



The New Old

NSR

New Society Rules — A We Are Pi publication

NSR is a research platform exploring the changing rules of society. If you want to better understand these changes and do something about it, then get in touch with Alex@wearepi.com.

Cover: An AI-generated image made on Midjourney to challenge taboos on elderly sexuality. To read more on the topic, go to page 20.

Current: An AI-generated image by Midjourney.

When you're young, it seems like there's no end to possibilities—as long as you don't get old. Because let's face it, nobody likes getting older, right?

The reality is that we're entering a new era where the global population is rapidly ageing, driven by increasing lifespans and declining birth rates. In 1900, the average person could expect to live to be 32 years old. Today, that number is 71. Across the world, more people than ever before are reaching what we now think of as old age—a phase of life that didn't exist just a few generations ago.

Even though the population is ageing, society still tends to ignore older people or portray them negatively in the media. They are viewed as being weak, out of touch, and a burden on society. In our youth-obsessed world, getting older only means getting less young, putting you one step closer to the end. It's a biased perspective on ageing that makes getting older something to fear, rather than something to be excited about.

But with this demographic shift has come a dramatic cultural shift. We're seeing a new generation of older people who are challenging the

status quo on old age and redefining what it means to be "old". They're defying the stereotypes and stigmas, refusing to conform to age expectations, and proudly embracing their golden years.

In this edition of *New Society Rules*, we had the privilege of chatting with some incredible individuals who are blazing new trails and taking ageist stereotypes head-on. They show us that older people aren't out of touch—they're successful artists, activists, and influencers, shaping and rewriting the rules of culture. And they show us that getting older isn't about losing youth or losing out on life, but about gaining much more: better sex, newfound freedom, and becoming the person you've always wanted to be.

Despite the judgement, bias, and the very real challenges that can come with ageing, many older individuals today are thriving. We hope you find their stories as provocative and inspiring as we do, regardless of which age group you belong to.



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Redefining The Ageing Narrative

We sat down with *Sari Botton*, editor-in-chief of newsletter Oldster Magazine, about how getting older lets you be the truest version of yourself.

Challenging limiting beliefs on ageing: an AI-generated image by Midjourney.



Through her Substack newsletter, Sari Botton examines what it means to get older through different people and their stories.



What's the inspiration behind Oldster Magazine's slogan: "Exploring what it means to travel through time in a human body, at every phase of life"?

As long as I can remember, I've been obsessed with the idea of what it means to pass through time in a human body at every phase of life. When I turned 10, my uncle made a comment that stuck with me: "You'll never be a single digit again." Even at that young age, it felt like a significant milestone. As I got older, I saw how ageing affected my parents and grandparents, but I didn't feel the same way they did. I've always wondered if it was because I didn't have children or if it was a generational difference. It led me to explore the topic further. Now I'm in my 50s, I still feel like I'm 11, so I realised there was a gap between my chronological age and how I felt. I wanted to explore that, so that's when I started Oldster Magazine.

What has been the reaction to Oldster Magazine?

For a while I was getting a lot of pushback from much older people. Every now and then, older adults felt very territorial about it and were like, "Oh, I can't believe you got all these young people on here."

Other people were offended by the name Oldster saying it's a slur. But I'm reappropriating it, because like I said, I'm in my 50s but still feel like a kid. When I asked who else is feeling this way, I discovered that everyone felt similarly, especially much older individuals who participate in Oldster conversations.

Who do you think is an "oldster"?

Everyone. My aim is to create an intergenerational conversation to discuss the significance of ageing and start conversations that are inclusive and feature individuals from diverse backgrounds, ages, genders, and social classes. On the blog's comment section, a community has formed with people of all ages engaging with each other, talking about their unique experiences in their various stages of life. They're really learning from each other, which is what I hoped to achieve.

"We need to ensure that older individuals have control over their own narratives."

Have you observed a greater level of openness in the conversation around ageing?

