

FREQUENCIES

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HOW OLD IS "AGING"?

WORDS BY
JEAN GODFREY-JUNE



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"AGING"?

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STATS + DESIGN
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It's hard to accurately
imagine being older than you
are; most people rely on
existing cultural narratives
to do that imagining.

The cultural narrative about
female aging can be summed
up in the word

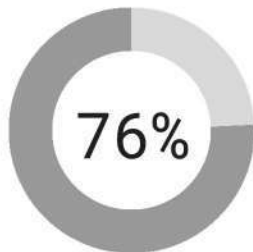
ANTI

91% OF WOMEN AGED 50-70 FEEL THAT THE "ANTI" NARRATIVE IN ADVERTISING DOES NOT REFLECT THEIR ACTUAL
LIVED EXPERIENCE OF VITALITY AND GROWTH.



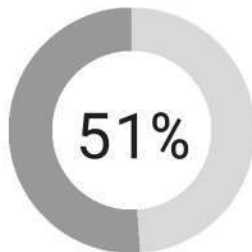
Contrary to the cultural narrative,
no one - female or male - in their
day to day life, is against their
life moving forward and evolving.

SELF-ACCEPTANCE



of women over 50
ACCEPT THEIR AGE
(60 % embrace it)

POSITIVE AGING



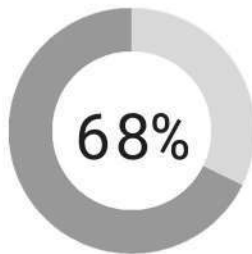
of Boomers
NO NEGATIVE BODY IMAGE
Report having total confidence

AUTHENTICITY GAP



believe Media is
ACCURATE PORTRAYAL
one-third of the time.

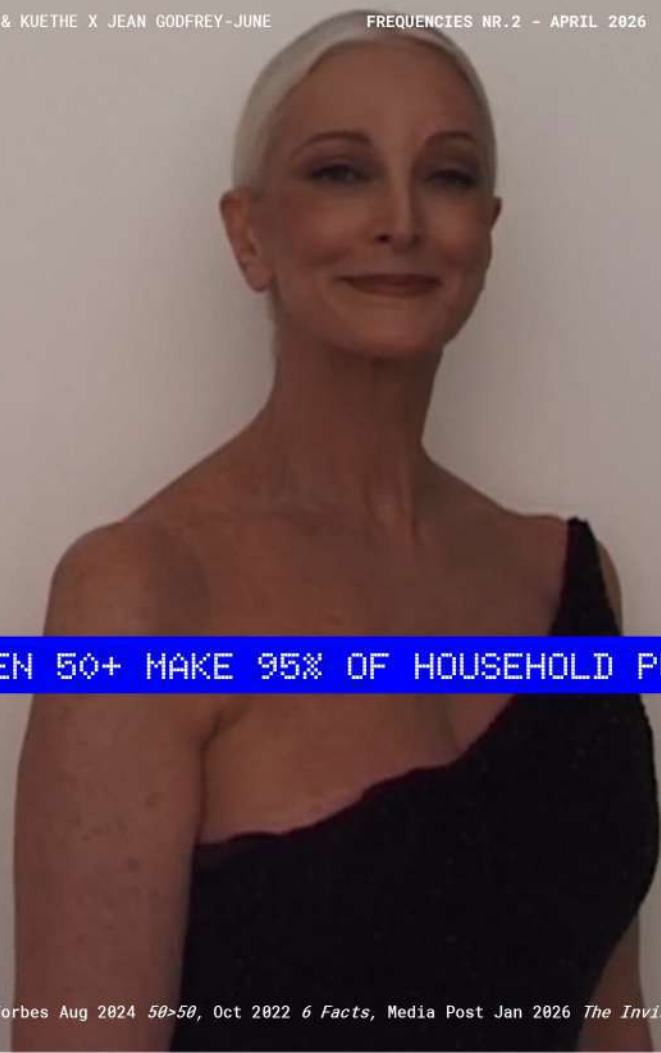
MISREPRESENTATION



of women over 50
RARELY/NEVER REPRESENTED
in media & advertising.

