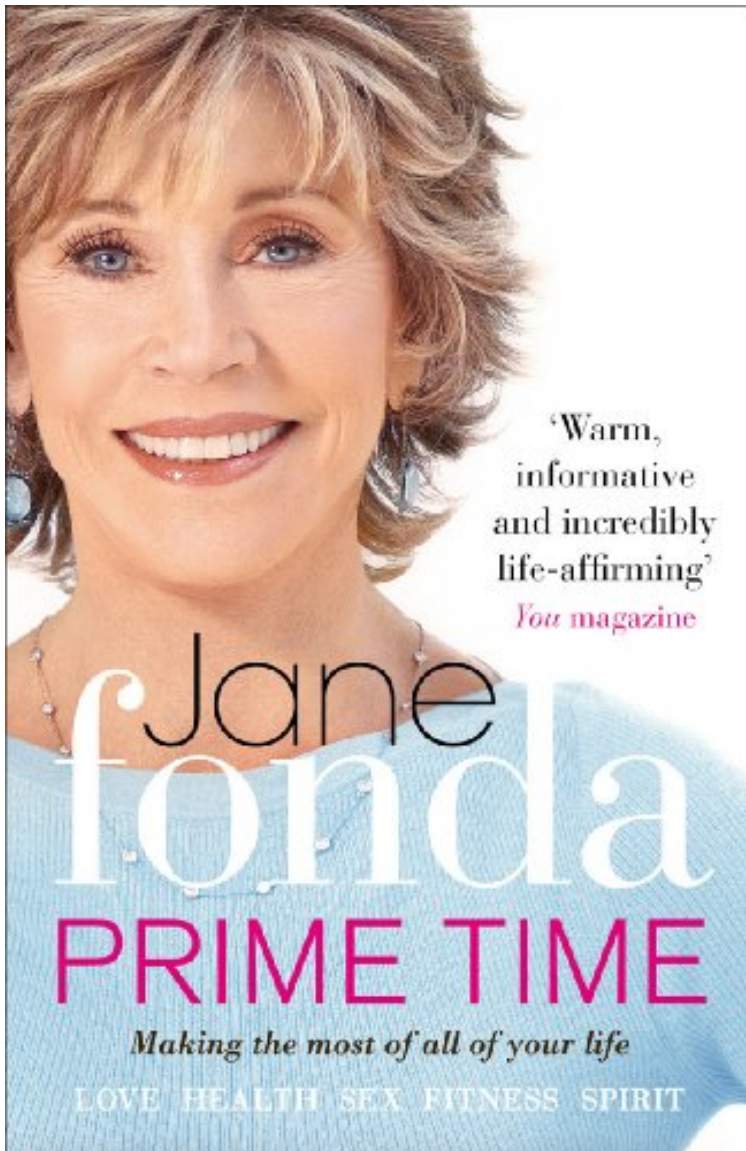


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Prime Time: Love, Health, Sex, Fitness, Friendship, Spirit; Making the Most of All of Your Life



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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurJane Fonda, no. 1 bestselling author, actress and fitness pioneer, is an icon for generations of women. Now you can learn her secrets to living life to the full with this intimate insight into her world. Combining stories from her own life and from the lives of others with new research, Jane Fonda explores how the critical years from 45 and 50, and especially from 60 and beyond, can be the time when

you truly become the energetic, loving, fulfilled person you were meant to be. Covering the 11 key ingredients for vital living, Fonda shows you how to enjoy a more insightful, healthy and fully integrated life - one that is profoundly in touch with yourself, your body, mind and spirit, and with your talents, friends and community. Covering health, fitness, sex, love, social growth, and self-understanding, Prime Time offers a vision for successful living and maturing, so you too can ensure that your forties and beyond are your own prime time.

