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**Laughter and hot flashes**  
**By Kay Wagner LMP**  
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My friend Evelyn and I have just finished a delicious pizza. Now I get to savor a cup of Starbucks coffee. I stir in sugar and add two packs of creamer. I stir the creamer in, appalled to see the coffee curdle. "My God, Evie! I just dumped not one but TWO packs of parmesan cheese into my coffee!"

They call menopause "The change". For four or five decades we've been on a path and we've known what to expect from our bodies. We've known what our schedule is. We've fit into a niche. Now we're talking about night sweats, retirement/career change and progesterone cream.

But our bodies know exactly what to do. The female body knows how to ovulate, to create life, how to rebuild, how to maintain a 98.6 degree temperature (well except for the hot flashes!) and to keep the heart pumping. Now our bodies are practicing the cessation of menses, creating a new hormonal stage for the second half of life.

Never underestimate the power of hormones. Stop blaming and questioning yourself when you need more rest, more time alone or don't have as much energy for everyone else. The key word here is *menoPAUSE*. It's the natural cycle. Multi-tasking and being a high achiever is no longer the goal. Applying the knowledge you've gained and treating yourself well is the cycle now. *Pause* and slow down.

It appears the conscious mind takes a 'pause' as well. One afternoon my friend Kathy and I were visiting and I was searching the house for the cordless phone. "Where the heck is the phone," I wondered. "It's in your hand Kay," Kathy laughed. The next day when we went shopping, Kathy needed to make a phone call. She dug through her purse for her cell phone and found she'd brought the TV remote instead. Maybe we should call it *mind-o-pause*!

To help men understand the effect of female hormones, I tell them to remember how testosterone once drove them. It was an undeniable source of power, strength, stamina and the drive to win. It's the hormones. When they realize the power of hormones it helps them understand their wife's hot flashes and mood swings.

We ask ourselves, what am I going to do with the second half of my life? Angeles Arien, in her book and tape set, *The Second Half of Life*, explains the importance of finding work that has heart and meaning. Indigenous cultures consider midlife the time for mentoring and leaving a sustainable legacy. I asked myself about my 28 year career as a massage therapist and trying to juggle family time, writing, and yoga classes.

When I realized how scattered my life seems, I asked myself, "What do I need to let go of?" The answer was, "Anything that's bad for my body."

In my life, that rules out practicing massage full time. In Kathy's case it means selling her industrial sewing machine and walking away from the grueling work of marine canvas. Catering, cooking and serving soul food provides heart and meaning in her life now.

I can no longer rely on my physical strength. I've got to market my mind. "Work smarter not harder." Delegate. Branch out. So I am creating meditation and guided imagery CD's. I am a little overwhelmed with the learning curve, but using my mind in new ways and applying my 50 year education in life is very fun.

Making new choices means walking into unfamiliar territory. Sometimes there are no land marks. As we

walk forward the only guidelines are the mental picture we hold in our mind and listening to our gut.

Susan ran back into the house, to the bathroom for..."Hm, what did I come back for? Hmm." She retraces her steps mentally and settles on just brushing her hair since she's in the bathroom anyway.

I've heard that the only cure for menopause is a spectacular sense of humor. I guess we're on our way!

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### **Stressed? Headaches? Insomnia?**

**Kay Wagner LMP has a special talent for helping people relax and improve their health. Kay offers "R &R" private sessions, coaching breathing, stretching and relaxation. She is a Licensed Massage Therapist and Certified Yoga and Pilates instructor. Learn to relax and rejuvenate in Kay's studio overlooking the mountains and water at 828 2<sup>nd</sup> St. Mukilteo WA 98275.**

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