



Possible Interview Questions: Topics to Talk About with the Authors

Side by Side: The Sacred Art of Couples Aging with Wisdom & Love

Caryl & Jay Casbon

www.SidebySideAging.com

The Story Behind the Book

1. Why did you pursue this five-year project of interviewing aging couples?
2. How did you choose the couples to interview?
3. In the book, you mention “soul stories versus ego stories.” What do you mean by this distinction? Why the focus on story?
4. Why did you dedicate your book to your therapist?
5. As a couple, what was it like to work together, and how did this experience of interviewing, writing, and producing a book impact your relationship?
6. What surprised you the most as a result of your findings in the *Side by Side* project?

Insights and Advice about Relationships

1. Why do you state in your book that **couples are invisible**, neglected, and often not valued in this culture?
2. What are four **practices** you learned from this project that can improve a relationship?

3. What do you mean by **relational fitness** and the significance of the practices of mutuality and vulnerability in marriages?
4. What is “**relational mindfulness**,” and what is its relationship to relational fitness?
5. Why do you claim committed relationships are **spiritual journeys** and crucibles for transformation?
6. How can relationships which are **committed to nonviolent practices and growth** be a catalyst for evolutionary awakening and ancestral healing in families and for the broader culture?
7. What do you mean by “**You marry your unfinished business?**”
8. What do the interviewees say about “**what love means now**” in this elder season of life?
9. How did “**the Beatitudes for Couples**” come about? How might readers embody “the Beatitudes for Couples”?
10. Why is **shadow work** so critical to the health of a relationship in these stories?
11. What **stories** stand out to you from your interviews?
12. Why is cultivating a **spiritual** relationship with the Divine (or whatever you call Great Mystery) critical to the long-term health of a relationship?
13. What place do kindness, mercy, and **forgiveness** hold in relationships?
14. What do you mean by the importance of couples respecting their different stories about similar events?
15. What did you learn from these couples about addressing **conflict**?
16. What are some ways couples can respect and negotiate their **personality** differences?

The Influences of Aging & Retirement in Relationships

1. How does **living and traveling together in an RV** create conditions similar to what couples experience in retirement?
2. What insights did you gain about the, “**the dance between me & we**” as people retire and spend more time together?

3. What are the **gifts of aging**? How do these gifts influence relationships?
4. How do we “**welcome the stranger**” in each other and ourselves as we age?
5. What do people most **fear** about the final chapter of life?
6. How did you find these couples addressing **end-of-life issues**?
7. Knowing they don’t have endless years left together, how did you witness this reality impacting the couples you interviewed?
8. What did you learn about the nuances of **caretaking** in committed relationships? How do the inevitable health challenges that accompany aging impact relationships?
9. How do toxic individuality, **ageism**, and rigid gender roles impact the relationships of this generation? Did you gain any other insights about the **Baby Boomer** generation through this project?
10. What did you observe about how these individuals are creating meaning and purpose in **retirement**?
11. What have the interviewees taught you about their roles with their adult children and grandchildren? What does **legacy**, as a couple, mean to them?
12. How does a healthy, growing, thriving couple influence and contribute to society? What do you mean by the **beneficial presence** of elder couples?

Our Dreams for the Readers

1. What can couples hope to gain from reading this book? What is the best way to read it?
2. How can readers get the most out of this book project?
3. Who can benefit from reading *Side by Side*? What are the cross-generational opportunities?
4. What are your dreams in terms of the perceived potential for this book, both for use with couples and couples’ groups? What impact do you hope it will make?

Authors' Bio

Caryl & Jay Casbon are the co-authors of a new book called *Side by Side: The Sacred Art of Couples Aging with Wisdom & Love*. They first met at Lewis & Clark College in 1995. Their shared life of common passions includes interfaith studies, learning, story, pilgrimage, travel, and family. Caryl devotes her time to writing, ministry, spiritual direction, and creating spaces for inner work. Jay's lifelong professional journey focused on higher education, leadership, learning, research, and religious art history. Married since 2001, the Casbons live in Santa Barbara, California. They offer extended learning opportunities for working with couples' groups, online seminars, and in-person retreats. To learn more and to see interview videos with the couples featured in the book, visit SideBySideAging.com. Side by Side is available from your favorite bookseller.

For more about Caryl and Jay go to <https://sidebysideaging.com/about/>