

## Marcia Gay Harden

Actor, author, mother of three, 58, Los Angeles

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**Your new memoir, *The Seasons of My Mother*, celebrates your mom, Beverly, who battles Alzheimer's disease.**

People with Alzheimer's have lived incredibly rich, full, determined, loving lives, and their legacy is lost to their disease. I want my mother to be remembered for the beauty she brought to our family and the change she made in the world. It's a tribute to her.

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**Does your mom, who's now 80, still have bouts of recognition and memory?**

Brief bouts. Sometimes she's nonsensical, other times there's such a startling clarity. Before I enter the room her caregivers say: "Look who it is! It's Marcia Gay!" Then I'll hear, "Your daughter." So I know she's asked, "Who?" There are no hurt feelings; it's about making sure she's OK.

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**She has early-onset Alzheimer's, which has a genetic component. Do you worry about getting it?**

I plan to get tested. What was hard with Mom is she hadn't put things in place. There was no formal sit-down early on to say, "This is what I want." Suddenly everyone's juggling to figure out the best course for her. It's a family disease and can devastate a whole family. Thankfully, we have a strong unit.

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**You describe your mother's love for the Japanese art of floral arrangement called ikebana. What's your passion?**

I do pottery. Lately, I, too, have taken up ikebana. It astonishes me how I can come up with something beautiful following its principles. And I love, love, love to read.



*"I want my mother to be remembered for the beauty she brought to our family."*

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**In 2011 you went through a divorce that broke your heart. How's your heart now?**

When I divorced I went still for a while. Now, it's time for me. I haven't met anybody, but I'm in a really good place. It's not about replacing a picture I had before. It's about creating something new.

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**Which brings us to sex—and 50 *Shades Freed*, the third installment of the movie series. Do these characters possibly need further freeing?!**

His love is freed! And now they are free to love each other and have all kinds of sexual escapades that come from love. It's a sexy action movie and a fun ride!

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**"Code Black": Is it tough to make those ER scenes look so real, and work with eternally handsome Rob Lowe?**

We do a medical boot camp every year. By the third [season] I was like, "I can do a thoracotomy, thanks!" And Rob is so irritating because he's so beautiful. But he's an adept and thoughtful actor. I love him.

8

**What's the current landscape like in Hollywood for women older than 40?**

More opportunity. In the past 15 years, the crossover for actors is far more seamless than it used to be. You can go from a commercial to a TV show to a film to theater—and even write a book!

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**What's the best and worst part about being 58?**

The best part is the contentedness. I can be in the kitchen making something with my kids, and I realize everything I need is around me, and it's beautiful. Worst is the slowing down. I don't want to slow down, ever!

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**On that note, are you still doing your 10,000 steps every day?**

I'm trying! I got back on the treadmill this past January after cracking a rib, which is finally getting better.

—LAUREN PAIGE KENNEDY