

Aging:

Our Shared

Journey



“Aging is an issue of mind over matter. If you don’t mind, it doesn’t matter.”

- Mark Twain

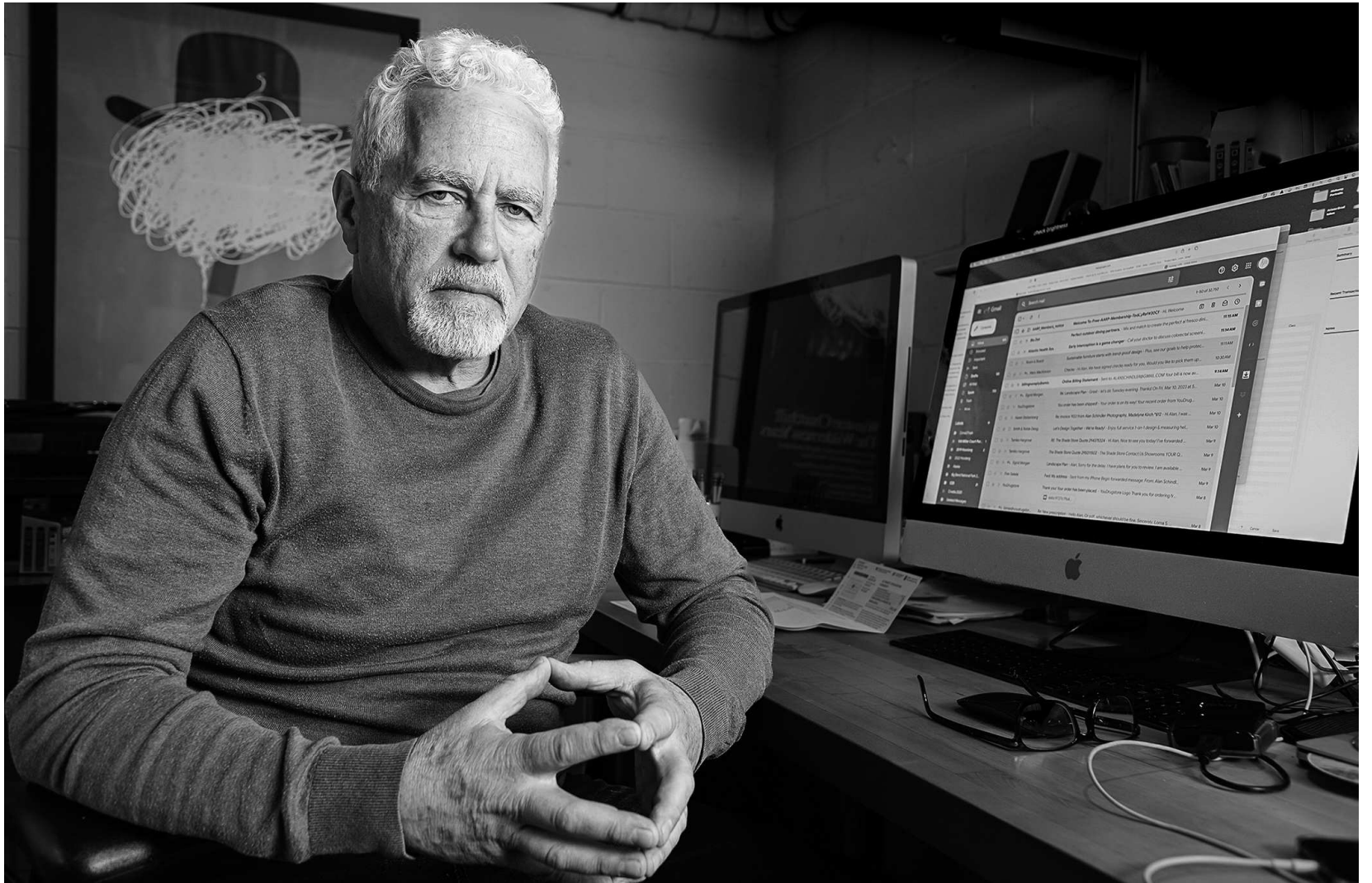
Alan - Born 1957

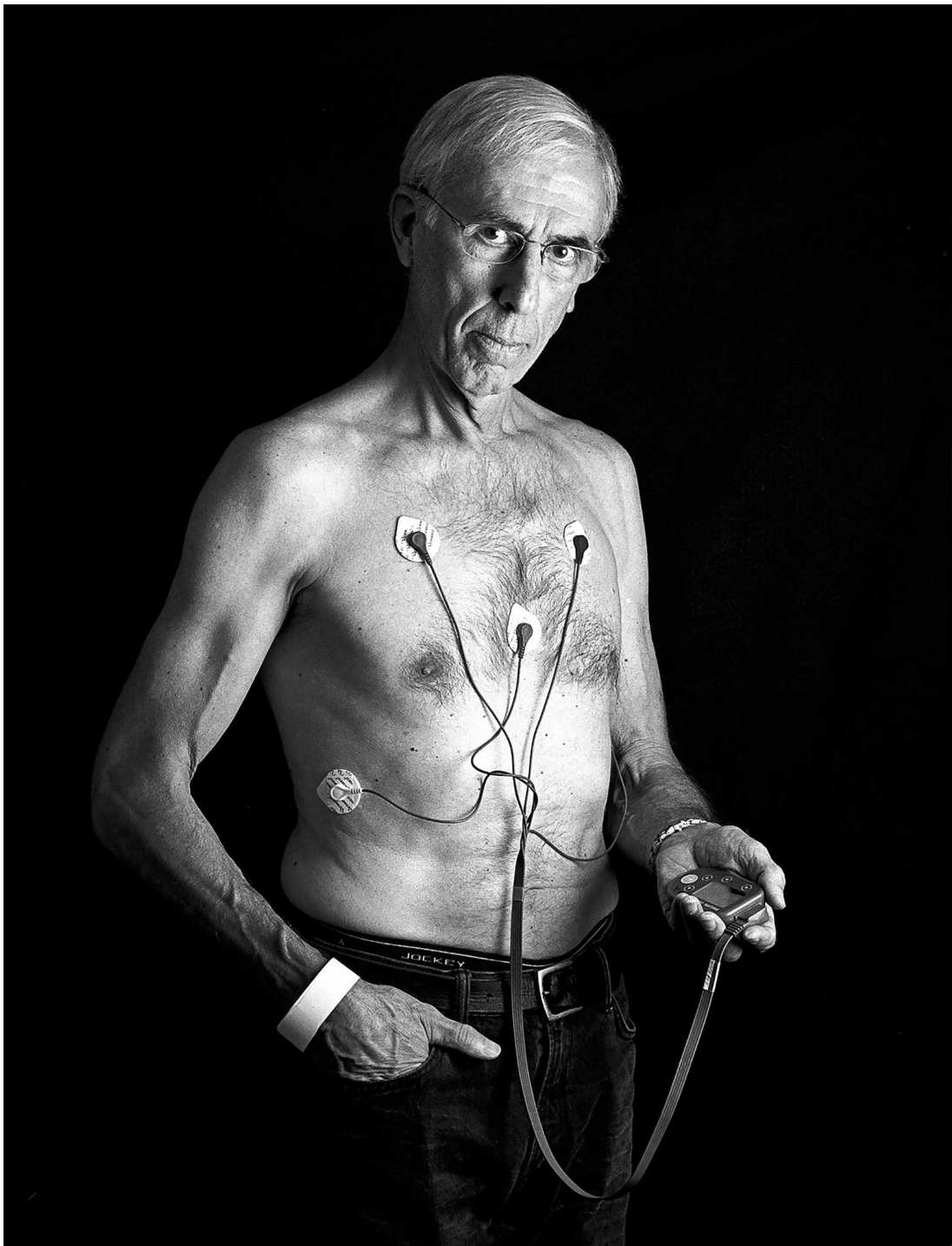
Age is a cultural construct. In our society , experience is often only valued to a point and youth revered obsessively. I'm turning 66 years young next month. I remember when I was in college, my idea of a 66 year old was that of a feeble old person. That's the message that was delivered.

I believe that if you focus on your age, then there is a tendency to act accordingly, according to how you are supposed to act. ""Act your age" and adjust your expectations are some of the implicit messages that we hear as we grow older. We are led to believe that certain behaviors are appropriate for our age group. I believe thinking like this is a self fulfilling prophecy and will lead to a faster decline physically and mentally. I won't limit myself with that way of thinking.

So you lose a step (or more) here and there, who cares. Just move forward , work through the inevitable pain, and enjoy the journey. That's the way I try to live.

I have no plans for aging really, because , as they say " the best laid plans" you know the rest.





Sandy - Born 1945

Getting older has been cause for looking inward and for appreciating the many wonderful things that I have and for acting on the important things that truly matter.

Glasses are necessary, but now I can truly 'see'. No longer can I endure the joyful physical exertions of my youth, but my heart is more open, more expansive. Years of experience have led to a level of confidence, which has allowed me to be more vulnerable and, as a result, more empathetic. The love of family and friends sustain me and for that I'm very thankful.

So, my plan for aging is to embrace getting older and to resist getting 'old'; to accept inevitable changes; to love my family; nurture my friendships; to pursue my passions; and to stay on the bright side of the turf.

