

**Dawn BlyBurton**

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### **For Immediate Release**

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### **6 Reasons for Returning to College in Your 40s**

After 21 years as a domestic engineer (aka Momhood), Beth Stoner, 47, said she decided to go back to school to get her master's degree in Clinical Mental Health Therapy.

She said the transition back to school came with its own set of challenges and questions.

“Am I being selfish taking this money and time away from my family? Does everyone look at me like I am crazy going to school at my age?” she said. “I still have many of these doubts surface periodically. But my husband, Dan, has been my biggest supporter. After a 4-hour admissions interview, I was distressed and feeling doubt, he said, ‘You are very smart, you just have not given yourself a chance to prove it’.”

What would motivate a 40 something year old woman to actively pursue a college degree and a different profession when halfway between entering the workforce and retirement?

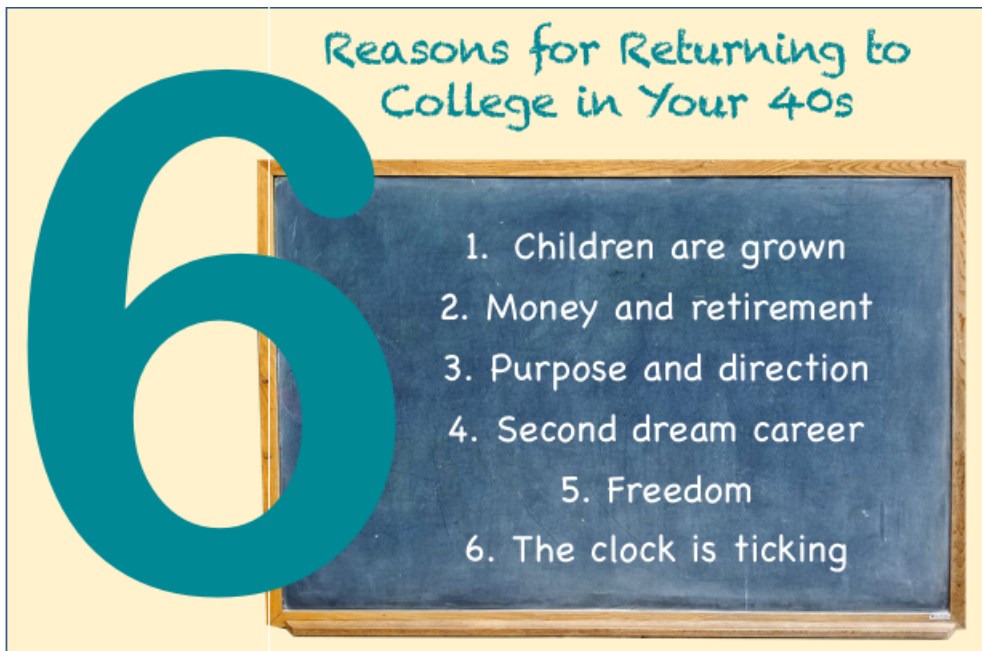
At the age of 40+, pursuing an education and different profession is a bit like gambling. Will the individual walk away with a big payout, break-even, or lose it all? What about missing time with their family? Is retirement a consideration?

Stoner, who lives in Happy Valley, Oregon, married with three children (one under 18), and Robyn Robinson (52) of Damascus, Oregon, married with two grown boys and three step-children (two under 18) share their top 6 reasons for choosing a different path and changing professions in their 40s.

Top 6 Reasons –

1. Children are grown. “Now, I can pursue my educational dream without taking time away from my children,” Stoner said.
2. Money and retirement. “Because of divorce,” said Robinson, “I needed a more steady source of income.” With a slightly different financial focus, Stoner said, “I need to save for retirement.”
3. Purpose and direction. “I sought to confirm to myself that I am smart enough to achieve this degree,” said Stoner.

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Infographic created by Dawn Burton

4. Second dream career. “My first career was as a hairstylist/business owner for 30 years. It was the right time to invest in nursing,” said Robinson.

5. Freedom. A motivation for Robinson was the freedom in nursing and the “ability to move to different states”.

6. The clock is ticking. Simple words for a complex change is reason six. Stoner admitted, “Not getting any younger!” While Robinson said she “needed a change in life.”

Robinson’s said her decision to return to school after 30 years as a hair stylist with her own business was based more on freedom.

“I never questioned my decision,” she said. “However, I wanted to quit a few times because school was stressful.”

She said there was a supportive community around her during the time she was studying.

The average cost of returning to school, according to the 2016-17 Standard Student Budgets for Oregon Postsecondary Institutions, an average cost of attending an Oregon Public University is about \$25,000. In addition, according to a report by Transamerica Center for retirement studies (August 2016), 86% of Generation X agree on some level that Social Security will not be there when they retire.

“It was expensive,” Robinson said. “However, I did get a scholarship that helped tremendously.”

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“I felt that school would be an investment for the future. I had, and still have, a great deal of apprehension regarding the money and feel some pressure,” Stoner said. “What if I fail? But I am very confident of employment after graduation.”

Based on the words of Stoner and Robinson, the choice to return to school in your 40s is not one to make lightly. The time and financial investments are often partnered with the desire and drive to secure a position in the preferred profession. Will the payout be enough?

The time is now Generation X to roll the dice.

For more information on going back to school, consider your emotional investment and commitment to succeed, then visit FAFSA4caster, an online worksheet provided by Federal Student Aid to help to understand the options for paying for college.

“It's better to have tried and failed than never tried, you can rest easy knowing you gave it a go.” Katherine Kelly

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