



- AGING -

DARE TO STOP THE TRAIN

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Rev: 08/09/17

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AGING

By Jerry McIntosh

Rev: 05/10/12

Aging should be described in terms of a youthful spirit in tandem with a progressively waning body.

Sadness is defining oneself by this aging body rather than by the youthful spirit.

Joy is embracing the youthful spirit while seeing the aging body as a citadel of wisdom.

CONTRIBUTION

By Jerry McIntosh

Rev: 01/26/16

As the process of aging progresses
there emerges a greater need to contribute.

The highest level of contribution would
be to alter civilization, for which I am unequipped.

Maybe, then, could I impart to my society?
My interest quickens, but then I survey my limited gifts.

Could I contribute to my family and friends?

However,

I can not paint

I can not sculpt

I am not a poet

I am not a musician

I am no longer an athlete

my hands are soft from non-use

I am appalled at my weakness.

As I have observed the nuances of life maybe I could be a builder...
a builder of ideas and the people who generate them.

DISSONANCE

By Jerry McIntosh

Rev: 09/20/12

For the young, life is simple ...
but moves slowly.

For those in their prime, life is complex ...
and moves swiftly.

In old age, life again is simple ...
and moves slowly.

Can we not combine vibrancy and simplicity
so we might see life unfold with
excitement, color and meaning?

FORGETFULNESS

By Jerry McIntosh

Rev: 07/03/13

Some say forgetfulness is a condition that accompanies old age,
however, the minds of many elderly are nimble right to death.

Many say forgetfulness is a nutritional deficiency and sure enough,
many minds bounce back with renewed vigor when given proper diet.

There are others who say forgetfulness is a physiological or genetic state
and therefore the synapses are programmed to turn-off
at some pre-designed time of life – maybe so.

But, why haven't we heard of forgetfulness
as a statement of rage, sorrow or disappointment?

Could it be that forgetfulness is also a plea for understanding,
a defense for unmet expectations or
simply a quiet unresolved depression?

GENERATIONS

By Jerry McIntosh

Rev: 04/05/13

While sitting in a beautiful sanctuary awaiting a most exquisite wedding,
I noticed two elderly ladies with wise faces attempting to find a seat.
Simultaneously many bright and fun-loving young people were swirling around them - seating some,
greeting others and generating high spirits.

The aged walked forward slowly,
bowed over with the accumulation of
heartache, success, pain and wisdom of life past.

While the youth bound forward swiftly
with the amalgamation of
hopes, dreams and expectations of life to come.

Should the twain meet, would not the
aged experience great joy giving the inestimable gift of life well lived;
and the youth sense a salvation from unfathomable pain of life unknown?

GRAVITY

By Jerry McIntosh

Rev: 05/12/12

As God observes our advancing age and loss of balance,
He has a plan

all parts must travel "south",
thereby creating a newer and safer center of gravity.

I AIN'T NO FOOL

By Jerry McIntosh

Rev: 05/11/12

When as a young man I moved from job to job,
they called it "instability".

Later with a family and settling in suburbia,
they called it "career building".

Now as the years have mounted and the children are gone,
they call it "retiring".

Well, I ain't no fool and I'm still on the move.
You see, the Bible says we have but 3 score and 10.

So while others talked, I listened -
I listened in the hallways and in the privacy of my office,
I listened to those who spoke and those who didn't.

With God's sound direction and others insightful advice,
the final career can now begin before
they call it "senility"!

IT'S ONLY A DAY

By Jerry McIntosh

Rev: 04/04/13

I see a gracious elderly lady slowly rocking in a chair
wishing she could share one more memory with her husband, no longer there.

I see a lonely mom and dad silently peering into each other's eyes
longing for the present sound of their grown children.

I see a beautiful young sister wistfully looking at the closed bedroom door of her alcoholic brother,
wondering, wondering ...

I see anxious class members at a 25th High School reunion
attempting a successful appearance with inward doubts due to lost opportunities.

I see a hurting husband staring in disbelief at recently served divorce papers,
trying to reconstruct a joyful marriage that somehow disintegrated.

Why this pain? This sorrow? This emptiness?

Are we a generation of cheaters?
Do we think we can steal from today and pay back with tomorrow,
because today is only a day?

Today, this day, has value - if we take time.

I wish for each, a day of value connected to another, and another ...
a life, in retrospect, full of joy and gladness...a life of value.

After all is said and done, we get what we gave.

A LIFE IS BUILT IN A DAY.

LISTEN

By: Jerry McIntosh

Rev: 09/12/14

It is said that we should take time to smell the roses.
Where are the rose gardens?
Are they not everywhere: our relatives, fellow workers,
friends, friends-to-be, children ... even antagonists?

If I were 8 again, I would sit on the floor
with the 12-year old ... and LISTEN;

If I were 45 again, I would walk with the 20-year old ... and LISTEN.

And if I were 75, well ... I would hope that someone
would be kind enough to sit with me ... and LISTEN.

LISTEN to my memories....
LISTEN to my experience
maybe even HOLD me, when I forget.

MATURITY

By Jerry McIntosh

Rev: 04/04/13

A man, past his youth, holding in his stomach at the beach,
a woman, past her youth, dressed in youthful, flashy clothes -
both attempting to retain the visage of another day.

How apparent the pain.

If only they could add to the sagging, wrinkled skin
the warm smile of wisdom and acceptance.

How sweet the peace.

OLD AND YOUNG MEN

By Jerry McIntosh

Rev: 07/26/13

Old men recall past accomplishments and the wisdom gained

while

Young men see visions of what could be,
but without the wisdom of old men
the young men's visions may only be empty dreams.

