



Jay refused to be invisible after retiring..



She's upped her fitness game...

...celebrated the launch of her book



'Don't call me a c

At 65, **Jay Courtney**, believes so strongly age is just a number, she's written a book telling us why 'at your age' is a good thing to hear. We're listening

Handing over a copy of the book to each of my daughters, I waited patiently while they read the dedication page.

To my powerful and beautiful daughters and my wonderful and magical granddaughters. My wish for you is that, by the time you become crones, you will wonder what I was making such a fuss about.

My eldest burst into tears and my youngest was speechless. It was a special moment, especially as I was the author of those words – and of the book. It had been an important journey and one that was spurred by my passion for equality and all while championing wonderful women from everyday life...

For as long as I could remember, I'd always been working towards something. I'd dedicated myself to raising my two wonderful grown-up daughters alongside a busy career in education and public health.

I'd always been active – enjoying

'If there's one thing I've learned'
Age is just a number. These last few years have been some of the richest in my life and I've enjoyed every moment of adventuring.

walking, crafting, reading and socialising. And in my early 50s, I'd gone through the menopause. It was a tough time both physically and mentally but, back then, there seemed to be a conspiracy of silence around the subject and it felt like the start of becoming less visible in society.

I loved my work, but I hadn't realised how much my sense of self was wrapped up in my role. I hadn't been thinking about retirement but, after being diagnosed with chronic fatigue syndrome in 2012 (which led to lots of time off), I had to make a decision. I realised I wasn't going to be able to give work my all, and so in 2016, aged 58, I'd retired.

I never thought for a moment that I'd struggle with it. I had my hobbies, loved looking after my grandkids, but the pace seemed to change. I didn't identify with what I thought were outdated labels for retirees... pensioner, post-

menopausal, granny. I'd always advocated for equality and found 'ageism' unexpected and damaging.

The most offensive was when I went for appointments with medical professionals and the term 'at your age' kept cropping up. I'd been so excited about this next stage in my life, but I'd quickly felt at a loss. When I asked a retired friend how she was coping, she said: 'I find things to fill my time.'

So, I joined some local groups, did some solo hiking, but I drew the line at attending an art group at a local nursing home. 'I just can't do it,' I said to my daughters.

I'd always been an equal at work, enjoyed being part of a mixed, vibrant, young team. But the retired world felt old-fashioned. I'd gone from feeling invincible to invisible and needed to find ways to shake off the 'greige'. I couldn't live the next 30 years of my life like this. And I didn't want my daughters – or granddaughters – feeling like