While older women report record-high levels of self-acceptance, the industry continues to 'symbolically annihilate' them through erasure.

Dr. Julie Whiteman, University of Birmingham



When we consider the possibility that women enjoy being the age they are (64? 32? 45?), we enter a white space.

The upside is huge:

WOMEN 50+ MAKE 95% OF HOUSEHOLD PURCHASING DECISIONS AND ARE THE FASTEST-GROWING

DEMOGRAPHIC ONLINE. THEY ARE PART OF

THE WEALTHIEST GENERATION IN HISTORY.



87% OF WOMEN 40+ WISH BEAUTY ADVERTISEMENTS FEATURED MORE REALISTIC PORTRAYALS OF WOMEN THEIR AGE.

Yet the images beauty advertisers are creating for women and the content women actually respond to on social media remain markedly different.

CAMPAIGNS FEATURING MATURE OR RELATABLE CREATORS

DELIVER 39% HIGHER AUDIENCE RETENTION THAN THOSE USING "IDEALIZED" IMAGERY.

DIRECT SALES IMPACT: AUTHENTIC, PROGRESSIVE ADVERTISING DELIVERS A 3.5% HIGHER SHORT-TERM SALES

UPLIFT AND 16.3% HIGHER LONG-TERM SALES COMPARED TO ADS WITH LOWER INCLUSIVE SCORES.





Women are frustrated:
they were brought up to believe their
station in society had improved and
would continue to do so.

That narrative is false.

ACKNOWLEDGE THE DISCONNECT

PAY IS STILL NOT EQUAL



A close-up, high-resolution photograph of a person's eyes. The person has light blue eyes and well-defined, dark eyebrows. The skin is fair and the lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the eyelashes and the iris. The image is used as a background for the text overlays.

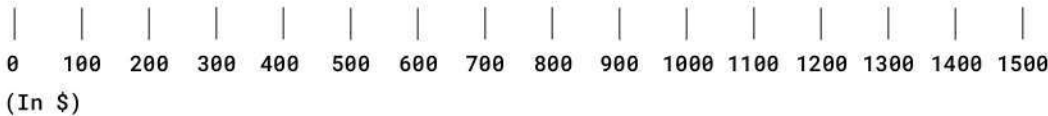
ACCORDING TO US CENSUS DATA: IN 2024, THE AVERAGE WOMAN WORKING FULL-TIME IS TYPICALLY PAID 81 CENTS PER \$1,00 PAID TO THE AVERAGE MAN, A GAP THAT HAD GROWN WIDER SINCE 2023.

WHEN LOOKING AT ALL WORKERS, WOMEN MAKE 76 CENTS ON THE DOLLAR COMPARED TO MEN.

Women



Men



Prescriptions
\$30.00 (Women)
\$23.00 (Men)
30 % Gap

Personal Care
\$20.45 (Women)
\$18.10 (Men)
13 % Gap

Clothing
\$41.58 (Woman)
\$38.50 (Men)
8 % Gap

The cumulative cost of gender-based pricing remains a primary barrier to long-term wealth building for women.*

*Sources: US Bureau of Labor Statistics 2025, World Economic Forum's *Global Gender Gap Report 2023*, The California Pink Tax Ban (AB 1287) and NYC DCA Report: *From Cradle to Cane*, Deloitte.



THE WEIGHT PENALTY

There is an estimated
9% to 18% wage penalty specifically
for women perceived as “fat”.*



JUSTICE IS
STILL UNEQUAL

HEALTH CARE IS STILL UNEQUAL



UNDERINVESTED‡

Only 6% of private healthcare capital is spent on conditions affecting women.*

UNDER-RESEARCHED‡

The US NIH only began mandating that women be included in health research in 1993.*

OVERCHARGED‡

Women spend \$15 billion more annually on healthcare than men do.*

AT-HOME LABOR IS STILL UNEQUAL



A woman in a blue and white striped dress stands in profile, looking out a large window. To her left is a white humanoid robot with a red 'SONY' logo on its chest. The background shows a bright, hazy landscape.