Sarah - Born 1989

My plan, as far as aging is concerned, is to let every ache, gray hair, scar, tattoo, and wrinkle be the patina unique to my own path in life.

I find comfort in rediscovering my mother's face in my own each year when I look in the mirror.

Aging looks familiar but feels unfamiliar.

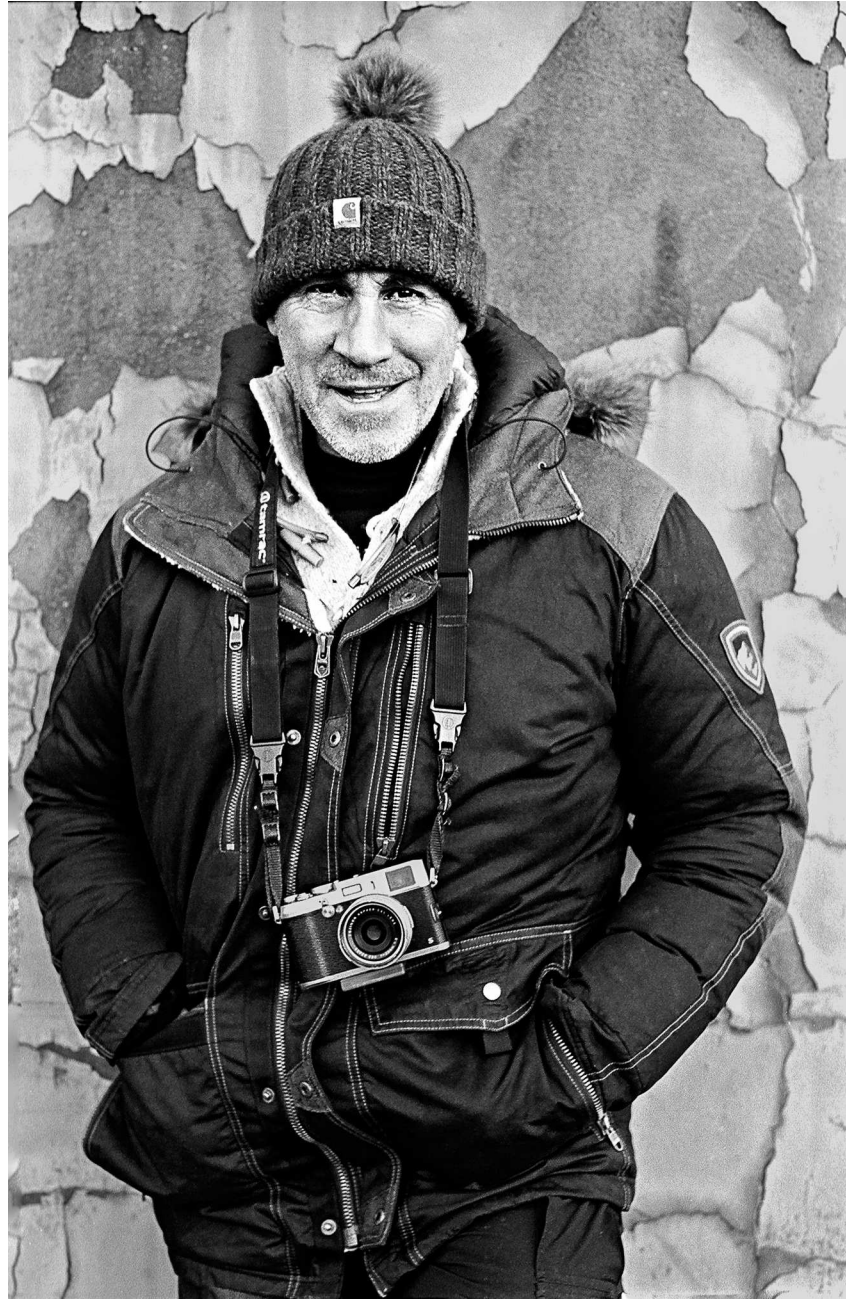


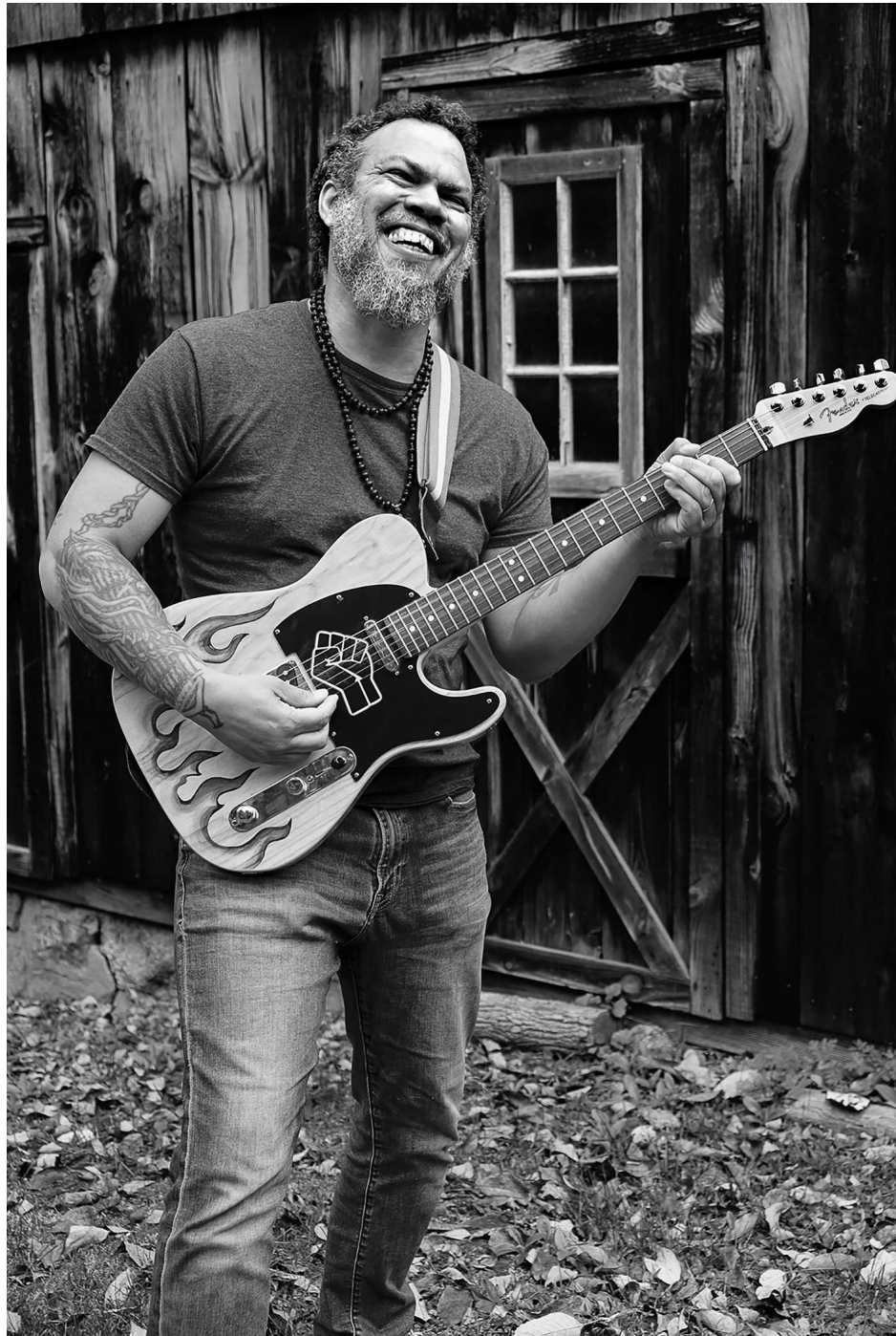
Ken - Born 1958

Many years of being very physically active, enjoying all aspects of a life outdoors, intense martial arts training, and a lifetime as a window cleaner (with at least a few falls), caused a need for bi-lateral hip replacement at age 40.

This prompted a deeper pursuit of both spiritual and artistic development. Today I channel my energy into a lifestyle less taxing on my body as I approach age 65.

My plan for aging is to move a bit slower through life (if I can) spending more time focused on my passion for the art of photography while bringing peace, joy and inspiration to those who appreciate my talents, positive energy and intentions.





Shaheed - Born 1971

My plan, as far as aging is concerned, is to not be concerned about aging.

I will continue to take care of myself, laugh as much as possible,
and be as happy as can be, because you can't win a chess game with Father
Time.



Sarah - Born 1991

I see my aging in a positive light. Since I have started my journey in aging, it has brought more happiness than I could have imagined...

I have noticed signs that I am aging. Long strands of silver hair dance around all the paths smiles have left behind on my face. Every new silver streak brings me excitement and makes me feel closer to my ancestors.

My eyes see clearer with intuition. My voice is softer. Every breath is deeper, filled with pure thanks and appreciation for the last.

My plan when it comes to aging, is to embrace it. Things don't matter much anymore. People and moments have taken place of possessions. A simple life full of the ones I love and the memories we make together.

Young people view age with dread and fear. But when you finally earn passage into your elder years, it feels like a new beginning.

