50, I am not interested in becoming someone new. I am interested in becoming more myself. And perhaps that is the greatest lesson my journey offers: there is power in knowing who you are, courage in claiming your space, and beauty in rising exactly as yourself.



RINKY WADHWA

Optometrist

40

Hair & Makeup by Catherine Li

"Running has taught me resilience, patience, and the importance of taking one step at a time, both on the road and in life."

Q: Tell us about your career and the roles that have shaped your life.

I am an Optometrist with a deep passion for being a primary eye-care provider. I am passionate about helping people detect, prevent, and manage eye conditions while supporting their overall health and well-being. One of the most rewarding aspects of my profession is building lasting relationships with patients and helping them maintain healthy vision throughout their lives.

In my free time, I enjoy running, staying active, and spending quality time with my loved ones. These moments help keep me balanced and remind me of what matters most.

More About Me...

My name is Rinky Wadhwa, and I feel privileged to take part in the 40 Over 40 photo campaign. The most powerful belief I hold is that beauty lies in loving and accepting who we are wholeheartedly.

My beauty secret is kindness and confidence.

A personal passion that has been monumental in my journey is running. When we talk about activities that involve cardio, the immediate focus is often on physical health. My passion for running began in 2009, and although it started as an effort to become physically healthier, it has helped me even more mentally over the years.

Running has become my constant. I have learned to keep my breath steady as my body undergoes the physical demands of cardio while thoughts and emotions move through my mind. During this time, I have discovered that steady breathing is often the key to overcoming unwelcome thoughts and navigating difficult life situations. Running has taught me resilience, patience, and the importance of taking one step at a time, both on the road and in life.

This photo shoot was a learning experience for me, as I am not very camera-acquainted. I found that it helped me embrace who I am and truly pour into my own cup so that I can show up as my wholehearted self. The saying that comes to mind is, "You cannot pour from an empty cup."

Through this photo shoot, I hope we can inspire women to love themselves from the inside out and support other women in all walks of life. Every woman has her own unique story, strengths, and challenges. When we learn to celebrate ourselves and lift one another up, we create a stronger and more compassionate community for everyone.

RITA SCHNARR

MA, RCC, CCC, Psychotherapist

60



“...women don’t need to become someone new-
they need to come home to themselves.”

Redefining Strength, Purpose, and Mental Wellness After 40

At 60, I am living proof that purpose doesn’t have an expiration date — it deepens with time. As a psychotherapist based in North Vancouver, BC, my life journey reflects resilience, reinvention, and a steadfast commitment to supporting women through some of life’s most complex emotional terrain.

Raised in Oliver, BC, I describe myself as a “farm girl” with big aspirations. As a teenager, I became a community ambassador — an early sign of my drive to grow, contribute, and connect. That desire to better myself and give back would quietly shape the course of my life, even as I spent 35 years building a successful career in business.

Behind the scenes, however, I was navigating deeply personal challenges. In my 30s, I faced unexplained infertility — an experience marked by grief, uncertainty, and loss of control. I also endured narcissistic abuse, which led to nearly a decade of panic and anxiety disorder. These experiences, while painful, became pivotal turning points.

Through my own healing journey in therapy, I discovered not only recovery but also clarity. I made the bold decision to leave my long-standing business career in my late 40s and pursue a master’s degree in Counselling Psychology. Becoming a Registered Clinical Counsellor (RCC) and Canadian Certified Counsellor (CCC) wasn’t just a career shift — it was a calling fulfilled.

Today, I run a private practice at Shipyards Health Clinic, where I specialize in supporting women (and men) facing emotional abuse, life transitions, relationship challenges, anxiety, and depression. My approach is grounded, practical, and deeply empathetic — offering women not just insight, but tangible tools for change.

My work is especially attuned to the realities women face over 40. I recognize the often-overlooked mental health impact of perimenopause, menopause, and post-menopause, particularly how hormonal shifts influence mood, identity, and relationships. I also address the growing weight of caregiver fatigue, as many women find themselves supporting aging parents while still managing careers, partnerships, and their own wellbeing.

