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# MOTIVATED

THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!

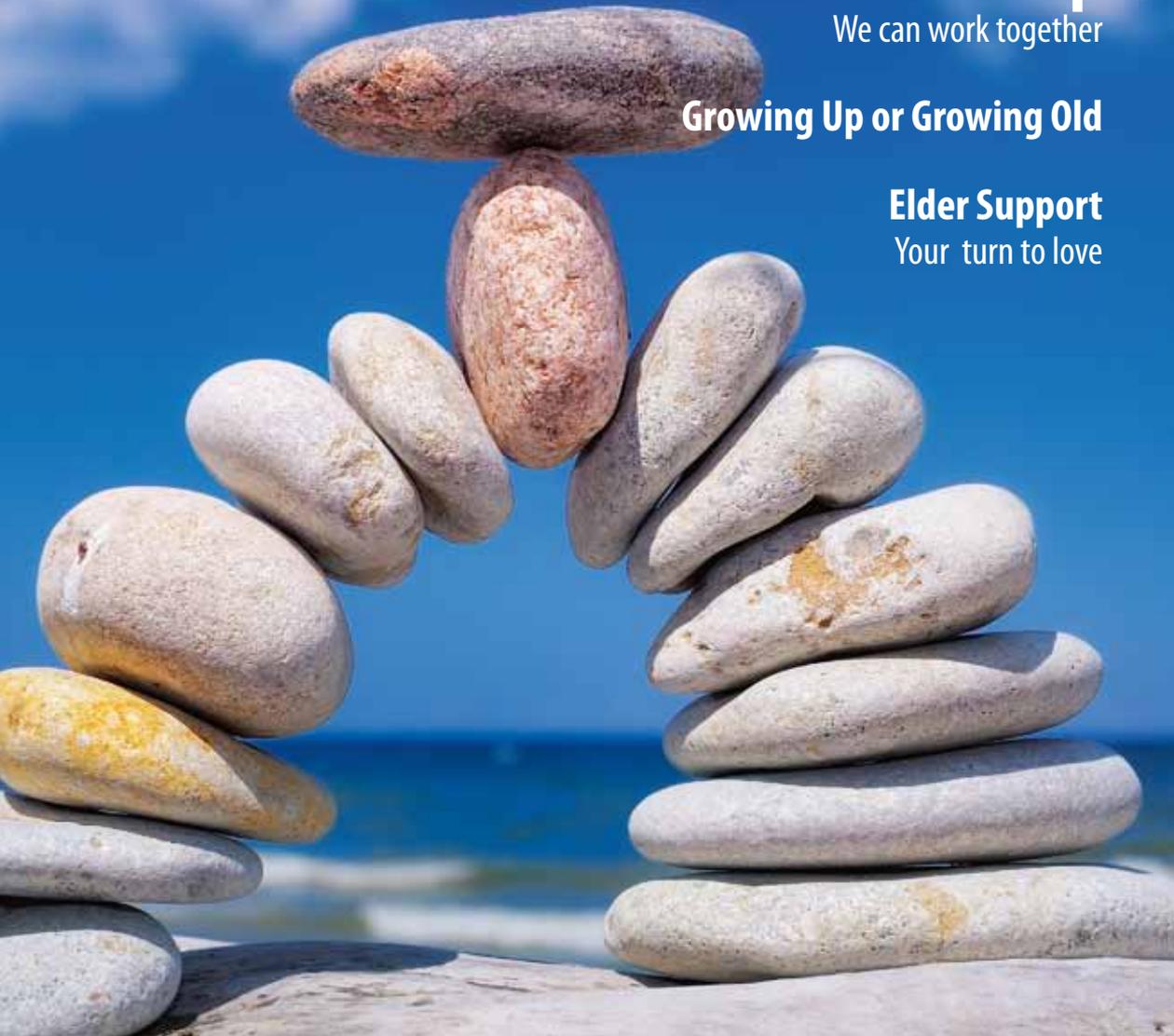
## Bridging the Generation Gap

We can work together

**Growing Up or Growing Old**

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Odd, isn't it, how our perceptions change as we age. When I was very small, my older brother, who was all of 2 years older, defined "big." When I was in 1st grade, I thought 4th graders were a higher life form, but by the 6th grade I was old enough and wise enough to realize that the new batch of 4th graders were in fact little kids.