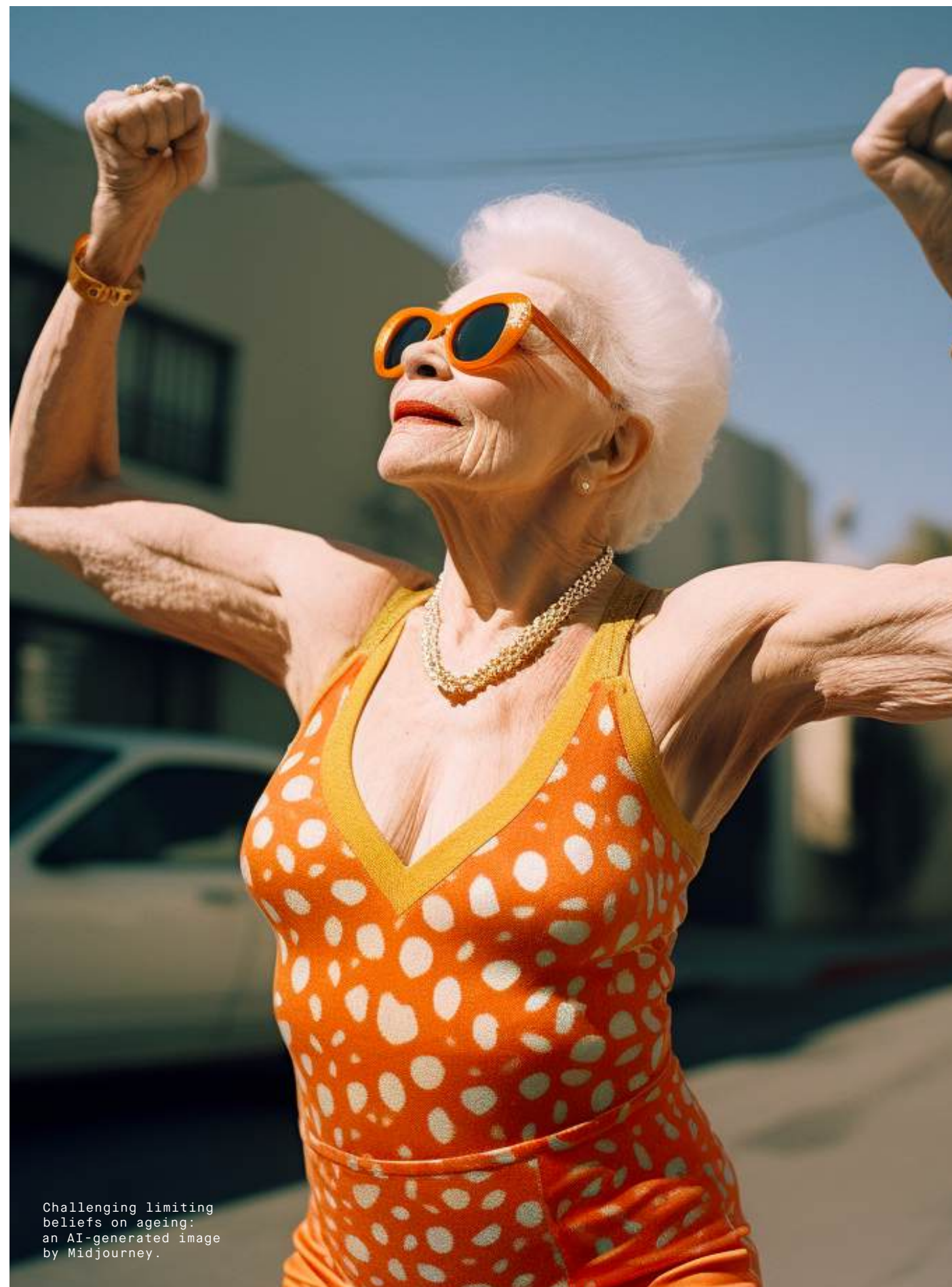
I see that there's a shift happening in the ageing narrative, but not as big a shift as it should be. Ageism is still strongly related to the patriarchal system, the system that makes people youth-obsessed. I think we get pretty excited when we see older people in the media, but the reality is that so much of the success is still appropriated by men who control the narrative. We need to ensure that older individuals have control over their own narratives.

