

CITY LIFE

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Jackie Harvey talks about hormones

by **VIKKI HOPES**
Abbotsford News

Jackie Harvey won't be retiring anytime soon; she has too much work left to do.

The public speaker and seminar leader, who turned 60 this year, is intent on sharing her knowledge about hormone health with as many women as she can. The task is never-ending.

"I think hormone challenges are going to escalate [over time]," she said.

Harvey, a Mission resident, has spent more than a dozen years researching issues such as PMS and menopause and sharing her knowledge – in layman's terms – with anyone who will listen.

These days, that entails standing-room-only audiences across North America consisting mainly of women desperate for answers on how to manage their fluctuating hormones and gain relief from often-debilitating symptoms.

What is most surprising about this mother of seven is that she has no medical background or university degree, but simply an unquenchable thirst to empower women to take control of their health.

"We ought to be taking more responsibility for ourselves and become involved in the decision-making," Harvey said.

Over the years, she has connected with the top medical experts in the field of hormone health, including Dr. John Lee, the author of several bestselling books, including *What Your Doctor May Not Tell You About Menopause*.

Lee, who died in 2003, was one of the first medical professionals to speak out against hormone replacement therapy and the detrimental effects to women's health.

His research was validated by the 2002 Women's Health Initiative study involving more than 161,000 women. The government-funded study was concluded two years early because it showed that women taking the synthetic hormone combination of estrogen-progestin – versus the placebo group – were experiencing increased risk of heart attack, stroke, blood clots and breast cancer.

Harvey, too, was buoyed by the study. It confirmed everything that she had been telling women over the years: that traditional hormone replacement therapy (HRT) can be dangerous.

Harvey said that, as time goes on, everything she has learned and shared is becoming more accepted.

"What I do is becoming much more

credible and believed more and more by the medical field," she said.

Harvey said the biggest problem is overcoming long-standing beliefs that date back to the 1940s. Estrogen was the first studied hormone and was shown to play a role in issues such as hot flashes, insomnia, migraines, and mood changes. A pharmaceutical company developed medication to deal with it, and HRT became the standard treatment for the next few decades.

Doctors treated women going through perimenopause and menopause for what they believed were low estrogen levels. Harvey said that, in fact, most women are actually "estrogen dominant" due to factors such as hormone-laden foods, use of the birth control pill, and the use of

herbicides and pesticides in the environment.

She said the role of estrogen is to grow, multiply and divide cells, and an overload of the hormone can lead to things such as ovarian

cysts, fibroids, thyroid dysfunction, osteoporosis, miscarriages, and breast cancer.

So while HRT may have provided women with some relief from their hormonal symptoms, it put their health at even greater risk, Harvey said.

She said an additional factor is that a crucial part of the equation was missing in the early studies about women's hormones: the role of progesterone.

Harvey said women need a balance of estrogen and progesterone in order to feel their best and be their healthiest. Most women are high in estrogen and low in progesterone, and it is this imbalance that causes difficulties, she said.

Harvey said that a "two-pronged approach" – lowering estrogen levels and in-

creasing progesterone – brings amazing relief, but the key is knowing how to do this.

She advocates first doing a "saliva test," as opposed to a blood test, for evaluating hormone levels. Some women might need a slightly different approach than others, and it's important to know the extent of the imbalance, Harvey said. The test involves collecting saliva in a test tube and sending it off to a lab. (Kits can be ordered through Harvey. The cost is not covered by B.C. medical and must be paid for in full by the purchaser.)

Estrogen is lowered by following a diet rich in fiber and cruciferous vegetables (such as broccoli and cauliflower);

using supplements such as vitamins and essential fatty acids; and exercising regularly.

Progesterone is increased by the use of a bio-identical (not synthetic) progesterone cream. It is applied to the body on areas such as the face, neck or chest.

Harvey said most doctors are not familiar with this approach, and it is up to women to do their homework.

"It is all about education – finding out what you need to know to make the very, very best decision about your hormone health, and just don't assume," she said.

Harvey said any woman can benefit from knowing her hormone levels and making adjustments where needed, even if her symptoms are relatively minor.

"If you don't intervene in your 30s, it will escalate in your 40s, and you'll have a tougher time with menopause . . . It's really important to resolve the issues."

Harvey said men can also benefit from hormone evaluation, as prostate and testicular cancer can be related to hormonal imbalances.

She discusses more about the issues in her DVD *Let's Talk About Hormones*. More information is also available at the website HelpForHormones.com.

As well, three seminars are held next month in the Fraser Valley. Tickets for each seminar are \$20 in advance or \$30 at the door.

The *Let's Talk About Hormones* seminars take place:

■ Thursday, Nov. 1 at 7:30 p.m. – St. James elementary, 2767 Townline Rd. in Abbotsford. Call Laurelle at 604-855-9678 or Carla at 604-857-5219.

■ Tuesday, Nov. 6 at 7 p.m. – Best Western Mission City Lodge on Lougheed Highway. Call Bonnie at 604-859-3645.

■ Thursday, Nov. 8 at 7 p.m. – Best Western ABC in Langley at 5978 Glover Rd.

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– Jackie Harvey, leader of Let's Talk About Hormones seminars

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Navy-blue suit Elvin's only hope to get job

It's almost 6:30 on Friday evening as Elvin lifts the bulging white plastic bag onto the counter.

"Never seen a guy in a fancy suit cashing in cans to buy a burrito before."