Extrait PREFACE The Arch and the Staircase The past empowers the present, and the groping footsteps leading to this present mark the pathways to the future. Mary Catherine Bateson Several years ago, i was coming to the end of my sixties and facing my seventies, the second decade of what I thought of as the Third Act of my life Act III, which, as I see it, begins at age sixty. I was worried. Being in my sixties was one thing. Given good health, we can fudge our sixties. But seventynow, thats serious. In our grandparents time, people in their seventies were considered part of the old old . . . on their way out.

However, a revolution has occurred within the last century a longevity revolution. Studies show that, on average, thirty- four years have been added to human life expectancy, moving it from an average of forty- six years to eighty! This addition represents an entire second adult lifetime, and whether we choose to confront it or not, it changes everything, including what it means to be human. Adding a Room The social anthropologist (and a friend of mine) Mary Catherine Bateson has a metaphor for living with this longer life span in view. She writes in her recent book *Composing a Further Life: The Age of Active Wisdom*, We have not added decades to life expectancy by simply extending old age; instead, we have opened up a new space partway through the life course, a second and different kind of adulthood that precedes old age, and as a result every stage of life is undergoing change. Bateson uses the identifiable metaphor of what happens when a new room is added to your home. It isnt just the new room that is different; every other part of the house and how it is used is altered a bit by the addition of this room. In the house that is our life, things such as planning, marriage, love, finances, parenting, travel, education, physical fitness, work, retirementour very identities, even!all take on new meaning now that we can expect to be vital into our eighties and nineties . . . or longer. But our culture has not come to grips with the ways the longevity revolution has altered our lives. Institutionally, so much of how we do things is the same as it was early in the twentieth century, with our lives segregated into age- specific silos: During the first third we learn, during the second third we produce, and the last third we presumably spend on leisure. Consider, instead, how it would look if we tore down the silos and integrated the activities. For example, lets begin to think of learning and working as a lifelong challenge instead of something that ends when you retire. What if the wonderfully empowering feeling of being productive can be experienced by children early in life, and if they know from first grade that education will be an expected part of their entire lives? What if the second, traditionally productive silo is braided with leisure and education? And seniors, with twenty or more productive years left, can enjoy leisure time while remaining in the workforce in some form and attending to education if for no other reason than to challenge their minds? Envisioned this way, longevity becomes like a symphony with echoes of different times recurring with slight modifications, as in music, across the life arc. Except that we dont have the sheet music to this new symphony. We todays boomers and seniors are the pioneer generations, the ones who need to compose together a template for how to maximize the potential of this amazing gift of time, so as to become whole, fully realized people over the longer life arc. In attempting to chart a course for myself into my sixties and beyond, Ive found it helpful to view the symphony of my own life in three acts, or three major developmental stages: Act I, the first three decades; Act II, the middle three decades; and Act III, the final three decades (or however many more years one is granted). As I searched for ways to understand the new realities of aging, I discovered the arch and the staircase. The Arch and the Staircase Here you see two diagrams that I have had drawn, because they make visualizable two conceptions of human life that have come to mean a lot to me. One diagram, the arch, represents a biological concept, taking us from childhood to a middle peak of maturity, followed by a decline into infirmity. The other, a staircase, shows our potential for upward progression toward wisdom, spiritual growth, learning toward, in other words, consciousness and soul. The vision behind these diagrams was developed by Rudolf Arnheim, the late professor emeritus of the psychology of art at Harvard University, and for me they are clear metaphors for ways we can choose to view aging. Our youth- obsessed culture encourages us to focus on the archage as physical decline more than on the stairway age as potential for continued development and ascent. But it is the stairway that points to late lifes promise, even in the face of physical decline. Perhaps it should be a spiral staircase! Because the wisdom, balance, reflection, and compassion that this upward movement represents dont just come to us in one linear ascension; they circle around us, beckoning us to keep climbing,

