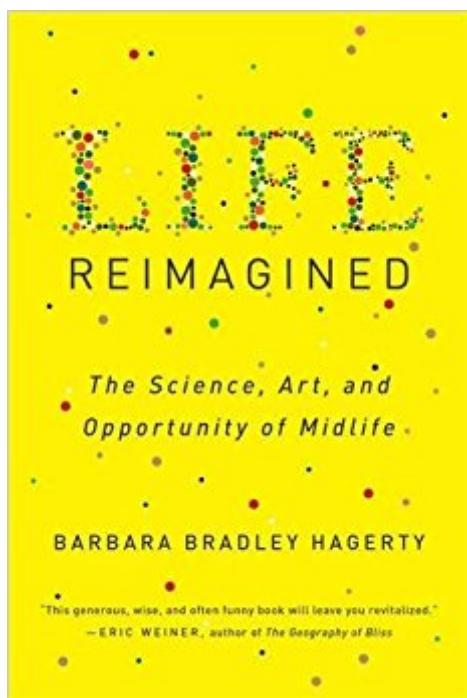


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# Life Reimagined: The Science, Art, And Opportunity Of Midlife



## Synopsis

“Barbara Bradley Hagerty is a wise and engaging guide through the possibilities of middle age.” •Daniel H. Pink, author of *To Sell Is Human* and *Drive* A dynamic and inspiring exploration of the new science that is redrawing the future for people in their forties, fifties, and sixties for the better •and for good. There is no such thing as an inevitable midlife crisis, Barbara Bradley Hagerty writes in this provocative, hopeful book.

It is a myth, an illusion. New scientific research explodes the fable that midlife is a time when things start to go downhill for everybody. In fact, midlife can be a great new adventure, when you can embrace fresh possibilities, purposes, and pleasures. In *Life Reimagined*, Hagerty explains that midlife is about renewal: It is the time to renegotiate your purpose, refocus your relationships, and transform the way you think about the world and yourself. Drawing from emerging information in neurology, psychology, biology, genetics, and sociology •as well as her own story of midlife transformation •Hagerty redraws the map for people in midlife and plots a new course forward in understanding our health, our relationships, even our futures.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“*Life Reimagined* paints a portrait of middle age that is far from grim and decelerating. Midlife begins to seem like the second big phase of decision-making. Your identity has been formed; you know who you are; you’ve built up your resources; and now you have the chance to take the big risks precisely because your foundation is already secure.” •David Brooks, *The New York Times* “*Life Reimagined* gave me hope that midlife, even with its

struggles, can be a time of growth and deeper joy in relationships old and new. *BookPage* “Bradley Hagerty crafts a book that is part insightful analysis, part memoir, and all-around engaging and relatable... [her] own journey is by turns instructive, poignant, and funny as she puts the information she’s discovering into practice... [she] makes a compelling case that our choices—“to seek novel experiences, to stay active, to invest in enriching relationships—“can transform the middle years into vibrant ones, and also help us move forward into old age with a greater sense of possibility and purpose.” *Washington Independent Review of Books* “Bradley uses the perfect mixture of anecdote and facts and knows how to tell a story. Inspiring and reassuring, this book is guaranteed to shake up anyone who is coasting through middle age, reminding them that it’s up to them to find their essence and shape their last years with purpose.” *Booklist* “Insightful... This work is a joyous reminder that the middle years can be satisfying, resilient, and significant.” *Library Journal* “An upbeat look at the joys of middle age... For midlifers eager to create a new habit of mind, Hagerty is a rousing cheerleader.” *Kirkus Reviews* “Barbara Bradley Hagerty is a wise and engaging guide through the possibilities (and occasional pitfalls) of middle age. With her deft storytelling skills and exhaustive research, she reveals a truth that should hearten millions of people: Done right, midlife can be a time of remarkable engagement, purpose, and love.” *Daniel H. Pink*, author of *To Sell Is Human* and *Drive* “Please don’t have a midlife crisis. But if you do (and you will), drop everything and read this book. It’s like having coffee with a good friend who has been there... and also happens to be well versed in neuroscience, psychology and much more. Barbara Bradley Hagerty has written a sharp-eyed, big-hearted book destined for widespread dog-earing and underlining. Whether it’s navigating the worlds of marriage or friendship or work, *Life Reimagined* offers boatloads of earned epiphanies. This generous, wise and often funny book will leave you revitalized... and actually looking forward to life... second act.” *Eric Weiner*, author of *The Geography of Bliss* and *The Geography of Genius* “This book is destined to become the bible for boomers seeking to make the most of the bonus decades opening up in midlife and beyond, as well as for those younger generations on their heels.” *Marc Freedman*, author, *The Big Shift*, and CEO, Encore.org “Combining her great reportorial skills with personal stories and fascinating data, Barbara Bradley Hagerty provides here a blueprint on aging. She debunks the idea of midlife

crises while recognizing midlife changes and then, through interviews with experts and individuals, points the way to move forward into life's next phases. This book is so engagingly told, I've been telling my friends to get this book as soon as they can. **Cokie Roberts**, journalist and author of *We Are Our Mothers' Daughters* "Life Reimagined is a powerful and inspiring book. Hagerty writes with wit, warmth, and scientific rigor. She shares her own experiences of the journey into midlife with honesty and humor and teaches us what science says about our brains, our resilience, and our relationships. Life Reimagined motivates us to delve into midlife with enthusiasm and reminds us that a life well lived requires thought and commitment" •no matter what one's age. **Karen Reivich**, Ph.D., author of *The Resilience Factor* "Grab this book, find a comfortable chair, and get ready to change the way you think about your life. Barbara Bradley Hagerty blends the latest science with rich personal reflections to create a work that informs, uplifts, and ultimately offers a wise guide to what keeps people happy and healthy. Beautifully crafted by a journalist at the top of her game, this is an exciting book that you'll find yourself talking about and sharing with the important people in your world." **Robert J. Waldinger**, M.D., director of the Harvard Study of Adult Development "Life Reimagined is arguably the best book on middle life ever written. Not only is it in beautiful prose, but it's also thoroughly researched. In order to feel understood and to anticipate the future, everybody from 30 to 70 should read this book." It is a joy. **George E. Vaillant**, M.D., former director of Harvard Study of Adult Development and author of *Triumphs of Experience*

