



Beyond Seventy: Women are living longer and owning who they are

By Sue Mayfield Geiger

(Photo by Chris Kuhlman)

“Age as a broad term when its used to put people in a box or a category is not a good thing. I want people to know that you do not have to accept the box that society puts you in. Reinvent yourself the way you want to be.”

--Lyn Slater, The Accidental Icon

As we leave 2020 behind and embark on a new year, I am preparing to start a blog that will go live sometime in early 2021. As a member of the over 70 tribe, I am in awe of so many women of a certain age who are still living life to the fullest, not afraid to strut their stuff and marching to the tune of their own uniqueness. Although I’ve had this swimming around in my brain for the last few years, I was dragging my feet until I met Lyn Slater via the internet. She calls herself “The Accidental Icon,” but there is nothing accidental about this gal, because she is definitely an icon who has proven that to her 750,000 followers on Instagram, YouTube fans,

readers of her website and those who have listened to the numerous Ted Talks she has given. Slater said that she started her website and blog to reach women who live interesting but ordinary lives. Now, age 67, she became famous over six years ago when she was mistaken for a famous model during New York Fashion Week. She was wearing Japanese designer Yohji Yamamoto’s suit and an obscure Chanel bag, and as she passed by, some of the fashion photographers started taking pictures of her. Everyone took notice. Slater retired from her teaching job and followed her path into the fashion industry.

Her outfits are bold, colorful, elaborate and powerful; her earrings drape down her neck and rest on her shoulders; her silver hair blows in the wind; enormous sunglasses usually cover her face, yet it is her attitude and confidence that is the first thing you notice. I am in love with the fashions of the 1940s since I grew up seeing my mother in silky slacks, boxy wool plaid coats, hats, gloves, and peep toe heels. Obviously not in vogue today, do I dare set my own trend? At my age? There is something inside of us (at least for me) that always wants to hold us back. I call that something the “fear fairy” and when she gets into my head, I retreat. But then I think of all the sensational gals who are yearning to get out of their own stifling boxes and show the world who they are. As a part-time senior model, I’ve had to confirm to my agency’s advice on how I should look for auditions (grandmotherly). But during my last photo session, just for grins, I posed in an outfit strictly for me. So, I’m going to get out of the box this new year and get in touch with my true self, and hopefully inspire other 70ish icons to do the same!