Rather than viewing my infertility as a limitation, I reframed it as an opportunity to nurture in a different way. Through my work, I created a space where women feel seen, understood, and empowered to reclaim their lives.

Outside my practice, I embrace balance and creativity. I am a professional singer, an active individual who enjoys workouts, walking, golf, pickleball, spiritual growth, and spending time with extended family, friends, and my stepdaughter and her husband. Moreover, I am someone who values quiet time at home with my husband and our two ragdoll cats. I am also a devoted caregiver to my mother, who is living with dementia — an experience that continues to deepen my compassion both personally and professionally.

My story is not about perfection — it’s about authenticity. I stand as part of a growing movement that challenges outdated narratives around aging. For me, this stage of life is not about fading, but about stepping fully into who I am, with honesty, acceptance, and strength.

My message is simple, yet powerful: women don’t need to become someone new — they need to come home to themselves.

RUPI KAINTH

Luxury Realtor & Developer

45



Q: Tell us about your career and the roles that have shaped your life.

I studied Design & Marketing and took a role within the municipal government post-secondary as a communications designer. At the same time, I moonlighted as a wedding photographer and specialized in corporate branding. During maternity leave, I got into construction and built my first two residential projects. After a personal setback, I decided to become a full-time entrepreneur while also being a single mother. Over the years, I expanded as a multidisciplinary designer with experience in fashion and interior design. With my love for interior architecture, photography, lifestyle, and homes, I became a realtor. My real estate career took off shortly after getting licensed. I keep my son close in all that I do and in all aspects of my life, sharing business insights whenever possible at home (or on the way to hockey games). Without intention, but as a result of my passions, my brand has become known for signature luxury real estate.

Q: What does turning in your 40s mean to you?

Turning 45 has been quite the epiphany. I have realized how lucky I am to have the support of such powerful people. As I grow into my 40s, I am learning to be transparent, fully authentic, and to hide nothing. I realize how many people accept all of me. This is one of the biggest gifts of this age — doing what you want, saying what you want, and not giving any F's otherwise. Those who are here for it are your people.

Q: If you had a superpower, what would it be?

My superpower would be to eliminate pain from people. As an empath, I feel others' pain deeply. There is nothing that bothers me more than seeing others suffer. People — even strangers, if not more so — strangers tell me their life story within 10 minutes of meeting me. I find myself feeling other people's energy within myself, both good and bad. At other times, I simply see someone and pick up on their pain. If only I had a superpower to zap away the pain... Until then, I do my best to be there for others — human to human.

Q: What professional milestones are you most proud of?

Building houses is something I am most proud of (next to being a mother). I had no map for how to do this. I was simply determined and trusted the process. In 2021, my build, Mode De Vie, won several building and design awards. It empowered me to realize that I really could overcome challenges that once seemed impossible.

Creativity is a huge part of who I am at my core. By expressing myself artistically in all facets of my life, be it fashion, social media visuals, real estate marketing, or interior design, my soul stays lit. I know that when we do what we love, we love what we do. I have embraced that one of my purposes is to share creatively and to “make everything around me beautiful.”

Spirituality is a core value and a way of life for me. I find myself moving through life personally and professionally with spirituality at the forefront. The study and practice of it have gotten me through everything and help me connect with people. On the professional side, I do not separate spirituality from business — in fact, I incorporate it as much as possible, whether it's in making business decisions, guiding clients, or keeping myself grounded. Spirituality is one of the most graceful “tools” that I am aligned with.

“As I grow into my 40s, I am learning to be transparent, fully authentic, and to hide nothing.”

SABRINA FEULA

Director, Member Engagement & Communications of BCNET

51

Hair & Makeup by Catherine Li



Living with Purpose

Sometimes the chapters we'd rather skip become the ones that shape our story the most.

In November 2023, I embarked on an exciting new chapter in my career, relocating from Alberta to British Columbia. It was a season filled with possibility, purpose, and the opportunity to continue doing meaningful work while looking forward to the future my partner and I were building together.

