



Embracing Menopause Naturally: Stories, Portraits, and Recipes

By Gabriele Kushi

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We are familiar with its symptoms: hot flashes, night sweats, and more. While menopause triggers physical changes, it also brings forth spiritual issues that, for many women, mark a redefinition of the feminine self. To address the impact of menopause, Gabriele Kushi has created a practical guide to dealing with this special time.

The author first provides a clear understanding of the overall process of menopause, from biological changes to emotional challenges. She then offers research-based nutritional guidelines that can help relieve menopausal symptoms, as well as healthful kitchen-tested recipes based on a natural foods diet. However, it is the stories and portraits of twenty menopausal women that are the heart and soul of the book. Here is a true companion for any woman who wants to nurture her own spiritual growth, adopt a natural foods diet, and enjoy good health throughout the midlife years.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Women facing midlife changes are likely to find *Embracing Menopause Naturally* useful, both for its clear explanation of menopause and for the testimonies of women who have come through the process."

(ForeWord Reviews)

About the Author

Gabriele Kushi is a certified macrobiotics health educator, counselor, and cooking teacher. For more than thirty years, she has helped people from all walks of life become healthier through natural foods and sustainable lifestyles. She has published numerous articles on healing with natural foods, and has spoken about macrobiotics on radio talk shows. A member of the Macrobiotic Educators Association, Gabriele teaches in Germany and the United States.

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INTRODUCTION

MY STORY

Surprised by my first hot flash, the need to connect to the earth mother's forgotten ancient symbols of menopausal women emerged, and ceremonies needed to be done.

Although it seemed too early, at forty-three, my menopausal passage had begun and lasted for five years. I found it curious that the end of my reproductive years and the beginning of my teenage daughter's should coincide. While collaborating with other women it became clear that what was happening in our family was happening in other families too.

As a macrobiotic consultant and cooking teacher who had lived a natural food lifestyle for many years, I understood the significance of food and its healing abilities in many physical imbalances. Naturally, I increased the amount of fermented soy foods and other plant hormonal regulators, like kale and daikon radish, when symptoms got too strong. I created new menus and taught Menopausal Cooking Classes. Some of my favorite recipes are included in this book.

When I was talking with my mother-in-law Aveline Kushi about her menopause, we wondered about other macrobiotic women's experiences with this passage. Aveline had devoted her life to sharing the macrobiotic way through cooking classes, and encouraging the growth and use of natural and organic whole foods all over the world. The inspiring autobiography *Aveline: The Life and Dream of the Woman Behind Macrobiotics Today* is a wonderful book about this remarkable woman and a continuation of her story.

While my menopause was in full throttle, I was completing my final work toward a BFA in Photography, Fine Arts, and Native American studies. My art always evolved around the feminine, and my intuition became stronger as my body changed. A desire to connect with menopausal women and to voice their experiences through photography and stories emerged. How did women who came from diverse cultural backgrounds experience this passage? Some of the women I searched for specifically, while others

are friends or macrobiotic teachers and long-time acquaintances of mine. I designed a set of questions, the women had the freedom to answer or not, and this ethnographic study evolved over several years. As I explored my changes and came to know other women, the book *Embracing Menopause Naturally* took shape.

ABOUT the BOOK

Embracing Menopause Naturally concerns the time in a woman's life when some important experiences that have defined her life cease to be. The passage is a different experience for each woman, but it is a journey every woman must make. Awareness is the best preparation for what life has to offer. Becoming educated about menopause is important for women of all ages. Exploring options of how to handle symptoms is best started early, to find appropriate choices.

Stories and Portraits of Menopausal Women is the heart and soul of the book, and brings the diverse experiences and the beautiful faces of menopausal women to the reader. The women share where they were born and how many children and grandchildren they have. How and when they noticed their first menopausal symptoms, and what they did to alleviate them. Some turned to their traditional cultural rituals for affirmation of this phase of life, while others sought alternative or conventional medicine. Several already knew the benefits of macrobiotics, while others had changed their lifestyle as a result of menopause. The women share how the passage affected their quality of life and describe ways they have come to express their new selves.

Chapter One: *The Menopausal Passage* provides practical aspects of living with menopause. The hormonal changes during the phases of menopause and the role of phytoestrogens are discussed in relation to easing symptoms. Scientific research on Hormone Replacement Therapy and midlife issues relating to breast cancer, heart disease, and osteoporosis are discussed. Charts of herbs and natural foods rich in calcium and phytoestrogen, which have shown to address menopausal concerns, are designed for easy access.

Chapter Two: *Benefits of Macrobiotics for the Menopausal Passage* is a reminder to respond to the innate wisdom of embracing the menopausal passage by living in harmony with nature. A brief overview of macrobiotics is provided. Supported with research, macrobiotic guidelines enable women to make healthy choices for the midlife years and beyond. With these guidelines, a balanced meal plan can be easily integrated into any lifestyle.

Chapter Three: *Natural Food Recipes* provides menu suggestions for the midlife years. A wide variety of organic and natural ingredients provide phytoestrogens, minerals, vitamins, and proteins for a healthy lifestyle. Each recipe is balanced, and a varying formula is given to inspire your own creations with minimal effort.

I hope you enjoy this book as much as I enjoyed working with all the women. May it inspire and assist you in finding ways to truly make your passage a blessed one.

Gabriele Kushi

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