



Attitude Versus Age

By Dr. Linda Hancock

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled “All Psyched Up” for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of “Life is An Adventure...every step of the way” and “Open for Business Success” is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email office@drlindahancock.com

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Most people know Dick Van Dyke because of his movie and television roles. He is likely best known for his roles in *Mary Poppins* and *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* movies where he delighted audiences with his singing and dancing.

From his 1940s beginnings as a DJ, Mr. Van Dyke has won the hearts of others, never missing a step in a long career that has spanned eight decades.. He has charmed audiences on radio, stage television, and film winning awards and honours at the Grammys, Emmys, Screen Actors Guild and Hollywood Walk of Fame. He is also recognized as a Disney Legend.

Besides this he has also written several books, the most recent of which is, "Keep Moving and Other Tips and Truths About Aging" which was published in 2015. In it, Mr. Van Dyke uses insights from his own life and of his brother Jerry Van Dyke to help the reader adopt positive and healthy self-care practices.

Even though he is now nine-one years of age, this man continues to embrace his inner child. In 2012 he married his 40 year old make-up artist and despite the forty-five year age difference he claims it is one of the best decisions he ever made.

Each morning, Mr. Van Dyke goes to the gym. He has been doing this for so long that he was given his own set of keys in case he arrives before the staff. After hanging upside down, using the treadmill and lifting weights he heads to the grocery store. As he pushes his cart down the aisle he connects with the piped-in music that is being played. Staff in the store expect him to sing along and dance to the tunes as he does his shopping. This may seem strange for someone who is in his nineties but it brings smiles to observers. In his book Mr. Van Dyke challenges his readers with a good question "If you are not singing and dancing, why not?"

The next activities is the crossword puzzle. His day progresses with fun, food and frolic until his nightly ritual of ice cream and chocolate sauce.

Mr. Van Dyke continues to work, travel, exercise and laugh. But he is not naïve or secretive. During interviews he is realistic and talks about problems that he experienced especially in his younger years. He is open about how his addictions had threatened his career and family life. He admits that he wasn't always famous and, in fact, would take some gigs as a struggling artist just to feed his children and pay the bills.

Few enjoy the fame and wealth of Dick Van Dyke but all of us have things in common with him. We start out in families that face daily challenges and then launch into a world that can feel overwhelming. In our youth many of us take jobs instead of building careers just to pay the bills. We might enter relationships that are not positive or satisfying. Illness and death attack loved ones. Unforeseen problems arise. But mixed with the troubles are blessings that give us hope and keep us going.

Through it all, we grow older. But how we age has a lot to do with our attitudes and choices. I know many people who appear to have everything one could wish for but they are miserable. I know others who appear to have nothing but are extremely happy.

Each of us is at a different place in life but, like Dick Van Dyke, I challenge you to keep moving.

Oh, and think about what you how you would answer the question "If you aren't singing and dancing, why not?"