Just three weeks later, everything changed. My partner was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and given a 22-month prognosis. In an instant, the life we had imagined was turned completely upside down. There was no manual, no roadmap, and no way to prepare for what lay ahead. It was terrifying, heartbreaking, and yet we had no choice but to put one foot in front of the other, choosing every day to move forward together. As we began navigating his diagnosis, another unexpected challenge emerged. Six months later, my breast cancer returned. At a time when I was trying to be his source of strength, I also had to find my own.

Like so many women, my instinct was to put everyone else's needs before my own. Even while navigating my own diagnosis and treatment, I devoted so much of myself to being a caregiver that I left little room to acknowledge my own fears and grief. Looking back, I know caring for yourself isn't selfish; it's essential. Yet while my partner was facing his own mortality, I couldn't help but put his needs ahead of my own, burying my own fears and grief beneath the overwhelming need to be strong for him.

The next two and a half years were challenging, to say the least, but my partner faced pancreatic cancer with extraordinary courage. He refused to let a prognosis define him, choosing instead to focus on hope, love, and making the most of every day we had together.

Looking back, some of my favourite memories weren't the big milestones; they were the countless moments we found reasons to laugh. After a 12-hour wait in the emergency room, we joined the other "ER bandits" on a mission to raid the sandwich fridge. During chemotherapy, the cold sensitivity was so severe that my partner had to wear oven mitts just to drink a pop or eat ice cream, and we couldn't help but laugh at the absurdity of it all. Even in palliative care, we'd exchange knowing glances as well-meaning volunteers passionately sang *Somewhere Over the Rainbow* — often with more enthusiasm than pitch.

Those moments of silliness didn't erase the heartbreak, but they reminded us that cancer could never take away our humour, our love for each other, or our ability to find joy in the smallest moments.

He passed away on April 8, 2026, my 51st birthday. In his own way, he made sure it would be a day I would never forget. While I certainly would have preferred a different

birthday gift, I like to think he was reminding me that love has a way of staying with us forever.

Losing him was the greatest heartbreak of my life, but it also changed me. Healing has meant more than recovering physically; it has meant learning to carry grief while rediscovering who I am beyond it. I've learned that resilience isn't about doing everything alone. Sometimes, the greatest strength is allowing others to hold you up.

Throughout this journey, I was carried by extraordinary people. My two incredible sons, Reece and Leo, gave me countless reasons to keep moving forward, even on the days I didn't think I could. My parents, sisters, and their families surrounded me with unwavering love, while an incredible circle of female friends reminded me every day that you can be vulnerable and brave at the same time. They showed up without being asked, loved me unconditionally, and proved that our greatest strength is found in the communities we build around us.

My career has always been rooted in bringing people together. I've been fortunate to witness firsthand the impact that occurs when people come together around shared values and are empowered to collaborate. Time and again, I've learned that meaningful change begins with connection.

My personal experiences have taught me that behind every title is a human story, and that the most meaningful leadership begins with empathy, authenticity, and compassion. In the end, our greatest impact isn't measured by what we accomplish, but by how deeply we care, how genuinely we connect, and how we make others feel.

Now, at 51, success looks very different than it did at 31. It isn't defined by titles or accomplishments, but by the relationships I've built, the lives I've touched, and the courage to keep moving forward despite what life throws my way.

If there's one message I hope to leave with other women, it's this: be as kind to yourself as you are to everyone else. Give yourself grace. Prioritize your health. Accept help when you need it. Your worth is not measured by how much you sacrifice. Never mistake vulnerability for weakness. Some of the bravest moments of our lives are the ones where we allow others to help carry us.

Today, I am incredibly grateful to be cancer-free. While grief will always be part of my story, I will not be defined by it. I choose to live with purpose, lead with compassion, and love unconditionally. Never again will I take a single day for granted.

I wouldn't wish this chapter of my life on anyone. But if sharing it reminds even one woman to believe in her resilience, care for herself as fiercely as she cares for others, and know that hope can exist alongside heartbreak, then sharing my story has been a true privilege.

DR. SAELE BRADWELL

Physician

44

Dress by Little Pink Dress Design



Q: Tell us about your career and the roles that have shaped your life.