My parents surely knew everything there was to know until I was a teenager, when they became clueless practically overnight. I could never imagine them as children, but now it's hard to believe that my own children are parents. My grandparents always seemed old, but now I'm a grandparent myself, and I don't feel old at all. Why should I? My mother didn't look or act old to me when she had great-grandchildren.

Age, I'm finding out, is more an attitude than a matter of years. For some, the prospect of new experiences and perspectives as they grow older excites them. Others bemoan each birthday and complain about a few wrinkles or the first gray hairs, or having to work together with or under employers who are much younger than they are.

True, each new stage in life presents a new set of challenges, but how much better it is to look at aging with the attitude that "the best is yet to be" and to enjoy each day, month, and year as it comes.

The stories, articles, and quotations in this issue of *Motivated* show that growing older can be a glorious adventure, and that working together with the next generation can be one of the most fulfilling experiences yet. Enjoy!

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# “Just Getting Started”

—Author Unknown

RESEARCHERS COMPILED A LIST OF 400 OF THE MOST ACCOMPLISHED PEOPLE OF ALL TIMES AND AREAS OF ENDEAVOR. There were diplomats, warriors, philosophers, poets, artists, writers, and scientists. Each name on the list was followed by his or her masterpiece or greatest achievement.

Since any list of this nature is highly subjective, the list was submitted to a panel of historians and other experts for their opinions. Names and accomplishments were added and dropped until the panel reached a consensus on the final list.

From each person’s date of birth and the year of his or her greatest accomplishment, it was determined at what age that individual was at his or her best. The list was then sorted by age at peak performance, and divided into decades.

It was found that people in their seventh decade—between age 60 and 70—were

responsible for 35% of the world’s greatest achievements; people between the ages of 70 and 80 were responsible for 23%; and people over 80, 8%. In other words, 66% of the greatest things ever done were done by people 60 or older.

Add to that 66% the 24% who were in their 50s and the 9% who were in their 40s, and that accounts for 99%. Only 1% of those 400 people did their greatest work before the age of 40!

The accomplishments of the under-40 group fall into two categories: those requiring youthful prowess and endurance, such as the conquests of Alexander the Great, and lyric poetry, which is typified by the super-sensitive temperaments and short lives of poets such as Shelley and Keats.

So if we’re over 40 and feeling over the hill—we shouldn’t! We may just be coming into our prime! ●



## What Is Old?

*Everyone is the age of their heart.*

—Guatemalan Proverb

*Nobody grows old merely by living a number of years. We grow old by deserting our ideals. Years may wrinkle the skin, but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul.*

—Samuel Ullman

*You are as young as your faith, as old as your doubt; as young as your self-confidence, as old as your fear; as young as your hope, as old as your despair.*

—Douglas MacArthur

# Bridging the Generation Gap

We can work together

Claire, a manager in her late 20s, supervises a department of men who are older than her father. Tom, who's in his early 50s, just started working for a dot-com where his colleagues are younger than his children. Myra, age 68, recently came out of retirement to help process statements at a bank several days a month.

Our workforce has never been more diverse. Several generations with differing values, ambitions, views and mind-sets overlap in today's workplace.

One positive result of this largely accidental generational blending in the workplace is creativity. People with different perspectives always have the potential to bring different thoughts and ideas to problem-solving and future opportunity. But one unfortunate outcome may be conflict. Comments such as, "They have no work ethic. They're just a bunch of slackers." Or, "I will not attend meetings that start after 5 p.m. I have a life," are heard in the hallways and around the water cooler.

The older workers, less conditioned to the head-spinning multi-tasking of the younger, can appear slow. To older professionals who remember the value of structure and hierarchy, their younger counterparts may seem flighty.

Managing this mixture of ages, faces, values, and views is an increasingly difficult task, and has been described as "diversity management at its most challenging."

How do successful companies handle this dilemma? According to *Generations at Work*, they build nontraditional workplaces, exhibit flexibility, emphasize respectful relationships, and focus on retaining talented employees. Here are five recommended ways to avoid confusion and conflict at work:





**Accommodate employee differences.** Treat your employees as you do your customers. Learn all you can about them, work to meet their specific needs and serve them according to their unique preferences. Make an effort to accommodate personal scheduling needs, work/life balance issues, and nontraditional lifestyles.