WOMEN GLOBALLY SPEND 2,5 TO 3 TIMES MORE HOURS ON UNPAID WORK THAN MEN.

“Make it work” translates to
“do the work” for women.

FOR LATINO WOMEN, THE DISPARITY IS EVEN MORE DRAMATIC, AT 3,6 TIMES THE HOURS OF MEN.



Your customers live in mounting frustration at the culture's false narrative. The older they are, 'the more clarity they have into its falseness, and the less accepting they become of "you're broken, here's the fix" messaging.

Globally, girls aged 5 to 14 spend 160 million more

hours on daily chores than boys of the same age.



ACKNOWLEDGE THE DISCONTENT:



MESOMORPH
Seattle women
want their bodies
to be beautiful
and strong—the
better to bike, sail,
run, hike, and

Show your customers you understand
their frustration and you become
authentic, a truth-teller, an entity
to be trusted.

Relieve it in some way and you can
really sell stuff.

Women's Beauty:
**OVERSTUDIED
AND
OVERSERVED**



The culture hones and amplifies the need for female self-improvement in the realm of physical beauty to an ever-more extreme degree.

Beauty companies spend millions on clinical studies every year, testing ingredients and attempting to prove their efficacy.



2025 Research Investment:

BEAUTY :

1 Corporation Estée Lauder

R&D expenses spend of
\$316 millions in 2025.



\$316MM

HEALTH :

**The U.S. NIH Office of Research
Government on Women's Health (ORWH)**

ORWH base budget request:
\$83.3 millions for 2026



\$83.3MM

Clinical Testing Standards:

Premium skincare brands
now conduct
an average of

10 to 15 separate clinical trials
for a single product launch

to prove specific claims (e.g.,
"reduces fine lines by 22%").

The Crowded Shelf:

In 2025, the average
"Prestige Beauty" consumer was
targeted with over

1,500 unique
product advertisements

per month across
social and digital channels.



Women's bodies and faces and hairstyles are constantly criticized and shamed.

WOMEN SPEND UP TO FOUR HOURS A DAY ON GROOMING,

TIME EQUIVALENT TO A PART-TIME JOB.

WOMEN SPEND AN AVERAGE OF \$1,120 ON COSMETIC PROCEDURES IN THEIR LIFETIME, COMPARED TO JUST \$159

FOR MEN - A 7 X DIFFERENCE DRIVEN BY SOCIETAL AGING STANDARDS.



In much the way the plastic industry creates a problem and then campaigns to demand that consumers fix it, the beauty industry often runs on creating insecurities about aspects of women's bodies that they then purport to fix.

prevent caking.
L'Oréal
Colour Suprême
lasts so long.
Feels so good.
And you're so worth
L'ORÉAL

The universal consumer-blaming of capitalism mirrors the culture's stance toward female aging, "empowering" women to fix made-up problems.

(How can you tell a problem is made up? An easy shortcut is to imagine telling a powerful man that he's suffering from the problem.)

Women's Health:
**UNDERSTUDIED
AND
UNDERSERVED**

FAILURE TO STUDY MEDICATIONS AND OTHER INTERVENTIONS IN A BROAD SAMPLING OF WOMEN HAS CONTRIBUTED TO WOMEN EXPERIENCING ADVERSE EFFECTS FROM MEDICATIONS AT TWICE THE RATE OF MEN.

The culture de-prioritizes women's health to an extreme degree.

The NIH only began mandating that women be included in health research in 1993.

The current wellness movement is powered, in part, by this deficit.



