



The rawest moment in any of the interviews for this book occurred with **Barbara Hartman**, when we dared to go into the territory where few women will publicly venture.

"The one thing I don't spend enough time on is me. The working out and the being overweight..." she said.

There it was. The topic.

Her weight. Then my weight. And then we talked about self-esteem.

Self-esteem is the one thing that dogs virtually every one of us the minute we wake

up as we start flogging ourselves for our personal flaws. It might be your wrinkles, it might be the shape of your nose or the size of your breasts or, well, it is probably your weight. That's the most common thing. But we all seem to have something that makes us be mean to ourselves.

"It is hard to talk about, because in a life of accomplishments, it is a considerable failure," Hartman said. "The way I get through thinking about it day to day is that, someday, it will be time for me. I am so proud of my life as a wife, and equally—if not more proud of—my life as a mother. I am proud of a fantastic career. But this is the one area I continued not to fix. No matter how much people say that all you have to do is put yourself first, get up a half-hour earlier and work out, it doesn't matter. You have to do it, and I haven't done it."

She told me about her three best friends—women she has known since she was twelve—and all three are thin and gorgeous. "I have real self-esteem issues when we take our infrequent girls' weekends because I see how other people relate to them, versus me. My career is, by far, the most accomplished. My family is a great family. Yet I feel less than them because of how I look."

She deals with it by looking at the total picture, which is amazing. But this one nagging issue—weight—continues to hold her back. "Sometimes it makes me feel very low. I know it can be done, but I haven't chosen to do it."

Her time to focus on herself is coming. She's fifty-four, she can consider retirement at fifty-five and she knows she's on the verge of something huge. It goes back to one of her mottoes: You only have one life. Live it now.

49 Live Your Life (You Only Get One) Barbara S. Hartman

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Something happened to me at work on January 9, 1997, and it completely changed me. I was a human resources associate director with our company and we were doing a panel interview. That was the last interview before the decision was made for someone to join the company. A woman named Arati Sharangpani was the interviewee. I don't know what happened. I fell in love with her. I'd read her file and thought she might be one of those magnificent people you don't come across every day. On her application, she'd written a lot of examples of how she impacted students at the University of Michigan. I felt she would be a person I would want to know. She was captivating. Not only did I offer her a job with P&G, but I promised her she could come to Chicago, which was what she wanted. But, at P&G, we don't promise people locations when we offer jobs. I was breaking rules left and right.

She accepted the job on the spot and proceeded to hug me, which also doesn't happen in interviews. I told her I would watch over her career.

She left the interview and took a cab to the Cincinnati airport.

She got on a plane back to Michigan.

The plane went down.

She died along with everyone else on that plane.

I didn't find out until late that night that she'd been on that flight. My grieving started with guilt. Maybe, if I hadn't had such a long interview with her and asked her so much, maybe she would have gotten an earlier flight. Or maybe if I'd talked longer, she'd have taken a later flight.

Our CEO called me and said Arati's parents wanted to talk to me. I thought they were going to blame me. I was so afraid to call, but when I did, I found out she'd called her parents after the interview. She'd told them that she'd just had the best day of her life.

Her parents wanted to thank me. Her life's goal was to work for Procter & Gamble, and she reached her goal on her last day.

They asked me to give the eulogy at her funeral, which I thought was strange. This was someone I'd known for two hours. But the Hindu religion believes in reincarnation. It was important that I give the eulogy because I'd had the last meaningful conversation with her. They also asked me to speak at the memorial service at the University of Michigan—where six hundred people had shown up. Arati was that spectacular.

It is an important story for me because none of us knows what will happen next.

We just don't.

We take everything so seriously, but we shouldn't. I used to have a boss who said, "Let's remember: We sell toilet paper." He was one of the great people in my life.

I was an education major in college. I was going to work for P&G for one year because they offered me the job. I thought they were crazy. I had no interest in selling—or so I thought. My interest was in teaching, in helping special-education children. But P&G paid twice what they paid special-education teachers, so I was going to do it for one year.

I forgot to quit.

I am now at a point in my career where I have nothing to lose. I have had a fabulous career here and have loved just about every minute of it. I want to spend the rest of my time making sure that other people—particularly women—can say the same thing when they have put in their thirty-two years. So, I say exactly what I think—all the time. There are benefits to being fifty-four. That has to be the safest birthday I have had because I can consider retirement at fifty-five.

I made a major career decision to turn down a job in 1984, and that cost me ten years of vertical growth. It was a job I'd wanted. No woman had ever had it. It was to be associate director for developing businesses. Women hadn't achieved that level yet. I turned it down because it required me to move to Cincinnati. Six weeks before I got that offer, I'd met my husband. During the first eight years of my career, I told the company, "Move me anywhere. I am single. I am very location-flexible." I kept getting promotions in Chicago. And then I met my husband.

One of the sayings that guides me is, "You only have one life." At age thirty-one, I met this man who I knew was going to be my life partner. They were giving me the job I wanted, but I said, "I have met this man who I know I am going to marry." They said, "How long have you known him?" I said, "Six weeks." They said, "Are you crazy?" I said, "Perhaps." But you only have one life. That part of my life was about to be fulfilled. I had to say, "I can't take that job right now. I may be wrong. I doubt it." So I turned it down and someone else got the job, and I was basically taken off the promotion list.

Not as punishment, but because you didn't get two chances back then.

I did marry my husband two years later. So, the way I thought about my career at that time was, get the best result that anyone at that level could ever get, and become so good at what I did that, if something ever changed and I could get a better job at a higher level, they would pick me. I would get the results. I was going to be a role model.

I will tell you that I did look for other jobs, because I realized I had potential at a higher level. But I realized I was a good fit with the values and principles of Procter. And, I loved being a part of this company so much that I was willing to stay at my

level, have this fantastic husband and two great kids. But I did look. I was pretty open about it. I had nice opportunities. But it didn't all fit for me. The great thing was that things did change and I once again was given great roles with significant vertical career growth in P&G. The key was to achieve significant results in anticipation of change.

You get one life.

Another one of my sayings is, "Go beyond." No matter what I do, I want to feel I go beyond the norm, whether that is at work, at being a wife, or at being a mom. I don't always succeed. But I am always trying. ■