**Create workplace choices.** Allow the workplace to shape itself around the work being done, the customers being served, and the people who work there. Shorten the chain of command and decrease bureaucracy.

**Operate for a sophisticated management style.** Give those who report to you the big picture, specific goals and measures. Then turn them loose. Give them feedback, rewards, and recognition as appropriate.

**Respect competence and initiative.** Treat everyone, from the newest recruit to the most seasoned employee, as if they have great things to offer and are motivated to do their best. Hire carefully to assure a good match between people and work.

**Nourish retention.** Keeping valuable employees is every bit as important in today's economy as finding and retaining customers. Offer lots of training, from one-on-one coaching sessions, to interactive computer-based classes, to an extensive and varied classroom curriculum. Encourage lots of lateral movement and broader assignments. In the face of new technology, new work habits and changing performance

motivators, young and old professionals need each other more than ever. Timeless expertise in business and operations could be lost if companies close the generational door.

**Myths about older workers.** With companies fighting over the best and brightest employees, many are beginning to recognize the many benefits of hiring or rehiring older workers. Myths and stereotypes about older people often blind some managers from tapping a great source of workers. Here are some of the more common misconceptions:

- Older workers resist change and are slow to learn new skills.
- Older workers are less energetic and have excessive health problems.
- Older workers do not have many productive years remaining before retirement.

What's the reality? Resistance to change is likely to occur in anyone, particularly if the change is not introduced well, is not supported by training, or is perceived as a threat. Older workers are no more likely than anyone else to resist new tasks or differing work environments.

On average, older workers are no sicker than younger ones. As people move into their 50s, many have no plans to take early retirement. Many are starting new careers in their 50s, and are planning a quarter century of full involvement. ●

# *Growing Up* or *Growing Old*



—Author Unknown

The first day of school our professor introduced himself and challenged us to get to know someone we didn't already know.

I stood up to look around when a gentle hand touched my shoulder. I turned around to find a wrinkled, little old lady beaming up at me with a smile that lit up her entire being.

She said, "Hi, handsome! My name is Rose. I'm 87 years old. Can I give you a hug?"

I laughed and enthusiastically responded, "Of course you may!" and she gave me a giant squeeze.

"Why are you in college at such a young, innocent age?" I asked. She jokingly replied, "I'm here to meet a rich husband, get married, have a couple of children, and then retire and travel."

"No seriously," I asked. I was curious what may have motivated her to be taking on this challenge at her age.

"I always dreamed of having a college education and now I'm getting one!" she told me.

After class, we walked to the student union building and shared a chocolate

milkshake. We became instant friends. Every day for the next three months we would leave class together, and we'd talk nonstop.

I was always mesmerized listening to this "time machine" as she shared her wisdom and experience with me.

Over the course of the year, Rose became a campus icon and she easily made friends wherever she went. She loved to dress up and she reveled in the attention bestowed upon her from the other students. She was living it up.

At the end of the semester we invited Rose to speak at our football banquet. I'll never forget what she taught us. She was introduced and stepped up to the podium. As she began to deliver her prepared speech, she dropped her 3x5 cards on the floor.

Frustrated and a little embarrassed she leaned into the microphone and simply said, "I'm sorry I'm so jittery. I'll never get my speech back in order, so let me just tell you what I know." As we laughed, she cleared her throat and began:

"We do not stop playing because we are old; we grow old because we stop playing. There are only four secrets

to staying young, being happy and achieving success. You have to laugh and find humor every day. You've got to have a dream. When you lose your dreams, you die. We have so many people walking around who are dead, and they don't even know it!" she said.

"There is a huge difference between growing older and growing up. If you are nineteen years old, lie in bed for one full year and don't do one productive thing, you will turn 20 years old. If I am 87 years old, stay in bed for a year, and never do anything, I will turn 88. Anybody can grow older. That doesn't take any talent or ability," she added.

"The idea is to grow up by always finding the opportunity in change. Have

no regrets. The elderly usually don't have regrets for what we did, but rather for things we did not do. The only people who fear death are those with regrets."

She concluded her speech by courageously singing "The Rose." She challenged each of us to study the lyrics and live them out in our daily lives.