Joe - Born 1949

Most days you wake up to a new pain somewhere in your body.

Always look forward to the small pleasures in your life.



Danny - Born 1946

I retired on a Friday and was well adjusted by Monday!

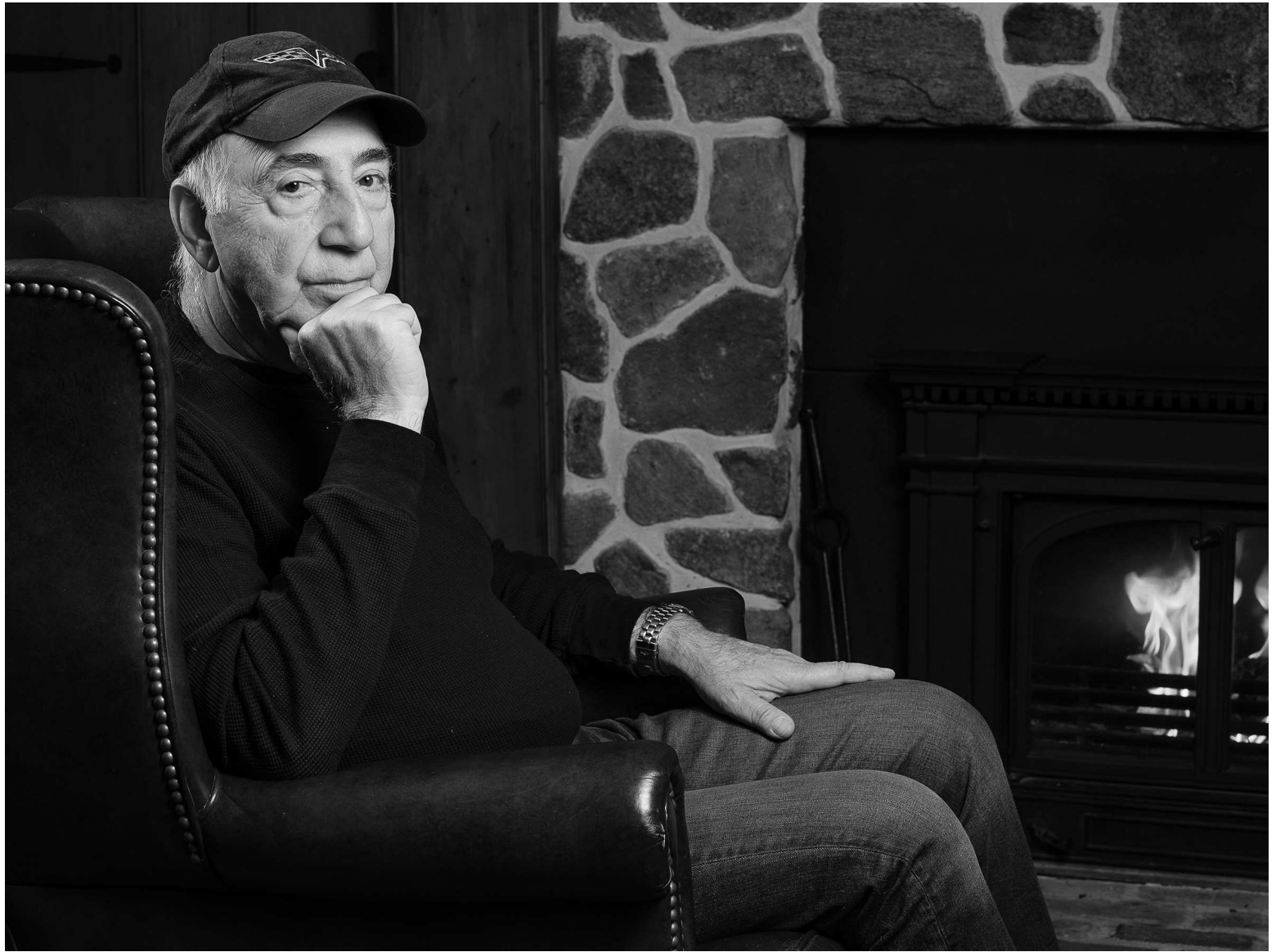
I always said that one thing I would do when I retired was to quit smoking. So with help, I did quit! If I had kept smoking a pack a day I probably wouldn't be here.

After I retired, I decided to be a walker instead of a jogger. I figured that walking was easier on my knees. My dad had both his knees replaced twice in his lifetime and I didn't want that. So I have been walking for 15 years and I'm starting to get tired!

To keep mentally sharp I play bridge 2 or 3 times a week. When one of our bridge players passes away they are usually in their 90's!! I always tell people that if you learn to play bridge and you play a lot it will add 3 years to your life!

Keep yourself physically active and mentally sharp. Just remember to keep looking forward not backward. If you live to be 100 then you can look backward!





John - Born 1944

Aging gives me the perspective to enjoy the little triumphs of life, and the wisdom to recognize them.

My plan for aging is to demand my mind and my body to do young things for as long as possible.

This will enable purposeful living.

Rick - Born 1946

So one day I get up and look in the mirror and there is this OLD guy looking back at me. Bald, with wrinkled skin at best.. looks like crepe paper... poor eyesight, needing glasses for both reading and distance, hearing aids in place, not all my original issued teeth, jowls like a bulldog and this is just the facial area. Fortunately my mustache has not given it up...I still hold onto some isolated part of my youth!

I wake up in the morning...THANK GOD...and I lay there for a moment taking inventory. Heart beating, although irregular, breathing, able to get myself to the edge of the bed. Ok...step up to feel the knees and hips...years of running destroyed both. Didn't they tell us that running was a great exercise back then?

God's cruel joke...once you have the time and the money to do anything you want...your body falls apart. Doesn't seem quite fair!

But all in all, I've had a pretty good run at life. In retrospect any day on the green side of the grass is a gift, as are old friends and new ones, too.

I can't say there are new chapters ahead...more like pages to be turned before coming to the conclusion of my life story.





Emily - Born 1978

Forty five is an interesting age - Middle Age.

I am currently living as the true definition of the sandwich generation. Taking care of both the elders in my family and my young children. Fully IN it, experiencing both Taylor Swift concerts and hospice care nurses.

Youth and so many of life's biggest decisions are in the past: college, career, marriage, children. In a way, much of the dreaming and hopefulness is behind me. But on the other hand, those choices and experiences have made me who I am today.

I've gained valuable life experiences from all those choices. They have given me the solid foundation to be the best of who I am for my kids, the confidence and self trust to run a business, and the self assuredness to know who I am and be true to that person going forward.

I am constantly digging deeper and learning about myself and my purpose in life. It's a life-long process.



Dave - Born 1983

As I've noticed signs that I'm aging, I've begun to think about the person, or should I say man, I have become.

I reflect on the past, whether it be fortune or pain, and begin to understand everything that has made me who I am today. But even though the future may be unknown, I can rest easy knowing I have persevered through the then unknown future which has now become the past.

My plan, when it comes to aging, is to enjoy and relish this gift of life and to shut out all the negativity that attempts to creep into everyday life. I plan to impose the "work to live and not live to work" idea as I age.

I will pay close attention to my body so I don't to injure it. I'm determined to retire in the good health I currently am experiencing.

I am truly grateful for my family and friends and, most of all, for my wife, Sarah and stepdaughter, Tereasa.

Laura - Born 1977

I still feel like the same me but am more aware of small physical protests when I do something that used to be easy - sitting on the floor for extended time, carrying something awkward, falling asleep in a weird position. My shape is changing which is hard to get used to. Clothing styles that used to suit me don't anymore and I haven't figured out how to dress the new proportions without looking frumpy.

I know I need to exercise more but I end up hurting myself or overdoing it when I try what I thought was my fitness level. I have to go much more slowly than I thought.

I know that one day, hopefully a long time from now, I'll wake up to some health issue or illness that will be hard to live with, so I try to really experience each day where that isn't the case. And I try to live in the idea that none of this is mine - not my planet, not my body, not my time, not my money, house, family, friends, life... - I have use of it all for a short time and I can love it deeply but at some point I have to return it all. That helps with the idea of loss that scares me so much. If it's mine and I lose it, that's awful. But if it isn't mine and I get to borrow it, then I cherish it while I have it and return it willingly when the time comes.



