

The Second Half of Life

"It is an incredible time to be growing older. This longevity factor creates new opportunities for people in the second half of life. For the first time in the history of humankind, we or our children or grandchildren may live to be 120. Today, the man or woman can anticipate living twenty to thirty or more years and needs to design a new beginning,"

Richard Morgan.



"The Great Things about Growing Old," Time Inc. Life Style group list the following:

Discretionary Time

If you've been driving yourself for years—working, raising a family, or both—it's an adjustment to have spare time once your job has slowed down and the kids have flown the coop. The good thing about getting older is that you've seen it all, lived it all, felt it all—and now you can take a moment to share what you've learned.

A Sense of Urgency

Before I was 62, I was tentative about many things. But now I know my own voice,

and most important, I have the confidence to use it. Today I'm blogging, writing books and articles, giving speeches and participating in all sorts of activities on second halfers.

Fashion

No longer am I concern about wearing a suit, tie, dress shirt, full length slack, socks, shoes, shaving, hair in the nose or ears, hair styled, wearing a watch or jewelry, and being on time or early.

Decisiveness

Scientists used to think that we lose a significant number of our brain cells as we age, but more sophisticated scans have debunked that theory. We now know that we hit our cognitive peak between the ages of 40 and 68. Through the years, our brains build up connections and recognize patterns—meaning we're better problem-solvers and can more quickly get the gist of an argument. It's the reason why judges and presidents tend to be middle-aged or older, and why Captain Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger was able to land that airplane on the Hudson River. Older brains can swiftly make the right calls.

Happier

As it turns out, most grumpy old people used to be grumpy young people. Aging doesn't turn a cheerful person into a grouch. To the contrary, research has shown that, as we age, we become more emotionally stable and content. In early adulthood, there are a lot of what-ifs: Am I going to find a soul mate? Have a child? Build a rewarding career? Then you spend the next few decades striving to achieve those goals. But when you're older, the what-ifs have been resolved. So you are less stressed and can—finally—relax.

Able to Stay

Aging in place (own home) keeps aging individuals' quality of life as high as possible for as long as possible. Benefits include:

Maintain independence: The reason for the desire to age in place expressed most often by seniors is the wish to live by one's own rules. For many adults the loss of independence feels infantilizing and disempowering; aging in place preserves peoples' independence, allowing them to reserve the right to eat dinner at 3pm or 11pm, to take a walk after breakfast, go see a movie in the middle of the day, and feel in control of their own lives.

Be close: Not only to their home and possessions, but also to family, friends, and activities. Individuals who age in place can have visitors whenever they wish (instead of at prescribed times only) and keep beloved pets; in situations where one member of a couple is healthier or more mobile than the other, the two can remain together. While remaining in the home they love can be critical to aging individuals' happiness, it's important to remember that rates of loneliness range from 20-60% in older populations; socialization is key to aging in place happily and healthily.

Stay healthier: Illnesses tend to spread faster through places where many people live together, such as assisted living facilities. Aging in place can help prevent the annual colds and flus that affect millions of Americans, and potentially reduce hospital visits and medical costs.

Keep routines: Drastic changes in routine are distressing to most people, especially those who may have had the same schedule and habits for 50 or more years.

Aging in place is less disruptive because it may only involve a few smaller changes (for example, the installation of a home monitoring system or weekly visits from a new professional caregiver) instead of a move to a new place with new people and a new schedule.

Minimize costs: Assisted living costs an average of \$200 per day, and live-in nurses can cost thousands per month. Aging in place can be a more affordable — and overall healthier — alternative.

The above benefits are not complete, but representative of many aging benefits articles reviewed on the subject.

Aging is not more of the same. Aging is an evolution of changes that neither parents nor their children fully understand. Amy Hanson, PH. D. suggests the following normal physical and mental changes:

All 5 senses tend to decline

Lung vital capacity declines

Physical strength declines

Age Spots

Skin Elasticity

Temperature

Menopause

Learning Takes Longer

Recall May Be Slower

Attention Span is harder to Maintain.

