



'Golden Years' Are What You Make 'Em

By CAROL KATZ

"What's so golden about the 'golden years'?" many people scoff. And indeed, the term is often used in sarcastic jest or as a euphemism for a time of life in which loneliness, ill health and a feeling of being useless run rampant.

The last period of life does have its problems. The body, like an old machine, has begun to slow down and may even be in need of frequent repairs.

There is a loss of energy, and in a society which worships accomplishment, it's not always easy to admit that you're just too pooped to set the world on fire.

Income usually drops sharply in the later years, and the difficulties that this entails are obvious.

Not everyone lives to be 65 or over, including many of a person's friends and relations. Often even a spouse. Loneliness, then, can become one of the biggest problems of old age.

IT'S NOT EASY to be over 65. It takes all the faith, strength and wisdom that one accumulates over a long life to be really good at it.

But it's not easy to be any age. Childhood, youth and middle age each have their own unique hardships, as you probably realize if you dare to be really honest with yourself.

"Consider the problems encountered at different ages and you'll probably find that you'll be able to live with old age in considerable satisfaction. In fact, 65 plus can have real advantages.

The striving and competition of earlier years are behind older

people. They need no longer keep up with the Jones nor make a fetish out of surrounding themselves with material objects. A reduced income will probably force them to live more frugally, but remember that Thoreau's "Walden" was a book that exalted just such a back to the essentials kind of existence; the simple life can truly be a very good one.

The older years provide time unlimited at last—no nine to five routine to fence one in. The heart's delight—whether it be fishing, painting, reading, gardening or golf—can now be had for the taking.

All this new found freedom, however, has been known to drown people. Experts advise retirees to actively plan their days; that precious time must not slide down the drain. Every hour must be used, even if, at first, an individual may have to write actual schedules for himself.

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS can flourish anew during retirement. Now is your chance to really get to know grandchildren as individuals and to really give them something of one's self. Retirees are also advised to assist their children, who are probably at the peak of their busy middle years, in whatever ways they might choose. Efforts in these directions will reap bountiful harvests of love and affection which will probably prove to be the finest benefit of life in the later years.

—As always life is what you make it. It is entirely possible for the elderly person to survey his future with the attitude of poet Robert Browning who said, "The best is yet to be!"

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