

**Dotsie Bregel,
Founder and CEO of
The National Association of Baby Boomer Women
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Presents

GRAY Matters

With

Anne Kreamer

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GRAY Matters
With
Anne Kreamer

Dotsie: Hello, and welcome to the call. The format for the call is very simple. I will interview Anne Kreamer who is the author of **Going Gray: What I Learned about Beauty, Sex, Work, Motherhood, Authenticity, and Everything Else That Really Matters**. And once we've finished through interviewing, I'll open the lines for questions. So let's get started.

For those of you who are on the call who don't know me, I am Dotsie Bregel, founder of the **National Association of Baby Boomer Women** which you can find at www.NABBW.com and also www.boomerwomenspeak.com and they are number one on major search engines for the search of baby boomer women. I am passionate about educating and empowering women at midlife, and boomer women happen to be my generation of women, too, so it makes it all very fun. Since launching Boomer Women Speak over five years ago, by the grace of God, I've become the "go-to" person for a lot of the media as far as our generation of women are concerned, and I've been connecting, encouraging, and supporting boomer women on a daily basis. So I feel like I have my finger on the pulse of this spirited generation, especially because of people like Anne who are willing to do these types of interviews. So anyway, my prayer is really to embrace all women and provide them with the means to soar.

This is the last call in our series for the **National Association of Baby Boomer Women** for January and it is the **Boomer Women: It's All About Us** series. Make sure you follow your newsletters and your updates to learn about the series for next month which will focus on Boomer Women's Midlife Health. Okay, so Anne, are you there?

Anne: I am here!

Dotsie: Okay, what I'm going to do just to give everybody a little background and I hope you don't mind, is I'm going to read the flap of your book. And then I'll read the bio and then we'll jump in—I'll jump in with some questions.

Anne: Okay, terrific.

Dotsie: Anne Kreamer considered herself an impossibly youthful 49 until a casual glance at a family photograph stopped her in her tracks. There she was behind carefully chosen clothes, meticulously dyed hair, and several rounds of Botox, looking horror of horrors, exactly 49. In one unguarded moment, all the years spent plucking and primping her way to a more youthful looking self suddenly melted away and she saw herself for what she really was—a middle-age woman with her hair dyed much too harshly. She wasn't fooling anyone. So

Kreamer decided it was time to get real. To her friend's shock and her hairdresser's dismay, she ended 25 years of appointments with her colorist and resolved to let her hair go gray. She was finished with the tyrannical upkeep, the enormous expense; this vain attempt at preserving her youth. She wanted to move toward some measure of authenticity and frankly, she was curious to know what she actually looked like. ***Going Gray*** is Kreamer's expiration of that journey and a forthright, funny, and penetrating look at aging as a modern female obsession. From the Woodstock nations and feminism affirmations of natural beauty, to three-hundred dollar hair sessions and routine lip injections, how did we ever get from here to there?

Kreamer uses compelling experiments, interviews with both celebrated and ordinary women, and her own story in an attempt to demonstrate the impulse so many women feel to hide, to mask, to undo the physical signs of life's progression, even as their lives become increasingly longer. So why is hair color so central to women's identity? What are the personal and the professional pressures behind the thousands of dollars women spend in the name of keeping up appearance? And what are the effects of letting down that guard; if only just a little? In this inspiring chronicle of middle-aging, Kreamer sets out to find her hair's true color and along the way discovers her true self. With humor, candor, and blazing insight, she gamely seeks to find the balance between attractiveness and authenticity, illuminating in a provocative and valuable way the politics and the personal cost of our definition of aging gracefully.

Okay that tells you a little bit more about what you're going to hear about tonight and if you haven't read the book, you must. It's just—I read so many books about women at midlife, and I really enjoyed this because to me it was about going gray, but it was about so much more. So anyway, Anne is the former executive vice president, and worldwide creative director of Nickelodeon / Nick at Nite, and part the founding team of Spy magazine. She graduated from Harvard college and lives in Brooklyn, New York with her husband, the writer Kurt Anderson, and their two daughters. Okay Anne, an official welcome to the call. How are you tonight?

Anne: I couldn't be better, thank you.

Dotsie: Oh good. Good. Okay, I recall and it was mentioned actually in the flap of your book, of reading about this photo of your daughter and your friend and yourself. Do you want to tell us a little bit about that and what made you decide to stop coloring your hair?

