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Lighter As We Go: Virtues, Character Strengths, And Aging



Synopsis

The fears of aging have been one long cascading domino effect through the years: twenty year-olds dread thirty; forty year-olds fear fifty; sixty fears seventy, and so it goes. And there is something to worry about, though it isn't what you'd expect: research shows that having a bad attitude toward aging when we're young is associated with poorer health when we're older. These worries tend to peak in midlife; but in *Lighter as We Go*, Mindy Greenstein and Jimmie Holland show us that, contrary to common wisdom, our sense of well-being actually increases with our age--often even in the presence of illness or disability. For the first time, Greenstein and Holland--on a joint venture between an 85 year-old and a fifty year-old--explore positive psychology concepts of character strengths and virtues to unveil how and why, through the course of a lifetime, we learn who we are as we go. Drawing from the authors' own personal, intergenerational friendship, as well as a broad array of research from many different areas--including social psychology, anthropology, neuroscience, humanities, psychiatry, and gerontology--*Lighter as We Go* introduces compassion, justice, community, and culture to help calm our cascading fears of aging.

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Customer Reviews

"Without being the least bit didactic, Drs. Holland and Greenstein have open-mindedly explored and discussed a societal topic that still remains sorely misunderstood, partly out of our universal fear of aging. This bold and liberating book should be on everyone's reading list, regardless of age." - The ASCO Post
"*Lighter as We Go* is succinct, nontechnical, funny and wise - but especially wise. It

clearly ranks as one of the best books on ageing that even the most sophisticated student is likely ever to read."--George E. Vaillant M.D., Professor of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School"

Lighter as We Go is a superbly informative and entertaining, tri-generational discussion about who we are as we age. It provides a 'lighthearted' (pun intended), yet not naïve description of getting older; what changes and what stays the same in our view of the world and of ourselves. This is a great read for the young and old alike."--Harvey Jay Cohen, MD, Walter Kempner Professor of Medicine, Director, Center for the Study of Aging, Duke University Medical Center"

Mindy Greenstein and Jimmie Holland draw on ancient wisdom, current science, and their own personal experiences to dispel fears and misperceptions about growing old. The reader is offered a gentler, more optimistic outlook that will comfort and even inspire all whose lives are touched by advanced aging -- whether another's or their own."--Susan Folkman, PhD, Professor of Medicine Emeritus, University of California, San Francisco"

I happen to fall (bad word) into the fastest growing age group--the 90 and over crowd. What to do? I say go right now, no matter your age, and get **Lighter As We Go** because it is the last word on the subject of growing older and living well with it. Mindy Greenstein and Jimmie Holland, at middle and older ages, have great ideas that connect with my own! Live like you're 50--have a ball! When you're 90, act any way you please! This book will help you see the rewards you haven't even thought about." --Liz Smith"

This delightful, highly readable book utilizes personal stories and a bit of human history to paint a picture of successful aging in which the mind and spirit triumph over physical limitations, and generativity and eudaimonia prevail. This outlook is consistent with information emerging from neuroscience and molecular medicine that not only are physical activity, hedonic satisfaction and good self-regulation of health behaviors important for sustaining good mental and physical health but also that finding meaning and purpose in life can be enormously beneficial." --Bruce S. McEwen, Ph.D., Alfred E. Mirsky Professor and Head, Harold and Margaret Milliken Hatch, Laboratory of Neuroendocrinology, The Rockefeller University"

Drs. Greenstein and Holland have a unique ability to draw the reader into this ongoing and enchanting review of aging writ wide and in the spirit of 'lighter as we go.' The book is truly uplifting and fun, not didactic or sterile, unlike anything I have read about successful aging. One cannot read this book dispassionately or in isolation, so prepare yourselves to join this symposium just as Cicero called his listeners to join him through his treatise *On Old Age*. And like any good conversation, Jimmie and Mindy leave us prepared and eager to continue our reflections and discussion far beyond the occasion of the book." --Dan Blazer, MD, PhD, J.P. Gibbons Professor, Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences, Duke University Medical Center, Division of Community and Family Medicine, School of Medicine"

A major contribution to the field of aging and

adult studies, this study provides a new way to view, consider, and teach aging." --A. L. Lewis, University of Arkansas Monticello, CHOICE "This book will definitely broaden people's understanding of aging and dying as the last challenging developmental task. Paradoxically, to age well, one needs to confront death. It will take all the lessons and wisdoms we have learned in order to get through the last stage with sustained growth in courage, meaning and well-being." -- Paul T. P. Wong, PsycCRITIQUES

Mindy Greenstein, PhD, is Clinical Psychologist and Psycho-oncologist, Writer and National Speaker, and Consultant to the geriatric psychiatry group in the Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. Jimmie Holland, MD, is Wayne E. Chapman Chair in Psychiatric Oncology, Attending Psychiatrist, and Founder of the geriatric psychiatry group at the Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center and Professor of Psychiatry at Weill Medical School of Cornell University.

Delightful & Inspiring! I got my copy of *Lighter As We Go* at noon and read straight through all afternoon. Greenstein and Holland are a terrific team. They've woven a wonderful blend of personal stories and fascinating research. The word that comes to mind is wisdom. For all the silly people who think they have to lie about their age, this is a great book, and for all the people who are happy to tell their age, this is a great book as well. The perfect birthday present. The book is as delightful as the cover!

Much has been written about lately regarding how to stay youthful looking, acting and feeling, no matter how many candles you blow out on your birthday cake. While I'm all for staying as active and engaged as possible as I age, I'm more interested in learning how to accept with grace and good humor the fact that I'm growing older, without getting old, and to live each day of my life with gratitude and joy all the way to the very end of my life. This small volume is interesting, easy to read and filled with heartwarming stories and solid advice and wisdom about how to remain young-at-heart while growing older, in spite of the challenges. I am sure I'll reach for it again and again in the future when I feel I need an attitude adjustment about frustrations related to aging. I do wonder, though, why the publisher decided to put the type in such a small font size when the targeted readership are into their 70s, 80s and 90s!

The authors have captured the trials and triumphs of getting older in a well-written and compelling narrative. Full disclosure: I've been a fan of Greenstein's since I first read an article of hers in the New York Times--about missing her doorman when he died.

I would recommend this book to anyone in need of comfort about the aging process because it is easy to read and it provides great information to help with different thinking about the later years along life's journey. All of the information is supported by studies and research findings.

Excellent! Unsurpassed wisdom and humor.

Some spot-on comments, observations, understanding & encouragement for individuals who are beginning to 'travel lighter' as well as those who love them.

This was a gift for my Dad. He loved it.

Not quite what I was expecting but enlightening nonetheless.

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