to keep looking both back and ahead. Rehearsing the Future Throughout my life, whenever I was confronted by something I feared, I tried to make it my best friend, stare it in the face, and get to know its ins and outs. Eleanor Roosevelt once said, You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. I have found this to be true. This is how I discovered that knowledge about what lies ahead can empower me, help me conquer my fears, take the wind out of the sails of my anxiety. Know thine enemy! Remember Rumpelstiltskin, the evil dwarf in the Grimms fairy tale? He was destroyed once the millers daughter learned his name and called it out. When we name our fears, bring them out into the open, and examine them in the light, they weaken and wither. So, one of the ways I have tried to overcome my fears of aging involved rehearsing for it. In fact, I started doing this in Act II. I believe that this rehearsal for the future (along with doing a life review of the past) is part of why I have been able so far to live Act III with relative equanimity. Being with my father when he was in his late seventies and in decline due to heart problems was what began to shatter any childhood illusions I had of immortality. I was in my mid- forties, and it hit me that with him gone, I would be the oldest one left in the family and, before too long, next at the turnstile. I realized then that it was not so much the idea of death itself that frightened me as it was being faced with regrets, the what ifs and the if onlys when there is no time left to do anything about them. I didnt want to arrive at the end of the Third Act and discover too late all that I had not done. I began to feel the need to project myself into the future, to visualize who I wanted to be and what regrets I might have that I would need to address before I got too old. I wanted to understand as much as possible what cards age would deal me; what I could realistically expect of myself physically; how much of aging was negotiable; and what I needed to do to intervene on my own behalf with what appeared to be a downward slope. The birth of my two children had taught me the importance of knowledge and preparation. The first birth had been a terrifying, lonely experience; I went through it unprepared and unrehearsed, swept along passively in a sea of pain. The second birth was quite the opposite. My husband and I worked with a birth educator in the months leading up to my due date, so that I was able to visualize what would happen and know what to do. The physical ordeal was no less grueling, the process no faster, but the experience itself was transformed. With knowledge and rehearsal, I found it easier to ride atop the sequence of events rather than be totally submerged by the pain. I brought what I learned from childbirth to my experience facing late midlife. As I said, I was scared back then it is hard to let go of children, of the success that came with youth, of old identities when new ones arent yet clearly defined. I felt I could choose whether to be blindly propelled into later life, in denial with my eyes wide shut, or I could take charge and seek out what I needed to know in order to make informed decisions in the many changing areas of my life. Thats why, in 1984, at age forty- six, before I even had my first hot flash, I wrote *Women Coming of Age*, with Mignon McCarthy, about what women can expect, physically, as they age, and what parts of aging are negotiable. It was a way to force myself to confront and rehearse the future. I was shocked to discover how little research had been devoted to womens health. Most medical studies I found had been done on men. Im happy to say this has started to change. At forty- six, I began to envision the old woman I wished to be, and I described her in that book: I see an old woman walking briskly, out- of- doors, in every season. Shes feisty. Shes not afraid of being alone. Her face is lined and full of life. Theres a ruddy flush to her cheeks and a bright curious look in her eye because shes still learning. Her husband often walks with her. They laugh a lot. She likes to be with young people and shes a good listener. Her grandchildren love to tell her stories and to hear hers because shes got some really good ones that contain sweet, hidden lessons about life. She has a conscious set of values and the knack to make them compelling to her young friends. This is an example of rehearsing the future . . . good to do at any age! Im glad I wrote it down, because its fun for me to read my forty- six- year- old vision of my senior self, almost thirty years later, as a reality check to see how well Im doing. Some days, I actually think Im doing pretty well. Im still feisty, and my solitude (which I cherish) doesnt feel like loneliness. Humor has definitely come to the fore. Im no longer married, but I do walk together with my what to call the man I am with when Im seventy- two and unmarried? Boyfriend sounds too juvenile, dont you think? So then, what? Lover? That seems too in- your- face. I think Ill go with honey. Anyway, my honey and I walk together, we laugh a lot, and we try to swing- dance for fifteen or twenty minutes every night when we can. I feel I may have finally conquered my difficulties with intimacy. (Or maybe I just found a man who isnt scared of it!) Gerontologists such as Bernice Neugarten have learned from their studies of the aged that traumatic events widowhood, menopause, loss of a job, even imminent death are not experienced as traumas if they were anticipated and, in effect, rehearsed as part of the life cycle. Betty Friedan, in her book *The Fountain of Age*, wrote, The finding emerges that the difference