Oldster features personal stories from contributors. What are the kinds of stories that stand out to you as editor-in-chief?

One of the questionnaires that fascinated me was by Lucy Sante, a transgender woman and a well-known public intellectual. She expressed regret about not having the teenage years she desired, wishing she had experienced adolescence as a girl.



Challenging limiting beliefs on ageing: an AI-generated image by Midjourney.



Challenging limiting beliefs on ageing: an AI-generated image by Midjourney.

But on the other hand, she feels young and excited about life since her transition. This is what I want to study, just as much as I want to study the 92-year-old Holocaust survivor who feels as though each day is his birthday, since it is a day he has been granted.

There's quite a range of individuals and experiences featured in Oldster. Have you seen any common themes across all your contributors?

At Oldster I see that contributors are very defiant in what they're writing, whether it's their personal essay or questionnaire response. Among the platform's most popular pieces is Whole 60, written by crime novelist Laura Lippman, about how she gave up dieting and even got herself a bikini. As women get older, women find joy in being less visible, as they receive less predatory attention from men. These women have taken back the word "crone", saying, "I kind of enjoy being older and not caring whether I'm thin or pretty enough."

What are some of the other benefits of ageing your contributors talk about?

Many people talk about feeling that, as they age, they are finally who they were meant to be. After all, people are living longer and healthier lives in today's world. We don't eat like we used to, we're exercising and we're meditating. As a result, our brains and bodies stay in better shape for longer than they did before. Now people age older, many of them talk about how they care less of what people think of them the way they used to. They are less concerned with other people's opinions and therefore, they feel much wiser.

What has Oldster taught you personally about your experience with ageing and getting older?

Recently, I saw a quote by David Bowie that said something like: "In old age, you become who you were meant to be". It resonated with me because the older I get, the more true "me" I feel. Looking back, I realise that I also felt most true to myself at the age of 11, before culture told me I had to perform femininity and before the hormones started. Getting old-

er now feels like you get to recapture that originality, that truth of who you are.

"Getting older now feels like you get to recapture that originality, that truth of who you are."

What can we do to help more people embrace ageing in the way you and your contributors have?

We need to expand the visibility of older people in ways we haven't seen before. That's why I try to show unconventional images of older adults, such as punk-rock ladies in their 70s or seniors reentering the dating scene in their 60s. We need to challenge the limiting beliefs about ageing and showcase older adults embracing new opportunities, whether that's pursuing a new career, learning from their grandchildren, or getting a new tattoo. I recently profiled a remarkable woman in her 50s who took up skateboarding in her 40s. But mainly, we need to see more older people who are just as capable and beautiful in a way that's different from what culture has been saying—to challenge the limiting ideas of beauty. This means seeing older people with diverse body types, faces, and hairstyles, rather than people who are ageing according to the standards. The more we get exposed to these stories, the more the culture will catch on.

"I try to show unconventional images of older adults, such as punk-rock ladies in their 70s or seniors reentering the dating scene in their 60s."

For more captivating stories visit [Oldster Magazine](#). If you want to learn more about Sari Botton, you can follow her on [Instagram](#).

Ageless Ambitions

We met with *Yan Ong*, an unstoppable multifaceted talent, to talk about why going headfirst into exciting new endeavours can be done at any age.



Yan Ong is a model, entrepreneur, and social media influencer who uses her platform to empower seniors and prove that age is no barrier to pursuing new ambitions.

You're a model and influencer, but only recently began doing both in your older years. How did you get started?

A local fashion designer noticed my silver hair and wanted variation in her range of models to showcase her clothing. Until this moment, it never crossed my mind to be a model. Especially during the time when I was young, a model had to be slim and tall, and I'm none of that. She approached me and I immediately said "yes" despite the fact that I was a little concerned about my age of 63, and having wrinkles and fine lines. Her trust in me gave me the confidence to step away from the doubts I have about myself and just go in front of the camera. That's how I ventured into modelling, and I have since become an influencer in addition to what I'm doing with modelling.



