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Happy Birthday

By John Amaro, LAc, Dipl. Ac. (NCCAOM), FIAMA, DC

From the moment of our birth until the last day of life, we are continuously maturing and aging. From the womb to the tomb, the basket to the casket, life is dynamic change. It's meant to be that way. Those who cannot or will not appreciate the phases of life become miserable. Aging is normal, natural and predictable.

Until the 25th year and 9th month of our existence, when the last bone in our body ossifies, growth is steady; at that juncture the body begins a degenerative path, the rate of which depends on heredity and how you have taken care of yourself.

When you recall those years between your fifth and 21st birthdays, doesn't it seem like those years lasted forever?

Why is that? The answer to that question has to do with expectations. When we were seven, we couldn't wait to be 10; at 10 we couldn't wait to be 13. When we were 13 we couldn't wait to be 16, and so on.

I wonder what would happen if when asked our age we responded with the childlike, "I'm 67 1/2." Ever notice how children always put in that half, even if they're not quite at the half way mark? They're really looking forward to their next birthday. What would happen instead of dreading it, we actually looked forward to being 50, 60, 70 and beyond? The answer: our perception of aging would be totally altered. While the biological and physical aging continues, at least mentally we would stay more youthful and vigorous. As long as we are young mentally, we will be young forever.

Recently, I celebrated my 50th birthday. On that morning I have to admit I felt a little forlorn as I anticipated the numbers of cards, balloons and flowers which would be adorned with black "over the hill" messages. What would the day bring? Besides that, my birthday also falls on April Fool's day.

As fate would have it, which it always does, that day was an incredible day of age healing and awareness for me. Dozens of cards, balloons and flowers were brought into the office; none mentioned being "over the hill." But the most significant event was the fact I saw over 50 patients that day who were well into their 70s and 80s. The general comment I heard all day long was, "You're 50, you're just a child," or "I can hardly remember being 50." What a great day! Because of those people that fate brought to see me that day, I can go easily into my 50s realizing we have a long way to go before we become old. In fact, I'm not sure when that is, but it certainly isn't before 85.

I was born in the second year of the "baby boom." Us true baby boomers know quite well that there has never been a generation like us in the history of mankind, and so we automatically get to deduct 10 years at age 50, meaning when you hit 50, it's actually like 40. Those of you who are more than 51, which is the age of the first baby boomer (1946), can back up the calendar five full years. So enjoy it!

The following list of aging signs are only meant to be humorous and not to be taken as reality. Laugh at these rules, but do not adopt them. From this day forth, look forward to your next birthday.

Remember, "Youth is a feeling, not an age." Keep your mind active, develop young interests, volunteer, exercise, walk, socialize, eat well, go to a ball game (preferably little league), surround yourself with kids. Have fun. Watch the classic movie "A Christmas Carol" and feel the message.

It is said, "A journey of a thousand miles, begins with a single step." Good luck on your journey.

Aging is when ...

- Your back goes out more often than you do.
- Your children begin to look middle aged.
- Your knees buckle but your belt won't.
- The little gray haired lady you helped across the street is your wife.
- You feel like the night after and you haven't been anywhere.
- The gleam in your eyes is from the sun hitting your bifocals.
- After painting the town red, you discover it's just a mild pink.
- You find you can't tolerate people who are intolerant.
- The best part of your day is over when your alarm clock goes off.
- You sink your teeth into a steak and they stay there.

- You feel your corns instead of your oats.
- You get winded playing scrabble.
- You burn the midnight oil until dark.
- You have too much room in the house and not enough room in the medicine cabinet.
- You get your exercise acting as pallbearer for friends who exercised.

John Amaro, DC, FIACA, Dipl.Ac.

Carefree, Arizona

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