Anne: Sure. Well, I mean, I had actually never given it a second thought to stop dying my hair until I looked at this photograph and my then 16-year old blonde daughter was on one side of me and another friend with her gray hair was on the other. And I had one of those moments that I think we've all had, perhaps when we're walking down the street and we glance in a shop window and we suddenly

go “Whoa, so that’s what I look like.” And it was one of those kind of seconds where I think I saw myself somewhat objectively. You know one of the things that I discovered in a lot of my research is that one of the primary reasons that women talked about why they’ve dyed their hair, and my story is a little different, but one of the primary reasons is that they feel like when they look in the mirror they don’t see their authentic self. And so hairdressers can tell you at any particular point when a woman thought she looked her best, maybe 16, maybe 25, maybe 35. And I think I had kind of seduced myself into believing a comparable illusion; that when I was looking in the mirror and I had the same, even though it was a lot darker by the time I was 49, hair color that I had when I was younger, that I was still that age. And in fact, in that moment I realized, I’m not, I’m the age of my friend who’s on the other side of me and I kind of looked like I was trying too hard. So it was that kind of shutter lifting for a nano-second that convinced me that maybe I should find out what my real hair color was.

Dotsie: Right. Well, are you willing to share as you did in the book what you figured you had spent on coloring your hair since you were in your twenties?

Anne: Yeah, I mean, you know I started out in my twenties doing single process treatments, some with highlights and I figured by the time I had stopped I was going about every three and a half weeks, and by the time you add in cut and color, I calculated a total, shocking, horrifying, numbing total of 65,000 dollars. At the time I started the research, I sent out a national survey and I asked women, probed men and women a lot about different aspects of aging that concerned them. And once you got past the fear of health and taking care of aging parents or something, looks and maintenance were part of it, and I discovered that women who made 25,000 to 50,000 a year on average spent only 10.00 less a month than women who made 150,000 dollars plus. So that hair color for me, as for a lot of women I discovered in the survey, was this kind of non-negotiable expense. Women were prepared to forego lots of other, not even necessarily luxuries, in order to maintain their hair color.

Dotsie: Right and you know it’s interesting because—this whole topic interest me because I’ve always been curious about our generation and how we went from being the hippies with the natural look to now doing everything we can to, I guess, still look like that. But to me, we’re no longer those natural people.

Anne: I think you raise a really great point, Dotsie. I think in the sixties, there’s two pieces of the kind of background that relate to this. I think in the sixties the “forever young” part was also connected with the hanging out, be natural, kind of bra-burning part of us, and what I think maybe happened is we lost a little bit of touch with that all natural part and locked on to the “forever young” piece and didn’t look back. Simultaneously, in the 1950s, only about 7% of women in America dyed their hair. Today it’s well over 65% of all women nationwide dye their hair. I did a piece for *Time Magazine* in August and I surveyed another huge sloth of women across the country for that piece, and I was specifically in that

piece trying to find out well is it in urban areas or is there different kinds of landscapes that that number of women dye their hair. And the fact of the matter is, it is nationwide, Camden, Maine to Tucson, Arizona, urban, suburban, rural, women are dyeing their hair. And that happened when in the 50s when women started going to work in significant numbers. So I think on some level conceivably what also happened is when women started going out of the house, it's like they could create a new identity for themselves easily in the privacy of their home with home hair color like Clairol. And so going to work also became inextricably linked with having one's hair dyed. It was a sort of professional affect that was adopted. So you've got these two things, I think, the kind of going to work, dyeing your hair, and then "forever young," and those all got mingled together to mean well you've got to dye your hair because grayer means you're old.

Dotsie: Right and you know it's interesting because something I've noticed too is that it's not just people in their twenties. There are kids dyeing their hair in like middle school and high school.

Anne: Well yeah, I write in my book that my own daughter went through a phase where she was dyeing her hair kind of with streaks of pinks and blues and stuff. To my mind it was like, "Fine, dye your hair, it's not tattoos, it's not piercing," it's about identity exploration and I think there is a difference on some level in terms of trying on personas as you're sort of growing up versus sort of a self delusional sense of what you might—what age you might be.

Dotsie: So in that regard, we're the ones that are delusional, not the teen.

Anne: No, I think—it's a nuance and I don't mean to be judgmental about it. I did it a long time myself and it wasn't until I began the process of not that I realized how central to my sense of youthfulness my hair color had been that I began to kind of become aware of it.

Dotsie: Right, well what about the process because that is what I think a lot of people are afraid of; maybe they don't mind being gray, but how do I get gray, how long does it take and maybe you can tell us a little bit about your bad hair year that you referred to in the book.