"Modelling boosted my self-confidence. But in order to get here, I created an alter ego named Anna."

In what ways has this experience impacted you?

It boosted my self-confidence. But in order to get here, I created an alter ego named Anna. When you are made up so beautifully and your hair is done properly, you subconsciously become another person. She helped me to move away from the idea that I can't do it, and that led me to be a more confident Yan too. I guess over time she will overpower Anna. But importantly, my modelling career made me realise that there's no such thing as age-appropriate for being a model, and there's so much you still can do at this age. I think that a lot of seniors feel that they can no longer do certain things, or that they aren't model-quality or not good enough to try something new. Hopefully, I'm an example for others: if I can do it, they can do it too. And there's no harm in giving it a try.

What excites you the most about your work?

I think there are a few reasons. One is that it gives me the opportunity to pay it forward. The money that I earn from my engagements, I'm donating to animal rescues and other charity projects that I'm passionate about. The other thing is that it also keeps me active and I love how I get to meet new people and learn new things. With modelling, it's a whole new adventure every time I go to a new shoot. But mostly, modelling and being on social media serves as a platform for me to constantly remind seniors that anyone at any age has the potential to do anything they want. Also, it helps me to create awareness for everyone to be reminded that seniors are important.

Why is it important for you to stay active and keep challenging yourself?

My family has a history of dementia, and both my mom and my sister had it. I had to look after my





Yan and her husband
with their cold brew
coffee business

mom for six months before she passed away. That was very painful for me to see, especially when she reached a point of not recognising me. So I told myself, I'm not going to let my children experience the same sort of pain that I went through. And for me to do that, I had to tell myself that I have to keep being active physically and mentally, doing everything I can to avoid that pain. And if it comes, my children or my spouse can say I made a genuine effort to prevent it from happening.

The spaces that you're active in—fashion, modelling, social media, and entrepreneurship—are normally dominated by young people. Have you experienced any pushback as an older person in a young person's game?

Not really. In terms of being in a "young people's game", I feel that we are competent in our own ways. I never felt that between young and old people, there's no contest. Actually, I feel more confident ever since I've been working with and learning from millennials. It really challenged me to get more out of my comfort zone. I think the only pushback I experienced was a moment when I just started a cold-brew coffee business, together with my husband. I was 60 at the time and it didn't occur to me at that time that we were selling a millennial drink. Surprisingly another senior advised us that we shouldn't be the face of the brand. Her reason was that millennials weren't able to relate to us. She even recommended that my son had to be the face of the brand. We persisted to not do it and we proved her wrong.

"I feel more confident ever since I've been working with and learning from millennials. It really challenged me to get more out of my comfort zone."

What are the reactions you get from older people when they see what keeps you busy?

When it comes to what type of reactions I receive, there are two camps of older people. One camp gets inspired and gets the urge to challenge themselves more often, like trying out new things or facing their fears. But there's also another camp who says, "Look, I know who I am. I just want to retire and enjoy my time off." They don't want to keep themselves busy. And I think that's good, that we as older people can do whatever we want that makes us happy, and nobody can tell you what you should do in terms of your age.

"It's incredibly important to remember that it's never too late to learn new things."

Given everything you've shared, what advice would you offer to individuals who are hesitant to try new things because they believe it's not age-appropriate for them?

I think you should not feel constrained by society's expectations of you. Don't let society dictate how you should or should not live your life. It's incredibly important to remember that it's never too late to learn new things. There are so many new hobbies and crafts that are relevant in the market. It's easy to start your home-based business, like soap-making, candle-making, or jewellery-making for that matter. You can gain income or not, as long as it's something you're passionate about. I've actually signed up for an English course because I wanted to improve that and I've just signed up. I thought, why not, right?

If you want to see more of Yan and all the things that she's up to, you can follow her on Instagram, [@Grey_Evolution](#).