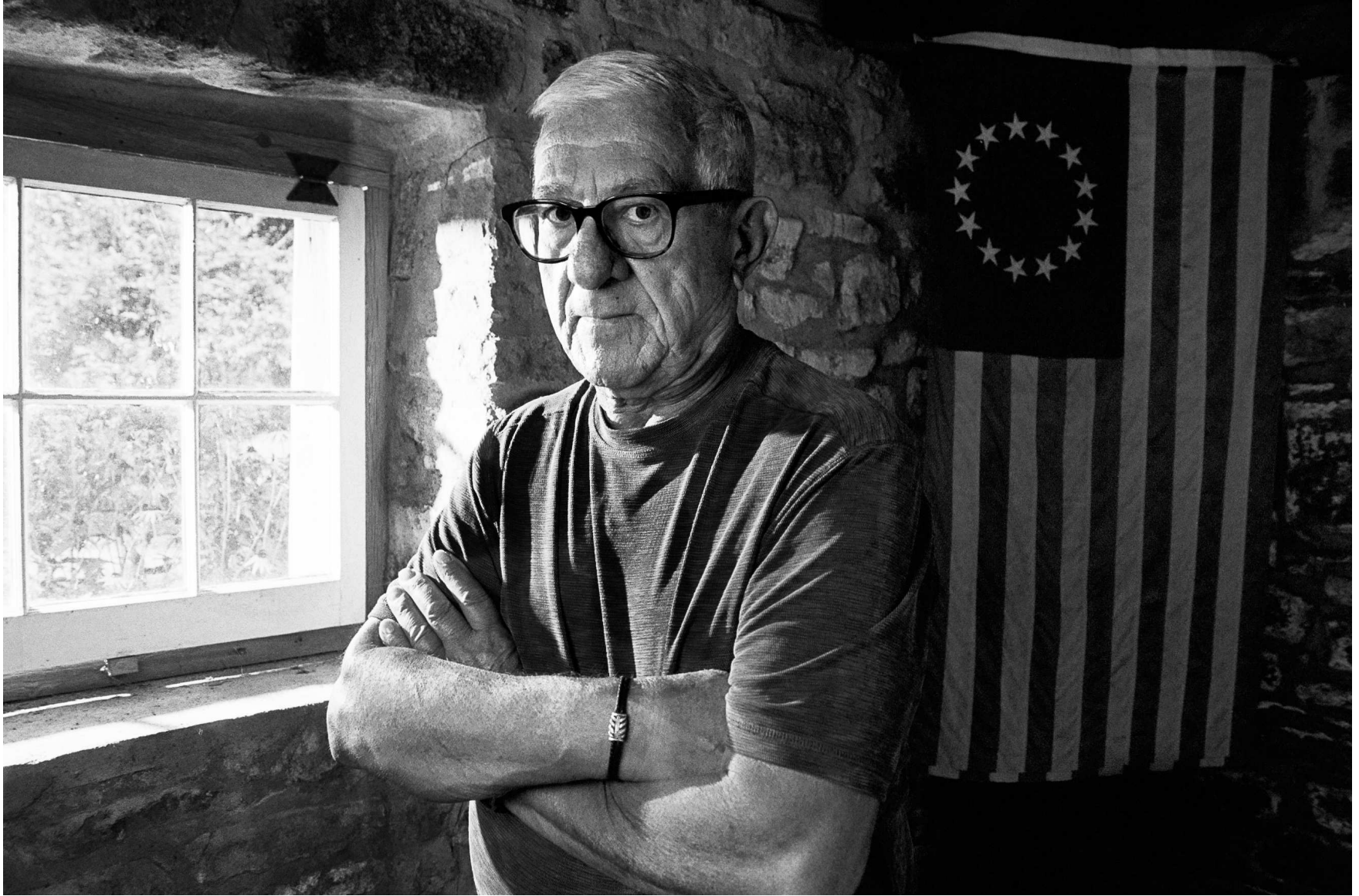
Gary - Born 1945

My observations of getting old are mixed. I had no choice. It was inevitable.

I wish I had taken better care of my self, but here I am . Now I'm trying to cope with all the issues of life except I don't have the same energy. But I feel an urgency to do more each day than necessary. I am trying to make up for lost opportunities. The ability to still do things I care about eases the fact that the end is coming.

I am thankful for the ability to watch my children do a good job of parenting, and watch my grandchildren grow and develop strong relationships with each other. Also, I get pleasure that I have family and friends who really care and think about me.

I don't take all the aches and pains too seriously, I try to learn something new each day, and I continue to do some things that makes me happy.



Kammy - Born: 1981

I would guess my life is about half over, as long as some tragedy does not befall me. I love life. I love speed and I want to feel the wind on my helmetless head. I'm probably going to turn the music up so I don't hear the seatbelt warning dinging at me to put it on. I don't want to just hike in the mountains. I want to summit the tallest peak and get my picture on top. I'm in my 40's, but I still feel like I'm in my 20's. I know God holds my very breath in the palm of his hand, and I want to be around to meet my great grandchildren, if it's His will. That being said, I know I'm not invincible, and I also know that only what's done for Christ will truly last. The time we have on earth is not even a drop in the bucket compared to eternity. It's difficult to balance in my mind if I'm just living to please myself and entertainment, or if I'm living for the purpose I was called to live by God? Knowing that we are His creation and that He gave everything through his son Jesus so that we can have true life and freedom is a humbling thought and I'm reminded of it daily. So when I consider this in terms of aging, sometimes without consciously thinking it, we start to live with this idea that God cares more about the youth of the world. That somehow as we age, the spotlight that once seemed to shine on us has dimmed. (Perhaps that's one reason we keep a tighter grip on "youth")? But in reality, God hasn't lessened his care or attention in the least. With time our perspectives change, and each season brings with it (hopefully) newly acquired wisdom. But wisdom that comes from God, and not on our own merit, is what will keep our joy alive as we age and until we see our Savior face to face in a future day. Honestly, the thought of death and leaving loved ones behind is not a joyful thought for me. The unknown of how it will occur and going where you've never gone seems frightful. But God tells us that for Christians "to die is gain". While it may cause apprehension, I do have a sure, solid hope of eternal life in Heaven because I am convinced of God's truth in the Bible. That Jesus died for a sinner like me and paid the debt of sins on my behalf, so I can join my creator for an eternity in Heaven. There have been seasons where I have experienced doubt, but God has always led me back to his unwavering truth found in the Bible. So while loving others, passing on a legacy of faith and love to my children, and knowing that I need to constantly refocus on what truly matters, I will embrace aging while simultaneously attempting to defy it by pushing myself physically so my body can remain "young" and enjoy the life God has giving me on earth.





Gary - Born 1952

Health-wise, I consider myself very lucky, especially when I hear what other friends and relatives in my age group are going through. Like most, I do have a few more aches and pains than I used to, but not too bad. I am thankful and try to never take my good health for granted. I try to help other family members and friends when I can. Which includes things like writing about aging for a friend's book!

When I was younger, I had an interesting observation about aging that has stuck with me. When I first started skiing, I was in my early 20's. On early trips to Vermont I remember noticing skiers with wrinkles on their faces! I realized this is something that old(er) people can do. Now, I am one of those older, wrinkly skiers. It's still one of my passions and I believe it helps significantly with my balance. It has always been a wonderful social activity as well.

I am also grateful for good relationships with family and a number of friends, which I think is very important.

My plan is to stay as active as possible, for as long as possible. I am betting on a law of physics that goes something like:

A body in motion tends to stay in motion. A body at rest tends to stay at rest.

I'm not really a gym person, but I walk frequently, stretch occasionally. I have at times taken yoga classes. I played racquetball for years. Oddly, I go out of my way to walk up steps when I can, because it's good for the ski legs. Other than that, I try to eat reasonably healthy, based somewhat on a Mediterranean style diet. Must be my northern Italian ancestry (father's side). I gave up eating red meat many years ago after getting somewhat interested in nutrition. My Italian grandmother is one of the few genetic hopes I have for living longer. She made it to 96! Maybe it was the nightly glass of brandy before bed? Maybe that's the secret?

Connie - Born 1949

When I look into the mirror and see my mother, I can't believe aging happened this quickly. It was Just yesterday that I was a 30 year old with a slimmer body and silky hair. The trappings of youth have long ago waned, but have been replaced with something far more valuable.

Now, although time is not on my side, I'm living life with a sense of wonder and curiosity that I simply did not have time for previously. I like taking it more slowly to think about things more fully and with more understanding.

I'm grateful for our relative health and that we can still do a lot of things that we enjoy. I love the peaceful and serene feeling of swimming laps and the translation to my regular life that it brings.

We know the value of planning ahead, and have a few tentative plans, but for now we are taking it as it comes and enjoying all the moments!