Anne: I had had a couple of short hair cuts in my life and those had not worked really well for me. So I didn't think I looked particularly good in very short hair so I wasn't prepared to kind of, you know, cut my hair off, and have it grow out, and have a sort of quick transition, as it were. I tried to do it keeping my hair kind of a little below my shoulder length. I went to my colorist and I said, "Okay, I've made this decision; can you help me do this?" And she added some kind of lighter highlights and then also, some toner to my hair as I went through it. And I did that a couple of times over the course of about six months and that successfully helped me with the kind of skunk strip effect which I was not brave enough at all to go boldly forth with that look. And eventually, I got to the place where I

would—you know those kind of tortoise shell looking caps, that's sort of the bad hair part. I had that effect going on a little bit. Which wasn't hideous or anything, but it was kind of funky, it wasn't that kind of streamlined, uniformed thing I had had going on for so long with my hair dye. But I found in hindsight because it wasn't this overnight thing, it allowed me to sit with various kinds of different kinds of emotions as I worked thru it. It was a real, kind of journey of self discovery on some level. It sounds so simplistic and it's like, "Oh girl, get a life, come on, couldn't you have thought about yourself before?" but I would ask anybody who has done it to tell me if they've had a similar experience as mine because a lot of the women who have written to me have talked to me about similar things. It took me eighteen months, I'd say, all in, until it was all out, but only about four of those months were the kind of truly painful, tortoise shell cap kind of look.

Dotsie: Oh gosh. I recall that you had a friend that was going on this journey with you and then she bowed out. Is that correct?

Anne: Well, I had a couple of friends who said, you know—yes, in fact one very good friend who was like, "Oh yes, I'm going to do this." She was a 65-year old grandmother and told her husband and children her decision to do this and they said, "no, no, no, you can't do it," and then she stopped. And I think the four pressures, or the four reasons women talk about a lot for why they dye their hair or that first one I talked about, you know, not feeling like you see the self you feel you are inside reflective back in the mirror, or when you look in the mirror. One of the second high ones was mothers. I think on some level for a lot of women's mothers to have a daughter old enough to have gray hair with aroused complicated emotions in them and they didn't want their daughters to have gray hair.

Dotsie: Oh my gracious. I thought you said "lovers," not "mothers." So you said, "Mothers?"

Anne: Mothers.

Dotsie: So they didn't have gray hair because their mother didn't want them to have gray hair? Wow!

Anne: Yes, lots and lots of women talked about their mother's would say, "Why are you looking so drab? Why are you letting yourself go? Come on honey, fix yourself up!" But I think the reflection of themselves back is like too scary on some level. Men were a third; that they didn't think they would be attractive to men if they didn't do it. And then a fourth, powerful reason was that they were concerned about job promotions, getting new jobs, getting raises, all the things that sort of went along with maintaining professional viability and opportunity.

Dotsie: Right and we're going to talk about that in a little bit; what its like in the dating scene, what its like trying to get a job with gray hair, etc. But what made you really want to write the book about your experience because you know, when you think about it, you think—when I heard about it I was like, “A whole book on going gray?”

Anne: Same thing. Could it be more like paint drying?

Dotsie: But no, no, the book is great, and so when I read the subtitle and I had gone back and read your article from More magazine, etc, and actually get together with a group of women once a month; we've all been friends for the most part since the first grade. This article came up ages ago so anyway, I had been following this story and was happy to hear about the book. But when you think about it, you think, oh my gosh what really can you say? But there is a ton to say. But what made you want to write the book?

Anne: What made me want to write the book was actually the follow up that happened after the More magazine piece got published. They got more reader response to that piece than any single piece they had published in the magazines 10-year history.

Dotsie: That's amazing.

Anne: I was staggered by that. The publishers were staggered by that, women started their own kind of self-help “going gray” group within the More Web site and I thought, “Holy Mackerel!” This is obviously something that a lot of women are wrestling with. So that is what kind of triggered me the idea of maybe there's more to this than meets the eye and then I thought well yes, it's about hair but I think hair was simply my entry point into thinking about the kind of more macro issues of what it means to be getting older in our culture. So those two things together kind of motivated me to think, “Well maybe this is an interesting way to talk about what's going on.”

Dotsie: Yeah, because one of the things that you say, and this is a quote, “We all get caught up in wanting to perpetuate the fantasy that none of us is aging. “ And that's pretty typical of a lot of boomers and one thing I always say is that you can't put boomer women in a box because there are many people who have had gray hair and never dyed their hair. So you know you can't make those generalizations but for the most part, you know, when you read about the plastic surgeries...we had a plastic surgeon on the call this month and you know the majority of his patients were boomer women. And so we do get caught up that; I'm sure you can share a little bit about that and what you learned about the media, etc. Do you want to talk about that now?

