

Why Did I Walk into This Room?

Why Did I Walk into This Room?

A Thinking Person's Guide to Growing Older



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To Boomers

*Will they still need you?
Will they still feed you?
Now you're 64 (more or less)*

*While the sun and moon endure
Luck's a chance, but trouble's sure,
I'd face it as a wise man would,
And train for ill and not for good.*

— A.E. HOUSMAN

*I'll make up for the sobriety of my youth,
I shall go out in my slippers in the rain
And pick flowers in other people's gardens
And learn to spit . . .*

— JENNY JOSEPH

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Foreword

After the completion of this book, but before its publication, Kenney Hegland died. Kenney was very bright with a keen understanding of aging. He had a great sense of humor and never took himself too seriously. His writings and life expressed his desire to be of service to others. He will be missed.

—L.F.

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Preface

This isn't a "how to do it" book, it's a "how to think about it" book. We won't treat you as someone in need of instruction. We respect your intelligence. We'll treat you as a good friend we can help by sharing what we have learned over the years.

We know the problems you and your family will face, and we'll suggest both legal and practical solutions. Aging isn't for sissies and it's much more than:

"I probably need a will. I'll get around to it."

We'll alert you to the things that will go wrong, suggest ways to avoid them, and what to do if you didn't. It's heavy stuff, but we'll lighten the load with existential musing and fairly good jokes (at least we think they are).

Along the way you'll hear from doctors, read a few poems, learn a little law, and love brief appearances from the likes of Edna St. Vincent Millay, Charles Dickens, John Keats, the Beatles, and Jay Leno. We won't have you putting down our book.

Skim the stuff below; we cover a lot. Do four critical things: make your house safe, check your blood pressure, talk to your loved ones about the elephant, and learn new things — and you've made a good start.

Here is a quick overview.

PART ONE

THE AARP LETTER AND BEYOND

What to expect as you age, what to consider if you're retiring, and what to do if you're bored. Making your home safe and considering a retirement facility. Most important of all, the elephant.

PART TWO

THE GOOD NEWS

Sex. Grandkids (raising them, educational trusts). Remarriage (the triumph of hope over experience). As lawyers we know a thing or two; we'll cover divorce.

PART THREE

SLINGS AND ARROWS

Hearing loss, bad meds, insomnia, and opioids. Driving. Age and disability discrimination. Dealing with doctors, surgeons, and lawyers. On a far more important note, protecting your loved ones from abuse.

PART FOUR

SLOWING TIME'S WINGED CHARIOT

Exercise. Supplements and diets. Strokes and the danger of high blood pressure.

PART FIVE

MONEY AND HEALTH WOES

Social Security, Medicare, being house rich and cash poor, and reverse mortgages.

PART SIX

MENTAL ILLNESS

Scary senior moments, actual dementia, depression, and guardianships.

PART SEVEN
CARE GIVING

Deciding and caring for others, and nursing homes.

PART EIGHT
PREPARING FOR THE WORST OF TIMES

Estate planning, avoiding probate, living trusts, and health care directives.

PART NINE
THE FINAL CURTAIN

Death in the family, probate, pulling plugs, death with dignity, hospice, mourning.



“Isn’t there something to help us through all of these problems?”
In 1785 John Quincy Adams, destined to be our sixth president, entered Harvard. He hoped to learn the Ultimate Generalization, the one that would explain everything. He was disappointed. We all need good advice. The Ultimate Advice, the one that always helps, is inspired by Dylan Thomas:

*Time held me green and dying,
Though I sang in my chains like the sea.*

Time holds all of us, if not green and dying. So what? *Let’s sing.*

Part One



The AARP Letter and Beyond

