

One Day You Will Be “Radical”

By Orna Raz



Yesterday someone posted on Facebook a photo with a quote by Gloria Steinem: “Women grow radical with age. One day an army of gray-haired women may quietly take over the earth.” Reading it I suddenly realized that when it comes to gray hair a rose is never just a rose, and perhaps my choice of not dying my hair has subversive undertones.

For as long as I can remember my mother had beautiful gray hair, she kept it short and let it dry in the sun. For a nurse, it was a practical, no-

nonsense hair style, and it suited her personality. In my eyes my mother's gray hair was a symbol of her wisdom and knowledge.

I was convinced that one day I would look just like her, but when my daughter detected some gray in my hair, she asked me to dye it. I refused, but she argued that I was too young to be old. I told myself that it was important to make my daughter proud and postponed my plan to grow old gracefully.

But, from experience, trying to please our loved ones hardly ever works. I knew the truth behind my gray roots and resented the effort of hiding it from the rest of the world. Whenever I saw gray haired women, I found myself complimenting them on their hair, and explaining why mine was dark. Of course, I sounded insincere and silly.

Perhaps a psychologist could have called my predicament a cognitive dissonance, but it simply translates to not being true to myself. So, one day I stopped dying my hair. My daughter was displeased at first, but soon she wrote to tell me that gray hair has made a comeback. I like to think it was her way of saying that she accepted my choice.

Back to Gloria Steinem's quote: hair color is a matter of personal choice, but I agree that women grow radical with age. Since young women face enough challenges juggling family and career and most of them have no spare time for activism, it is up to us, their mothers, to come to the rescue again and do it for them.

I noticed that many young women attended the different protest marches recently. They made a special effort and came to show their discontent. However, usually it is the older women who dedicate their life to the cause and become active in different social and political movements.

In *Women Wage Peace*, for example, the age range of most of its hard-core activists is from late 40s to late 60s. While in many other aspects of life women that age start to become less relevant, here they can shine and make a real difference. Many of us are willing to dedicate all our time and effort to promote peace and justice in our region, and I believe

that we have the wisdom, knowledge, and determination to bring a change.

Young women have something to look forward to, Gloria Steinem makes growing older seem almost fun. Hopefully it won't take long before they join us in taking over the earth and making it a better place.

About the author Orna Raz

She has a PhD in English literature from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and she usually writes about issues concerning women, literature, culture, and society.