WOMEN'S HEALTH RECEIVES ONLY 5% OF GLOBAL HEALTHCARE R&D FUNDING.*



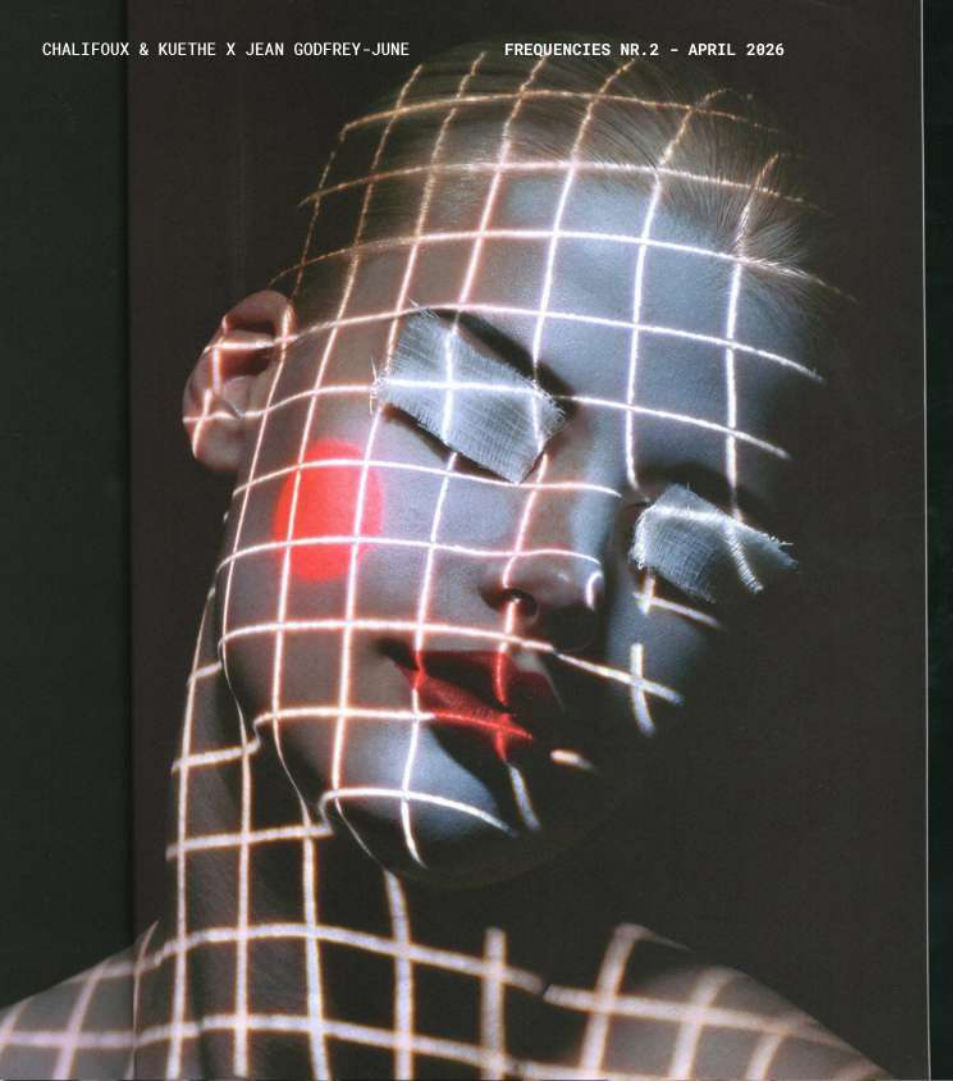
WELLNESS

Health and beauty are supposedly synonymous; one reflects the other.

People - women included - want to feel good, physically and psychologically.



Wellness movements, like the pursuit of physical beauty, evolve out of our natural drive for self-improvement.



78% of women aged 65+ now rate
“longevity” and “vitality” as more
important than “looking young”.

This focus changes the way they look
at the beauty, wellness, and fitness
industries.

The CAGR for the sexual wellness segment is approximately 7.53% to 7.87%.*

“Skin longevity” is replacing “anti-aging” in skincare messaging.

