

Age is just a number

Posted By [Gary Douglas](#) | Jul 02, 2014 | 225 comments



Are you adopting other people's ideas about ageing?

We are all bombarded daily with ideas about ageing. Articles tell us what we should expect at 40, 50, 60, 70 and 80 with regard to our health, our capacities, and our prospects. Doctors often have a "well what can you expect at your age?" and even our siblings and children can get in the game with their expectations about what is appropriate for us as we pass the 60 year mark.

While it's fine to have information, there's an often overlooked danger here. If you allow yourself to believe these predictions, you can actually create them in your life. Over the years, I've come to realise that our points of view create our reality. It's just like telling a child that they are stupid. If they believe what they are told, will they ever be able to do well in school? Absolutely not! How many points of view do we all take as truths that are actually just someone else's idea of what is? We are bombarded with points of view on a daily basis: "Your eyes will begin to go at forty", "If you have arthritis it will only get worse", "You can't expect to have the same stamina that you had twenty years ago", "These foods are good for you and these foods are bad for you" It's all determined by your genes", "You better take this medication if you want to get better". My question is, who makes this stuff up?

Often, people point to the "research" to justify their points of view. However, when you take a careful look at what is presented as facts based on research, it becomes clear that much of the research is flawed. For example, almost all medical research done in the past was performed on men. Since women's bodies work very differently than men's, it's no wonder that applying the findings to women

did not create the expected results. Another issue with research is that the “abnormal” results that don’t fit with the average or most common reactions are not included in what is presented as “the research results”. Might you be one of those people that don’t react like the norm? One more thing to consider is that different studies come up with very different findings. It’s not unusual to be able to find completely divergent views from scientists on the same topic. The conclusions based on studies also change with time. Do you remember when eggs were considered very bad for you? Recently egg whites were deemed to be acceptable, while eating the yolks was still off limits, and now whole eggs are considered good for you!

In all of this there is a theme that we should trust others before we trust ourselves. You are unique and so is your body. What if you were willing to trust yourself before you trusted any expert? It’s not that all of the information out there is useless, rather that a willingness to ask questions about what works for you and what doesn’t will create much more desirable results than buying someone else’s point of view as “the truth”

One result of everyone believing the same “truths”, is that you may be considered a real odd ball if you choose to go a different route than the majority. Often there is even pressure put on to people who are not conforming to the “common wisdom” about age, to change their points of view. We are all expected to fit in and be like everyone else. To not do so can even be considered a threat

I recently moved from California, where I had lived for numerous years. Many of my contemporaries who had known me for a long time were dying or had major medical problems. All had retired. I received frequent admonishments about my desire to continue working and traveling the world. Didn’t I know that that was not appropriate or responsible “at my age?” I was too far out of the norm for them to be able to relate to, and my joy in living seemed almost an insult. What about you? If you’re reading this blog, you are probably also a happy person who is determined to create a life that is beyond what you have been told is appropriate, acceptable and to be expected “at your age”. Yeah for you!

It’s wonderful that so many people are more and more willing to defy the common wisdom pertaining to age. When we don’t buy other people’s points of view, when we are willing to trust what we know to be true for us and to ask questions instead of accepting other people’s answers, a whole new world of often unimagined possibilities opens up! Doesn’t that sound like fun?

How do you feel about ageing? Is age just a number for you? How do you defy your stereotypical age? Tell us in the comments below...

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