Anne: Well sure. What I think is kind of amazing is that you know the advertising language that is used today is no different than it was used in the 1950s. The

Clairol language is still, you know, feeling dreary; feeling like your life is kind of not what you want it to be? Well dye your hair and it will all be fine. And they show these, always very young women, very attractive women, you know, happy with their perfect children and you know, glowing husbands. I think it's really astonishing. In the Clairol advertising now that is running in a lot of magazines, it's about again, embracing your authentic self. I see those Botox ads in magazines, "express yourself." And I think what are they talking about? Ah, you're freezing your face! You know? As I talk about, I tried Botox three times in my life and I think it makes me feel vulnerable in a way to talk about how I was worried about presenting an aging self like that, you know, it's an insecurity on my part and I think a lot of us wrestle with that. Its because every single image of every single person we ever see has been Botoxed. This was written about like crazy. When Katy Couric got her anchor position, you know, they shaved twenty pounds off her press release. I mean this woman who is supposed to be the new voice of honesty and truth-telling. They felt it was important she look slimmer. The cameras in studios now actually have the technology built into them to photo-shop, to kind of soften the features of skin tone while not doing anything else to other colors of us. So if you're looking at somebody on the *Letterman Show* or *Leno* or the *Today Show*, their skin tones have automatically been adjusted by the camera to not look wrinkled.

Dotsie: In addition to all the makeup and all the procedures.

Anne: In addition to all the makeup and everything else. So here we are at home, you know, living our normal lives, frantically trying to get dinner on the table and the trash out the door and our kids dressed, while everybody is chemically and technologically enhanced. It's not helping us.

Dotsie: Right, right...and is looking younger really a valuable asset? And that's something that I think we have to consider and something that I know, like even—you know you talk about finding the balance between attractiveness and authenticity and I love that because I know myself—I'm getting dressed to go out and I'm like, oh gosh not these pants, not this shirt, yes this shirt and then okay, well these earrings, that necklace. You know what? Do I really care? I really don't care that much so why do I put myself thru that?

Anne: I think we make assumptions that are not necessarily true. That's one of the things I tried to test in the book; whether the assumption that men would not find us attractive if we had gray hair. I think what it boils down to a lot of the time is most people, certainly most people do not give us the same amount of attention we give ourselves, and I think everybody is far more self critical than anybody else is really of them. But the way I first started to test the attractiveness function was I thought, if I went on www.match.com that would be the easiest way to test whether hair color alone created any different kind of response to me from men.

Dotsie: Yes, and this I thought was really interesting. Tell the audience what you found.

Anne: I went on to—in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles, stating that I was 50, everything else about myself, you know, being appropriate to a 50-year old woman and I first went on with my hair photo-shopped back to the brown color I had been dying it. And then three months later, with the exact same photograph, not the kind of before and after thing on the book, but with the exact same photograph of my hair with it's now natural gray color, I went back on. And three times as many men in every single market including Los Angeles were interested in going out with me, more interested in going out with me with my hair gray than they had been with my hair brown.

Dotsie: Isn't that wild? I just thought it was wild.

Anne: It was the precise opposite of what I had expected would be the case. Based on everything that I think we've been preconditioned to believe. And when I was on *Good Morning America*, they repeated the experiment with a 61-year old widow in Florida and she had the exact same result, too. So, it wasn't simply my luck of the draw or whatever timing kind of thing. And what I took away from that experiment was I think to the degree that one can be honest as much as one can in one's communications with other people, they will respond favorably to that. And I think maybe the guys, and they were younger; they were like 35-year old guys who were like, you know, "winking" me and you know I feel like maybe they thought I would be more—less judgmental of them if I was being honest about this thing, it's such an anomaly in our culture. I don't know; but I then thought well okay it's one thing to do this in cyberland maybe, you know—could I go out in public and see what it was like?

Dotsie: Yeah, you've got to tell us about this because first of all, what the listeners have to know is that you are happily married to what sounds like a really delightful man from everything I read in the book.

Anne: For thirty years!

Dotsie: Thirty years and you have two children and he allowed you to do these experiments for your book. But let me, if I could, just quote your husband because I think it gives you an idea of; gives everybody an idea of the kind of guy you are married to. "I think my husband said one day not long ago very unabashedly, that's it like the difference in rebuilding versus upkeep and maintenance. Shaving legs or depilating or wearing makeup is maintenance like repointing the bricks. And I guess you could argue that hair color is in that latter category, too. But to me, it's different because the color of one's hair is such a profoundly noticeable every present, and primary expression of who one is. So the idea underlying artificial hair color is that gray on a woman, but not a man, mostly, not yet, is a flaw, a blemish, an embarrassment to be hidden and a

problem to be fixed. To me, coloring gray hair is like painting over the brick, or stone, or cedar shingles on a nice old house. It's not necessarily awful, but part of the beautiful essence of the real thing is how it looks as it ages. It's why we love old cities like Paris and Rome." And I thought, "Oh, he gets it!" You know? He gets it! So that's just to give everybody a little idea of where your husband is coming from. So tells us about heading into the bars in New York City.