between knowing and planning, and not knowing what to expect (or denial of change because of false expectations) can be the crucial factor between moving on to new growth in the last third of life, or succumbing to stagnation, pathology, and despair. With the help of many friends of all ages, as well as gerontologists, sexologists, urologists, biologists, psychologists, experts in cognitive research and health care, and a physicist or two, I have written this book. Even though I was already in my own Act III, doing this has been a form of rehearsal for myself and for you, the reader. I wanted to be prepared and learn all I could. I wanted to be able to say to myself and to you, Lets make the most of the years that take us from midlife to the end, and heres how! I do not want to romanticize the process of aging. Obviously, there is no guarantee that this will be a time of growth and fruition. There are negatives to any stage of life, including potentially serious issues of mental and physical health. I cannot address all these things within the scope of this book. As we know, some of how life unfolds is a matter of luck. Some of it about one- third, actually is genetic and beyond our control. The good news is that this means that for a lot of it, maybe two- thirds of the life arc, we can do something about how well we do. This book is for those of us who, like me, believe that luck is opportunity meeting preparation; that with preparation and knowledge, with information and reflection, we can try to raise the odds of being lucky, and of making our last three decades our Third Acts the most peaceful, generous, loving, sensual, transcendent time of all; and that planning for it, especially during ones middle years, can help make this so. Wholeness Arnheims staircase made me realize how important it can be to see life as an interplay between ones beginning, middle, and end. I found out that if we understand more deeply what Act I and Act II are (or were) about, who we are (or were becoming) during those foundational years, what dreams are still to be realized and which regrets addressed, then we can see Act III as a coming to fruition, rather than simply a period of marking time, or the absence of youth. We can understand it not as the far side of the arch as the decline after the peak but as a stage of development in its own terms. We can experience it as part of the staircase with its own challenges and joys, pitfalls and rewards, a stage as evolving and as satisfying and different from midlife or youth as adolescence is from childhood. In 1996, Erik and Joan Erikson wrote, in *The Life Cycle Completed*, Lacking a culturally viable ideal of old age, our civilization does not really harbor a concept of the whole of life.⁴ The old ways of thinking about age, the fears of losing our youth and facing our own mortality, have kept us from seeing Act III as a vital, inte- grated part of our overall story, the potential- fi lled culmination of the fi rst two acts. This old thinking is even more tragic now, in light of the extension of the life span. It can rob us of wholeness, and it can rob society of what we each, in our ripeness, have to offer. Those of us now entering our Third Acts are, on the whole, physically stronger and healthier than ever before. There is every likelihood that, if we work at it individually and collectively, we can develop a new culturally viable ideal of old age and see our lives as a series of stages that build one upon the other. Our doing so will not be just for us; it will represent a major cultural shift for the world around us and will help younger generations reconceive of their own life spans. I have been inspired and encouraged by what I have learned while writing this book. I hope reading it will do the same for you. And so lets begin.

From the Hardcover edition. *Revue de presse* Reassuring . . . upbeat . . . Prime Time is part autobiographical confessional, part life advice, the two intertwined, so that reading the book is often like talking to a friend. *Los Angeles Times* A how-to book about being happy and self-aware [that] cites research and interviews with upbeat, lively, sexually active older people to extract some all-purpose lessons about endurance. *The New York Times* Warm, informative, and incredibly life affirming. *Womans Day* Read this, age gracefully. *InStyle* From the Trade Paperback edition.