

STARTING OVER AT 70



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Carol Maraks

Since the orders to stay at home, I spend a lot of my time listening to podcasts, webinars and joining ZOOM meetings. I naturally gravitate to topics that have to do with the needs of people over 50 and professionals who offer them services. I was getting so depressed. All I heard was that someone my age needs a will, should find a hobby or should send letters to grandchildren. But I know plenty of people who are using this time out to form new businesses and many people began telling me their personal stories of starting over after 50, 60 or even 70, like me. I wanted to hear more about why and how they did it.

Carol Marak, the go to authority on topics of aging alone spent some time with me sharing her latest project, her first book, "Solo and Smart, Get the Best of the Rest of Your Life." to be published in 2021. I met Carol in 2016, when she invited me to participate in Seniorcare.com's Aging Council. Since then, I know Carol mostly through the Facebook Elder Orphans group, and by taking her courses at CarolMarak.com.

Caryn: Carol, can you tell us something about why and how you decided to start a business?

Carol: After both of my parents died, I thought, "Wow, that was a lot of work!" That's when I started preparing for my own care, without adult children or a spouse to look out for me. What do I need to do to take care of myself in the best way possible? I was in technology since

the 1970s, but in 2006 I felt driven to write about the issues that family caregivers face because there just wasn't any information out there. I quit my job and I really felt guided to do something in the senior care industry. I started a website. I started going to Meetups and conferences. I hired a web person and learned about internet marketing, SEO. I took courses with SCORE and wrote out a business plan. Really, it all grew by word of mouth. Some of my articles got published locally and people got to know who I was. A couple of years ago the industry shifted and I started giving more onsite presentations. Then the pandemic came and I was able to move my work back online.

Caryn: What's the future hold? Would you ever think of retiring?

Carol: The book is my pivotal foundation. I'd like to consult with companies and provide information about planning in a positive way. Even married people with children can identify with solo living if their family is not involved. It's how you perceive yourself. I observe how some people are just interested in life. It keeps me thinking, how can I navigate and make sure that my mind stays sharp. We all get negative feelings sometime, but I want to be around people who accept where they are and want to improve on that.

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