Anne: Well I should probably also say that he also lived with me through my hair being a bittersweet color, and then when I turned 40, dying it ebony black; you know walking in the door—he put up with a lot of funkadelic hair over the years so I'm kind of surprised he likes my natural hair color this way. I did at the dinner table say to the family, "So is it cool with you guys if I go out bar hopping and see if guys are interested in talking to me with my gray hair?" And they said, "Yeah, okay Mom, kind of weird, but okay." And I went out with the mother of one of my daughter's friends and one of my husbands and my good friends so I was not out there sort of autopilot. I hadn't been out to bars really since the Carter administration so I was terrified and sort of out to my depth and I wasn't sure what to expect. I thought if I went out with a guy, he could actually offer me a point of view about the things he was seeing as I was doing it. And if I went out with my girlfriend, same kind of idea could happen. So we went out—I live in Brooklyn so we went into Manhattan and I went to as many kinds of venues as I could go to. I wanted to try kind of places where business men might hang out and places where you know, young guys might hang out and where you know, normal working guys would hang out. It was during the NCAA Basketball finals so I knew in fact it would probably be a night where a lot of heterosexual guys would go out and maybe boost my odds of encountering people willing to talk to women. What I kind of found was that fundamentally—you know I met several terrific guys along the way and I think the young ones that I met and talked with who I sort of flirted with up to a point and then would sort of come clean and talk about how I was actually doing research and that I am married and wasn't interested in getting to know them, that they appreciate the kind of sense of truthfulness. You know, here I am, take it or leave it, like me as you can, but if I showed any interest in what they were talking about, it didn't matter. I think we have done sort of a disservice to men on some levels by not trusting that they're smart enough to see thru all the stuff to who we are as individuals. And that's really what I came away—it was really a life affirming night for me to go out and do these. Young guys who were age inappropriate weren't interested in me. Well like duh? The guys that were sort of age appropriateish, my hair color didn't seem to make any difference that I could tell from when I had gone out with my dyed hair in my early dating years. So that was really—that was great. And I think both those experiences underscored for me in a sense that our assumptions that we will be more attractive with dyed hair are not accurate. You know I was just at a party the other night for a friend who was turning 50 and there was like this 35-year old bartender and my husband and I were both there getting a glass of wine and the guy says, "I love your hair!" And you know nobody ever said that to me the entire years that I dyed my hair.

Dotsie: How about that! Isn't that wild? You must have a really great cut.

Anne: Well that's my hair on the cover of the book but they—when the photographer came they sent a stylist. I have a good cut now because I got it reshaped again when I started letting the gray grow out but it's nothing fabulous. I do all the styling myself. I think it's just a real response to—you know, it's unusual.

Dotsie: Well I think, yeah, in New York City—and maybe we can talk about that in a next because you did travel to different parts of the country to see can I get away with it here, can I get away with it there? Do you want to talk about that a little bit? And then also about the work place.

Anne: What I find—I'm originally from Kansas City and my sister lives in Cleveland. None of my friends there don't dye their hair. Everybody I know dyes their hair with the exception of three or four friends; one who swims all the time and it would sort of, you know, look Chartuse and stuff. The majority of women, Chicago, Louisville, Houston, Dallas, Portland Maine, and Portland Oregon, all dye their hair. I did not find the saturation point particularly different in New York City than I did anywhere else.

Dotsie: I'm sorry, you did say that earlier, but you did find what, like in LA?

Anne: Well, in LA—in the belly of the beast. Nobody had gray hair.

Dotsie: I recall something like that.

Anne: Jamie Lee Curtis I think, and one therapist who has written me since the book came out and sent me her photograph were the two people. I'm sure there are others I'm exaggerating making a point but it's slim pickings in Los Angeles.

Dotsie: Now what about trying to get a job? I know you also experimented with that.

