

I have a dream

I have a dream that one day, older people will not have to sky dive, run marathons, complete a bucket list, rely on cosmetic surgery, or Viagra, in order to be admired, valued or just to keep up.

When one reaches one's third age, say seventy for example, one has lived much more of one's life than that which remains to be lived, so how should one approach it, There is no shortage of advice : from not giving up hope, to getting real, and not believing that something new is just around the corner.

The truth is that most people do not want to grow old – or worse still to die. Even the mention of death is enough to induce the accusation of being morbid, or depressed, Simone de Beauvoir, while not believing in infinity, could not quite believe in finity. She said *'I want this adventure – the context of my life to go on without end.'*

There are many forthright accounts of how to spend one's twilight years, like this classic from Lionel Fisher.

"Now that you're old cut yourself some slack, would you?

Let yourself off the hook

Give yourself a break

You don't have to do it all anymore. Take it easy for a change

It's OK with the rest of the world. So why not you?

For the first time in your life do what you want.

Not what everyone thinks you should.

Not what you think everyone else thinks you should. Do what you want.

Excuse yourself, say no. Back out, Beg off. Stay home . take a raincheck. Take a nap. Watch football on TV

Anything but what you'd rather not do, but feel you have to, for everyone else's sake but your own. And then feel bad about having done it. That's plain wrong."

And ask for some help when you need it: it's too heavy, its too far ,Too Near, too cold , too hot , too bright, too dark.

Whatever,

It's OK because there's always going to be something you need help with from now on.

And be grateful for the helping hand. You'll find more and more people extend one to you these days.

Whatever the reason for accepting, you've got the best excuse in the world. The only one you'll ever need

"Hey I'm old"

More poignantly come these insights from a woman facing death:

'I am reading more and dusting less, I'm sitting in the garden admiring the view, without fussing over the weeds, I'm spending more time with my family and friends, and less time working

Whenever possible life should be a pattern of experiences to savour, not to endure, I am trying to recognise these moments and cherish them.

Someday or one of these days – are losing their grip on my vocabulary, If it is worth seeing or doing, I want to see, hear and do it NOW.

I certainly have a sense of urgency about this stage of life, This is often construed by my friends as busyness- ooh you are busy these days, they say, as though there was something vaguely abnormal, about having a full diary.

For me the secret is balance, doing things I enjoy- helping people who need help, doing voluntary work that is interesting, trying something new, having days when I don't go anywhere, getting regular exercise. Actually I don't have a full diary. I relish days that have no appointments, There are times when I just love being outside in the sunshine, or popping in to see a friend.

So what is my dream at this stage of life? Having shed the time consuming stages of work and motherhood, done a fair bit of travelling, sought new relationships. I want to just be, to be open and see where life takes me.

I wish that the younger generation would not turn away from older people, or the elderly avoid or distrust the young.

We are all on this journey together, and although life may not be the party we hoped for, while we are here, we might as well dance together, at least some of the time!!