

Getting Older

By Stan Parks

The other day on my Birthday a friend asked me how it felt to get older. How I felt? Well, I made it another year. That was an achievement.

Physically, I thought to myself, I wish it was forty instead of ninety-five, but that is impossible and so I must face my chronological age. If I screw up, so what? Who cares? Certainly not me. So I'm kinder to myself. Who's my best friend? Me.

I've seen too many of my best friends leave this world much too soon. Grade school, high school, university; leaving before they understood the great freedom that comes with aging. They're all gone so it's up to me to carry on.

Whose business is it if I choose to stay up late at night and then get up late in the morning? I will dance with myself to those great songs of the forties, fifties, sixties, and seventies. Or sing those melodies and weep over lost loves.

I can dream of walking the beach with waves crashing on the shore in the moonlight, or swimming in my ill-fitting bathing suit if I choose to, despite getting pitying glances from the jet set. If they are lucky they too will get old.

I know I forget things sometimes but then there are things I would rather not remember, but I do remember a lot of good things in my life.

Yes, I've had my share of heart break. How can your heart not break when you lose a loved one, or when a child suffers, or even when some beloved friend passes? A wise one once said that broken hearts are what give us strength, understanding, and compassion. A heart never broken is pristine and sterile and will never know the joy of being imperfect. How many of us are perfect?

I am truly blessed to have lived long enough to see my hair turn gray, and I still have hair. And the wrinkles mean I've had some good laughs in my time. So many have never laughed and have died before their hair turned gray.

As you get older it's easier to become positive in your thinking. You care less about what others may think about you. If they don't like something I may have done, "tough!" I have earned the right to even be wrong.

So to answer the question about me getting old and whether I like it... I like it. What else have you got to offer that's better? It has set me free. I like the person I've become. I'm not going to live forever, but as long as I'm here, I will not waste my time lamenting on what could have been, or for that matter, what will be.

So pass me a martini with an olive in it. Here's to ya all!

May our friendship never fail because it comes straight from my heart.