

Every once in a while, a book comes along that will change society for the better..

This year it's the publication of 'Silver Wolf', written for the millions now in their fifties, suggesting that they create a Grand Plan to make their Third Act the best years of their life..

*Martin Gates* finds out more, in this exclusive interview with the author, *Peter Carvell*.



# Who is Silver Wolf?

**MG:** Let me say right now, that I think 'Silver Wolf' is a great book, which could change the lives of anyone over 50. But for those who have not yet read it, what is your key message?

**PC:** "It's very simple. I suggest that, at some time, probably in your fifties, you should think about starting a new life. I call this your Third Act, because it is a third life quite different from the first two.

"By the time you're, say 55, you've worked hard full time, for 30 to 35 years, to pay the mortgage and bring up a family, and you deserve to stop and ask yourself what you want to do for the rest of your life.

"This is the time to go back to those dreams that got lost in the hectic work years, sort out what you want to do, what you want to learn, and what you aim to achieve in the next 20 years. Then work out how you will do all these in your Third Act. I call that your Grand Plan, and this becomes the blueprint for the rest of your life".

**MG:** But you recommend people go

on working, don't you? A lot of people aren't going to like you for that!

**PC:** "I don't think that retirement, in the way our parents just stepped out of life, makes any sense today. Retirement was possibly alright when it was only for a few years, when you worked to 65 and died on average at 69. But we live in a very different world now. Many people are often retired now by 57, and then can expect to live at least 20 more good years. You can't 'retire' for 20 years. That's nonsense.

"Also, work is good for us. We are, by nature, working creatures; without work, play becomes work. I have a friend who thought that stopping work in his fifties meant he could play golf every day. After six months, going to the golf course became worse than going to the office. So, he started another company, where he could work three days a week.

"Anyhow, most of us will probably have to continue doing some work for purely financial reasons. Our pensions have failed to perform, the State Pension

is a joke, so we have to go on earning".

**MG:** But you're not saying that we should go on working until we drop, are you?

**PC:** "No, never. Simply work for as much and as long as you want to. You can do this now, because the world of work changes on October 1st, 2006. That's when the Age Discrimination Act makes it illegal to sack anyone under 65 on grounds of age; and, just as important, to stop anyone being retrained on grounds of age.

"What this will mean is that part-time working becomes much more usual. Companies can keep the experience and contacts of the older worker on a part-time basis, and you can continue to work and enjoy staying part of the working life, but work gradually less - four, three or two days a week".

**MG:** One of the chapters in 'Silver Wolf' that I particularly enjoyed was your debunking of the myths of age. Are you sure that we're not all going to become senile?

**PC:** “No way. Our parents were told that, but we now know that it's not so. Nothing happens to our minds or bodies at any particular age. We lose a few million brain cells each year, but still have 97% of them when we're 70. We lose a bit of body strength each year, which is why exercise is far more important over 50, but we can still live normal lives. We don't automatically have any more illnesses than we did earlier. And, if we do, the incredible advances in medical knowledge ensure that your Third Act is full of quality years”.

**MG:** Can we determine how long we live, and influence what kind of life we have in our Third Act?

**PC:** “Yes. It's another myth that our genes determine how long we'll live. In fact, genes are only 30% of the story; the rest is up to us. What I point out in 'Silver Wolf' is that there's not much point in letting your mind or body go to seed, if you want to have a great life for another 25 years.

“So, I suggest that we all get our bodies fit for a happy Third Act. For most of us, that means cutting back on the booze, cutting out smoking, and eating more sensibly, in a way that helps the body's immune system. Once we've started that new programme, then it's worthwhile rediscovering the joys of exercise. It really doesn't matter what exercise - walking to the station, using the stairs not the lift, swimming a dozen lengths, completing the circuit in the gym - just get the body alive again”.

**MG:** But you mention another way in 'Silver Wolf', of far more interest!

**PC:** “You mean sex?”

**MG:** Yes. Tell us more.

**PC:** “It's the end of another of those myths, that sex ends at 50. In fact, all the surveys show that people are happier with their sex lives in their Third Act than in the previous 25 years. Once the kids leave home, sex steps in the door, kind of thing. And long may it last, as the medical world now seems convinced that sex is their new wonder drug! According to them, sex helps prevent heart attacks, helps get rid of love handles, helps take away your stress and gives you an aura of happiness. I'm not certain how they can prove all this, but it's not a bad excuse to enjoy some happy loving”.

**MG:** I think making your Grand Plan is a lovely dream, but wouldn't millions really be far happier just retiring? They just want to stop work and do nothing, don't they?

**PC:** “Of course, some do. I just suggest in 'Silver Wolf' that most people might like to consider a different way to enjoy the next 20 or more years. This is where we come to more myths about ageing, the belief that retirement is a happy time, and that most people want to retire. Both of these beliefs are simply wrong for most people.

“It's true that, at 40, most people think they want to retire early, but by 55 they know that they don't want to retire. Most can't afford to retire, and are certainly aware that retirement does not usually bring happiness”.

**MG:** Alright, I'll start making my Grand Plan. But is the Age Discrimination Act really going to make tremendous changes?

**PC:** “Yes, eventually. Just as the Sex Discrimination and the Race Discrimination Acts did. But the changes

will come gradually. Ageism will linger on, and it'll still be a disadvantage for a few years to look old. That's why I suggest in 'Silver Wolf' that some older people should think about the way they look, the way they act, and their attitudes to others”.

**MG:** What attitudes?

**PC:** “Oh, you know, the archetypal attitudes that a certain kind of older person has. There's a chapter in 'Silver Wolf', on how you should behave if you really want to be old. Like grumbling at everything, hating the young, always talking about the past, always forgetting where you put anything. And, in particular, always being not very well”.

**MG:** Well, I hope that 'Silver Wolf' is a best seller, and that it really does change the lives of millions. Thank you for coming down here today.

**PC:** “Thank you for inviting me. I hope 'Silver Wolf' sells well, but also that it will help readers to get their Third Act right, so that they can enjoy the happiest years of their life.”

\* 'Silver Wolf' by Peter Carvell is published on 21 September by Delancey Press at £9.99, and will be available from Amazon and good booksellers. Or, you can order your copy direct from Surrey Occasions Magazine, which has a number of copies signed by the author.

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