

Dear Age Sage,

I am trying to do all that I can to stay healthy as I grow older. Both of my parents died at early ages (58 and 67) from complications related to heart disease. I have never smoked (both parents did), I have always exercised and although my diet could be better, it is not that bad. Am I doomed by bad genes, despite my good intentions?

Signed,  
Worried

Dear Worried:

The number of people living longer is increasing dramatically. An estimated 4.2 million U.S. residents now fall into the age group of the “oldest old”—85 years and older—with more than 40,000 having reached the age of 100. In fact, centenarians (those 100 and older) are the fastest-growing subpopulation of the elderly, and by 2050, according to census projections, 1 million Americans will celebrate their 100<sup>th</sup> birthdays.

At the same time, a growing body of evidence suggests that good genes are only a small part of the longevity puzzle. In fact, researchers now believe that chronic illness is not an inevitable consequence of aging, but it results more often from lifestyle choices that we’re perfectly free to reject.

Good health practices will help you make up for at least some of the genetic difference between you and centenarians. Essentially, you can compensate for bad genes by healthy living—or ruin perfectly good genes with poor habits. Smoking and excessive alcohol intake, for example, increase the risk of many chronic diseases. As you age, be sure to get regular health screenings.

There are numerous books and articles that discuss things we should do and things we should avoid as we age. I have selected a few and have tried to find the common traits that they all share. Read below to see the simple lifestyle choices you can make to stay healthy as you age.

#### COMMON TRAITS OF HEALTHY AGING

A NEW VISION OF AGING - Center for the Advancement of Health, Washington, DC

- Increase physical activity
- Improve eating habits
- Take steps to minimize risk of falling

CDC - Healthy Aging: Preventing Disease and Improving Quality of Life

- Stay physically active
- Eat a healthy diet
- Do not use tobacco

- Get regular health screenings for early detection of disease
- Get immunizations
- Prevent falls
- Practice self management techniques

DARE to Be 100 - Dr. Bortz

- Diet
- Attitude - goals, planning, optimistic
- Renewal - Stay in the mainstream
- Exercise - legs, more important than heart and lungs

Younger Next Year - Henry Lodge, MD and Chris Crowley

- Exercise for the rest of your life
- Quit eating crap!
- Have a good financial plan
- Care
- Connect and Commit

US National Institute on Aging - Formula to live up to a decade longer

- Don't smoke
- Put family first
- Be active everyday
- Keep socially engaged
- Eat fruits, vegetables and whole grains

As we read the traits above, we notice they are mostly focused on our external body. Let's take a look at:

#### **THE COMMON TRAITS OF HEALTHY AGING FOCUSING ON THE INNER BODY.**

A list of the hypothetical benefits of aging might look something like this: the older we get, the more we can increase in kindness, compassion, perspective, steadiness, wisdom, flexibility, humor, strength, warmth, patience, experience, generosity, openness, balance, and acceptance of ourselves and others.

But another benefit of age might be that the inner person becomes more important than the outer. With so many of us aging, we will definitely have the numbers to launch a new fashion trend favoring the assets of the inner self. And since the "culture" is us, it's the boomers' chance to shift everyone in the direction of valuing those characteristics that money can't buy and only age can improve.

What has to change for us to look forward to aging as an opportunity for our fullest flowering instead of fearing it as the beginning of the end of everything fun, potent, and interesting? In order to age with grace, we balance between

the beliefs that youth is where the action is, and that aging can also be a fun and rewarding process.

We will most readily reap the benefits of aging if we anticipate the coming phase of life as a time of freedom to grow as individuals. Those who want a head start on the next new thing could begin grooming themselves for enhanced inner beauty now. If we're smart, we'll make reordering our expectations about aging a priority. After all, we're not getting any younger.

**TIP:**

Why not try Affirmations - Affirmations are positive statements or self-scripts that can condition the subconscious mind so that you can develop a more positive perception of yourself. Affirmations can help you to change harmful behaviors or accomplish goals, and they can also help undo the damage caused by negative scripts, those things which we repeatedly tell ourselves (or which others repeatedly tell us) that contribute to a negative self-perception. Repetition is the key to making affirmations effective. You want to think about and repeat your affirmations several times a day, every day.

Here is an example of an affirmation related to Health and Healing:  
"Day by day in every way I am becoming healthier and healthier. My immune system functions at optimum efficiency and keeps me in good health. I choose perfect health and use the unlimited power of my mind to heal myself."

Until next month,

The Age Sage

Please write to me at: [32 Miller Ave., Portsmouth, NH 03801 or call at 1-888-359-2435 or email at: theagesage@extended-family.net](mailto:theagesage@extended-family.net)

[www.extended-family.net](http://www.extended-family.net)