



Mentorship — How to be a Valued Elder

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In ancient times our elders were revered. They shared stories and experience to teach, guide and mentor the younger generations.

This experience and wisdom was highly valued and essential in the developmental growth of the younger generation and, in fact, to the success of the entire society. Why then, in our current North American culture, is youth and youthful appearance valued, while older adults are considered broken humans?

Why do our seniors feel underappreciated and why do our retirees feel that they have been put on a shelf and are now, in most cases, serving no more purpose to society than collecting dust?

Recently I read, no — devoured, a wonderful book by Dr. Roger Landry “Live Long, Die Short”. I have read many powerful books BUT this one was extraordinary and there was an exceptionally unusual chapter on “Valued Elders”. Dr. Landry suggests that having purpose is fundamental to happiness in older adulthood and that sharing experiences can effect great change not only in a younger person’s life, but in the health and aging journey of the sharer. This is win-win mentorship.

Let us think about a young finance student being mentored by a retired successful wealth advisor. How about a young engineer being mentored by an experienced retired engineer?

There are countless examples. The elder feels valued and part of the student’s life, the student has access to extensive experience and practical real-life information and examples.

What an immense benefit for both!!

Think about it, you retirees! How about volunteering at universities and schools and sharing your vast wealth of information!!

Students, think about looking for an interesting retiree and reap the payback of learning from someone with a wealth of knowledge, real life experiences, and a successful career.

Such wealth at our fingertips, in fact, Dr. Landry calls this human capital. Do we use capital or do we let it “gather dust” and serve no one. Where soon every fifth person in North America will be over 65, we cannot afford to let this rich resource go unused.

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