

# Becoming Beauty-full

by Maggie Rose Crane EX '67 (University of Wisconsin/Milwaukee)



Maggie today and in 1967 as a collegiate member of the Epsilon Chi Chapter.

**Power emanates from a woman who accepts her self fully and loves who she is. Feeling beautiful is a state of mind. Thankfully, this is as true at age 20 as it is at 60!**

**Have you noticed that when you feel good about your life and your choices, you also feel vibrant, sexy and powerful? On the other hand, when you find yourself changing who you are by deferring to cultural standards of youth and manufactured beauty, when you give away your power to materialistic urges, you'll often find yourself on the treadmill of more, more, MORE. Suddenly, you're not good enough.**

**It's human nature: we see pictures of designer homes and we want one. We see a celebrity wearing a fabulous dress and we want it. We see smooth skin and a shapely figure, and we want that! There's an underlying belief that if we just have what they have, wear what they wear and look like they look – we will be happy.**

**Unfortunately, we're just left wanting!**

Living in the United States of Advertising, we are constantly bombarded with images of fashion, makeup and entertainment. No matter what our age, we find ourselves trying to measure up to an airbrushed standard that doesn't even exist! Women everywhere feel not good enough as we struggle to meet an unachievable standard: impeccably dressed, impressively addressed and perfectly shaped. Each time we fall short of these cultural expectations, it validates a belief that "there is something wrong with me." Slowly but surely, we are programmed to believe we are defective. As a result, many of us spend a lot of time, energy and money trying to make ourselves into who we think we should be. We poke, slather, tuck and camouflage, waging an all-out campaign to resist or disguise what is.

Today, the cultural message to be "perfect" is louder than ever, and the younger generations could pay an even bigger price than we older generations have. We seem to have crossed a line somewhere – with women of all ages abdicating their personal sense of self to be like the celebrities they see flaunted in their faces every day. It's inconceivable that our goal here on earth is for all of us to move toward the same standard of beauty, yet so many of us are willing to go to extremes to do just that.

In the interest of our future generations, perhaps it's time maturing "wise women" come forth and, reminiscent of the 1960s, once again proclaim, "We won't take it anymore!" Haven't we had enough of trying to be perfect, enough of trying to meet an unattainable standard, enough of trying to look like the celebrities? (Who, by the way, have trainers, hairstylists, makeup artists, personal stylists and the money to purchase any product or procedure they desire.)

When we define our beauty by our physical appearance, it's no wonder that we become disheartened as our bodies begin to reflect the passage of time (or a few too many doughnuts). Sure, our looks matter – but they are not who we are! By reaffirming that our physical self is simply part of a greater whole, we are able to appreciate that we are on this earth for a reason, and have much to offer.

Leading by example, and accepting our uniqueness at every stage of life, we maturing women have the opportunity to influence an entire generation (or at least those willing to listen!) by challenging our youth-and-beauty culture and embracing the satisfaction and freedom that comes with aging gracefully, knowing we are so much more than our physical bodies. By living our lives mindfully, authentically – with vitality and gusto – we can provide them with a roadmap to becoming the amazing women they were meant to be. Just as we have been both enriched and challenged by our mothers' generation – we have an opportunity to leave a legacy of self-love, acceptance and authenticity to the culture of women following in our footsteps. By redirecting one's focus from our packaging to our essence – we are better able to embrace the bigger picture and respect the ongoing circle of life.

For those of you still enjoying your younger years, remember – who you are today is the person you will wish you were 10-20-30 years from now. Don't miss the life you are having by wishing you were different than you are. Embrace the totality of the magnificent being that is you – now. (That applies to all of us!)

When you participate in activities you feel passionate about, spend time with those you treasure, inhabit your body fully, express your creativity, honor your boundaries, eat healthy foods and exercise your brain – what's not to love?!

Being happy, engaged and vibrant ... now that's beauty-full!

At any age.

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Maggie Rose Crane EX '67 joined the Epsilon Chi Chapter at the University of Wisconsin/Milwaukee in the late 1960s as Margie Bartz. Through her writing, speaking and workshops, Maggie shows maturing women how to let go of the past, embrace the present and create a life that honors the amazing woman they've become. Her award winning book, *Amazing Grays – A Woman's Guide to Making the Next 50 the BEST 50* (Regardless of your hair color!) is available at [www.maggiecrane.com](http://www.maggiecrane.com) or e-mail [maggie@maggiecrane.com](mailto:maggie@maggiecrane.com).