

Some thoughts on 'Being Senior'

When some of us went to public school they didn't have Grades 1,2,3 etc. as they do now. Instead they had Junior 1st, Senior 1st, right on up to Senior 4th. We all aspired to reach Senior 4th because the next step was high school and that meant you were getting older!

There were tea dances, mixed gender parties, school trips – all chaperoned – but parties nevertheless. WE were all flushed with the glory of being in our teens, a senior child at that point. When school days were over, of course we got a job. The employee who had been working on the job the longest and was the most prized was the senior employee. When a man or a woman reached the highest and most important and sought after post in a company (not many women in those days) he or she was the Senior Executive. So when did a lot of the flavor go out of being a senior?

For many of us, our faltering bodies have not kept pace with our minds. In our minds we are still young. Does an older man still not turn his head to admire a pretty girl? Does a handsome face and brawny physique still not give us a bit of a flutter, ladies?

Many of us have lived through a Depression or a World War. Both of these in turn have changed the course of our lives. When young, at our mother's knee, we were taught manners and to respect our elders. Our spending money had to be earned – paper routes, baby sitting, etc. There were hard and fast rules, curfews, chores, etc. that we learned to obey. We learned to be frugal. This taught us that in this world there is no free lunch. Consequently what we had we worked for and expected no more.

When war came, man of our men and women fought and sometimes sacrificed their lives for this country and the rest of us waiting for them and tried to make a start on a future. We had children and did everything we could to instill in them the same values that we had been taught. We educated them as best we could afford. They married and had children – our grandchildren – a bonus for us! As time went on, some of us were left alone, some had to assume the role of caregiver, but whatever life thrust upon us, we handled it to the best of our ability.

Many societies revere their seniors. Their advice and knowledge is sought after and valued. Sometimes, sadly, in our society we are treated as being past it or geriatric – labeled as a senior citizen and other euphemisms for old age. Our golden years turn out to be a litany of failing health and financial worries, and it is very easy to become deeply depressed about it.

George Bernard Shaw once wrote that 'youth is wasted on the young' and we can all agree with that! Oh, to be young and know what we know now eh? Of course, this cannot be and we must learn to value each day as it comes.

There can be only one way to meet this challenge and what a challenge it is! WE can be as active as our health will allow, we can keep in contact with friends who share our interests, volunteer to help wherever we see a need, travel to far- away places of just uptown, whatever health and finances allow.

Above all, laugh a lot! There are still many laughable things in this world. We cannot regain our youth but than once longed for state has arrived. We have earned the right to be at the top of the heap. We are seniors!

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