

Interview Questions for Lynne M. Spreen

1. Why did you write *Dakota Blues* and *Middle-Aged Crazy*?

I got tired of looking for stories about older people having life-changing epiphanies. So I began writing them.

2. You seem kind of obsessed about getting older.

Do you know that at midlife, most of us have about as many years left as it takes to raise a family? And at that point, we've lived through forty or fifty years of life lessons. So, what's next? Are we going to repeat the same moves for the next half-century, or are we going to change something? That's what fascinates me.

3. Was there any one person who inspired you to write these books?

Probably my mom. She was trapped in a difficult marriage, and because of that, us kids were exposed to domestic violence. I went to work as a very young person, because I wanted very badly to be independent. That being said, my parents did the best they could, under the circumstances. But it was a tough way to grow up.

4. What's the most important thing readers will learn from your stories?

To question and reconsider your beliefs, especially as you get older, and especially *about* getting older. In our culture, women are judged by standards of fecundity: are we sexy? Is our skin taut and clear? Our hair thick and long? Our teeth white and straight? (Sounds like I'm talking about livestock. Well, there you have it.) But there's more to life than looks, or appearing/acting youthful. If you don't get to that place of understanding as an older person, you're going to hate yourself.

5. You were fifty-eight when you published your first novel. Isn't that kind of old?

Man, you're not kidding. I grew up with carbon paper and party lines. Learning to write, publish, and market my work at this age involved a learning curve you would not believe. I console myself with the thought that I probably grew new brain cells in

the process. Did you know you can do that? Yup. Learn something new, exercise, and socialize. That's what makes them sprout, even if you're older.

6. When do you write? Where do you get your ideas?

In the mornings, and from advice columns, respectively. I'm not kidding! Some of the greatest dramatic life questions are asked of Carolyn Hax (*Washington Post*), or Annie's Mailbox, which replaced Ann Landers. I've got a sweet tooth for that stuff. Sometimes I get character ideas there. I'll print them out and throw them in a file.

7. Name some favorite authors.

All the Annies: Anne Lamott, Annie Proulx, Ann Patchett, and Anna Quindlen. Also, Elizabeth Strout, Kent Haruf, Marilynne Robinson...that's just scratching the surface.

8. Where can we buy your book?

Amazon.com. Here's my author page: www.Amazon.com/author/lynnespren. (Make sure you type my name in lower case or it won't work.)