Items Misplacement

Minor Disorientation in unfamiliar surrounding

Some feel generational understanding is a tool for understanding the aging process. The following is breakdown by Amy Hanson, PH. D. adapted from

Gary McIntosh's book; One Church: Four
Generations:

Builders

Born Before 1946

Formative Years: 1920s, 1930s, 1940s

Characteristics:

Hard workers

Savers

Frugal

Patriotic

Loyal

Private

Cautious

Respectful

Dependable

Baby Boomers

Born between 1946 – 1964

Formative Years: 1950s, 1960s, 1970

Characteristics:

Educated

Media-oriented

Independent

Cause-oriented

Fitness-Conscious

Quality Conscious

Question Authority

Generation X

Born 1965 to 1983 (66 million Americans)

A smaller (bust) generation when compared with Boomer parents.

Formative Years: 1980s, 1990s, 2000s

Characteristics:

Freedom

Issues of Survival

Willing to Work

Feeling Neglected

Postponing Marriage

Millennials

Born: 1984 to 2002

The bridge into the new millennium

Formative Years: 1990s, 2000s, 2010s

Characteristics:

Entrepreneurial

Technologically Savvy

Fragmented

Sophisticated

Demanding

Diverse and Tolerant

Others divide the life course into the following frame work with each age having 20-25 years in a given lifespan and the particular focus outlined here:

Years	Stage	Focus
20-25	Preparation	The first age is a time for growing up.
40-50	Achievement	The second age is a time of establishment.
60-75	Fulfillments	The third age is a time of a more caring life.

80-100 Completion The fourth age is a time of integration (Polishing of, coming to terms with, acceptance of eternity).

According to Third Age Partners, the third age challenge lies in the response-ability to give back, to find the best way to contribute our money, talent, and time to address the needs of community and world.

Chris Holck has this to say about the Boomers and second halfers:

“There has been a paradigm shift in the way our society views the second half of life. Compared with pre-Boomers (those born prior to 1946), the “new old” expect to live longer, they are seeking to live healthier, they have more resources at their disposal and they are wired to think differently. That difference is summed up with the idea that the second half of life for them is an encore. We (I too am a Boomer) enjoyed the first half of life like a good concert and now we don’t want it to end. We want more! We want an encore! And we expect that just like in a concert, the best is saved for last!

The generations before the Boomers go by a number of labels: The Builder Generation, The G.I. Generation, The Silent Generation and the Greatest Generation to name a few. What an impact they made for our nation, our culture and our churches. They worked hard, served their nation, raised their families, paid their dues, did their time, made their contribution and now the church along with society is marginalizing them.

The North American church has dropped the ball on guiding 142 million second-halfers. It appears that most pastors are unaware of the reality of a new church “life stage.” In part this has been a lack of education about this new church ‘life stage,’ and lack of strategizing as how to best harness the determination and power of second halfers.

Longevity Response-Ability [as well as Bob Chism's ten other books] is intended to provide church leaders and second-halfers with directions for building God's Kingdom."

An essential ingredient for second-half equality is gerontological, aging ministry, and second-half ministry reading certification training.

Understanding the aging process helps prepare us for changes and a new, special, appealing time of life. Most of what society teaches us is untrue myths such as dependency, disability, homogeneity, inability, lonely isolation, retirement, senility, and the rocking chair that make us apprehensive, rather than joyful about this new beginning:

Young Old (age sixty-five to seventy-four)

Middle Old (age seventy-five to eighty-four)

Oldest Old (age eighty-five-plus)

The oldest old is uncharted. The third age parallels the first two groupings, while fourth age parallels the last. The third age is a time of fulfillment and a more caring life. The third age challenge is giving. The fourth age is a time of completion and polishing off, coming to terms with life, acceptance of eternity.

To be happy for the rest of your life and eternity surrender to God, become a child of God, love God and your neighbors, glorify God in what you do, and serve God.

True happiness in doing God's instructions can be found in the following core scripture:

The Ten Commandments

"You shall have no other gods before me.

You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

Honor your father and your mother.

You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor," Exodus 20:1-17 (NIV).

The Building of His Church Commission

"And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it," Matthew 16:18 (NIV).

The Great Commandment

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with your entire mind...Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments," Matthew 22:37-40 (NIV).

