

The Fountain of Youth

If there ever was a generation who would put every resource known to man against the challenge of defeating aging, it would be the baby boomer generation. Of course the deeply rooted desire in mankind to stop or turn back the aging process is as old as time itself. We have ample evidence of that in literature. From *The Fountain to Youth* to *Peter Pan*, there have been many efforts to just stubbornly say "I won't grow up" as though stamping one's foot and refusing to participate can actually keep us from growing older.

Baby boomers have always had a love affair with youth. It is no doubt deeply rooted in their explosive teen and twenties years in which this generation became virtually the center of the universe as youth culture dominated the country if not the world in the sixties and seventies. That kind of thing can convince you that you are the generation that would never grow old.

But, of course, the baby boomer generation has grown old. But the interest in staying vibrant and active has resulted in the explosive growth of the exercise and diet industries. Because if baby boomers can't stop aging from happening, they can at least not LOOK old or act like it either.

From a medical standpoint, of course, there has never been an anti aging medicine or pill. Medical science has seen phenomenal changes and had breakthroughs in many areas of research and study. Boomers were fully prepared to fund any medical work being done that might result in the elimination of aging or at least in slowing its relentless onset. But medical science has not found any magic potion that could cause aging to stop or to reverse its effects.

Even if aging could be stopped at some level on the physical level, you have to wonder if that would be practical in light of aging that affects the whole of what a person is. We know that we don't just age in body, we age in attitudes, in maturity and in our ambition and how we view our goals in life. This has as much to do with the cycles of life from youth to parenthood to middle age and then to retirement as it does with physical changes in our bodies.

For many, the question might be, "If science could make it possible for you to never age or die, would you even want that?" There is an intuitive knowledge in our hearts that we have a season to live on this earth and then it's time to pass the torch to the next generation. Everything works on that cycle. You are defined by your place in life. So if you are in your forties, being a parent or a spouse is considered the appropriate place to be. So too, at 70 or 80, we are expected to be wise old grandma and granddad. Our behavior in society, what we value and what we look for from others is expected to be driven by our age in

life which is a subset of the aging process.

If aging was somehow defeated entirely, that entire cycle of life would have to be completely re-evaluated. If you knew you would live 200 years rather than 80 or 90 years, how would you plan your family, your career and your finances?

Thankfully, perhaps, aging remains a constant. The good news is while baby boomers fight aging with a passion, they are also capable of growing into their senior years with a lot to give back to society. So just as boomers have been had a huge impact on society through every other decade, when they accept that they are going to be part of that aging process, they will be a great generation of grandmas and grandpas as well.

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