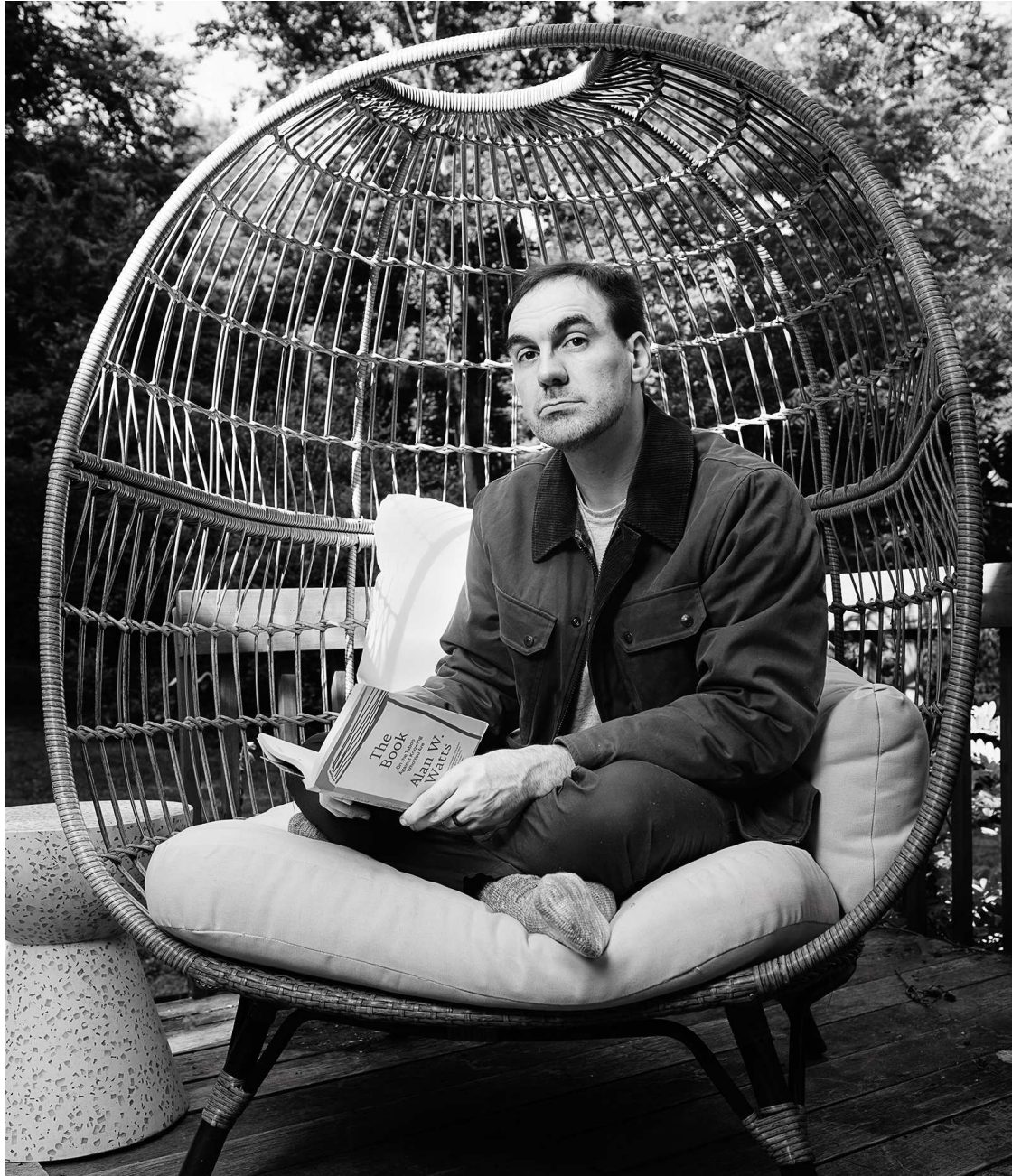
Andrew - Born 1983

My first impression? Aging stinks! And worst of all, too much of it will kill you!

But; I only seem to age when I focus on the things I can't do anymore. If not for that, I haven't aged a day. The game, then, is to find the things I can still do.

I'm not in denial that my body will fail. I just don't think I'm in there. Not entirely, anyway. Today I found myself on this page.

I'll be somewhere tomorrow, too, if you look for me.





Summer - Born 1977

I have very little physical changes in my appearance over the years. People often think I'm 15 to 20 years younger than I really am. People who have known me for a long time, joke that I have "Vampire Syndrome". I don't have any wrinkles. My skin is starting to get a little loose and I do have some dark spots from the sun. I have a small amount of silver hair, but it's not very noticeable. Mostly, only notice increasing aches and pains in my muscles and not having the energy I used to.

Emotionally, I've lost my "thick skin" where nothing would bother me. I'm calmer and more mature, but I get emotional and overwhelmed much easier now.

As I've gotten older, I've started to feel pretty lonely. I did not keep in touch with my friends from when I was younger. They all got married and had kids and we started to not be interested in the same things anymore. I started to feel like an outcast.

I started dating and being friends with younger people who I felt more accepted by and had more in common with.

Recently I became single after 15 years. Now, dating is hard because of the difference between how old I am and how old I look. On the dating apps, I lie about my age and say that I'm 10 years younger, so that I don't get paired with people I have no interest in and nothing in common with. But then I have to tell them the truth about my age at some point.

I would like to find someone to spend the rest of my life with, but I'm afraid of what will happen as I start to look and act too old. I know I won't ever get cosmetic surgery to stay looking younger. I do find myself spending more and more money on creams and serums though.

I can't imagine what I'll look like in 20 years. As every year passes by, I feel more out of place...like a lost time traveler just trying to find the right place in time.

Alex - Born 1988

Sometimes when people get older they don't have energy for anything. I don't want to be like that. I don't want to lose my passion for what I love due to getting older.

I am planning on staying young in my heart by doing what I love to do now, like traveling and discovering new places.

Mentally, I'll probably just accept the fact that I won't have a young body forever. It is what is is.

I can't do anything to keep my face looking young. Eating healthy and using skin care products is helpful but it all depends on genetics.

I've noticed that if a person is happy, their face looks 20 years younger. So, yes, I plan on doing what makes me happy. That way my face stays young.



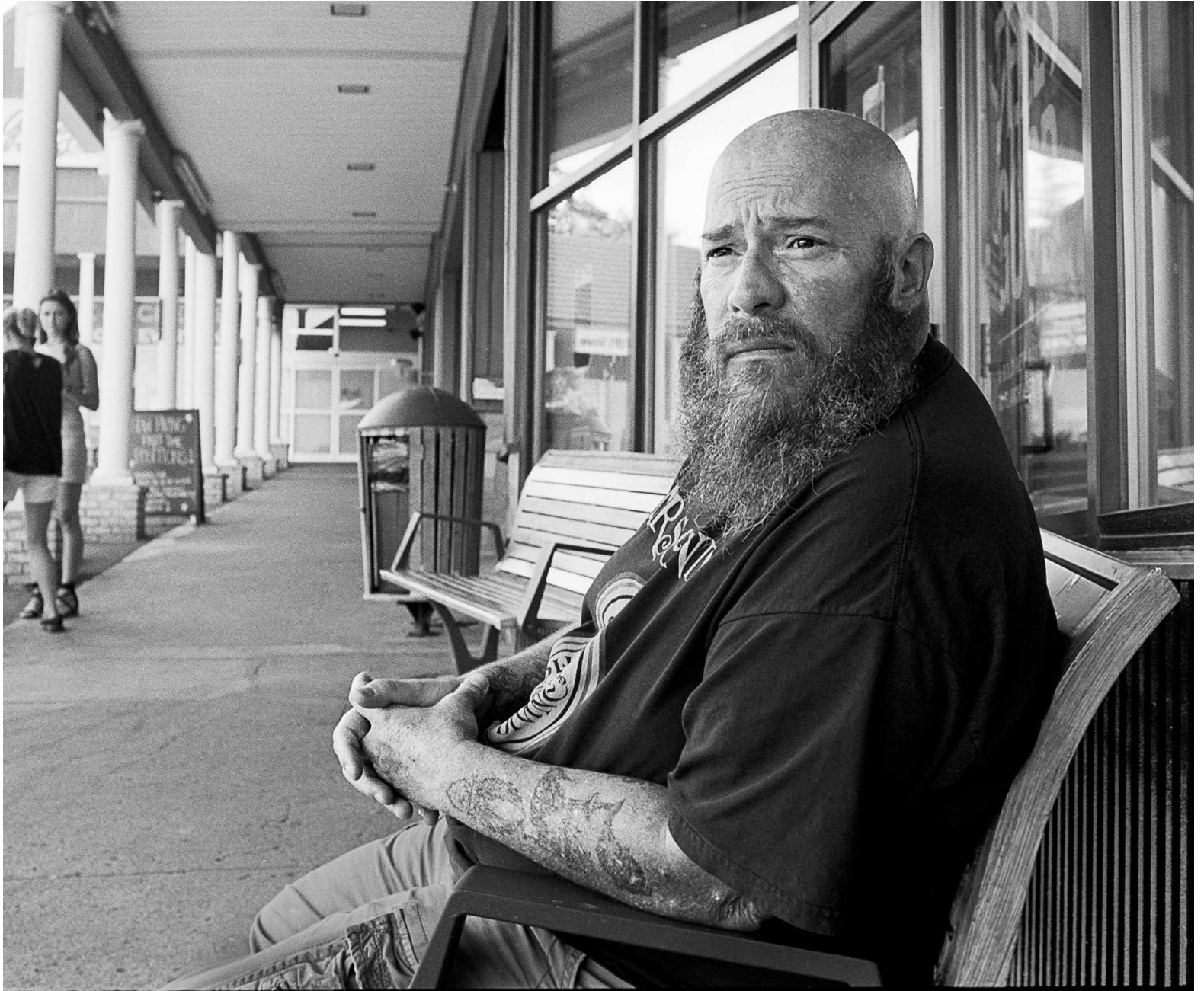
Brian - Born 1963

The first real physical change due to aging is thin skin diabetes.

I'm working on getting healthy. I walk twice a day.

Aging doesn't have any impact on relationships. I don't have any.

The plan for aging is to "keep on keeping on", one day at a time.



Mike - Born 1959

For most of my life I always thought I looked like me. But over the past few years, I feel like I look a like an old man. It's disconcerting to see myself in photos. My body feels more creaky in some ways. I can still work endless hours, but I pay for it over the following days. But it's who I am and my fate is to either get older, or the alternative which is much more finite.