The convenience store clerk rubs his thumb and forefinger together in a mocking gesture.

"Young hotshots running a little short these days?"

"Smart guys don't waste their money," Elvin shoots back.

Elvin Stringer is on his way home from looking for part-time jobs after school. He hasn't eaten today.

He's only 16 but looks like a young professional. Navy business suit, light-blue Oxford dress shirt, burgundy striped tie and highly polished black wingtips.

His whole outfit came off the faded mannequin in the front window of the

Rainbow Thrift Store.

Dorothy Givens, a volunteer, sets up the window displays for the store. For several days, in the late afternoon, she had seen a scrawny teenager in a baggy green nylon jacket staring through the front window.

Last Friday, Dorothy motioned him into the store. "You like nice clothes? Trying to impress a girl?"

"No, ma'am. I want to be a professional and work downtown. If I had business clothes, I might have a chance of getting a good job. My mom needs help."

"Want to try on the suit?" "I've got no money."

"Pay me back when you get work. Smaller sizes are hard to sell anyway."

Elvin doesn't know it, but Dorothy has met his mother. She works at the drycleaner's and babysits



ALLEN UNRAU
Young and Old Alike



on weekends to make extra money for food.

Dorothy knows that Elvin's father blows his welfare cheques on the horses. They live in a tiny green bungalow with a moss-covered roof. A rusty truck frame holds up the sagging front porch.

Dorothy pays for Elvin's new outfit herself, but

doesn't tell him.

Elvin changes into the suit every day after school. Everyone in the neighbourhood laughs as he walks to the corner.

"Look at the skinny dweeb in the banker duds!"

Then he rides the bus downtown and visits glass office towers. Occasionally, personnel officers interview him. When they discover his real age and lack of experience, they tell him to try burger joints.

On Friday, he finally gets a promising interview at Tradonex Corporation, but again he's turned down.

"We don't hire 16-year-olds."

Elvin spends the next hour scouring a downtown park for enough cans and bottles to pay for something to eat and bus fare home.

Then he rushes over to the convenience store.

"Where'd you get that classy suit?"

The question comes from a middle-aged man in a black suit standing behind him in line. His short-clipped grey hair is rumpled, and he's not wearing a tie.

Elvin's tempted to say Nordstrom's. Instead, he looks down at the floor and mumbles, "Rainbow Thrift Store."

"How much?"

"Thirty."

"Good deal. They take American Express?"

Elvin hangs his head. "I haven't paid for it yet. The thrift store lady said she would trust me to pay her back when I got a job."

"Is that why you got the suit?"

"Yes, sir. I'll do whatever I can to get ahead. My mom really needs my help."

The man looks thoughtful. "Honest. Not afraid to get dirty. Determined to succeed."

He points a finger in Elvin's face.

"Next time, put those qualities on your resume."

He hands Elvin a card.

"My office has a beautiful view of the park. I've been watching you for the past hour as I made my calls. Personnel said a kid in a suit had been in looking for a job. Never seen a guy in a three-button Armani scrounging for cans down there before. Come see me Monday afternoon."

Dumbfounded, Elvin looks at the card. It reads, "Calvin Giles, President, Tradonex Corporation."

Allen Unrau writes fictional stories about real-life issues.

Comments?
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Slice of
Life

UCFV and Learning Plus

Kim Lawrence, director of marketing and communications at UCFV, speaks at the Abbotsford Learning Plus Society's annual general meeting on Thursday, Oct. 18.

The meeting begins at 2 p.m. at the Seniors Resource Centre, 2478 McCallum Rd.

Lawrence will discuss the new partnership that UCFV has formed with Learning Plus.

Network news

The Abbotsford chapter of the Valley Women's Network holds its monthly luncheon on Tuesday, Oct. 16 at the ABC restaurant (32080 Marshall Rd.).

The event runs from noon to 1:30 p.m. Cost is \$15 for members, \$17 for non-members. This month's speaker is lifetime member Peggy Allen, who discusses *How Well Do You Know Your Network?*

Reservations are required by calling Desneige at 604-854-5277 or e-mailing vwv@memorycastings.com.

Stamp club meets

The Fraser Valley Philatelic Club holds its monthly get-together on Monday, Oct. 15 for the purpose of learning about the hobby of postage-stamp collecting and for trading.

The meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. at Abbotsford Senior Secondary, 2329 Crescent Way. For more information, call 604-945-1017 or send an e-mail to ingruss@telus.net

Back to their roots

The Abbotsford Genealogical Society meets Tuesday, Oct. 16 at Clearbrook Library (32320 George Ferguson Way).

The meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. Speaker Roy Kelly presents *Legacy Program: Tips for Tyros*.

For more information, visit www.abbvgs.ca.

New group for cancer

A new drop-in peer support group has formed in Abbotsford for young adults who are battling cancer or who have survived the disease.

The group is open to those between the ages of 18 and 40. For more information, call Julie at 604-820-6581.

Travel club for singles

The Singles Travel Club gets together on Monday, Oct. 15 at Crossroads Restaurant, 1821 Sumas Way.

The meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. The club offers group tours for single people.

For more information visit singlestravelclub.ca or call Val at 1-888-552-1552.

Meetings at legion

The ladies' auxiliary of the Abbotsford Royal Canadian Legion holds its monthly meeting on Thursday, Oct. 18 at 10 a.m.

The branch meeting takes place Saturday, Oct. 20 at 10 a.m.