Barbara Bradley Hagerty is the author of *The New York Times*-bestselling *Fingerprints of God* is also an award-winning journalist who spent nearly 20 years as a correspondent for NPR. Her work has appeared in *The Atlantic*, the *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Vogue*, and *The Christian Science Monitor*. She has received the Templeton-Cambridge Journalism Fellowship in Science and Religion, and a Knight Fellowship at Yale Law School. She lives with her husband in Washington, D.C.

ARGHGH I wanted to really like this book, and I did at first. The emphasis on attitude, purpose and not being on autopilot really resonates. But as I read it, I got more and more irritated. It seems like there might be some flaws in the studies that show people are MORE satisfied and happier with their lives after their 40s and into their 50s. Who are these people in these studies? Let me guess. Self selected affluent college educated people with lots of time and money on their hands who

would find it interesting and entertaining to participate in studies about their mental and emotional health. I'm guessing that people raising challenged kids, financially supporting ailing parents, working multiple jobs and dealing with physically or mentally ill spouses while their own health is slowly deteriorating don't get called on often to discuss their lives. And that sentence describes almost everyone my age that I know, but not anyone used as an example in the book. The examples given by the author of her life and the lives of her friends and family are particularly grating. These people make 6-7 figures, have enough money, existing professional success and time to change jobs, follow their bliss, work for charities, participate in athletics, go on RV trips. The Meaning of Work chapter especially made me want to throw the book across the room. (But I didn't because it's a library book, sorry ). The book ends with a discussion of the 'bravery' of people making mid life career changes and has the particularly egregious example of a Philip Morris lawyer who spent her career working in Hong Kong and Switzerland defending tobacco and then after literally getting injured WHEN HER HAMMOCK BREAKS, bravely decides to change careers. So in a feat of great emotional daring, "L and her husband sold their home and bought a new one WITH ENOUGH ROOM TO BUILD A POOL HOUSE." And then started a business doing POOL THERAPY FOR DOGS. How more tone deaf can this book get? Nevertheless, I give it 2 stars because it helps me remember that all I can control is my attitude. (I just laughed again at the absurdity of the dog pool example! Enraged and hysterical at the same time.) I am living my life with purpose, and within the small window of choice I have over my circumstances choosing to be grateful for what I have. Just don't read this book if you are feeling at all vulnerable, exhausted, overworked, financially insecure, overwhelmed or trapped in the middle of middle age. It will only make you feel worse.

Barbara Bradley Haggerty, a journalist at National Public Radio, caught my attention with this passage in the start of her book: when she was in her fifties, she sensed a growing disconnect "between my thirty-something self-image and my fifty-something reality." All admitted there were moments, more and more frequent, when I seemed to be pushing a wheelbarrow full of dense, unfulfilled ambition up a steep gravel path. It was exhausting, but I didn't know any other way to live. "After a health emergency, she spent two years examining the middle stage of life, the forties, fifties, and sixties. She calls this a time to "pause to evaluate how to move forward in life." I liked her attitude and found a good number of useful tidbits in this book, which was well-researched and had a conversational tone. A caveat: some reviewers have criticized her

for being of a certain ethnicity and class, denigrating her exploration as elitist. Yes, it's a privilege to be able to consider reinvention, as opposed to it being a dead issue due to poverty or ill health. However, I think an open mind is capable of taking in multitudes of data for the eventual betterment of civilization. I found the book helpful and recommend it.

Just turning 42 this weekend puts me on the junior edge of the midlife audience this book aims for, but it nonetheless applies quite strongly to me. I'm familiar with a lot of the research and researchers Barbara draws on in this book, and she translates their work masterfully. This book takes research from psychology, neurobiology, and other fields, wonderfully weaving in her personal stories of growth through midlife, and applies it to the period of adulthood that has had very little written about it. She does justice to the research that she cites, unlike a lot of books which try to translate psychological science into popular press. Not only did I take notes on the tips from the research and jot down researchers names for my own investigation later, but to my surprise her personal stories often brought me to tears. I listened to the audiobook version which I highly recommend if you are at all familiar with Barbara's voice from her years at NPR. I felt as if she was sitting with me, like an old friend (her voice so familiar from NPR), telling me personally of her struggles through challenging times with the emotion and depth that only the author herself can. (And an experienced radio voice, at that!) It was clear to me in listening that she was feeling the emotions of the story as she narrated it, which significantly contributed to my enjoyment of listening and identifying with her deep questions. I felt along with you, Barbara. Thank you for your exhaustive research on this book, for your skill in writing it, and for your candid, emotional accounts of your own struggles in this time of life. This resonated deeply with me and, as it is so full of solid, useful information, I can imagine myself coming back to this book as I move deeper into my own midlife.

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