Saggier and Sexier Than Ever

We spoke to *Jane Fleishman* and explored the radical thought that sex at an older age can be the most fulfilling yet, and that the key to achieving this is to welcome and embrace change.



Jane: "Seeing older people as sexual beings challenges ageism." An AI-generated image by Midjourney.

Jane Fleishman is a sexual educator, writer, program developer, and researcher. At 62 years old, she received her PhD in Human Sexuality. Jane offers sex-education training for elder care professionals as well as consulting for individuals and couples.

What inspired you to venture into sexual education focused on older people?

When I was searching around for a research topic, I realised that there was very little done about my own people, those who are older and queer. I've been an out lesbian for about 50 years, and I realised that I could actually do something that would benefit my own community in a way that I've never been able to. I believe that seeing older adults being sexual beings in whatever way—how they dress, how they act, how they display affection in public—can really challenge ageism. I always liked making trouble, and so I thought, what better way to be a troublemaker late in life than to look at one of the fundamental areas that shape our lives, both in very positive and also very detrimental ways. So looking at human sexuality was a really amazing choice for me to make.

“What better way to be a troublemaker late in life than to look at one of the fundamental areas that shape our lives?”

When we talk about sexuality and intimacy, there's a big taboo around older people and sex. Why is that?

It's mostly because of the misconceptions that exist about older people. The first one is that all older people are the same—they're all white, wealthy, heterosexual, married, and none of them are happy. Let's get rid of that first. It would be preposterous to say that all 30-year-olds are the same, just as all 70-year-olds are the same. Secondly, the world believes that older adults don't have sex. And if they do have sex, there's something gross about it. But the data shows there are plenty of people in their 70s who are still having sex. The last one is that old people's bodies are not seen as something that can be sexy or attractive. Adults hear: “You can't have that anymore, you're too old and weak, you are over the hill and all dried up, you can't get it up.” It's all of these really negative aphorisms that are part of our vernacular. This is called sexual ageism. It comes from the idea that only certain people are allowed to be erotically desirable, and old people are not in that group.

While there are many misconceptions about older people and sex, what are some of the real changes and challenges that come with age?

Older people very often want to find a partner, but they're scared. They're scared because their body doesn't look the same as it did 30 years ago. Their body has sagged or it's not as muscular, and there's no positive view of an older body. Besides the more common changes like a stiff back or a bad knee, a lot of older adults report that their skin sensitivity changes and other senses change. How much do you want to be touched? Where do you feel some heat? That may change as you get older.



Left page: Jane Fleishman with her vulva and penis puppets.

This page: Jane: "Seeing older people as sexual beings challenges ageism." An AI-generated image by Midjourney.

Jane: "Seeing older people as sexual beings challenges ageism." An AI-generated image by Midjourney.



Big changes—especially around our bodies and sex—can be scary and intimidating. How do you help older people navigate this change?

Discussing sex with older adults means we must have patience, because of all of the misinformation, repression and oppression that we have suffered throughout our lives. Instead of always being negative, let's try to find some ways to heal some of those wounds.

Many of the people who provided education about sex and ageing before me were focusing on vaginal dryness, erectile dysfunction, chronic pain. Just stop already, you're not helping! I don't even use the term erectile dysfunction when I talk with older adults, because I find it to be such a cold clinical term. I say erection differences. Or when someone can't have an orgasm I say there are orgasmic differences. Just like we think of gender as a continuum, I think about bodily functions in terms of your sexual function as a continuum.

What has been the response from the older people you work with?

There was a man that came to talk to me after a workshop because he couldn't have erections anymore. He said, "So I guess I gotta give it up, right?" I said, no, on the contrary, you're living in the right time and space. There are medical aids, there are medications, there are different kinds of surgeries if you really want to do that. And there's other kinds of sex that you can have, which is really the thing that I wanted to suggest. There's a million sexual behaviours, I call it "outersex". Like really good make-out sex. There are people who can have an orgasm just for making out.