The Great Commission

"Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you," Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV).

Stewardship Commandment

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving," Colossians 3:23-24 (NIV).

Longevity Response-Ability Commission

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever [YOUNG and OLD] believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life,” John 3:16 (NIV). 2 Corinthians 12:9 (NIV) declares “...grace is sufficient for all your [RELEVANT] needs.”

Rejoice & Give Thanks Commandment

“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus,” 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (NIV).

Trust in God Commandment

“It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man,” Psalms 118.8 (NKJV).

In our Christian walk there is much to be accomplished in our congregation, community, state, and nation. Examples of worthwhile personal, social, and public corrective action and service include:

Personal

Balance what is important with what gives you satisfaction

Reach out to those who are spiritually lost

Inspire a life of purpose and significance

Identify your unique gifts and strengths

Pray with faith and pure motives

Volunteer your time and talents

Study and practice the Bible

Love others as yourself

Match faith with deeds

Care for those in need

Connect with others

Control your tongue

Affirm each other

Don't cohabit, divorce, watch pornography
or any other addictive habits

Give up your limiting beliefs (materialism,
entitlements)

Give up your need to always be right

Give up your need for control

Give up on blame

Give up your self-defeating self-talk

Give up complaining

Give up the luxury of criticism

Give up your need to impress others

Give up your resistance to change

Give up labels

Give up on your fears

Give up your excuses

Give up the past

Give up doing what others expect

Aging intolerance and conflict:

Lack of the corporate church to act on a life
stage, elderhood (age 65-84) life after
graduation from the public sector

Lack of support for second-half lay ministry "to"
and "among" and "by" and "with" due to the
"self-appointed, holier than thou, good old
boy's God club"

Lack of full-scale ministry to the whole person
for the entire life

Unconstitutional Government

Our government is moving from democracy
towards socialism, and communism

Executive Order rather than by congressional
legislation

Attempts to remove God as the essential part of our heritage

Mandatory retirement, an ageist national retirement policy has eliminated capable adults from the work force

Usurping one of the roles of the Church--- general social welfare

Creating division among real workers and the entitled non-workers, haves and have not's, rich and poor, old and young, black and white

Wealth shifting: single and married tax rate schedules, social security, Medicare, war on poverty, Obama Health Care, unemployment

Trying to make the weak strong by making the strong weak

Unsustainable debt for social welfare

Not balancing the national budget.

Lack of English and immigration border enforcement

Gun control

Life is short. Eternity is forever. To really be happy in this life and for the opportunity for eternity God is the only answer.

If you have questions, discuss them with your study group, a trusted Christian friend, your pastor, or the author. Contact: Robert W. Chism (Bob), 1513 Eagle Ridge Drive, Antioch, IL 60002, chism.w.robert@comcast.net, 847-395-1626

About the Author

Founder of [New Beginnings](http://NewBeginnings.org/) (gonewbeginnings.org/), a personal website dedicated to helping second-halfers' finish extremely well

Aging & Development Reading Certification, a reading program to assist church leaders learn

more about the issues related to aging process and second-half ministry

The Longevity Response-Ability Crusade, a reform organizational action group for second half of life equality and a better society

USA Missions Harvest Campaign, an initiative to equip 60 million second-halfers to evangelize 82 million unchurched

Second Half of Life Prayer and Commitment, a program to help create an age-integrated society

Sunday Flags Day, a witness to patriotism and religious freedom by flying the American and Christian flags each Sunday weather permitting

Contributor to the forum on a new life stage, longevity response-ability, elderhood, protirement, salvation evangelism, stewardship, and second half of life equality.

Author of [Basic Ministry for the Second Half of Life](#) (2012); [Longevity Response-Ability](#) (2013); [Making an Aging Difference](#) (2013); [A New Life Stage](#) (2014), [Life Stages Lessons](#) (2014), [The Essential Ingredients for Second-Half Ministry](#) (2014), [Planning the Life God Wants](#) (2014). [Daily Legacy Living](#) (2014), [Chism's Isms](#) (2014), and [The Second Half of Life](#) (2014). All royalties after expenses go to fund helping second-halfers'.

Speaking, teaching, and consulting.