At the year's end, Rose finished the college degree she had begun all those years ago. One week after graduation, Rose died peacefully in her sleep. Over two thousand college students attended her funeral in tribute to the wonderful woman who taught by example that it's never too late to be all you can possibly be. ●

## *Lyrics to "The Rose"* —By Bette Midler

*Some say love, it is a river that drowns the tender reed.  
Some say love, it is a razor that leaves your soul to bleed.  
Some say love, it is a hunger, an endless aching need.  
I say love, it is a flower, and you its only seed.*

*It's the heart, afraid of breaking, that never learns to dance.  
It's the dream, afraid of waking, that never takes a chance.  
It's the one who won't be taken, who cannot seem to give.  
And the soul, afraid of dying, that never learns to live.*

*When the night has been too lonely, and the road has been too long,  
And you think that love is only for the lucky and the strong,  
Just remember in the winter far beneath the bitter snows,  
Lies the seed, that with the sun's love, in the spring becomes the rose.*





## *Bridging the gap between parents and children*

The Parents Zone, Web Reprint, adapted

**G**eneration means all human beings born and living around the same time; also known as coevals. When there is a significant gap of time between two coevals, it is defined as “generation gap.”

When we compare two generations and when there is a considerable difference in the lifestyles, habits, likes, and dislikes of the people belonging to these two separate times, problems due to age gap arise. It is no secret that this gap is widening rapidly.

More and more parents and their offspring agree that they just can't understand each other. This lack of understanding of social, moral, political, musical, or religious opinions leads to lack of acceptance, which is one of the primary reasons why families break.



## *Here are a few tips for parents to help bridge this ever-widening gap:*

**1. *Communicate constantly*** It is simply a fact that communication plays an important role in bridging gaps between not only parents and children, but also in every relationship that we can think of. When we communicate respectfully with our children, we are letting them know that we are willing to do all it takes to lessen the age gap and understand things from their point of view.

**2. *Be open minded*** Open mindedness means widening our horizons. When we widen our horizons and we open the doors and windows of our heart, we look at things with a new perspective. This helps us understand why what is being said is actually said. This is very important if we want to understand our children's priorities and habits.

**3. *Learn to accept*** Trying to understand our children's world is no mean task. It takes a lot of effort to understand the younger generation. We have to accept first that we lived in a different world. For us, that was an ideal world, with less corruption, hypocrisy, cheating, and every bad thing we see so much increased now. Then, we will have to accept today's times too, especially the fact that not everything is that bad, and make the effort to understand and accept our children's perspectives and priorities. That is a big step towards bridging the generation gap.

**4. *Listen and understand*** We as parents sometimes tend to talk too idealistic. We will have to stop that, and we will have to learn to listen, and then to understand. Giving lectures is not at all a good idea.

**5. *Silence is golden sometimes*** Yes, sometimes we have to learn to be silent too. We have to let our children voice their opinions and listen to what they are saying, without interrupting them.

**In conclusion, the reality of a generation gap is only in terms of age. If we set our egos aside and look at things from an entirely different perspective, we can minimize the gap between our children and us. This does not mean we should not do what we need to do as parents. It just means we become a little more understanding and accepting of what our children see as "their world." ●**

# Elder Support

Your turn to love



*Knowing that you're loved gives you hope and faith. It cheers up your whole outlook. –David Fontaine*

Do you have parents, grandparents, or other loved ones who are growing older and experiencing some of the troubles that occur naturally in old age? Here are four ways that you can show them your love and support:

## **1. Empathize.**

Put yourself in their place. You may think you have problems, but if you stop to think about what it might be like to be their age, that would probably give you a much greater appreciation for what some elderly go through. Many seniors no longer have the physical capacity to do some things they've always done, which can be discouraging and lead to feelings of uselessness. Some are not able to see or hear or even to eat or walk on their own, so they feel ashamed, humiliated, stripped of their dignity. Others are in almost continual pain or discomfort. Due to their weakened immune system, even minor ailments can turn into serious problems. Their bones are more fragile and their organs more delicate, and when those are broken or damaged, they require more time to heal. Depending on their circumstances, they may worry about what will happen if their condition worsens and they don't have anyone to take care of them, or they may dread becoming a burden to others. Understanding and sympathy go a long way

in easing those hardships and alleviating those fears.