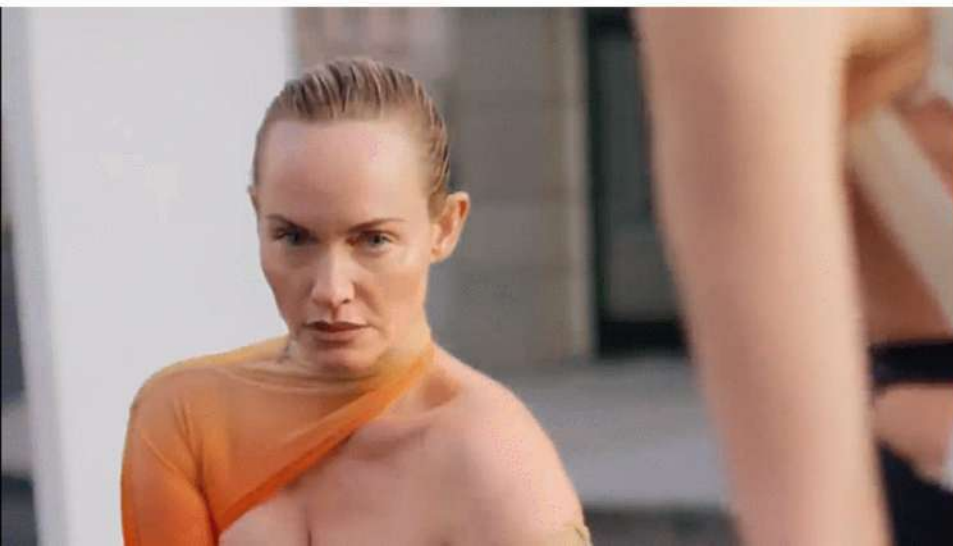
The “beauty from within” (ingestible wellness) market is growing at 9% annually.*

The messaging around exercise is shifting quickly from “weight loss” to “strength.”



The activist, entrepreneur,
and social-media star Katie
Sturino has pointed out that
there is no destination size
for women—they are shamed for
their bodies no matter what
size they are.

The same is true for a woman's age: there is no destination, no point at which she should feel good about it.



26 can be too young and too old at the same time.

As can 56.



When someone dies at 50 or even 60,
male or female, everyone says,
that was so young.

But images of 40-year-old women are
regularly used to depict "aging"
and "old".

According to the CDC, women live
4.9 to 5.3 years longer
than men.

Age

LIFESTAGE DATA

THE MARKETING "EXPIRATION" NARRATIVE

66+

THE LONGEVITY RUNWAY
Average female life expectancy is 84.2, leaving 20+ years of active "youth".

THE "END DESTINATION"
Viewed as the conclusion of consumer relevance and vitality.

56-65

THE INFLUENCE PEAK
Subjective age is 20% lower than chronological age; peak of self-made wealth and leadership.

THE "SUNSET PHASE"
Focus on healthcare and "senior" services; framed as the end of dynamic life.

46-55

THE ECONOMIC POWERHOUSE
Women over 50 control \$19 trillion in assets and 80% of purchase decisions.

THE "INVISIBILITY GAP"
Marketing frequency drops by 60%; characters often become "background" figures.

36-45

THE CAREER "BROKEN RUNG"
Women hit peak management entry, yet face the highest "mental load" at home (4.5 hrs/day).

THE "MAINTENANCE PHASE"
Shift toward "anti-aging" to "save" what is left; labels like "mature" begin

25-35

THE NEURO-STRUCTURAL PEAK
The prefrontal cortex (decision-making) only fully matures at 26.

THE "GOLDEN ERA"
Primary focus for beauty and fashion; framed as the peak of relevance.

CULTURAL LEADERSHIP

How are you marketing to a woman who is at her peak of self-assurance?

BEYOND ANTI

If the current marketing narrative for women is *ANTI*, what is the affirmative POV your brand can own?

INTERSECTIONAL INCLUSION

Are you integrating older women into mainstream narratives or relegating them to aging specific content?

FINANCIAL POWERHOUSE

Given "Pink Tax" costs, can your brand play a role bringing women into a stronger financial position?

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

How can you engage active fandoms where women share their ideas, passions and lived experiences?

PATTERN BEHAVIOR

How do these beauty & wellness insights translate to put her in the driver's seat in hospitality, tech, or automotive categories?

THANK YOU FOR FOLLOWING

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