People also report that there's a lot more interest in kink with older adults. They're looking at other ways to get excited and get their sexual needs fulfilled. Sometimes that comes with this idea that they can try something new because nobody's really watching. Isn't that great?

"It's reported that there's a lot more interest in kink with older adults. They're looking at other ways to get excited and get their sexual needs fulfilled."

Are there other unexpected positives or benefits that come with getting older when it comes to sex and sexuality?

It's a really radical thought to imagine that sex gets better as you get older, but people tell me that there's a real freedom. There's freedom from other people's expectations. You're not bringing anyone home to your mother anymore. You're not worried about your biological clock. You don't have kids at home. You don't have jobs. There's a lot more possibilities. In general, people have told me that they finally feel like they're coming into their own. They don't have to worry if they have the perfect body. They're just having fun and enjoying each other in a way that they haven't before.

"There's a real freedom. Freedom from other people's expectations. You're not bringing anyone home to your mother anymore."

You work primarily with older people, but do you have any advice for younger people who want to better prepare for sex in their older age?

Start prioritising sex now in a really healthy way that feels good to your body and your partner's body. What increases your feeling of self-esteem? Find a way of being sexual in your 20s and 30s and 40s that you can continue later on. It's a gift you're going to give yourself for forever, for your whole life.

You can learn more about Jane's written work, courses and training on her website, JaneFleishman.com.

Silver Activism

We spoke to *Bill McKibben*, founder of Third Act, about how activism at an older age is not only important for older people but necessary for society.

Third Act members at the Stop Dirty Banks Day of Action in March 2023



Bill McKibben is an environmentalist and founder of Third Act, an organisation that promotes social and environmental activism among older individuals to utilise their skills, experience, and time to support meaningful causes.

What inspired you to start Third Act?

In my 20s, I wrote my first book on the subject of climate change, which is now known as *The End of Nature* (1989). Since then, I have been actively involved in the matter of climate change and have been collaborating with young people for most of my life. They effectively established a youth climate movement and I really believe it's appropriate for young people to lead the charge since they will have to endure the effects of climate change for their entire lives. However, I began to worry about the number of people who claimed that it was up to the next generation to solve this problem. Which seems unfair and highly impractical.

“I began to worry about the number of people who claimed that it was up to the next generation to solve this problem. Which seems unfair and highly impractical.”

Can you elaborate on that?

Young people lack sufficient structural power to make changes on the scale we need. When you look around for who does have that power, it's the people over the age of 60. Their political influence is vast, and if we could harness it, it's more than enough to get the attention of congressmen/women and senators because they know older people are active voters. When it comes to voting, older people tend to have more influence than younger people because they vote more frequently. We have around 70 million people over 60 in the US, a number that's increasing by 10,000 every day. That's more people than are born in the US daily.

In what other way can these millions of people use their influence?

Well, fair or not, the baby boomers and the Silent Generation above us hold a larger share of the country's financial assets than the younger generation. So, if you want to make some changes in Washington or Wall Street, it's probably good to have people with hairlines like mine engaged in the fight.

“This older generation grew up in a period of remarkable political, social, and cultural transformation. So that muscle memory in this group is very strong.”

Considering these reasons, it's interesting that we don't typically associate older people with activism. Why do you think that is?

Historically, we have been setting old people aside. They've been encouraged to retire, meaning to retreat or go away. But this is changing as older people are living longer and healthier lives, particularly in this country. Also, there's this thought that people become more conservative as they age and therefore are less likely to take to the streets.

Is there any truth to that thought?

For this older generation in particular, it's not necessarily true. For them, growing up in young adulthood was actually in a period of remarkable political, social, and cultural transformation. It was the time when women began to be taken seriously in public life, marked by the height of the civil rights and anti-war movements, as well as the first Earth Day. So that muscle memory in this group is very strong. We've found that many people who were dedicated to those causes are still passionate about them and eager to continue working hard. As a result, we have had no difficulty in finding tens of thousands of volunteers to help with our initiatives.