## **2. Take an interest.**

Some seniors may not be as strong or sharp as they once were, but the intangibles that matter most, those personal qualities that make them the unique people they are, have not diminished. In fact, it is often in the later years that qualities such as love, thoughtfulness, loyalty, humility, humor, optimism, and wisdom come to full fruition. That makes seniors some of the most fascinating people in the world. So does the fact that they have lived through times that those who are younger can never experience firsthand. Take the time to unearth their latent treasures, and you'll be surprised at what you'll find. They may even surprise themselves.

## **3. Show love and appreciation.**

Sometimes simply knowing that we are loved can make all the difference in how we view and deal with our present circumstances. Knowing that they are appreciated for past efforts can also help seniors put their lives in perspective and counter feelings of regret over failures and shortcomings, both real and imagined. Some of the saddest words ever spoken are heard

at funerals: “I hope he knew how much he meant to me,” or, “I wish I’d told her more often how much I loved her.” Show love and appreciation while you can.

#### **4. Help them stay active.**

Numerous studies have shown that physical activity slows the aging process, which results in both prolonged life and improved quality of life. Conversely, a sedentary lifestyle increases the chances of age-related disease and premature death. Even a short walk in the fresh air is beneficial. (Recommendations vary, but a sensible approach is to start slow and gradually

increase the duration and frequency of exercise to at least 20 minutes, five days a week.) Other studies have shown that intellectual stimulation can bolster the mind and stave off memory loss in the same way that physical exercise strengthens and protects the body. Asked why they aren’t more active physically and intellectually, many seniors say it’s because they don’t have anyone with whom they can exercise or engage in mentally challenging activities. Help them stay active, and you will be investing in your own future at the same time. ●



## *Answers to Your Questions*

### **How do I connect with my new, young coworker?**

**Question:** I have been working in advertising for the same company for about 20 years. Throughout my time here, I have enjoyed the relationships I’ve built with many different kinds of people. Recently my company hired a new employee straight out of college. To this point, I have not been able to connect with him in any way. I know that there is a little bit of a generational gap between us, but it is important that we are able to communicate and work together. Do you have any advice on how I could connect and communicate with my new coworker?

**Answer:** Today’s workforce may be comprised of as many as four generations working side-by-side, and connecting with each other may present a challenge. Each generation has their unique mindset, work style, and ways of communicating. This being the case, working and communicating across generations has become vital to building a cohesive, productive, and successful team. Here are some principles that will allow you to connect with your coworker.

☛ **Do not be condescending** – You need to make sure that you show your coworker respect through the language that you choose to use when speaking to him.

☛ **Constantly seek their feedback** – A person from this generation will most likely

see things different than you. You want to make sure that you take into consideration what their thoughts are on projects so you can appeal to a wider range of people.

☛ **Use humor** – Humor is always a good way to break down barriers between two people. As long as it is tasteful, humor can be a very successful way to strengthen your communication with a coworker.

☛ **Encourage outside the box thinking** – Try to bring out the creativity from your coworkers any chance you get.

☛ **Use email, texting, and instant messaging as your primary communication tools** – These are the forms of communication that this generation of workers will be most comfortable with, and you will generally get a quick response. ●



# *Age, a state of mind*

Age is an issue of mind over matter. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter. —Mark Twain

There is always a lot to be thankful for, if you take the time to look. For example, I'm sitting here thinking how nice it is that wrinkles don't hurt. —Author Unknown

Growing old is no more than a bad habit, which a busy person has no time to form.—André Maurois

If wrinkles must be written upon your brow, let them not be written upon your heart. The spirit should not grow old.  
—James Garfield

The years teach much which the days never knew.  
—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Hardening of the heart ages people more quickly than hardening of the arteries.—Franklin Field

The heart that loves is always young.  
—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Growing old isn't so bad when you consider the alternative.—W.C. Fields

What matters is not to add years to your life but to add life to your years.—Alexis Carrel

A man's age is something impressive; it sums up his life: maturity reached slowly and against many obstacles, illnesses cured, grief and despairs overcome, and unconscious risks taken; maturity formed through so many desires, hopes, regrets, forgotten things, loves. A man's age represents a fine cargo of experiences and memories.  
—Antoine de Saint- Exupéry

Do not regret growing older. It is a privilege denied to many. —Author Unknown

