# Women’s midlife crises are no longer silent struggles but catalysts for empowerment and renewal



It has been a decade since my life altered irrevocably in my mid-40s, a period I now recognise as an essential phase for all women. The notion of a midlife crisis has traditionally been a male-dominated narrative—a punchline associated with middle-aged men and flashy convertibles. However, it is time for women to take ownership of this transformative period, embracing it as an opportunity for a more magnificent future.

For many women, the desire for change appears during their late 30s to 60s. While some may navigate multiple crises, others experience a gradual transition filled with challenges that can lead to a calmer, more fulfilling life. However, this journey is fraught with difficulties; issues such as divorce, anxiety, and depression often peak in midlife, leaving many feeling depleted and overwhelmed. Acknowledging this reality is crucial, especially when we recognise that the high demands placed on women’s roles often strip them of their sense of self.

In my personal journey through a midlife crisis, I faced a series of profound losses: I left my marriage, had an affair, lost my job, experienced the ravages of Alzheimer’s with my mother, and even mourned the death of my dog. Yet, amid these tribulations, I also found the seeds of healing and self-discovery. It is crucial to understand that while circumstances may remain unchanged, our perceptions and responses can shift dramatically.

As women approach this pivotal stage, unresolved emotions can surface. The wane of oestrogen and progesterone during perimenopause often gives rise to what I term “The Rage,” a powerful yet legitimate response to years of suppressed feelings. Conversations with women in their 30s to 60s often reveal common themes of frazzlement, frustration, and fear. They associate midlife transitions with a decline into irrelevance rather than an opportunity for reinvention.

Despite societal conditioning that promotes silence, discussions around midlife sexuality are crucial. In conversations with sex-positive advocates like Emma Sayle—founder of the community "Killing Kittens"—it becomes clear that open dialogue about sexual desires remains painfully absent. Sayle argues that the lack of communication about sexuality often stifles pleasure, particularly for women who grew up in an era laden with restrictive views on sex. Such conversations could stimulate profound change in how we perceive and experience intimacy.

Simultaneously, the medical landscape for women facing sexual dysfunction is riddled with obstacles. Many menopausal women endure painful intercourse but receive scant information about treatments like vaginal oestrogen, which could alleviate discomfort. A study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association highlighted how only 5 percent of women utilise topical oestrogen, despite its benefits for menopausal symptoms. Experts like Dr. Rachel Rubin emphasise the comprehensive nature of Genitourinary Syndrome of Menopause, a condition resulting from diminished hormones, which can drastically affect quality of life.

Adding to this complexity is the conversation surrounding testosterone therapy for women. Research indicates that testosterone plays a crucial role in female sexual health, countering myths that it is exclusively a male hormone. Urologist Dr. Kelly Casperson points to gender bias in medical treatment, where men have easier access to testosterone while women face stringent barriers. Women dealing with low libido often find themselves navigating a labyrinth of medical protocols that prioritise proving a diagnosis rather than addressing genuine health concerns.

Yet, anecdotal evidence suggests that women who incorporate testosterone into their hormone replacement therapy experience significant benefits, from enhanced mood to improved cognitive function. Notably, studies have shown that testosterone may protect against conditions like dementia and osteoporosis, further underscoring the need for awareness and acceptance of this hormone in women’s health.

The landscape of midlife is not just a bleak journey into decline; it can spark renewal and empowerment. Women should be encouraged to see this phase as a renaissance—a chance to re-examine their desires, relationships, and health choices. Personal anecdotes abound of women experiencing unexpected sexual vitality during perimenopause, a phenomenon sometimes referred to as the “perimenopausal sex surge.” This period can be both chaotic and liberating, compelling women to confront their evolving sexual identities.

Ultimately, sharing and exploring our experiences during midlife can foster a sense of community and understanding. Engaging in open discussions about sex, identity, and hormonal health can light the way for others navigating similar challenges. As we reshape the narrative surrounding midlife, it is essential we view this stage not as an endpoint, but as a launching pad for renewed vitality in our lives.

