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## **Act 2: Surrender** **by Rev. Christine Green**

"All changes, even the most longed for, have their melancholy; for what we leave behind is a part of ourselves; we must die to one life before we can enter into another!"  
Gail Sheehy

When we describe experiences of turning age 50, we use terms like: empty nest syndrome, raging hormones, mid-life crisis. They are all synonyms for one word: **change**. Change can have a high level of emotional charge depending on the degree of attachment we have to it. Our body's age, children grow up and leave, relationships evolve. Change seemed so effortless in the early part of our lives, during the second half of life it sometime looks like loss of control. Why is it that some changes are effortless and others are daunting?

Webster defines midlife crisis: *a period of emotional turmoil in middle age characterized by a strong desire for **change***. The crisis comes about when looking at the goals we didn't accomplish, the plans we no longer want to pursue and the loss of control of all of it.

In the book *Transitions*, author William Bridges explains that there are many transitions during our lifetime; we move through adulthood in an experience of expansion and contraction, change and stability. When we come to the second half of life, we are more aware of what we can no longer do and what we left behind. He states: "...we face what existential psychologist James Bugental has called "the nevers": I guess I'm never going to be the head of the firm...never going to have children of my own...never going to be rich and successful. For many it is a time of coming to terms with the recognition that they have been chasing a carrot on a stick."

When I turned 45 I decided to let go of my dream of ever finding a husband and getting married. Ok, it was more of an obsession. I searched everywhere, thought about it all the time, made lists of what I wanted in relationship, talked endlessly with other women about how difficult it is to find a man. After years of searching and looking

and many failed relationships, I quietly stopped. Canceled my dating service memberships, quit looking over my shoulder in coffee shops, and stopped begging my friends for ideas. I committed to nurturing my friendships and to taking care of myself. Within six months of my decision, I met my current husband. He showed up wanting to attend my prayer group. It took me a while to recognize the possibility of relationship with him, since it was no longer a priority for me.

Universal Law #21 is the Law of Detachment: In order to acquire anything in the physical universe, we must relinquish attachment to it. We don't have to give up the intention for it, but give up the attachment to the result. In surrendering attachment, there is an extraordinary sense of freedom. In that freedom, come all sorts of possibilities.

How do we recognize if there is an attachment? Clenched jaw or clenched fists, rigid neck and shoulders, controlling behavior, anxiety, organizing your life around the compulsion are all good indicators. How do we surrender? Take attention off what you don't **possess** and identify something you want to **express**. That changes our body language, mood, attitude and outlook. It gets our creative juices flowing and opens us to new ideas.

When we surrender we free up the constant chatter about what isn't working. We are then open to discover what other possibilities are in store for us.

Margaret Thatcher was almost 50 when she broke through the glass ceiling in British politics and became leader of the Conservative Party. Eleanor Roosevelt, Indira Gandhi and Golda Meir were all in the 'second half' of life when they came into their own.

There is a saying, if you want to make God laugh, tell him your plans. The converse is also true. If God wants to make you laugh, he will tell you his plans for you. The second half of life is about opening our hearts for the new plans wanting to be expressed. May your New Life be filled with exciting possibilities and awesome adventures!

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