Third Act member at the Stop Dirty Banks Day of Action in March 2023



Bill McKibben at protest
with rocking chairs

Have you seen older people personally benefit from being activists?

They benefit extraordinarily. We receive great reactions from people all the time, and most of them are incredibly grateful for the opportunity to feel like they are playing a role in something meaningful. The worst thing about ageing can come from a sense of no longer having an important role to play in society, especially in the US, which is so career and work focused.

Are there any other benefits?

The other thing is that movements offer a place where people can mix easily with others from different age groups, which is something that many older people appreciate. In a society where many people now live in age-segregated communities, including retirement communities, this is especially important. That's the best thing, to see people of different generations and backgrounds come together for a common cause.

And how does the relationship between different generations work when it comes to activism?

One of the insights I've had is that this relationship works very well. Older people and younger people like high school and college students—it's a natural match. I think because the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren is often easier than the relationship between parents and children. There's just way less tension. Last year, we did a big thing called Seniors to Seniors (older people writing to high school seniors), urging them to vote and telling them what voting had meant in their lives. And for those who participated in the program, they had the reaction I've described. They really liked this sense of connection that came with receiving the letters. It turns out that if you're 17 or 18 now, you've likely received very few letters in your life, so that made the experience unique.

“One of the insights I've had is that this relationship works very well. Older people and younger people like high school and college students—it's a natural match.”

Do older activists have unique strengths that younger people don't have?

Well, absolutely. By the time you reach your 60s you've often built up a great deal of skills and knowledge in a particular field. For instance, we have a group of lawyers in their Third Act who provide diverse legal assistance, a team of retired educators and teachers in our community who are involved in developing and writing curriculums, and much more. I've noticed that older people are enthusiastic about engaging across all kinds of lines. They don't mind doing tasks that may not always be exciting. Like the work we're currently doing on energy policy, where members are willing to undergo long, boring meetings to learn more about it. That's kind of their superpower. It's a generation that's also not shy about contacting political officials, bank managers, or anyone else to express their opinions, which can be incredibly valuable.

To learn more about Third Act or join their movement, you can find more information on their website ThirdAct.org.

Modernising Dance at Any Age

We talked to *Dianne McIntyre*, a renowned modern dancer, choreographer and director, about how she continues to be a trailblazer at a later age, and why you can be modern at any age.

Photo by Larry Coleman



Dianne McIntyre is a well-established figure in the world of modern dance, having dedicated her career to dance for over five decades. At 76 years old, she remains passionate about her work and continues to receive recognition for her contributions.

Your dance journey started at the age of four, and you even choreographed your first piece at seven years old. Since then, you have remained dedicated to the world of dance without ever looking back. What fuels your deep passion for modern and contemporary dance?

Modern dance allows people to express themselves in their own style, even if they learned a certain technique in ballet or any other style of dance. When you're a choreographer, even a young one, you're encouraged to develop movements that come from within yourself. Modern dance encourages us to be innovative and each dancer tries to invent their own particular style. I'm in the world of newness and it keeps me developing something new.

Why do you think that modern, contemporary, or innovative ideas are not commonly associated with older people?

On the one hand, people tend to think: "Oh, that person's work is from another time" or "that person's work is old-fashioned". But also, it is an old way of thinking that after artists have created great work, they need to take a break, lay back, sit on their porch, go on vacations and drink piña coladas. I believe that if you have art in your heart, you have the fire of creativity. You don't want to lay back. For me, I have continued to try to see what I can do that's even more wonderful than the work I've done before.

"I believe that if you have art in your heart, you have the fire of creativity. You don't want to lay back."

Paul Taylor is one of my favourite choreographers. During an interview, I remember him saying that

he had not created his masterwork yet. He was in his 80s when he said that. So for me, when I look at dance, but also visual art and music, I see so many new ideas coming from people who are very established. The reason they're brilliant artists is because they keep reaching for something new. Look at Picasso or American dancer Katherine Dunham— young people would still admire them because you would never know what's around the corner.

Can you tell us a bit more about your own inspiration for creating newness?