Psychologically though, I feel more myself than at any time. I know who I am and what I like and don't like. I am no longer worried about what anyone thinks of me, nor do I feel tortured by the urges and impulses of youth. In many ways, I am far more content than I've ever been.

That said, we've always been on the edge with money. We may have to move someplace less expensive to live over the next few years, but we want to stay in the area. We have family and friends, and access to great medical care, which are all important to stay close to as we get older.



Jeff - Born 1960

My hair's going grey, but I'm going to age how I am. I don't really care. There's nothing I can do about it. You know, I doesn't bother me at all.

I'm still pretty agile and pretty strong but I have to watch myself because I can hurt myself easier. My brain tells me, "yeah go ahead and do it" but you can't do it the same way anymore. I try to do things now to make it easier for myself later on in life.

I'm at that age when I know that every year I'm going to age a little more. I'm going to get closer to the end. It seems that when you're done breeding everything's trying to kill you!

My relationships with family and friends are just as good as when I was young. Now, I try to help people more. I try to help out the younger generation. And the older people need help too. Hopefully I'll get payback so when I get real old and can't do anything, maybe they'll help me.

I try to leave the world around me a better place than it was, at least for the family. I think I did that and that's the best I can ask for, really.



Martin - Born 1954

Getting old? I look at it as another year is OK with me.

I wrangle carts six days a week; eight hours a day. I don't work Wednesdays. The work's alright but when I wrangle carts in winter my legs stiffen up with the cold.

After all that I'm dead tired. I just go home, hit the sack and read my railroad magazines.

When I'm older, I plan to retire, relax, work on my Lionel model train collection and take pictures of trains, all kinds of trains.



Elizabeth - Born 1959

My sense of feeling young-ish for my age over the past two decades has disappeared in the past year. I am shocked at loss of strength and other body declines. Aging is catching up with me. Aging, like youth, is just a constant work in progress. Here are key elements to my plan for aging:

Gratitude, gratitude, gratitude!

More experiences; less stuff

Letting go

Acceptance

Appreciation

Be curious. Read. Learn.

Connections - friends and family; also the brief and random

Walk in Nature

Maintain one's healthy body parts; improve or manage the others.

Home joy is life joy.

As a solo person who enjoys her solitude, I increasingly recognize the importance of my interpersonal relationships. I am learning to be intentional about them.

I am anxious to start a new chapter, the next version of me. But, now, I realize I have given no thought to the later stages of growing old-er, except to focus on remains as strong and healthy as possible. I do not have a home in which to age in place. That is a big concern... for my future.





Travis - Born 1984

My personal observations of aging are... wearing sweatpants a lot more, things crack on my body that never did before, and feeling more comfortable when staying in, and not having to go out.

Writing music has definitely changed as I have gotten older. But I think that's just learning how to write better. And, personal experiences always change how you write music.

I think a good plan is just coming to peace with aging and realizing age is just a number. You can stay young by taking care of yourself mentally and physically



Medina - Born 1996

I have mixed feelings about aging. In one way, I am embracing all the positive aspects of it such as gaining wisdom over the years and learning who I am as a person and becoming comfortable with it. The physical aspect intrigues me because I am still only 27 years old, and haven't experienced significant signs of aging yet, aside from some fine lines and weight gain that weren't present in my teens/early twenties. I've been warned by those older than me that the physical aspect of aging can be very challenging, particularly the disconnect between one's mental state and their changing appearance. I believe it will feel as if I am in someone else's body for a while until I become accustomed to it. I'm sure this will start to happen to me as I approach my 40s since aging becomes accelerated once a person reaches their mid 30s.

To expand on the emotional observations of aging, I believe mortality has become more apparent and scary as I get older. I've come to realize that those around me are aging and won't be with me forever like I once believed as a little girl. I understand I have limited time with my family and loved ones, and as I grow older, the lonelier life will become. This aspect of aging can weigh on me heavily at times; however, a sense of gratitude for life has also blossomed within me over the years. I've become much more selective with my time and who I spend it with, and make a conscious effort to nurture bonds with those closest to me. Additionally, I have started to appreciate the little things that I overlooked in my younger years such as spending time in nature and home cooked meals with family and friends. This new perspective has made me a happier and more grateful person overall. I've also come to understand the importance of taking risks and going after what you want in life in order to avoid regret in later years.

My plan to adjust to the inevitability of aging is approaching it one day at a time. I am learning that aging isn't entirely negative; it signifies a life lived. There's a profound beauty in this process, and it's important to focus on that aspect rather than dwelling on the less appealing parts of aging. In fact, youth poses some challenges as well, such as uncertainty and naivety. It's a reminder that every stage of life brings its mix of hurdles and blessings, shaped by our perception and attitude towards it. I believe that maintaining a positive attitude towards aging and cherishing the life experiences I've had will help me reconcile with its inevitable progression.

Ethan - Born 1949

For quite a few years, when asked about aging by my young High school students, I felt the quote attributed to Hunter S. Thompson pretty much described me:

“Life should not be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside in a cloud of smoke, thoroughly used up, totally worn out, and loudly proclaiming “Wow! What a Ride! “

However, only a short five years after retiring, I'm not so sure about skidding in broadside in a cloud of smoke.

I find myself moving through the day much slower, more conscious of my place in the environment that I have spent my adult life creating, and questioning what the future holds.



Chad - Born 1982

I spent a majority of my life involved in some kind of martial arts or combat sports. So needless to say, I was a little rough on my body. At the age of 14 I broke my hip playing football and that required surgery. The abuse I put my body through led to a struggle with pain pills in my early 20s. It was during my 20s that I probably felt the worst I've ever felt due to the pain, the lack of physical exercise, and the shitty eating habits of fast food and late night bowls of cereal. And, I made some bad decisions.

At the age of 25 I was sentenced to 5 years in federal prison. I served time in the federal correctional institute of Miami and it was there that I got into physical fitness. I developed a strong sense of responsibility to take care of myself and my physical well-being. I ended up becoming a certified personal trainer and I realized I wanted to train and coach fighters.

I've been training mixed martial arts for the last few years, focusing on my coaching journey. I do suffer when it comes to my hands in my feet because of the years of boxing and Muay Thai (kickboxing). I've broken bones and had boxer fractures, and have broken bones in my feet and ankles. That led to early stages of arthritis. I have days where my joints, hands and feet are sore or inflamed, but overall, I feel pretty good. I've also noticed the more that I train and stay physically active, the less pain I am in and the less discomfort I feel.

Now, I'm a completely different person emotionally. Most people mature emotionally as they age. I think human beings are naturally born with an immature emotional behavior pattern. and the only thing that can change that, is life.. I think that the more hardships, struggles, trials and tribulations that we go through in our life, make us stronger emotionally and also build a stronger character. That is one of the things I can say I am thankful for going to prison for. I believe that I matured, extremely fast in those five years. I came home at the age of 30, with the mentality and the mindset of a 60-year-old. I had seen everything life has had to offer good and bad and, with that, I've learned to be grateful for every little thing life gives me.

I have been learning how to live in a subconscious state of mind. I will continue to train mixed martial arts. Movement is medicine and the more active you are the younger your body will remain. It's important that the older we get the more we incorporate some kind of physical exercise into our daily routine. And every day I try to better myself mentally by reading, helping someone or just going to my morning Martial arts class. I try to build mental fortitude and remain focused. I feel that will help me adapt to aging both emotionally and mentally.



Priscilla - Born 1968

The first thing I noticed about my aging is that it's not as easy to lose the weight I gained. When I was in my 30s, and even in my 40s, I had the energy and discipline. to lose it. Also, I have less flexibility. My body begins with aches so I have to stretch to feel great all day. I noticed more lines on my face. A lot of them are the "laugh lines". I say to myself, " Maybe I shouldn't laugh so much. Look at these lines!" But, I wouldn't have it any other way. My vision is not what it used to be. I'm squinting more.

I now have hips that I really didn't have before. And being a Latina, it's perceived in a good way. Hips are a welcome thing in the Latina culture.

Aging has been challenging because I always took pride in not looking my age.

Now, I'm catching up to my age and it's a little bit of a challenge. I want to be able to age gracefully and accept it yet I want to always look good. I've seen my body aging and I'm fearful of where it's going. I also think about my health, a lot. There was a time in my 20s and 30s when I took my health for granted. Then a lot started happening in my 40s, physically, in my health that now I have become more concerned about anything that happens. Brain fog from menopause scares me. I'm not a hypochondriac but now I realize that people my age are dying. I try to look death from the perspective where I can learn to accept that it is part of life but I also want to be ready for it, if that's even possible. I've learned to deal with these things through humor. I laugh at myself and make fun of certain things. That way, I take control of it. I'm older but I know there are still things I want to do; still things I want to learn.

Regarding relationships, my husband and I are in a very good place. As we both get older there is an acceptance of each others aging. Those changes give us character. They make us who we are and allow us to have the relationship we have, based on mutual respect and we see the beauty in each other. And that has allowed my aging to not overwhelm me. We still find each other attractive.