Anne: Yes, I did. I went back to corporate recruiters positioning myself as someone who wanted to get back in the workforce and that was deeply sobering. Number one, regardless of my hair color, they basically said at 50 I was kind of unemployable; that the best I could hope for would be to consult with somebody sometime and, you know, kind of scary stuff. And then none of the corporate recruiters that I talked to, and the majority of whom were female, of course they dyed their hair, none of them had a single female client looking for a job candidate who had gray hair nor a single job candidate who had gray hair who applied for the job. One of the recruiters mentioned very specifically a woman who was more qualified for a position, and this was a few years back, who had gray hair; she was more qualified for the position and she didn't ultimately get the

job than another—a man got it. When she went back to the client saying you know, I'm surprised by this, why didn't she get the job? The man said, "Well, she just didn't fit the culture." And by that, the recruiter said she believed it was his way of saying she looked old. I do believe we live in a really ageist culture, and I think as women, we should be outraged by that, boomer women outraged by that, regardless of hair color. Statistically in 1900 we lived to be an average age of 47. Now we women are going to live to an average age of 80. We're going to be working a whole lot longer than our 65 retirement ages and we should want all of us to have the most diversity we possibly can to ensure that all of us can continue to earn the money we're going to need to live. I did a lot of research. You can count on one hand women in high profile positions in our country who have naturally gray hair. Of course Kathleen Sebelius last night is one of them. But of the sixteen female senators we have, not a single one has gray hair, and they range in age from 46 to 74. Obviously a lot of their male counterparts view it as an asset. In the entertainment industry they are all English women, you know, Vanessa Redgrave or Helen Mirren, or Judy Dench. There's Tony Morrison, Emily Lou Harrison, Jane Alexander and then you're kind of done. I feel like it's a lot like you know when Michael Jordan, Bruce Willis and a bunch of sexy, high visibility men started making baldness cool, they gave permission to all bald men across the country and the world to, you know, wave their bald heads and say, we're virile, we're masculine, we're cool and it became almost a fashion statement, an asset. And I feel like we need—if more women—if Hillary Clinton had never dyed her hair would people think she—would the issues that surround her—is she authentic or not authentic, be the same...I don't know. But you know, if Carly Farranteno, Susan Sarandon, had their gray hair, would that make it less of a professional liability. I think it might.

Dotsie: Yeah, and that's really sad and very disheartening to me because people have to take that into consideration because women are so independent and they need to continue working; you get laid off at midlife and what do you do?

Anne: It's a real issue. If I were a single mom in my late 40's looking at all the stuff going down, I would not risk not having my hair dyed in this current economic climate. It would be a scary thing. So I think until more high profile women step out and say, you know what, this is bunk. We should be valued, evaluated on our skill sets, then I think we got some—its tough.

Dotsie: Right, well...let's see, we've covered a lot of what we had hoped to cover is there anything particular that—I guess that last point, I guess that was what surprised you the most, is that right?

Anne: Well the fact that guys don't care and it really does affect your work.

Dotsie: Okay, so really they kind of fight with each other.

Anne: It was the opposite of what I thought I would find out.

Dotsie: Right, how about that? That's really cool. What about any tips; because we're getting close to asking questions. Do you have any tips for anybody?

Anne: The main tips I would offer would be—you know I hadn't realized how much—it was a little bit like for me, you know if you paint the room in your house suddenly your sofa looks a little dingy or tatty and you need to reupholster it. I hadn't realized how little I had done to evolve into my kind of changing age. I hadn't bought clothes in a while and I hadn't changed my color palette or my makeup and I realized—one of the things I went to an image consultant, principally to talk to them about reentering the workforce, but one of them was really helpful to me in helping me to understand that my different hair color meant that different clothing would make me look my best. I use to wear olives and browns and russets and kind of stuff like that with my brown hair. She made me realize that kind of navy's and different kinds of grays would make my skin tone livelier than those colors had done. And that maybe pink lipstick and some things like that would help brightened me up in a way, you know, my hair—it all kind of worked as a complete package. So I think for women thinking about maybe making a change, think about the colors you wear, think about the kind of makeup you do or don't wear, and think about your hair cut because that might need to change too. Like getting four inches cut off my hair was helpful to me in terms of kind of making me feel kind of lighter and kind of livelier.

Dotsie: Right and those are good points. Actually last week we had the founders of www.fashionfitformula.com on the call and it was just interesting to hear the tips that they had that can help you change your appearance very easily by just tucking in the collar of blouses and elongating your neck or, you know, shortening your skirt instead of wearing it at mid-calf; whether or not your shape should have a belt; so there are little things that we can do.

Anne: That is exactly right.

Dotsie: Well let's see. Anything else you want to add before we open up for questions? Actually I do have a question for you because when I was reading your book just—I always think about the youth and what messages we're sending the youth and everything. And I raised my kids, and my husband and I always told them that you know, it's really what's on the inside that counts. You know, let's not get too carried away with these designer labels. I'm sure we've all been thru that with our children, and then some of what I read in your book makes me think oh my gosh am I feeding these kids a lie, you know. How important is authenticity? And especially like in a work place. There's just got to be balance or something.