It can come from a certain sound that the music makes. I'll be like, whoa, I haven't heard a sound like that, let me see what kind of movement comes from that! Or dancers come into a rehearsal with certain ideas and I'm like, whoa, I had in mind for you to do this, but you are doing something completely different. It keeps me into the freshness of what the dance can be. The other thing that inspires me is what I see happening around me. These can be small things, or big political things. It can be something I've read in a book or online, or something I saw in nature that's just so glorious and beautiful that it just grabs me.

In your view, do you believe that your age can bring unique advantages or benefits when it comes to creating new artistic works?

Certainly! I can look back and see some paths I have taken to create work and say, well, I could have done that better. I can look back on the whole history of my own dance and learn from that. At my age, I have the opportunity to even excel from what I've done in the past.

The other gift of age is that I have seen a whole history of dance in person. I've seen it from my childhood all the way through this period. And some things from the past, that younger people have never seen, are so inspiring to me. Young people might see it online, but dance is an art form that happens when you see it live. Music can be recorded and sound so much like it sounded live. However, video recordings of dance have a flatness to it that doesn't show the power and the nuances that you see live. I have had



Early photo of Dianne dancing in her studio in Harlem, New York City.



Dianne McIntyre teaching. Photo by Janelle Jones

the good fortune to see so much dance throughout my life, and that will always stay with me.

“I look back on the whole history of my own dance and learn from that. At my age, I have the opportunity to even excel from what I’ve done in the past.”

As you’re ageing, have you encountered any particular challenges or obstacles that affect your work?

When I was in my 40s, or maybe my late 30s, somebody wrote an article saying “Dianne McIntyre is still dancing and performing”, and I thought: Still? What? I haven’t even started yet! You see, physical challenges are a given. Not only when it comes to dancing or teaching, but also in terms of the practicalities. When I was a younger artist, I could run

around, take 15 costumes then ride on the subway, and have a rehearsal. Those things make me tired now, but there are people who can also help me with that too.

As a choreographer, it can be challenging when I try to articulate my own way of moving onto another dancer. The dancers might jump higher, do more turns or fall flat on the floor, which I can no longer do. Even though I feel what that movement looks like, it doesn’t look like that on them. It has to do with the limitations that I have in my own physicality, but it can become something new which can also be inspiring to see.

“When I was in my 30’s or 40’s somebody wrote an article saying “Dianne McIntyre is still dancing and performing”, and I thought: Still? I haven’t even started yet!”

And how is that when you’re performing as a dancer yourself?

When I’m doing those improvisational things by myself, there are some things that I would’ve done in the past that I can’t anymore because they would cause a strain or they just don’t feel comfortable. However, the style that I’m moving in is still my own particular type of expression. The people over the last several years who’ve invited me to perform either with the group or by myself don’t think about my age. They asked me to perform, just to perform. People are just like, oh, wow, Dianne McIntyre is performing.

It’s very clear that you still have a lot of passion and discipline for the work that you do. What inspires you to keep going?

Well first of all, I just always loved to dance. When I am absent from dance for even a week, I’m not completely myself. But when I’m dancing, my head is clear, I can move forward, I can move mountains. The other thing is that I know other older people who do the same thing, I’m very inspired by talking to my

other arts friends. Older colleagues who are writers, dancers, musicians are my role models. Like, oh, if they’re doing it, so can I.

For older artists who wish to challenge the stereotypes surrounding older individuals and ageing, what advice would you offer to them?

You can’t think less of yourself because you’re a person of age. You can be aware of the changes that are happening, but stay with your own voice. I don’t think of myself as a person of age. Do not try to change, don’t be shy, and don’t try to be young. Try to be different, be yourself, push that and people will respect you for that. And it’s very important to get assistance! You have to get support that you didn’t necessarily need when you were younger, but it can be that extra bit of help as you push against that stereotype.

If you want to learn more about Dianne’s career and her work, you can find more information on her website, DianneMcIntyre.com.



Dianne McIntyre's In the Same Tongue Residency. Photo by Chris Cameron

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