



## IAm Getting Older So What!

Ink Free # 22

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I enjoy sharing a few of my photographs on Facebook. Many do. It makes no difference if you use X, Instagram, Tick Tock, or any platform; a healthy group of good folks post images they feel worthy of sharing. Other posters chronicle their travels, experiences, meals, and humorous signs. All in good fun. That is the bright side.

Social media attracts its unfair share of bullies, unqualified critics, and just plain junk. We all know that and continue to post our stuff. No one endorses, never encourages the negatives, yet the dark side lives.

When younger, I likely never understood the concept of aging. We were too busy being young, exploring our egos, and testing the envelope. 'Age is just a number' took the place of genuine empathy. We did our fair share of mocking, joking, and lord knows what. Perhaps not to people we knew, but likely to the older generation in general. Not everyone did, of course, yet I need honesty here to accept a broader view of the aging journey. I clearly saw their wisdom, enjoyed the memories, and sat in awe of their accomplishments and talents. Yet they were old, and who wants that!

Facebook, oh my Facebook. The platform for the unaccountable, the facts never matter, the hurt veiled inside jokes and humor. I know not why this offends me so, yet it does. The poking fun or shaming of body size, IQ, or aging; totally annoying by any measure. For example, someone posts an image saying 99% will not see the cat, or other words your all dummies. Other posts show four types of food and ask which one you would toss out. I spend as little time as I can, nanoseconds, on these. The posts that cause me to lose my patience and sometimes respond in near anger show a picture of an old potato peeler, early toaster, or kitchen tool no longer available on the market. "I am so old that I remember these," the poster blurted in bold type. Comments are often, "Oh, my grandma had one," or "Sadly, I remember that too." Sadly, really! Sadly, you remember a 'church key,' a rotary phone, or a black-and-white TV with only three stations. What's wrong with that? What is terrible about having more experiences and more memories?

### What is wrong with getting older?

Humans inject vaccines to live longer, we transplant organs, giving more years to our bodies, and we advance medicine to prevent infant deaths. Consider the fact that warding off polio and repairing a heart do not pass on to the next generation. These are fixes for just us, not life. It is all about us. Add to the equation our need to look beautiful or be socially acceptable. We want to live longer and look good too. And more do we do to live longer. Preventing viruses, bacteria, or the like also means our weaknesses pass to our offspring. Unlike the Elk or Bear with the most substantial soul best suited to adapt to change is replaced by the best-kept people, not necessarily the strongest. Before you cry out, "Life is most important," I am only saying that more people are aging now than 100 years ago. With the we live the positives, there might be consequences. We a product is recalled the focus on keeping more people alive than ever in human history. It is what we want. What about the future generations. No natural selection, few immunities, more people. So what is wrong with getting older? Noth-

ing wrong for each of us, but the future, well that is above my pay grade to worry about.

Major news outlets both report / interpret the daily news. These web pages fill space with poorly written stories or events, often proclaiming some bias point of view. Recently, on Fox News, a story called "What we did that is now illegal." Drinking from the hose, riding in the bed of a pickup truck, licking the beaters after the cookies made it to the oven, drinking from a mountain stream, and more. None of this is illegal. The author argues that we are wiser now and do a better job of staying alive. Perhaps we do, but what does that do for the future? Ponder all we want; their message is to stop change, live longer, and focus on today.

Senior citizens witness more incredible changes, than those half the age, and complete with an entire pipeline inventions spewing out daily. Older folks experienced change, knowing that change is a constant in our lives. Some argue that the old values disappear with time, and I agree. My parents, post-World War II, knew how to conserve and use what they had. Milk, soda drinks, and much more came in recyclable containers. Grocery bags ended up as school book covers and cookie cooling platforms. We ate what we could afford, called the older generation by Mr., Mrs., or Grandma—never using their first names. Etiquette of respect! Chores, allowances, and spankings forged respect for others and enforced right and wrong values.

I clearly remember those lessons enforced with some discipline or grounding. It's different today, for sure. Change comes with positives and consequences. Such it is in life. I offer no judgment here, yet suggest that the older folk also have experience, ideas, and minds. As the body wears out, be it the brain, knees, kidney, or heart, it does not mean that getting old is wrong. On the contrary, I say, it means all life forms live a finite time. Humans appear also a need to find cause or blame. A

connection, "scientists say," exists between colon cancer and cooking oil. We now assign blame and empower ourselves to fix the problem. Remember, there are now more people on the planet and the largest aging population than ever. Reproduction and some sort of evolution continue while we each are a brief flash in time.

When I see a media post mocking age, I often respond. "Yes, I remember Ed Murrow, Howdy Doody, and party phone lines, and I am proud of that. These events, memories, and changes make me who I am today. I am an octogenarian who is comfortable being me without needing superpowers or more comfort. Hey, young fellow, you will be here too and might then understand that respect for how you got here is a good human trait."

Getting older, I embrace aging, which is about accepting what I can not do and doing what I can. It is my choice each dawn to look at the day, assess my capabilities, and do that which is fun, rewarding, and hopefully educational. I value being able to make these daily choices.

### Ink Free

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Pondering along in old age without fear, excepting what I can do Enjoying every minute  
of it!