

'Old' Does Not Mean 'Obsolete'



by Lee Duigon

December 1, 2022

I received a heartfelt comment a few days ago from a reader named Patrice, who was responding to my last week's NewsWithViews column, "[Why Is Retirement So Hard?](#)". Let me share it with you, with some minor editing.

"Why do younger persons, even those just ten or fifteen younger, find me—us retirees—so utterly boring and irrelevant, despite our having had decent higher educations (with a few extra degrees tacked on for good measure), meaningful careers, and lots and lots of travel and other adventures, from the mundane to the exceptional, under our belts?... [They] automatically want to exclude us, to look right past us, and want to put us, figuratively, in the back of the proverbial shelf of an out-of-the-way storage closet. It's a lonely kind of feeling, but most of all it's a horrible feeling—the feeling of being irrelevant."

Patrice puts it down to "mass brainwashing," which I take to mean our movies and TV shows, our politics, and what we persist in calling our—ahem!—education system. That's who's doing it. What we'd like to know is why they do it.

I learned a lot from my grandfather, and would have learned much more if only I'd realized how valuable his experiences could be to me! Eighty years' worth of experience, insight,

and thought. But when you're eighteen years old and going to college, you think you already know more than Grandpa. He was not irrelevant. His insights were keen, and based on facts he'd seen for himself. Time spent with him was anything but time wasted.

If only I'd had the good sense to appreciate it. But of course you take your family for granted, assuming it would always be there for you... and then, one day, it isn't.

We take our country for granted, too. Its prosperity, its liberty—they'll always be there. But there are many once-thriving countries that aren't with us anymore.

The problem is not being young. We're all young once. It's more a case of hucksters, phonies, hypocrites, pseudo-intellectuals, and shysters who exploit young people's inexperience for their own profit.

Oh, I remember college! All the exploiters had to do was to overpraise the intellectually defenseless students in their audiences (they'd been hearing "Good job!" since they were toddlers), tell them over and over again how smart they were, how vastly superior they were to any previous generation... and the speaker had those students wrapped around his little finger. Eating out of his hand. Pet us and we purr. And then we'd go out and demonstrate and protest just to show our masters that their confidence in us was not misplaced. We danced to any tune they played.

No, Patrice, we have not become irrelevant. The truths we learned the hard way are still true. We are seen to be irrelevant by persons who've been lied to, gulled, and bamboozled all their lives. The political sharpies and Hollywood con artists pick up where college leaves off, and way too many people are still dancing to those tunes even as they stumble into middle age. It's harder to outgrow your "education" than it used to be.

Once upon a time Herodotus said the Persians made their country great by teaching their children to shoot straight and tell the truth. What more can we do, than that? But those are not lessons that are taught in public schools or colleges, or fostered by airhead celebrities, or encouraged by political hacks who put themselves first and the country and its people last.

Let's pray they don't find out till too late just how relevant we are.

I have discussed these and other topics throughout the week on my blog, <http://leeduigon.com/> . Click the link and stop in for a visit... while it's still relevant. My articles can also be found at www.chalcedon.edu/ .

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