ONCE NOW

By Jerry McIntosh

Rev: 08/07/17

Once I was young and my muscles ached as they grew and stretched over my frame;
now my muscles ache as they retract in need of calcium and potassium.

Once my eyes focused on shapes, colors and hues far and near;
now my eyes struggle to relate far and near even with the help of my glasses.

Once my ears could hear the distant snap of a twig;
now I cup my ears to separate words of a friend.

Once my skin seemed a size too small;
now a size too large.

Once my voice was full and rich and I could sing melodiously;
now I sing quietly so that only I hear the tremulous, scratchy sounds.

Once my generation was held high with hope and potential;
now another generation is the recipient of adulation.

Once I saw my elders in quiet, angry despair;
now I see my own peers grappling with loss and subsequent fear.

Must I join this inexorable march toward disrespect and extinction?
Has my trip through life been blind and meaningless?

Once I was ignorant and made poor choices;
now I have experience and can avoid much pain.

Once I was empty and lonely;
now I have friends and am rich and full of joy.

Once I was impulsive and my opinions were ignored;
now I have wisdom and am sought out for consultation.

It occurred to me that life provides a start and a finish,
but the middle is for me.
The middle can be filled or not...and according to my purpose,
will be respected or not.
If we fill the middle with risks, observations, learning, listening,
loving, boundaries and commitments:

There will be sight without eyes,
vigor without muscles,
hearing beyond sound and
singing in my soul
as those I love, love me.

PROACTIVE - A MATURE REACTIVE

By Jerry McIntosh

Rev: 07/04/13

When new events present themselves to the young
their only choice is to react with little knowledge of the outcome.

When these same events present themselves to those with age,
the outcome of seasoned choices are known.

So, reactive responses mature into proactive responses.
This right response to events I call wisdom.

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THE DECADE THEORY

By Jerry McIntosh

Rev: 02/21/15

It is understood that from Birth to approximately the age of twenty, one's physical, mental and spiritual growth is largely the result of genetics, parenting and others.

The Decade of the Twenties, however, is interesting in that the primary responsibility for growth is absorbed by each maturing individual. The Twenties is a period of "events" just happening and our response is reactive rather than taken in stride.

The Decade of the Thirties is similar to the Twenties in that "events" happen, but are less individual and more about family and community.

The Decade of the Forties is the beginning of circumstantial familiarity. We recognize patterns of circumstances along with prior results...the beginning of wisdom - wisdom that guides us into more fruitful lives.

The Decade of the Fifties is the emergence of our contribution to family and society. Individuals may become known for their special contribution to the world they live in and are sought after for their insights.

The Decade of the Sixties contains the full expression of their wisdom...synthesized from decades of learning fueled by failure and success.

The Decade of the Seventies is fascinating in that it, too, contains much wisdom but rather than pass wisdom on to anyone who will listen (as the 60-year-old does excitedly), the 70-year-old looks for the truly introspective person and asks questions...questions designed to encourage the further emergence of wisdom in the inquiring learner.

While it is true that the search for wisdom is a search that appeals to many, not all enjoy the search.

It is also interesting that 70-year-olds pass wisdom best to 50-year-olds, 60-year-olds pass it best to 40-year-olds and 50-year-olds pass it best to 30-year-olds. Unfortunately, most 20-year-olds have yet to learn the value of wisdom!

TIME

By Jerry McIntosh

Rev: 02/16/14

The young see time as a burden, a throw-away:

“How much longer ...?”

“I can’t wait ...”

The seasoned see time as a commodity:

“If I only had more of it ...”

“Maybe I can re-engineer it.”

Those ripe with age see time as lost opportunity:

“Why didn’t I use it better?”

“It is too late, isn’t it?”

Those with limited dreams and abundant time,
care so little about it.

While those with abundant dreams and limited time,
are frantic for it.

This world could be changed if those with abundant time
would partner with those who have abundant dreams.

Hardship and Success are twins,
in that, only Time will reveal their Value.

WHAT WILL I DO WHEN...

By Jerry McIntosh

Rev: 05/13/12

Awakening one morning,
I see my Youth tip toeing around the room
picking up this experience here
and that experience there.

The experiences of Tireless Vigor,
Indestructible Health,
New Found Love, Undaunted Risk Taking,
Unquenched Learning, Contagious Laughter and even
those of Loss, Sorrow and Remorse.

My Youth looks long at these experiences and
then slips them into his backpack
gently placing the key to my heart on the dresser
and disappearing.

My mind and heart alike scream
“Don’t leave, I’m not ready yet!
What will I do without you?”
But no sound emerges from my soul.

As I lay there, Old Age comes and smiles.
Is it an evil or friendly smile?
I can’t tell.
He opens his backpack and resolutely
places his memories in the empty spots
left by my escaping Youth.

Memories of Vigor drooping, Health gasping,
Love becoming resolute, Risk withdrawing,
Learning lost, Laughter quieting and
those of Loss, Sorrow and Remorse.

Old Age then reaches to the dresser and
grasps the key to my Heart.

It is apparent that I will grow old ...
happily, if I accept new challenges and rely on wisdom
or sadly, if I do not.

What will I do....

WISDOM

By Jerry McIntosh

Rev: 05/12/12

Wisdom is like an underground aquifer -
it is there, but no one can see it.

It belongs to no one person, but rather to everyone.

We can only assume it's origin
and have no concept of its width or depth.

Wisdom is available only to those who desire it -
it is more precious to those who would dig for it.

Wisdom, like water, demonstrates its highest use
at the point of our greatest need.