

## Getting Old

By George Underhill

I've not been feeling very well lately. I won't bore you with the details of my ailments, but the words of John Barrymore come to mind. "He neither drank, smoked, nor rode a bicycle. Living frugally, saving his money, he died early surrounded by greedy relatives. It was a great lesson for me." At my age, and with my body failing me, I have to keep that in mind. I'm now paying for the recklessness and intemperate living of my youth, but I'd regret it had I lived a staid and very careful life.

There are positives about getting old. For example, I don't really have to be overly concerned about eating BBQ. The accumulation of purported toxins will be eclipsed by my life expectancy. The same goes for fish with mercury, dioxins and other chemicals. By the time I have ingested sufficient toxins to kill me, I'll already be dead. So char that steak, baby, and BBQ that farmed salmon. As an aside, I read that tilapia will eat garbage, sort of like suckers, but they taste all right and may even be good for you. The downside of my appetite is that I don't seem to be able to eat as much. In my younger days, I would down a huge steak and enjoy every morsel. Now, a morsel will pretty much do me. It's the same with the demon rum. Now, it only takes a few drams to get a lift. I've morphed into what we used to refer to as a cheap date.

Women get a foretaste of old age called "The Change." With menopause, all kinds of hormones stop producing and all kinds of different ones start. Women suffer all kinds of ailments like hot flashes and general feelings of psychological stress. I don't think that men get this, but I've read some articles of late that say they experience parallel problems. I think that's just because we don't want to be left out of the pity party. The good part for women is no more kids. Neither women nor men have the patience to monitor a roomful of rug rats at our age. Mother Nature is surely not dumb. On the plus side of not having more kids is we can spoil grandchildren but our own kids have to take them home.

Are there other benefits to aging? Well, a few. If you had difficulty sleeping when you were young, when you're old you can sleep any old time. We used to drink and carouse all night, and make sure we were still awake to go to the liquor store when it opened. Not only could I not do that now, but when the 10:00 p.m. news comes on, my internal clock says, "Get to bed buddy, or you'll fall asleep in your chair."

I don't have to hold in my stomach anymore because it just doesn't matter, and there's nothing left to learn the hard way. You may not think these are great advantages to getting old, but give me a break, I'm struggling here. I made a list, or thought I did, but maybe I didn't. I can't remember.

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If at first you don't succeed, sky-diving is not for you.

- Steven Wright