Anne: There does. I actually felt like, I mean, my kids are now 18 and 19, both daughters. The pressure they face as young women to live up to these kinds of

ideals I was talking about earlier, I find really, you know, hard to kind of manage and I think we've all read all the different studies and things about girls self esteem plummeting in high school and all these things and so actually, I do feel that the more I can kind of communicate to them that they're ok just the way they are by showing them that I think I'm okay just the way I am, is only good. So yes, I think the message we're communicating to the youth is important and I'm stunned at how many women in their thirty's have written to me saying thank you, I had no idea that this was even an option, you know? Whenever I see a gray-haired woman on the street I think, you know, she looks great and thank you, thank you. I never expected women that young to be interested in a book called "Going Gray."

Dotsie: Great...that's wonderful, that's wonderful and actually that's one of the reasons that I really like Boomer Women Speak and the NABBW because while it's a lot about us, we're also educating our mothers, our parents generation as to why we are who we are, and then we're also educating the younger generation by saying look what we've done, look what we've learned, and listen to our wisdom because we can help you out here.

Anne: Yeah, that's exactly right.

Dotsie: Okay, so before we do questions, I'm just going to read one more thing from the book just to give the listeners an idea of how you kind of sum things up a little bit in the end.

"I want to be clear. I'm not a born-again zealot proselytizing for a life of back to nature purity and austerity. I remain as least as vain as the next person. I intend to continue spending large sums to have my hair cut and styled. Do I want to look as attractive as I can on my sixtieth birthday? You bet. This is complicated and I don't propose that these are one-size-fits-all answers or absolute litmus test about living authentically. Nor do I think the choices are all or nothing. Things happen. How we choose to grow older is deeply, it is idiosyncratic, it is a matter of individual taste and circumstance depending on one's age, romantic status, professional situation, class, race, ethnicity, geography, all of it."

And I think that's so true. That's what makes us all individual. So anyway, let's see if anybody has any questions for you. I hope someone does. Sometimes people are shy. Does anybody have a question? Go ahead.

Caller 1: Hi, can you hear me? Good. A delightful call, I've been toying with this issue. My name is Pat Burns and I've been toying with this issue about going gray or not going gray. I missed the very first part of the call so I apologize if it's a repeat; I'll try to listen to a replay line; was it a process where you just stopped coloring your hair?

Anne: I did. But what I did to put it simply is, I worked with my colorist to put some light highlights into it and then put a toner over it. I did it like two or three times over the course of like six months because it was too scary to me to have like the skunk thing going on.

Caller 1: Well mine is like—as a matter of fact, I always say like oh I’m getting my halo removed because it’s such a ring around my whole head. And they always kind of giggle. My grandkids always giggle when I say that. Mine isn’t just all over. I’d look like I’m going bald is what I’m worried about.

Anne: No, I doubt it. Do you go to a salon?

Caller 1: Oh yes.

Anne: Well then I would talk to your colorist and say look I’ve made this choice and you know, help me. I’ve actually had a lot of women write me who’ve made the decision to do that. Then they go to the salon and they say, “No, no, no, you can’t do that. You’d look dreadful!” And they’ve quit going to that salon and found somebody who will help them and then they’re kind of happy about it. So I hope you’re in a place where they going to be sweet. I love my colorist. Every time I go to get my hair cut she’s there and we have a great time, you know. She was really very helpful to me.

Caller 1: Okay, thank you.

Dotsie: Thanks Pat and I have a question for you because I don’t know; I’m thinking maybe there’s an easier way to do it. This is a funny story. My son is Asian, he’s adopted from Korea. And when he was on a baseball team in his teens, if they won a game or they got into some tournament or whatever it was, they were all dying their hair blonde. So he went from his dark Asian hair to, and he went and a friend of mine bleached the heck out of his hair, and then he had to go back to school and the school he went to you had to have your natural color hair. So instead of it just growing out, he went and had it dyed, you know, pretty much his natural color. And then we never knew really when it had all grew out, do you know what I’m saying?

Anne: Yes, I naively thought I could just go in and say could you just pull all this color out and I’d walk out with this beautiful silver-colored hair. Each time you dye your hair with a single processor, even a highlight, each shaft of your hair absorbs the color a different way. So if you could think about the way a porcupine quill looks, if you pulled the color out, every inch would have a different saturation of the color in it and you couldn’t pull it all out at once; you would end up looking like a hyena at best. Because I kept saying to my colorist, “Come on, how come you can’t do this?” Because your son’s natural hair color is dark when it was bleached, then the bleached hair could absorb the dark hair.