My story isn't boring — though it might sound picture-perfect at first.

I grew up in northern BC, shaped by wide open spaces and quiet resilience. I studied Biology and Chemistry at the University of Northern British Columbia, married my high school sweetheart, and became a mother to a bright, beautiful daughter who would come to anchor every part of my life. I went on to earn my Doctor of Medicine through UBC's Northern Medical Program, where I found myself drawn to surgery — its precision, its intensity, its sense of purpose.

Along the way, I sought meaning in connection. I volunteered in northern India, caring for malnourished and orphaned children. At home, I spent time with those living on the margins — offering food, warmth, and sometimes just presence. Those moments, more than anything, began to shape the kind of physician — and person — I hoped to become.

With my young family beside me, I moved across the country to begin a General Surgery residency at the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, stepping into what felt like a long-awaited chapter.

But life has a way of rewriting even the most carefully imagined plans.

Over time, challenges in my health, my relationships, and my work began to shift my path. What once felt certain became unclear. I was asked, in ways I hadn't expected, to let go of who I thought I needed to be. Choosing to change direction — to leave surgery, to return home, to begin again — was one of the hardest and most defining decisions of my life.

Today, I am a family physician and a Cardiac Surgery Clinical Associate at Royal Columbian Hospital in New Westminster, caring for patients in the fragile, deeply human space after heart surgery. I am also a single mother, raising an extraordinary seventeen-year-old daughter who continues to be my greatest teacher in courage, perspective, and love.

My path has not been linear. It has been shaped by loss and growth, by breaking and rebuilding, by learning to listen — to my patients, to others, and, eventually, to myself.

I no longer measure my life by how closely it follows a plan, but by how honestly it is lived.

Some people are consumed by their fires. Others are forged by them. I am still becoming — but I know now that there is strength in that, too.

Q: What message do you hope to share about women's health?

Through this photo shoot, I hope to convey that women's health is not just physical — it is deeply intertwined with

trauma, mental health, systemic barriers, and lived experience. Strength does not mean silence, and healing does not require perfection.

As Picasso once said, "The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away." I've come to understand that my gift is connecting through honesty — and my purpose is to share my story so others feel less alone, and more able to overcome their own challenges.

From the outside, my life once appeared ideal. I was a surgical resident, a mother, and a wife—driven, accomplished, and seemingly thriving. But beneath that image was a very different reality.

I grew up in an environment marked by poverty, abuse, addiction, and trauma—experiences I carried silently into medical school, often feeling ashamed rather than proud of how far I had come. In medicine, there is often an unspoken assumption that physicians come from privilege and stability. My story challenged that, but I didn't yet have the voice to share it.

At home, my marriage was controlling and abusive. At work, I faced the relentless demands of surgical training: extreme hours, chronic exhaustion, and a culture that discouraged vulnerability. Over time, the weight of unprocessed trauma and burnout caught up with me. In my final year of residency, I went through a divorce, became a single mother, and struggled with depression, anxiety, and profound self-doubt despite years of achievement.

I went on to experience further trauma, including sexual assault, leading to complex PTSD. I reached a point of deep despair and took leaves of absence — something I once viewed as failure. What helped me rebuild was not a single moment, but a series of supports: therapy, community, and people who showed up when I could not.

Then came another turning point: a diagnosis of advanced breast cancer. Treatment was long and grueling, but also transformative. It reshaped my perspective and deepened my empathy. I returned to residency stronger, and for a time, hopeful. I learned to keep going, perform, and hide my struggles for fear of being seen as weak.

Ultimately, ongoing physical limitations and a shift in priorities led me to step away from surgery and choose family medicine — a path that allows me to care for others without sacrificing myself.

But healing is not linear. While navigating the aftermath of lifelong trauma, I turned to maladaptive coping, adding another layer of struggle I had to confront — addiction. In accepting the need for help, I entered an inpatient program and began recovery work. I am now nearly two years sober.

My story is not about having it all together. It is about honesty, vulnerability, and hope — the hope that healing is possible, that your story matters, and that choosing yourself is never failure, but strength.

