

Our chapters 14 and 15 topic for discussion was about our hopes and fears regarding imminent old age, specifically the age of 80. What do we need to do right now, what do we need to change, in order for our hopes to be recognized and our fears to be suppressed? What is in our control and what is not? Where do I want to be in my life at this age?

Jul 17, 2012

Christine Gardner

Well for starters I hope I'm alive! Having had a great deal of experience with Oma in a nursing home, and most recently my mother within the last several weeks, I know enough that I don't ever want to end up in one. I hope to have been able to have worked long enough and be in a good place financially to have been retired for a bit. I hope my children are decent, productive members of society, that they are happy and healthy and don't forget about their old mum and visit me. I want to be Betty White of 2060! That's the year I will turn 90. I think that little lady got it goin on! I love her. I think her wit and attitude are so admirable. I want to feel like that and be like that.

I think if I could get over my guilty feelings and learn to accept myself, I will make it ok. For me it's the next 10 years that will be the hardest and the truest test, and once I hit my 50's and begin my career (btw, 50 is my 30, I've just decided) I will be able to resolve the conflict with myself. If I have too much time to dwell it will hurt me. So I will need to stay as active as possible in every way - physically, socially, mentally, and emotionally. Once I retire at 75 I will start my garden (I've always loved working in the yard, even pulling weeds!) and (hopefully) entertaining grandkids. I don't know if I will ever have another husband, but either way is fine. I'm not sure I'd want to go down that road again anyway because I think the recovery from the 1st one has taken years off my life. But it's ok because 100 will be the new 80 by the time I get there. :)

I think my chances are good biologically to make it to 80, maybe even 85. Oma lived to be 84 with serious health problems, and didn't care for doctors, she did not take care of herself and had a terribly fat European diet rich in butter and fat. It was only in the last few months of her life that she got really sick and deteriorated quickly, thankfully only having to stay in the nursing home 6 weeks or so before she passed away. My grandfather on my dad's side lived to be 97, and he was a vet of WWII and smoked for 30 years before quitting cold turkey when he turned 50. He had moved to Arizona with my grandmother in the early 90's like a lot of retirees do for the warm climate. He remained active and played shuffleboard and puttered around in his little woodshop, went on walks every day, also up until the very end when he got pneumonia, and it did not take long for him to pass. I think I have relatively good genes, so I am hopeful, despite not always taking the best care of myself.

I would say my song would be "I Will Survive", mainly because I have so far! Always loved that song. I remember Opa taking us ice skating as little kids and they always played it. Excellent tune. :)

Jul 17, 2012

Kylee

I also hope that I am alive. I would love to see all the changes in the world throughout my lifetime.

Jul 17, 2012

Lara

Agreed re: Betty White! Have you watched Betty White's Off Their Rockers? It's hilarious. A good dose of anti-stereotype. [Link](#)

The compressed morbidity that Christine describes of her grandparents is such a blessing. Often in trying to extend the lifespan, all we extend is illness and suffering.

Jul 17, 2012

Nicolli

I love your words and your feelings about family I feel I am getting to know you through your words and I like that. I love that you are family oriented that is how we are too.

Jul 17, 2012

Christine Gardner

O you're so nice! Me as well. I love this class and these discussions for that very reason! :)

Jul 17, 2012

Arthur

Oh my gosh I laughs so hard when I watched that show. It is great to see some old people having a good time with what the younger generation thinks they are like! I hope that I can laugh and have fun when I am in my 80s!

Jul 17, 2012

Andrea

Betty White is awesome!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Jul 18, 2012

Mary

Christine, I also hope my children will be responsible, caring and productive members of society, happy with their lives and families. I think I would be at ease with passing away, if I knew they were all happy and healthy and had found love in their lives. After all, a piece of ourselves lives on in our children and as noted in other comments we all want our lives to have had meaning. If I have children that are a positive influence in this world and in the lives of others, when I am 80, I will feel that I succeeded.

Jul 19, 2012

Melissa

I totally agree Betty White is awesome! Love her spunk.

The one thing that I do like about the active retirement homes that are springing up everywhere in the valley, is that it allows people of the same age group be closer together. They are all able to enjoy each other, socialize, be active, and have friends close to them that are in the same point in their lives. My grandmother, was very active until she retired because she moved into a retirement area that didn't have a ton of activities, her health has deteriorated big time. Has had 3 spats with cancer and now has to be on oxygen 24 hours a day. My other grandmother, moved into a retirement area that did have activities and social gatherings, her health has ski rocketed and I have issues getting a hold of her on the phone because she is always out doing something. Her health has drastically increased for the better.

Jul 19, 2012

Trisha

I agree with Melissa that retirement centers have come a long way from what they once were. It is sure a lot better than being alone with no one to care for you.

Gardening sounds like a great hobby...if only I could keep a plant alive

Jul 20, 2012

Christine Gardner

Trisha I have no skills at keeping indoor plants alive, but outside is a different story. They are much more hearty! :)

And I'm sure you're right about the retirement homes, but I don't think I will ever get the smell of the one Oma was in out of my mind....it's burned on my brain. It was just a very sweet, sick smell. People there told me it was cancer. I actually liked the girls that took care of Oma, for me the hard part was knowing I could not take care of her myself, and that she ended up in the very place she wanted to be least of all. Fortunately it didn't last long.

Jul 20, 2012

Holly

I agree...it would be nice/weird to see how society changes when I'm an old fart.

I chose to put my contribution to this discussion into my portfolio because it was such fun to see what other people's feelings were about aging, what their attitude was about the whole, inevitable process. I think it's healthy to admit what you are afraid of, and I think death is scary. We all approached it in a lighthearted way, given the subject matter, and it made it easier to talk about. I learned that the way I take care of myself now will have an impact on the manner and speed in which I age, beyond just tangible, physical changes, but emotionally and cognitively as well. Relationships with family and friends seem to be what my classmates valued most, and they are critical in every stage of development as we move through life. I know I want to be around to see my children grow and know they are ok. Although there is nothing I can do to delay the inevitability of senescence, if I know now what to expect and about when it may happen, there is much I can do to be proactive to help delay it. I feel more courageous and less frightened about it happening. I want to be at peace not just when I die, but

before, so I can enjoy my old age. What I do now in my life will determine whether that is possible or not.