

# Q&A Mireille Guiliano

Best-selling author Mireille Guiliano has been called the “high priestess of French Lady wisdom.” In her latest book, *French Women Don't Get Facelifts*, she offers some tips for women on embracing the aging process, from makeup and hair suggestions to dietary changes. [See review on p. 114.]

## How does your latest book differ from your previous lifestyle works on French women?

Well, it's different in that I have acquired a few more years. My body and mind have changed, and...I've found that experience and wisdom come with more years. I'm sure many women would agree with that. I've been discovering more tips and tricks and secrets...

[and this book] seems [like] a good way to [share them with readers] because [these are not things] we learn in school.

## A lot has been written about the French feminine mystique. What does that term mean to you?

I think it's a cultural thing. A lot of women around the world aspire to be French because of what they see in movies or books and have an idea about French women that...because of our background, we have... a lot more experience, whether it's fashion or gastronomy.

## How is the attitude toward aging different in America than in France?

I feel much younger when I'm in Paris simply because men still look at me, and I feel more seductive. I enjoy dressing better, and it's clearly cultural. I used to say to my young staff (who [complained that] they couldn't date in America) that in America, after 30 you're old.... It's still very different in France, where a woman of a certain age has respect and a different attitude toward who she is. In France, you're basically not old until you're 80-plus.

I see how [American] women even in their forties...suffer because they can't find a partner or they can't have a sex life.... In France, it's so easy, you just walk into a park and sit for five minutes, and you'd be amazed how someone...[will try to make] conversation. It's really much less about the years you carry than what you project as a person, as a human being. If you smile, if you're nice to people, it works.

## How can older women feel confident in a society that is so critical of aging?

When it comes to ourselves, [the French] are kind of like, pick yourself up, don't complain, do something about it.... You've got to take charge. You're responsible. Nobody's going to do it for you. But you have to listen to your body, and you have to know yourself, and you have to do a little homework, which a lot of women are not willing to do, or they're not aware that they can actually control a lot of things. At the end of the day, you're responsible for your own [life].

## Who inspires you and why?

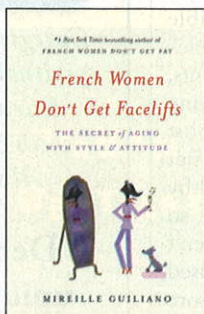
My mother.... She was a single child from a mother who... probably shouldn't have had [children]...and so my mother's reaction...was “I'm going to try to be better than that,” which she did. She totally gave her life for us, she worked very hard, she never had vacations, and she was just trying to teach us to do our best, and I see that today.... For me, having a great mother and a great godmother... certainly helped me a lot to be who I am today.

## Do you have any beauty icons?

Lots of them...obviously, there are people like Catherine Deneuve or actresses, but to me, once you find a person [who is] what [the French] call *attachant* (nice and kind), you see that person in a different way, and you can see beauty in [an unconventionally] beautiful person. It's the inside out as opposed to the outside in...so I find a lot of women beautiful. Everyone has something beautiful about her—it's just finding it and emphasizing it, whether it's your smile or your eyes or your hair. And how you treat people makes you beautiful, if you're a good person, a kind person.

## What's the most important message you have for your readers?

To age well, you must love life. It's that simple. And a lot of people don't love their lives, are tired of living, or don't see that every day is a bonus. I want to inspire people to have a different attitude toward aging.—Ajoke Kokodoko, Oakland P.L.



ing. In this collection of informative case studies, she describes many outbreaks, from that of salmonella nationwide in 1994 to that of the West Nile virus in New York in 1999. The book features a mix of descriptive writing and fascinating facts. For instance, Legionnaires' disease (LD) is “a disease of modern technology” since the pathogenic group *Legionella* in natural settings—waterfalls, lakes—does not cause illness. Only when it is concentrated in stagnant, artificially hot waters does it prompt sickness. Startlingly, in 1977, the medical detective who determined LD's cause was told that his find was “an anachronism,” as “all significant microbes had already been discovered.” The CDC was subsequently underfunded to make way for Richard Nixon's war on cancer, only to be hit with 30 new pathogens causing diseases such as AIDS, SARS, and multidrug-resistant tuberculosis. **VERDICT** Levitt's pace and writing are too workmanlike for a general audience, but this is a compelling read for anyone who's considering a public health career.—Cynthia Fox, Brooklyn

## Null, Gary. *Reboot Your Brain: A Natural Approach to Fighting Memory Loss, Dementia, Alzheimer's, Brain Aging, and More*. Skyhorse. 2013. 448p. ISBN 9781626361232. \$24.95. HEALTH

Alternative health guru Null believes that as a result of poor lifestyle choices, the large segment of the American population over the age of 47 is heading for some form of dementia. According to him, stress, poor diet, and obesity lead to Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, multiple sclerosis, and ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease), among other conditions. Null's solution is a vegan, low-fat diet that also excludes refined sugar, alcohol, and caffeine. Exercise and myriad nutritional supplements will also help. The book reads like an infomercial that's full of testimonials and references to animal studies that prove that following this regimen will reverse the diseases. Null is a popular radio personality with a following, but his credentials are from nontraditional institutions that are accredited but not rigorous. While proper nutrition and exercise are definitely linked to good health, the need for supplements is controversial. **VERDICT** Only for fans of Null; buy where he is popular.—Barbara Bibel, Oakland P.L.

## Perlmutter, David with Kristin Loberg. *Grain Brain: The Surprising Truth About Wheat, Carbs, and Sugar—Your Brain's Silent Killers*. Little, Brown. 2013. 320p. ISBN 9780316234801. \$27. HEALTH