SHEILA ZIPAGAN

Registered Nurse

50

Hair & Makeup by Catherine Li



Q: Tell us about your career and the roles that have shaped your life.

I have worked as a bedside nurse in Medicine at St. Paul's Hospital for the past 20 years.

Q: What accomplishment makes you feel most empowered?

One of the professional milestones I am most proud of is reaching 20 years as a bedside nurse in Medicine while also entering a new chapter of life at 50 years old. Nursing has never been just a career for me — it has been a calling that shaped my character, strengthened my faith, and taught me the true meaning of compassion, resilience, and service.

Over the last two decades, I have had the privilege of caring for people during some of the most vulnerable moments of their lives. I have witnessed joy, heartbreak, recovery, loss, and hope, all within the walls of a hospital room. Working at the bedside requires not only clinical skills, but also emotional strength, patience, and the ability to remain calm under pressure. There were long shifts, difficult seasons, and moments of exhaustion, yet those experiences helped build my endurance and deepened my sense of purpose.

One of the greatest lessons nursing has taught me is the importance of human connection. Sometimes, the most meaningful part of patient care is not found in procedures or medications, but in listening, encouraging, comforting, and simply being present. Knowing that I was able to make even a small difference in someone's day or provide comfort during a difficult time continues to be one of the most fulfilling parts of my profession.

Reaching the milestone of 50 years old has also become a powerful reminder that growth and purpose do not have an expiration date. Instead of seeing age as a limitation, I now view it as a reflection of wisdom, experience, and perseverance. I feel empowered knowing that I have remained committed to serving others while continuing to grow personally and professionally. The journey has taught me to value discipline, lifelong learning, and self-belief.

These milestones have contributed greatly to my sense of empowerment because they represent consistency, dedication, and resilience. Empowerment, for me, is not about titles or recognition. It is about knowing that despite challenges, I continued to show up with compassion, integrity, and a heart willing to serve. It is about becoming stronger through every obstacle and understanding that my experiences can inspire and encourage others, especially women who may feel uncertain about their own journeys or new beginnings later in life.

Today, I carry a deep sense of gratitude for the people I have cared for, the lessons I have learned, and the strength I have discovered within myself. My journey as a nurse and as a woman entering her 50s has shown me that true empowerment comes from perseverance, purpose, and the courage to continue growing through every season of life.

“Instead of
seeing age as
a limitation,
I now view it as
a reflection of
wisdom,
experience,
and
perseverance.”

A woman with dark hair, smiling, is seated on a large, white, curved cushion. She is wearing a white, strapless, off-the-shoulder gown with a full, ruffled skirt. She has large white flower-shaped earrings and a ring on her finger. The background is a soft, light-colored wall.

STACY CHENG

Realtor

50+

Hair by Pierreelyn Arcega & Makeup by Vivian Jun
Dress by Little Pink Dress Design

"I'm more intentional, more grounded, and more aware of what truly matters – family, friendships, health, and the joy of living with curiosity and purpose."

Q: Tell us about your career and the roles that have shaped your life.

For more than 30 years, I've worked as a REALTOR®, guiding families through important decisions with care and integrity. My work has always been rooted in relationships. Many of my clients have stayed with me through multiple chapters of their lives, and I consider it a privilege to walk alongside them. Outside of my career, my most meaningful role is being Olivia's mom – motherhood has been one of the greatest gifts of my life.

I've built my career as a REALTOR® by focusing on what matters most to me: people. Real estate has never been just about transactions – it's about supporting families through major life moments, building trust, and often forming friendships that last decades. Over the years, many clients have continued to trust me as their needs and families have evolved, and it's a responsibility I deeply value. Beyond my career, motherhood has been the chapter that's transformed me the most. Raising my daughter, Olivia, has given me a clarity and grounding that influences everything I do.

That perspective is deeply shaped by my own mom, whose love has always been expressed through quiet selflessness, generosity, and strong values. Her simple, steady way of living guides me as I show up for my daughter, and her example continues to shape my journey. In many ways, honouring her is honouring the roots of my own story.

