

UNSTUCK

On A Quest To Shake Up The Routines of Motherhood and Middle Age, Two Local Moms Write A Popular Blueprint For Everyone



Karen Amster-Young and Pam Godwin

By Emanuelle Block

Approaching 40-something and friends for over a decade, Karen Amster-Young and Pam Godwin both felt stuck. Soon realizing that their complaining achieved nothing, they decided to do something about it. The plan was to try one new thing every week for a year. They began to blog about it on the52weeks.com. Challenging themselves with new experiences was so motivating, and the feedback was so resoundingly positive, that the blog evolved into a book. *The 52 Weeks* is an inspiring blueprint for getting going again in your life. With wit and practical advice about how to take the first steps, Amster-Young and Godwin explain that we can grow, learn, and achieve at any age or any stage—and get unstuck.

What is *The 52 Weeks* about? In the title, you describe your journey as two women on a quest to get unstuck. What do you mean by that?

Karen Amster-Young: The book is about *getting going* again in life. People get caught up in patterns and routines of daily life, and they don't even realize it, but sometimes they start to feel stuck doing the same things day in and day out. How do you break that up? We've tried to help people find ways to shake it up, to try new things, face fears and really get out there.

How did the project begin? Where were you in your own lives when you came up with the idea? Were you friends?

PG: We met over ten years ago when our children were in preschool together. In recent years, we found ourselves grumbling that we felt stuck. Then we looked at each other and said "stop complaining!"

We didn't want to hear ourselves complain anymore, and we didn't want others to have to listen to us complain. We wanted to be proactive, so we thought about what we could do in our lives rather than groan and whine. We knew we had much to be thankful for. But our lives were transitioning—job changes and our children were getting older.

KAY: We started to make a list of things we wanted to do. You can live in New York City or any city, but stop exploring it because you get caught up in routine. We created a "52 List"—scheduling something new to do each week for one year. Of course, each person's "52 List" is different.

PG: Someone once said: "If you're bored, you're boring," and that resonated with us. It was time to do something. And we hit the ground running.

You started the project as a blog. How was it transitioning from blog to book?

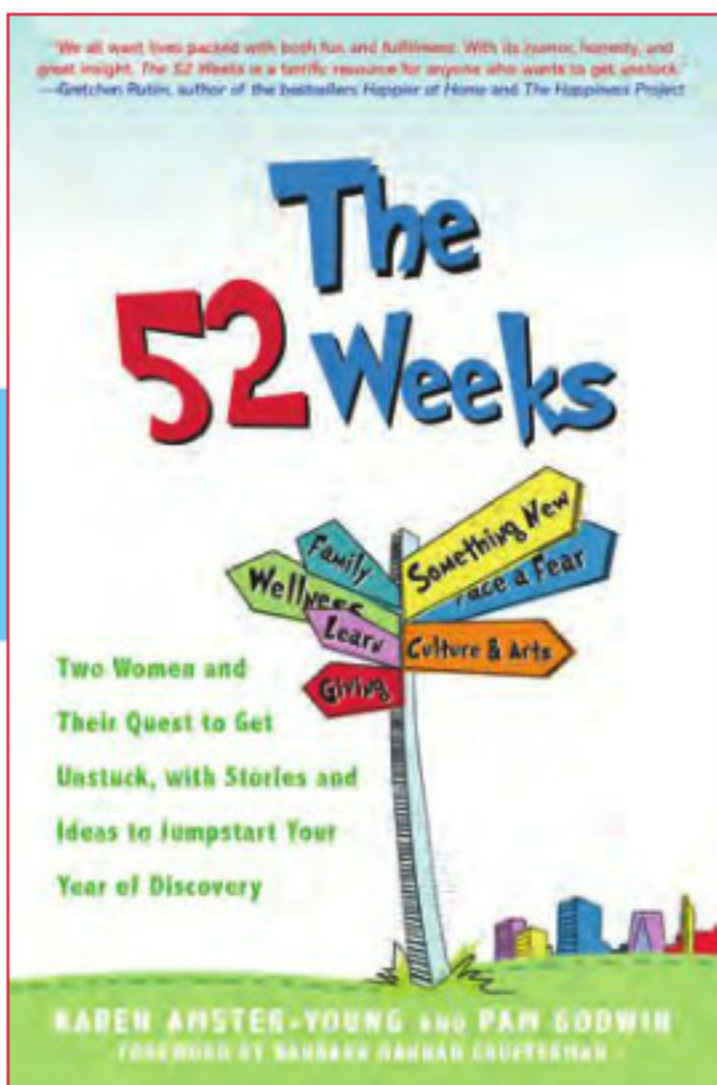
PG: We decided to blog about our list-of-52-things-to-do because we wanted to be accountable to ourselves and to others, so that we would follow through with our plans.

KAY: The reaction was positive. We knew we were on to something, and we got some media attention. And then the light bulb went on—we wanted to put the information out as a book.

PG: We'd been blogging for several months, so our stories were out there already. But if we were going to develop it into a book, we wanted to round up some expert contributors—and we did.

For whom is the book written?

PG: We are 40-something moms. But in reality, anyone (at any age or stage) can get stuck and want



to get unstuck. In the book we give lists of activities in different categories to pique interest and give ideas, no matter what stage of life. It is very user-friendly.

How has the project affected your own lives? Have you personally applied the 52-week principle?

KAY: It's not an instant transformational *how-to* book. As life cycles, you might get unstuck

and then stuck again. We're "works in progress." The blog and the book helped jumpstart our lives. Doing nothing is not going to help you go a mile or even an inch. You've got to make a move, and this is a fun way to do it.

What was most memorable on your 52 List?

KAY: Some experiences were exciting, adrenaline-inducing. But others were more personal and made us look inward. Going to a Kabbalah class for the

first time was fascinating. Test-driving a Maserati was exhilarating. Another week it was the simple task of trying to be more kind and patient with family members.

PG: Rock climbing, dance lessons, an African art class... It didn't matter what we did—it's the act of *doing something* that is transformative. It has a ripple effect.

How's your friendship?

PG: We are yin and yang!

KAY: We're very different—but we've gotten so much satisfaction from having completed a project like this with a friend.

PG: We did many of our own 52 things separately, but we provided an important support system for each other.

What's next?

PG: We're thinking about expanding the idea into workshops. The feedback has been so positive. It's very inspiring. If we can help other people in this way—it's a really great feeling.

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