With every shared story, each conversation about the intricacies of female health, we inch closer to normalising the discourse that has been long overdue. Embracing this time as an opportunity can lead us to not just survive, but thrive beyond the threshold of midlife, making it not a crisis, but a catalysing force for growth and empowerment.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-14743557/I-midlife-crisis-affair-lost-job-mother-discovered-cheap-little-known-hormone-treatment-middle-age-woman-consider-got-life-KATE-MUIR.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-14743557/I-midlife-crisis-affair-lost-job-mother-discovered-cheap-little-known-hormone-treatment-middle-age-woman-consider-got-life-KATE-MUIR.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/menopause/expert-answers/testosterone-therapy/faq-20057935), [[3]](https://www.aarp.org/health/drugs-supplements/testosterone-for-women/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[4]](https://www.pleasureinthepause.com/blog/testosterone-therapy-women-menopause-truth), [[5]](https://intimmedicine.com/the-benefits-and-risks-of-testosterone-therapy-in-perimenopausal-and-postmenopausal-women/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[6]](https://time.com/7259392/testosterone-therapy-women-benefits-risks/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-14743557/I-midlife-crisis-affair-lost-job-mother-discovered-cheap-little-known-hormone-treatment-middle-age-woman-consider-got-life-KATE-MUIR.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/menopause/expert-answers/testosterone-therapy/faq-20057935), [[7]](https://agelessforever.net/anti-aging-news-blog/the-unexpected-importance-of-testosterone-in-womens-wellness/)
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* Paragraph 7 – [[3]](https://www.aarp.org/health/drugs-supplements/testosterone-for-women/), [[4]](https://www.pleasureinthepause.com/blog/testosterone-therapy-women-menopause-truth)
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1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-14743557/I-midlife-crisis-affair-lost-job-mother-discovered-cheap-little-known-hormone-treatment-middle-age-woman-consider-got-life-KATE-MUIR.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/menopause/expert-answers/testosterone-therapy/faq-20057935> - This Mayo Clinic article discusses the potential benefits and risks of testosterone therapy for women, particularly postmenopausal women experiencing low libido. It highlights that while testosterone therapy may boost sex drive, its long-term safety and efficacy are not well-established. The article also outlines possible side effects, including acne, hair growth, and weight gain, and emphasizes the importance of consulting healthcare providers before starting such therapy.
3. <https://www.aarp.org/health/drugs-supplements/testosterone-for-women/> - An AARP article examining the use of testosterone therapy in women over 50. It notes that while some women report benefits like improved libido and energy, the FDA has not approved testosterone treatments for women. The article also discusses potential side effects and the need for more research to confirm the therapy's safety and effectiveness.
4. <https://www.pleasureinthepause.com/blog/testosterone-therapy-women-menopause-truth> - This blog post features an interview with Dr. Susan Hardwick-Smith, a board-certified gynecologist specializing in women's midlife wellness. She discusses the benefits and risks of testosterone therapy for women, emphasizing the importance of individualized treatment plans and the need for careful monitoring. Dr. Hardwick-Smith also highlights the lack of FDA-approved testosterone products for women and the significance of consulting qualified healthcare providers.
5. <https://intimmedicine.com/the-benefits-and-risks-of-testosterone-therapy-in-perimenopausal-and-postmenopausal-women/> - An article from Intim Medicine discussing the benefits and risks of testosterone therapy in perimenopausal and postmenopausal women. It outlines potential benefits such as improved sexual function and mood, as well as risks including cardiovascular concerns and adverse effects on lipid profiles. The article emphasizes the importance of thorough evaluation and informed decision-making when considering testosterone therapy.
6. <https://time.com/7259392/testosterone-therapy-women-benefits-risks/> - A Time magazine article exploring the growing trend of testosterone therapy for women. It shares personal experiences of women who have undergone the treatment, noting improvements in libido and cognitive function. However, the article also highlights the lack of FDA approval for such treatments and the need for more research to understand the long-term effects and safety.
7. <https://agelessforever.net/anti-aging-news-blog/the-unexpected-importance-of-testosterone-in-womens-wellness/> - This article from Ageless Forever Anti-Aging and Wellness Center discusses the role of testosterone in women's health, particularly during perimenopause and menopause. It addresses the lack of FDA-approved testosterone therapy for women and the variability in treatment outcomes. The article emphasizes the importance of thorough discussions with healthcare providers and regular monitoring when considering testosterone therapy.