Turning 50 has brought a new sense of confidence and clarity. It feels like stepping into a chapter where I trust my instincts and appreciate the relationships that have carried me through the years. I'm more intentional, more grounded, and more aware of what truly matters – family, friendships, health, and the joy of living with curiosity and purpose.

Q: What moment best reflects your strength and resilience?

A defining chapter of my own life was my seven-year journey through infertility and endometriosis. I went through failed IVF cycles, losses, and countless moments of heartbreak. For most of that time, I still believed motherhood would find its way to me – but near the end, I had to start asking myself how I would make peace if it didn't. That emotional shift was one of the hardest things I've ever faced. And then, in my 40s, just as I was learning to let go, I became pregnant naturally. Welcoming my daughter, Olivia, was nothing short of a miracle, and it changed my perspective on everything.

That experience taught me resilience, compassion, and the importance of having a strong support system. My heart is with every woman who has walked a similar path or is still in the middle of it. Through this photo shoot, I hope to bring more visibility to women's health – especially the silent battles so many of us carry. Infertility, loss, and uncertainty don't diminish us; they reveal a depth of strength that deserves to be seen and acknowledged.

Q: What is your beauty secret?

If I have a beauty secret, it's staying young at heart. Your energy shapes how people see you – when you're happy, curious, and excited about life, it radiates outward. That inner light keeps you feeling and looking younger than any product ever could.

This chapter of my life feels full and meaningful – and I'm grateful to share it.

TEGAN MOSS

President & CEO of The Kelty Foundation

41

Outfit by Karis The Label



Turning 40 has felt less like a milestone and more like an awakening. If I could describe this chapter of life in one phrase, I would call it my impact era.

There is something incredibly clarifying that happens as you move beyond 40. You stop measuring life by titles, appearances, or external validation and begin measuring it by something far more meaningful: the impact you have on the lives of others. By this stage, you have gathered life experience, built relationships, developed skills, discovered your values, and weathered challenges that deepen your perspective. You begin to realize that everything you have lived through, including the hard parts, can become fuel for purpose.

For me, that perspective was profoundly shaped by loss. I lost my cousin Kelty to mental health challenges when he was just 17, and years later, we lost his younger sister, Riley as well. I also lost one of my close friends in my twenties. Those experiences changed me deeply and ultimately inspired me to pursue my undergraduate studies in Psychology at McGill University, driven by a desire to better understand the human mind and how we can better support those who are struggling.

Over time, I combined that understanding with an entrepreneurial spirit to co-found a marketing and branding agency, NatPark Creative, where I developed expertise in strategic communications, storytelling, and building meaningful connections with audiences. Alongside that work, I have also worked as a film and television actress since 1993, an experience that strengthened my ability to connect with people, communicate emotion authentically, and use storytelling to create impact.

Today, my deepest professional dedication is leading The Kelty Foundation alongside an extraordinary team. Building on foundational partnerships with BC Children's Hospital, Lions Gate Hospital, and Crisis Centre BC, we launched the Kind Mind Program, an upstream mental health initiative focused on prevention, emotional literacy, and coping skills for children and families. Rather than waiting until children are in crisis, we focus on building lifelong foundational tools for mental wellness. Today, the program reaches more than 20,000 families annually across British Columbia.

Above all, I am a proud mom to two incredible boys, ages 10 and 12, who fuel my commitment to this work every single day. Becoming a mother gave this mission new urgency. I want my children, and all children, to grow up in a world that understands mental health is foundational to how we think, feel, connect, and thrive.

Because in the end, the true measure of a life is not what we have, but the lives we help shape along the way.

“You begin to realize that everything you have lived through, including the hard parts, can become fuel for purpose.”

WENQING LUO

Homemaker

72

Hair & Makeup by Catherine Li



Q: Could you share a bit about your life journey and the roles you've undertaken throughout the years?

I grew up in a time when life was very different in China. I started working when I was only 15 years old, sewing burlap sacks. At 21, I worked hauling heavy loads of soil, and later, between the ages of 23 and 25, I worked in a leather manufacturing factory. Life was never easy, but those experiences taught me the value of hard work, perseverance, and resilience.

