

TIME Magazine

10 Questions with Jane Pauley

The first baby-boomer news anchor talks about reinvention, being bipolar and bad hair days

By Belinda Luscombe

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Erik Tanner for TIME

Your new book, *Your Life Calling*, is about reinvention. Why that subject?

I'm intrigued by change. The most notable moments in my career have been times of transition, and when I saw an off-ramp, I was inclined to take it whether I knew where I was headed or not.

Most people don't have the luxury of reinvention. Isn't it kind of an elitist concern?

Everybody on the sidewalk who's currently 35 is going to be 45 and then 55 and 65. So reimagining the rest of their lives is not something that only the elite are entitled to play with. The reality is that for a generation or two, people have been living a lot longer, and we haven't changed our mind-set about midlife. For many of us, the number of years we go on living will exceed the number of years in a conventional life. What are we doing to do?

What are you going to do?

I don't know. I haven't a clue. I'll probably have to find the opportunities myself, maybe even invent them. *The Jane Pauley Show* was a failure, but it's the thing I am proudest of. My psyche doesn't know that I'm supposed to be embarrassed by it, because my psyche is proud that I had the courage to try. One of the misconceptions that I address in the book is the idea that at this age, you better get it right. It's paralyzing.

Your husband Garry Trudeau, a career cartoonist, helped create *Alpha House*. Did he take your advice?

Garry is the creator, writer, executive producer and show runner of *Alpha House*. He does everything but be John Goodman. Garry is living the life he always dreamed of. He has no need for my book. He's in a constant state of reinvention. That said, Garry doesn't like change. The kids would build a Lego pirate ship, and Garry would glue the pieces together.

Your book makes me wonder if he's prouder of your career than you are?

Absolutely. I have the memory of an Etch A Sketch. Garry kept my newspaper clippings and organized them in binders.

Are you optimistic about the news business?

I think the news industry is really unwell. But I'm optimistic for the generation of young people who are going to reinvent it.

Why did you largely keep your kids off TV?

Celebrity can be a mental health disorder. Fame certainly goes to your head. I raised my kids with five different minivans, which their friends thought was funny. "Your parents are famous and you're driving a minivan?"

You were diagnosed as bipolar in 2001. Has that changed the way you live?

I am bipolar. It was triggered by medications for the treatment for hives. Part of my advocacy is not talking about the stigma. It's real, but it doesn't help us move forward. My other message is, I take my meds every day. No holidays. I've not had a recurrence.

Do you ever feel vulnerable?

Sleep is the most important thing. If I don't think I need to sleep tonight because I'm writing a song, it might mean that something is pushing through. As I head off on a book tour where I'll be doing nothing but talking about myself, hearing applause, sleeping in hotel rooms, changing time zones, I have to be careful.

Did you coin the phrase *bad hair day*?

Prove me wrong. Bryant Gumbel and I were talking about my bad hair days on the *Today* show in the early '80s. If I had two good hair days out of five it was great. Garry put the phrase *bad hair day* in *Doonesbury*. He got it from his wife.

So your career is not a total loss.

I do have a claim to immortality.