I find that I'm now more confident, more centered My aging has given me more freedom to express myself. Now I have the wisdom and the confidence to be who I truly am.

I'm now in a place in my life where I've learned to detach in a healthy way while still loving the people I want to be there for, and that came to me by aging, knowing who I am; liking who I am. I want to see the parts of me that are beautiful. I want to embrace the wisdom that has come with that. I want to celebrate the clarity that has come with age.



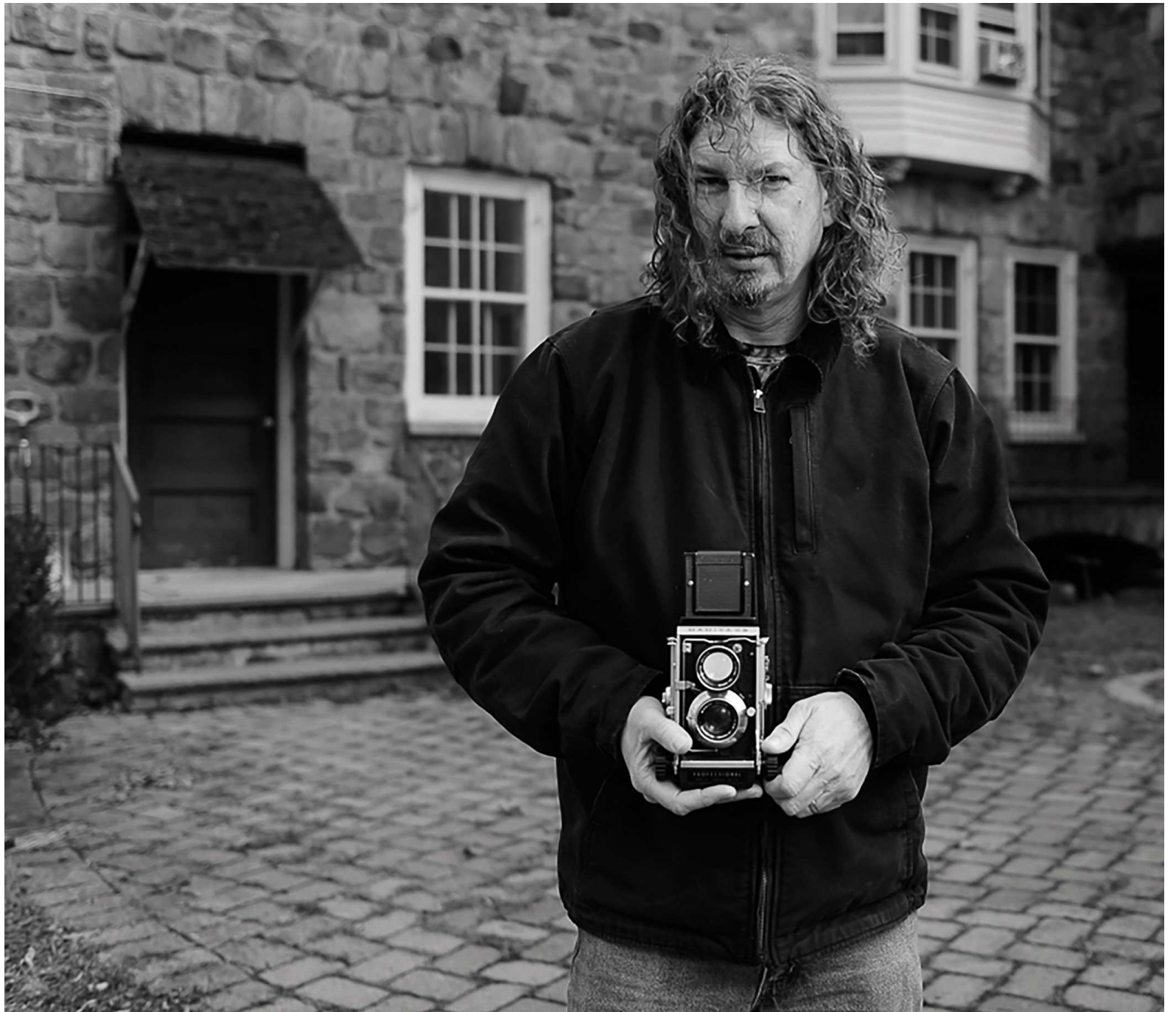
Wayne - Born 1973

I try not to think about aging, but it's been difficult lately. Every day I notice more grey hair in my beard.

My plan, as far as aging is concerned, is to age gracefully so I can enjoy my retirement. I worked too damn hard to not enjoy the rewards I've earned.

I need to take good care of my body by exercising, eating healthy and getting enough rest. I've realized I can't live, physically, like I'm 21 years old. But I can still follow my curiosity and continue to learn and grow.

I want to be there for my kids when they grow up and start having their own families. I am looking forward to being a grandfather.



Randon - Born 1973

My plan, as far as aging is concerned, is to go down, gracefully, with the ship.



Phil - Born 1949

Been wakeful so long don't know how it feels
To be sleeping sweet dreams in scarlets and teals
With nerves gone electric, that sizzle and snap
I'd talk to somebody but it feels like a trap

It's hard to keep going with a gale in your face
So I stay hunkered down in a dangerous place
They say there's a rainbow arcing beautiful hues
Once thought I saw it, but it was only the blues

How does the trying, the purposeful strain
Wind up just aching without any gain?
It's hard to keep chasing some theory of bliss
When I look around and see nothing but this

Pour me another, might be I'll have two
I'm already toasted, so this one's for you
It's hardly worth leaving and useless to stay
Not much of a bargain, what's left to say?





Gerry - Born 1959

Now, when I look in the mirror I see a wrinkly old face. There's no color in any of the hair that I might have left. Sometimes I just don't feel like that old person. But I'm OK with it, so that's a mind change.

I used to look for acceptance. Now, I care less about what others are thinking about me. If they agree with me, cool, but if they don't that's too bad. I can be that grumpy old man sitting on the porch, now.

Aging picks up speed. When you are younger changes come more slowly. When you're older, changes seem to happen every 3 months. So you have to find ways to do physical things in a different way.

I guess this is part where you start to cruise until you pass away. That's what I think. I'm OK with not participating. I'm OK with just waiting around now. You only get about 10 good years for cruising and then you got a problem. You don't get out of here without suffering in some way.

I say to the young ones: "Being youthful, you have a lot of resilience but you're still dancing to the music and, eventually, you're going to have to pay the band."



Peter - Born 1962

Physically I have slowed down in the heavy physical work outs. I notice my muscle mass isn't what it use to look like. I do feel very healthy and strong. I am not experiencing any physical issues that would limit my movements or doing the things I enjoy. Aside from the occasional back pain that I've had for years...All is good.

Emotionally I am centered and relaxed. I have more patience and understanding now. I don't feel my "Age". It hasn't limited me in my day to day activities.

Relationships... are another story.

Adjusting to memory fog is one area that should be addressed. You know when you just forget that word or loose your train of thought? Well this happens when we are young as well but seems like a bigger deal as we age.

I don't feel aging has been an issue for me at this point. But I'm sure as I get older all of the changes that come along with aging, some more than others, will have to be dealt with then.

For now....onward and upward



Bob - Born 1950

I am fortunate in that my physical and emotional health are sound and I still have energy to create and be active. I stay active developing my artwork and being involved in the community, which has been a good balance of expressing myself and being social. Now, I am contributing in many more ways than when I was younger and consumed by my business career. Inevitably things will slow and decline as this is just a fleeting life, but I try not to become overwhelmed about tomorrow. Today is good enough.

My plan for aging has been trying to find contentment and peace in the process of getting older by celebrating, rather than fighting, life's fragile, impermanent, and slightly broken nature. This realization has freed me from worrying about the existential goals of status, wealth, and popularity and, instead, enabled me to focus on the intrinsic goals that fill basic needs, which bring more happiness.

My aim is to be more in the moment and to appreciate the imperfect beauty in everyday life.



Michelle - Born 1965

Age to me is like a lens. It focuses every part of your life. Through the years, that lens sharpens your sense of happiness and inner peace that you only glimpse at in your youth. It refocuses your priorities, allows you to hone in on what's important, which for me, like most people, would be family, health and happiness. It develops your confidence, self esteem and sense of gratitude. Maybe that is what they mean when they say "wisdom" of age.

Aging is no easy task, At a certain age, you look in the mirror and say "that can't be me." But there I am. It's not like i "feel" a certain age. In my head I'm still in my 30's. I think you need to age to find out who you really are.

It's a trade off, you are trading some of that frenetic energy of youth for a contentment that comes with age. A trade off that maybe isn't a fair one, but a trade off nonetheless.



Peter - Born 1992

Throughout the years I've started to see grays, wrinkles forming on my forehead, and body strength increase.

My views on life and what I strive for have changed. I've noticed my drive and work ethic increased. I've drifted from friendships with people who have may have less drive than I do and surrounded myself with more like minded people.

My plan to adjust to the inevitability of aging is to stay active and healthy, continue to surround myself with like minded people, and stay motivated to live life to the fullest. I've sought recently to avoid process foods and remove known toxicities from my household.

