



# *Peeking Over the Edge ... views from life's middle*

*By Cathy Jo Marley*

## Sample Interview Questions

### **1. What is Peeking Over the Edge about? (answer takes 1 minute)**

Peeking Over the Edge is a personal look at the second half of life as a time for celebration rather than regret. Specifically, I look at how, after I turned 50, I became more reflective, more positive, more assertive than I ever thought I could be. I talk about my lifelong battle with weight and self esteem, family and stepmothering, and the insights that come with age. It's a little bit about love, a little bit about self acceptance, and a lot about the legacy we choose to create for ourselves.

### **2. In the book, you have a chapter called Today, Tomorrow & For Always...this little legacy of mine. What do you want to be remembered for? (answer takes 1.5 minutes)**

I'd like to believe that when I'm gone I'll be remembered as more than just a woman who put in her time. I would like to believe I will be remembered for my passion, my positive outlook and my desire to find the good in any situation I encounter. That especially applies to all the negatives we hear every day about growing older. Being over 50, I believe, is not the end of life's joys and adventures. Instead, it's the beginning of the best life has to offer. I really believe we grow wiser, calmer, and far more loving as we grow older. Maybe that's one reason grandparents have such a positive reputation!

I would love to have people remember me as a woman who helped other people live a more positive and a happier life. I'd like to believe that when I am gone, people will say I made a difference in their lives. There's a song I quote at the beginning of the chapter you're talking about. It's called Oklahoma City Times and it pretty much says what I'm all about. It says:

"Now, I'm not countin' on riches or fame to make my mark  
The best I can do is touch someone and hope they feel my spark  
And maybe add a little sunlight where no sun ever shines,  
'Cause I gotta be more than just two lines in the Oklahoma City Times"

### **3. What advice would you give someone who is reaching middle age? (answer takes 1 minute)**

Lighten up! Children instinctively know how to play, but somewhere along the way, most of us become really serious and forget how to just have a good time. When we try to play, we work so hard at it that it ends up being work, something we "have" to do. I suppose it has something to do with the responsibilities that go along with being an adult. Responsibility is great, but so is play.

And don't be afraid of crossing some imaginary line that takes you from young one day to old the next. Feeling old is optional. For sure, middle age is not the end of the world. Oh

sure, we start sagging and wrinkling and things hurt that never hurt before, but really, as long as you're still looking at the green side of the grass, things aren't all that bad. The alternative sure is a whole lot worse! It comes down to perspective.

**4. What has been your most memorable moment since turning 50? (answer takes 30 seconds)**

Boy, that's a tough question. I'm not sure I can put my finger on a specific moment. It was more gradual than that. It was more like I just realized one day that I was happy and I was content with the type of person I had become. When I was younger, I was always trying to be better, to be more, to have more. Now I'm just where I want to be and doing what I want to do. I think as I've grown older, I have become much more philosophical about life in general. That's a pretty remarkable feeling.

**5. What do you like best about being over 50? (answer takes 30 seconds)**

I love being able to give myself permission to stop trying to be perfect. You know, I've reached a point in life where I can accept myself for the unique human being I have become. That's huge, because it also means I don't worry nearly as much about what other people think of me. If someone doesn't like me or is turned off by something I have to say, so be it. There's always someone else who resonates with me.

**6. What do you like least about being over 50? (answer takes 30 seconds)**

Recognizing that no matter how much rose tint I add when I paint the picture, I have a finite amount of time left to live and those I love do too. It's just a fact of life: people age and they die and there's always someone left behind who is grieving. I'd really rather that person not be me, but I expect someday it probably will be. That's why I talk in the book about keeping relationships clean. It's the best way I know to keep from having regrets.

**7. What can readers expect to get out of this book? (answer takes 20 seconds)**

I hope they will feel more positive about where they are in life, wherever that may be. Hopefully, they will realize regrets over the past are counter-productive and that the second half of life is so much richer and rewarding than they ever thought it would be. If this book can help just one person see aging as a good thing, I think I will have succeeded.

**8. What motivated you to write this book? (answer takes 30 seconds)**

I used to write a column in the newsletter for the Entrepreneurial Mothers Association. That's really where the seeds for this book were first planted. I never really gave much thought to how people would react to what I said, but I was amazed at how many women took me aside and thanked me for what I had written, telling me reading it had really affected them. That was the first time I realized I might have something to say that could make a difference in people's lives. So I just kept writing.

**9. This book is really about you. Why would a reader be interested in reading it? (answer takes 1 minute)**

I'd like to believe that when people finish reading *Peeking Over the Edge*, they will have connected with something much more universal than just me. Hopefully, they'll see themselves in what I have written. Maybe they'll realize they aren't alone in how they feel about themselves and their connection to life. You see, the things I talk about in this book are really things that matter to everyone.

I really believe we all try to put on a brave front when we face the world, but inside everyone, from the homeless woman struggling to feed and house her kids to Oprah, has the same basic fears and insecurities. The problem is most of us are afraid to voice them. I couldn't help myself. Writing this book was one way I could conquer my own fears and insecurities. Maybe if others see me letting it all hang out, they'll realize we're all in this lifeboat together.

**10. There are a lot of people who would like to write a book, but they don't. What was the deciding factor that made you do it? (answer takes 30 seconds)**

I wrote at this book for ten years, but just couldn't seem to finish. Then one day, a friend of mine who always claimed she was no writer called to tell me she was self publishing a book. It was the motivation I needed to finally finish my own book. I figured if Kathy Stephens could just decide to write a book and then do it, I could too. Once I made my mind up that I *was* going to finish this book, I got serious and made it happen. My advice to all would-be authors is to just start. Once you start writing, it can acquire a momentum that simply carries it to completion.

**11. What was the most difficult part of writing *Peeking Over the Edge*? (answer takes 1 minute)**

The hardest part was getting past that inner critic that kept hanging on to the fear that what I had to say was trivial. I suppose it comes down to fear of exposing my heart, of being vulnerable. No matter how confident a person is, no matter how much they believe they don't care what others think, there's always that little voice inside that says, "Yeah, but if people really knew me, would they still like me?" It gets better as we age, but I don't think it ever completely goes away. I had to get past that and just keep on writing anyway. You'd be amazed at the affirmations I have posted all over my office, just trying to shut that voice up. I found that joining a writers group and entering contests helped me too. Both gave me the confidence to keep going and believe I really could be an author and people would want to hear what I had to say.

**12. What advice would you give other aspiring authors? (answer takes 30 seconds)**

Persistence is important. If writing is really your passion, don't let anything keep you from it. And don't ever forget that writing is a little bit like a lockset. Each key is matched to a lock that responds when the key is turned. With writing, everyone has something valuable to say and there is always someone who needs to hear it.