Dotsie: Gotcha...right, right.

Anne: And then as the dye grew out, his natural color matched the dye. So, I'm sorry to say you can't go there.

Dotsie: Okay, but I'm thinking what if you had your hair dyed gray or something?

Anne: Yes, you can't do it. You've still got dye. You cannot go there. There are people who get lowlights put in their hair and I have not done it. And I don't know why in particular they do that; maybe they want a different sort of texture to their hair. But the only easy way you can do it that makes it quicker is to get yourself a kind of gumein, Judy Drench haircut and off you go.

Dotsie: Right, right. Okay, anybody else on the call have a question. Go ahead.

Caller 2: I just have a comment. I'm a speaker and a trainer and I let my hair go just natural three ago and actually was putting a very dark color in my dark brown hair. And I've actually had more compliments in the last three years on my hair than I ever have in my entire life. And it's very soft. I thought my gray and white hair would be kind of brittle, but it's very soft.

Anne: So is mine. Same thing. Same results exactly.

Dotsie: Isn't that interesting?

Caller 2: I have long, gray hair.

Anne: I'm actually growing mine out.

Caller 2: I had it shaped the other day and I have a very curly and it looks like I have a perm but I don't. Its my natural curl and my hair has never been more natural since I just let it go.

Anne: That's fantastic.

Dotsie: That's great and do you mind telling us who you are?

Caller 2: I'm Pat McGill.

Dotsie: Oh, hi Pat, how are you? Thanks for being on the call. Okay, anybody else have a question or a comment for Anne?

Caller 3: I wanted to say I love the book. It was fantastic. And the excerpt in More magazine, I think it was, was what interested me. It was so good. I work in entertainment so when you were talking about entertainers, you were so right,

absolutely right. I do know Crystal Gail and I know a few people. I sing jazz and blues with Grammy-winning musicians and I'm a dancer. So I know for example Bonnie Rae has a streak that she needs out. There's a few that are so I got crazy and wanted to do it, too. Exactly as you said, entertainers will do that. I wanted to let mine out and that is exactly what I was told you're not old enough to have gray hair. So I tried a weave to weave in my natural color and let the rest gray out, but it was just too dull, they said, for the stage. So the only thing I can do right now is to fight it by bleaching some of my hair and doing like a rinse over that.

Anne: Alright, that makes sense to me.

Caller 3: You're so right, though. If we can have entertainers like these English actresses that are wearing their gray hair and having love scenes, Diane Keaton is managing it, you're right, we need some women to stand up and go ahead and go gray.

Anne: Yes, hairdressers have told me that after *The Devil Wears Prada* came out, that tons of women came in and said, "I want that Miranda Priestly 'do' that Meryl Streep is wearing." She wore a wig, actually.

Dotsie: It will take our generation to do it.

Anne: I agree.

Dotsie: Okay, we have time for maybe one more question or comment. Anybody else have anything to say or ask? Okay, it sounds like maybe we've come to an end.

Anne: This was fantastic, I really enjoyed it.

Dotsie: Oh good! And you know what, tell us your Web site.

Anne: Oh its my name. It's www.annekreamer.com and lots of women have been sending me before and after pictures so if any of you on the call want to do that, please do. If you've never colored your hair, send those. We've got a wall of women waving the flag.

Dotsie: And you're before and after pictures are also on that site if no one's seen that yet.

Anne: Yes.

Dotsie: And also the picture on the site of when you first saw yourself as, you know, someone who—

Anne: Yes, and a little tiny survey you can take called the *Fountain of Youth* survey.

Dotsie: Oh fun! We'll have to swap links so we can get some people filling that out for you.

Anne: Great.

Dotsie: Anything else? Anything new coming down the pike for you?

Anne: Well, I'm actually at work on my next book also dealing with issues that will be near and dear to women's heart, I hope.

Dotsie: Oh good. Well if you need to do any surveys or anything, be in touch with me.

Anne: Oh good, what a good idea.

Dotsie: Yes, we've had—I'm not sure if you are familiar with Mary Brown and Carol Orsborn but they wrote a book called *BOOM* and it's about marketing to baby boomer women and they did a survey on our site when they were writing the book, and other people have. So it's a good way to kind of—another avenue.

Anne: Thank you. That is an excellent idea.

Dotsie: Yes, Anne, its been a lot of fun, and keep up the good writing and I look forward to your next book.

Anne: Thank you guys and I appreciate everybody who phoned in. Thank you so much.

Dotsie: Okay you're welcome and thanks for being on the call. Good night.