

Boomer Babes

With Brilliant Dreams

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rock!

Donna Partow

Best Selling Author and Christian Communicator

Donna is one of America's most popular Christian women authors. Her books have sold almost a million copies on all seven continents and have been translated (in part or in whole) into numerous languages. She travels worldwide, sharing her life journey with disarming transparency and refreshing authenticity. In the process, she challenges pre-conceived notions about what it takes to be a vessel God can use. **Contact Donna at:** www.DonnaPartow.com



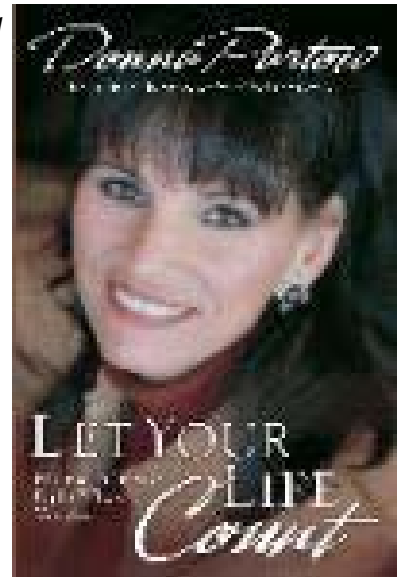
1. As a baby boomer woman, what do you find most comforting about growing older?

My husband and I were having ‘our time’ in the morning several weeks ago, sitting under a canopy in our backyard. He looked at me and said, “What if this is as good as it gets?” It only took me a few seconds to know: “Then it’s pretty good.” I’m not sure I have any less challenges in this season of my life. In fact, I probably have far more. But I’ve finally learned what a blessing it can be to have realistic expectations. I have found the secret of being content whatever the circumstances. I used to crave so much: attention, respect, love, approval, applause. Having grown up poor, and in a very troubled family, I also felt I had a lot to prove. I was gonna show the world that I could BE somebody. None of that matters anymore. It’s just gone and what a relief.

Turning 45 changed me. It freed me from trying to be ‘the wonder girl’ and forced me to make peace with just being an ordinary woman with, as hokey and cliché as this sounds, an extraordinary God. I find comfort in being grateful – in knowing I’m not entitled to even one of the blessings God has so graciously given. I don’t deserve anything. It’s all grace and it’s all good.

2. At what point in your life did writing become your career and did it find you or did you find it?

I was four when my sister set up our little schoolroom in the basement, sat me down at an antique desk and taught me to read. Not long afterward, she handed me a pencil and I started writing. Expressing my thoughts on paper immediately became a powerful outlet for me. Within a few years, my entire family was swept up in to the turmoil of the Vietnam War and its aftermath (my two brothers returned profoundly wounded). Writing was my way of coping. I loved writing assignments in school and would always force my family to sit and listen with rapt attention while I read them aloud, even if the subject was biology. I loved reading my writing aloud – to this day, that’s how I self-edit. If it doesn’t sound right, I re-write. I majored in English in college but, by some fluke of the universe, wound up in investment banking. Well, it was the East Coast in the 80s! When my entire department was eliminated without notice, I vividly remember wandering the streets of Philadelphia wondering, “What on earth happened to my dreams? Who have I become?” Somewhere between my former office and the train ride home, I had made my decision to pursue a writing career. I launched a marketing communications business and several months later, connected with an acquisitions editor at Focus on the Family Publishing. I’ll never forget the day I received the official phone call offering me my first book contract. I screamed at the top of my lungs. It was my dream come true.



3. As a little girl, what were the dreams of your heart and have you realized those dreams in some form or fashion as a woman?

From the time I was a little girl, I had two dreams: I dreamed of being a writer and I dreamed of standing on a stage. God has granted both of those dreams. I'm currently finishing work on my 26th book and my speaking ministry has taken me around the world – to every continent except Antarctica. Amazingly enough, my books have made it to the great white unknown via a research scientist stationed there and I believe, someday, I'll have the opportunity to minister on the 7th continent in person.

4. How important is it for us to listen to our heart and why?

It's essential for us to listen to our hearts because that's where our dreams are buried, sometimes for decades at a time. I believe God has placed a dream in every heart and we will never be fully alive until we tap into it. Of course, the Bible does say the heart can be deceitful so we have to make sure the dreams we pursue are genuine God-dreams and not grand illusions. The

essential things are trust and timing. Oh, listen to the woman who learned the hard way! God's dream will unfold in God's way according to His time. Trying to force our way or make our dreams come true according to our timetable will yield nothing but frustration and strained relationships. So it's not enough to listen one time, catch the vision and run with it. Listening is a moment by moment essential. Here's a little Latin lesson I picked up from one of my favorite authors, Henri Nouwen. To not listen is surdus. To not listen at all, to be completely deaf, is absurd. You don't have to be a Latin scholar to guess that's where we get our word absurd. Trying to live the Christian life, trying to live out your dreams, apart from daily listening is absolutely absurd. It's fruitless and will never work. Fortunately, there's an answer. The Latin word for listening is audire. Look at that word and you can plainly see it's where we get our word audio. Now it gets interesting: to listen with great attention is ob audire. It's the root word for obedience. The obedience God wants from us is that we simply listen with great attention as He directs our steps. For example, God directed my steps into Allison's life, then directed her to invite me to do this interview. I didn't go chasing Allison. God brought her into my life when the time was right and we formed an immediate connection. That's how you know it's God and not just another great idea.

5. What single piece of advice would you give to a fellow baby boomer sister who decides she has not been listening to the dreams of her heart and wants to change course in midlife?

Find the nearest monastery. No kidding. Go somewhere you can be absolutely quiet for at least two to three days. Don't talk to anyone. Put a sign around your neck that says "Silent Retreat." If you can't find a convent or monastery, try a Christian retreat center during the week when it might be quiet. But don't go to a retreat center to participate in a program, listen to a speaker or get advice from someone. There's certainly a time and place for all of that, but this isn't it. Now is the time to be still and know that he is God. Other options include a friend's cabin in the mountains or, as a last resort, a hotel. Go in silence to listen for God's voice. Bring your Bible, a notebook, a pen and a listening heart. It will absolutely change your life!

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