At 26, I became a mother for the first time. Over the years, my greatest role has been raising my five children. Looking back, I realize that being a mother has been the most meaningful and rewarding part of my life.

Q: What achievements are you most proud of?

Without question, I am most proud of my five children. They have all grown into kind, intelligent, independent, and caring adults who have built loving families of their own. Watching them become good people is the greatest accomplishment I could ever ask for. As a mother, there is nothing more fulfilling than knowing your children are healthy, respectful, and living meaningful lives.

Q: What has turning 70 meant to you?

Reaching my seventies has reminded me how quickly life passes. As I have grown older, I have learned to let go of the things that do not bring happiness. Instead, I hope my children and grandchildren continue to live healthy and happy lives.

Since my thirties, I have experienced many health challenges. For years, I struggled with fatigue and other symptoms without understanding the cause. Medical checkups and tests often revealed nothing unusual. It wasn't until recent years that I realized many of my health struggles were connected to my mental and emotional well-being. I only wish this had been recognized much earlier, and that the healthcare system had been more supportive. Now, in my seventies, my greatest wish is simply to stay healthy and enjoy life.

Q: What advice would you give to your younger self?

If I could speak to my younger self, I would tell her to be braver. Put yourself first sometimes, enjoy life more, and never stop learning. Life offers many opportunities if you have the courage to try new things. Looking back, I know I was not always brave enough to make difficult decisions or step outside my comfort zone, and I hope younger women will have the confidence to do so.

Q: How did this photo experience make you feel?

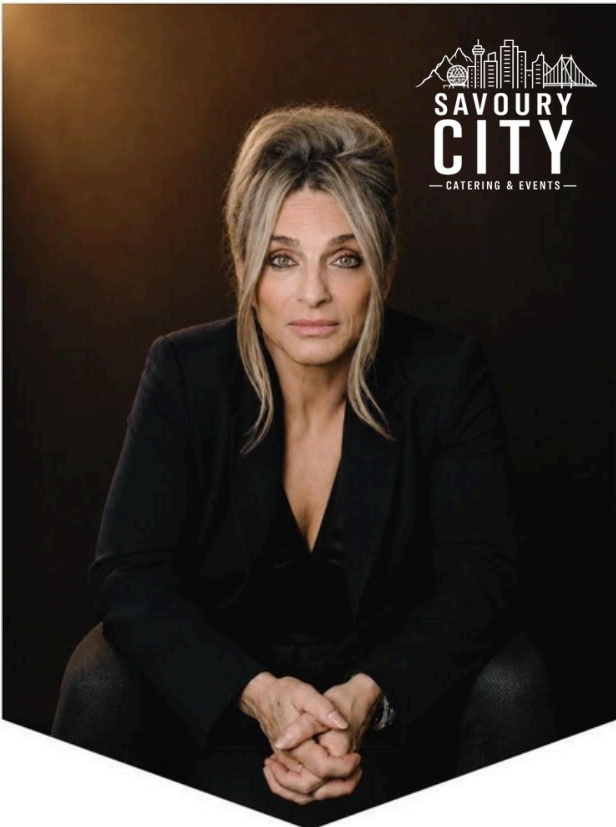
This was my very first time participating in a professional photo shoot, which made it even more special because it was photographed by my own daughter. It made me feel beautiful, confident, and special, and I truly enjoyed every moment of it. I would encourage every woman to step outside her comfort zone and simply experience something new. You may surprise yourself.

I am especially proud that my daughter created this meaningful project to celebrate women while supporting the community. Helping others is always worthwhile, and I believe that when we do good for others, kindness has a way of coming back to us.

I would also like to thank everyone reading this magazine, as well as everyone who has participated in this project, for supporting my daughter's vision. Watching Denise create her version of the 40 Over 40 campaign and plan the Beyond Beauty Gala has been one of my greatest joys. She has always been intelligent, hardworking, strong, and independent, and I am incredibly proud that she is using her talents to celebrate women and give back to the community. As her mother, seeing the lives she has touched and the community she has built mean more to me than words can express.



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