How people view aging usually depends upon their particular age. Adolescents often wish they were older, and young adults don’t seem to mind turning thirty. But by the time people have reached forty, they have often begun the long search for ways to reverse, slow, or delay the aging process. They earnestly start exercise programs, shop for healthier foods, take vitamins, and buy youthful clothing and expensive facial creams. While these steps are useful and can have desirable effects, they do not provide a strategy for dealing with the ultimate changes—such as forgetfulness, reduced strength, the loss of a friend—associated with aging. A different kind of approach is needed.

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.

Henry David Thoreau Walden [1854]
To date, behavior analysis offers the most practical and effective plan of attack. By viewing the inevitable changes brought on by age as problems to be solved, behavior analysis provides an honest appraisal of the changes and offers deliberate strategies to offset them. While behavior analysis can offer little help in terms of physical aging, it can help you find ways to lead a more productive, happier life—regardless of your physical condition. The key is to remain active. For it is only in doing that you experience consequences, and it is the consequences of doing that leads to a fuller, more enjoyable life.

The following pages offer practical advice to help you age gracefully. Find them in the article Aging Gracefully under Resources.

- A Little Background
- Turning Words into Actions
- Getting Along in the World
- Getting Along with People
- Changing How You Feel
- Remaining Physically Active
- Remaining Intellectually Active
- Enjoying the Day
- Preparing for the End of Life
- Links to Senior Sites
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