



I Think I'm Getting Old!

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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This is the year of the fifty-fifth birthday! When I was a child I thought that was ancient! (But in those days I was the young one and besides the life expectancy was much lower).

I'm finding that it's a little harder to climb stairs without some body part protesting and keeping my weight within a healthy range is almost impossible. My doctor wants me to lower my cholesterol and politely explains why this is important every time that I visit him. I don't know if he thinks I have forgotten what he told me or if he's just trying to be polite because the numbers aren't going down.

Waking up in the night to go to the bathroom is not unusual - it's now a regular occurrence. And when it happens I sometimes find that I am wide awake and ready for activity - even if it is only 3 a.m.

I'm long past pretending that I remember everything or where I have put things. In fact, I find that my children and grandchildren just roll their eyes and silently follow me carrying my purse or the necessary event tickets that I have inadvertently left on the counter.

My friends realize that if I am late for our scheduled "date" they are to order their meal without waiting. They carry a book with them and know that I have likely just gotten enthralled by a lively conversation with someone and lost track of the time - or ended up at the wrong restaurant!

I've had to enter not only the birthdays for family and friends into my computer but also the years when each was born. That way I can figure out how old they are without having to hold that information in my memory bank from year to year.

I find myself saying "A couple of months ago..." and then am surprised to hear that this should have been "A couple of years ago..."

Yes, I'm getting old! But the good news is that it doesn't bother me.

In fact, there is a freedom in knowing that you don't have to remember everything. I'm thankful that my career has progressed to the point that I have a wonderful assistant who remembers things for me! She makes me "look good" by handing me the appropriate file as I approach my client and invoicing companies for services provided and paying my telephone bill so I can still call people.

I realize that getting old means you can have a nap - without guilt - and read wonderful books in the night when you can't sleep. It means having grandchildren who think that you are amazing because they only see you at your "best". It means having people open doors and carry items for you and ask you questions about the "olden days before television" while waiting for the answer with expectation that a wonderful story will follow.

It means you can bring out clothing and hats from decades ago and be in style or see the activities that you have enjoyed for years, like gardening and homemaking, come back into style.

Getting old offers the promise of seniors' discounts and retirement and the opportunity to develop a legacy for those who follow.

Most of all, however, getting old means that you are viewed as being "wise".

You see I have been around long enough to know someone with every disease imaginable so I know the symptoms and cures. I have lived through economic cycles of want and plenty so I understand survival as well as investment principles. Over the years, I have had opportunity to watch friends face difficulties and know what worked or what didn't work in resolving them which helped me learn how to make good choices in my own life.

The *Compact Oxford English Dictionary* defines "wise" as: "To understand and assess something only after its implications have become obvious". Well, if that's the case, I guess you could say I am wise and will increase in this as the years continue.

Life is choices. You choose what your attitude will be about getting old.

Some people dread it and others try to "escape" it through plastic surgery and denial.

I've decided to embrace it!

Now...what was I doing before I got off on this tangent?