Angela - Born 1987

This is a complicated question for me. I've struggled with severe anxiety and depression for many years, and have a lot of medical issues in my family history. I've always had a low-lying belief that I am not going to make it to become "old." It has always felt like something abstract that might never come to pass, like when I think about what I'd do if there were a rain of dollar bills, or a zombie apocalypse, or something equally hypothetical.

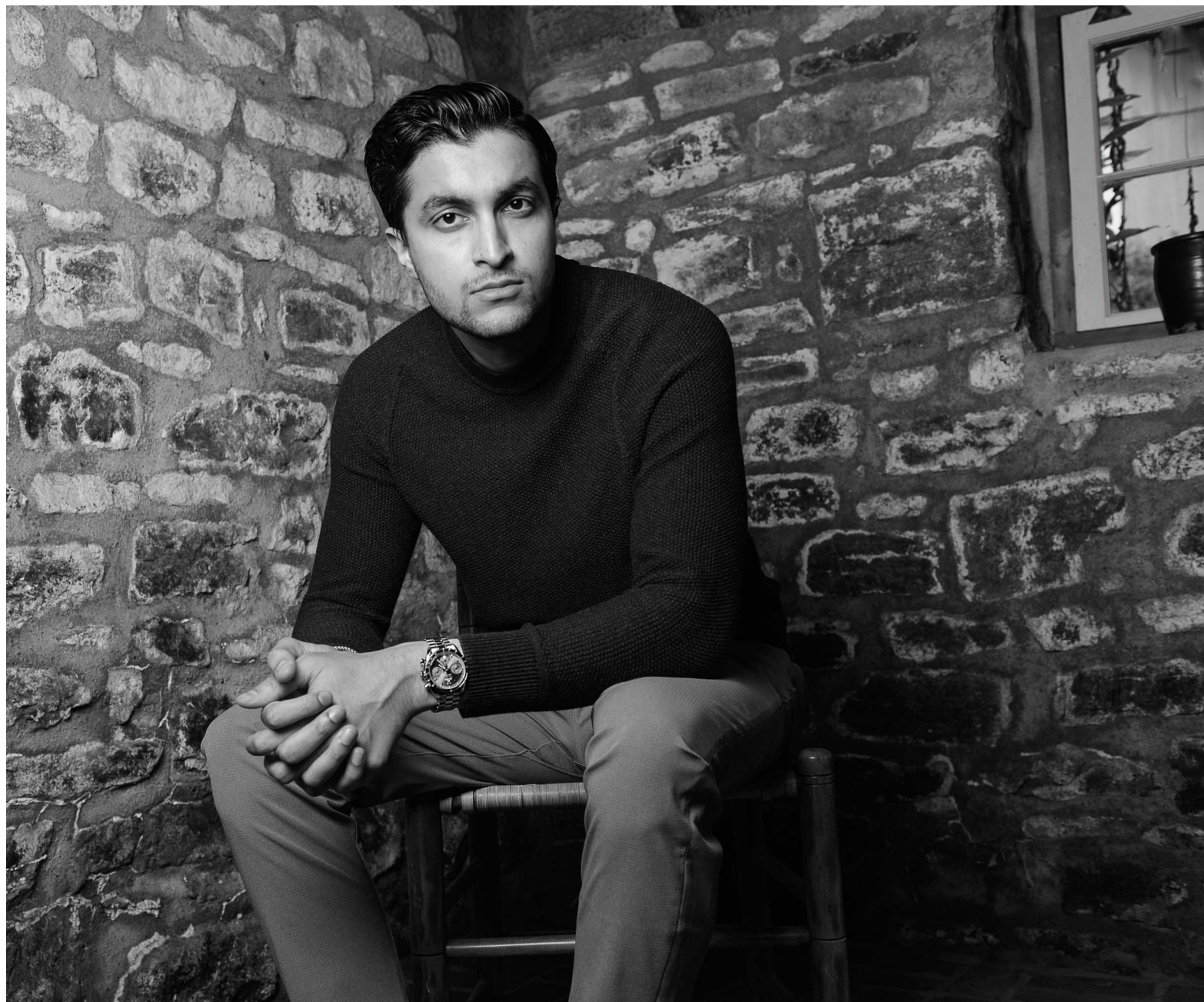
The kicker is that I am a primary care physician, and so I come across literally hundreds or thousands of people every year who had the exact same thought process, and are now noticing that aging isn't quite so abstract anymore. Sometimes people feel it when things ache more than they used to, and they heal more slowly. Sometimes it is with a much larger medical change: a heart arrhythmia, a broken hip, a neurological disorder, or a cancer diagnosis. I've heard patients say "but I thought that was something that happened to older people," and then watched the dawning comprehension as they realize that yes, they ARE the older people now.

Some have been lucky and not felt it until their 70s or 80s, some have felt it in their 30s or 40s. As Tom Scott puts it: "That was a problem for future me, and now I am future me, and this sucks." I know that I feel different in my body now than I did before. When I was younger, I could eat a whole carton of Haagen-Dazs and it would never touch me. Now I swear I look at the dang thing, and I gain weight. My neck and shoulders constantly low-level ache. There's a post that gets frequently circulated around social media, which is a picture of a cassette tape, and the caption "If you know what this is, this is your reminder to get up, stretch, and take your daily ibuprofen."

I've come to realize that as each day passes, I am getting older, so this abstract thing is becoming less and less so. Honestly, I'm still not sure (or maybe I am delusional) that I am going to make it to "old", but the number of what old is keeps increasing.

The upside to aging is that it has come with certain experiences and growth. I know more about red flags, unhealthy relationships, when to walk away, and why it is hard to do so. I learned a lot more about interacting with patients. I've gotten more experience at giving people grace, including myself. I've figured out how to take care of myself more, mentally and physically, because I can't just rely on youth to power me through crappy eating, staying up too late, and "just seeing what happens." I'm sure that if I make it another 20 years, I'll look back on current me and laugh at how much experience I thought I had, and what little a drop in the bucket it is. Which is probably true, but for now, it's my bucket, and I'm proud of it.





Siddhant - Born 1999

As I've gotten older, I feel I've actually become stronger in almost every sense. Physically, I'm faster, more agile, and in better condition than I've ever been. My body feels more capable, and I have a clearer understanding of how to train, recover, and perform at a high level.

Mentally and emotionally, I'm sharper and more stable. I see through things more easily, I trust my instincts more, and I stay grounded in who I am. My emotional control has improved, and I've become more selective with who I allow into my space. As a result, my relationships are more intentional and meaningful so they are built on clarity, mutual respect, and real connection.

I don't believe in "true aging" in the way society defines it. While the physical body may eventually decay on this mortal plane, the soul and consciousness within are infinite. I am not simply this body. I am spirit, awareness, and energy. As are all things. I've come to know this through deep reflection, meditation, and connection to the universe. Aging, to me, is just a process the body experiences, not something that limits who I actually am. I've come to remember fragments of past lives, and that has shaped how I view existence. I don't live in fear of time, but in harmony with it. Change is inevitable.



Beth - Born 1963

Aging is something that some people do not have the privilege of experiencing. It is hard when you can't do what you used to do. When I find myself feeling bad, mentally or physically, I remind myself of those words.

I like to listen to older folks talk about how they grew up and, then, what they enjoy now. I have learned so much from older people and enjoy their stories and experiences.

It's very interesting to me.

Working at the Antique Mall has really opened up more time for me to ponder on those things that come into the store to sell. Questions like , I wonder who owned this?, or even how many people have come through this building young and old. I thank the lord for everyday I grow old.

Shelley - Born 1975

I believe that we look at the past because what is to come feels terrifying. We hold our breath waiting for the next birthday, the next holiday, the next illness and we forget to live. I have indeed fully stepped out of this tired, freckled dusty meat shell and it's just another experience, another dimension, another plane, the next season.

Death is nothing to fear. Just the next step of being. Believe what you will, there is another season after death.

After cancer, chemo, and the death of the horrific naive old me- I try to learn all that I can.

Read everything, make music, create art, explore nature, drive to the edge of the world, live my passions, hug, kiss & snuggle, get therapy without shame, let the shit & bad days go and I laugh & weep as often as needed.

Try to love passionately and without reason. Be kind every chance you get. There will be less regrets that way. No whispers from the grave of what could've been.

...



Doug - Born 1974

As I approach the half century (!) mark, I'm in the best physical shape of my life. Interestingly, it actually began (or it became more apparent) when I turned 40. Who knew?

Emotionally, I'm more aware of the journey my life has taken and continues to navigate. I alternately feel connected and solitary (though not lonely). Of course, I strive to be at my best - as a father, husband, son, friend, leader, teacher - But I'm really trying to nurture my own happiness and mindfulness from within. And of course, it takes work.

The hardest thing to do in life is to let go. Of perceived weakness, failures, mistakes, conflict, grudges, insecurities. Again, it takes work. How do I navigate this? To find and maintain steadiness, connection, confidence, and peace? I tell myself: Do the work. Just breathe.





Robert - Born 1957

It is amazing how everyone else seems to be aging but I'm not. If only that were true! I think the old saying that "...you are only as old as you feel..." is apropos. Until this question was posed I never thought about it much.

Of course as the hair gets grayer (at least it is there), the waist a little bit bigger and you tire a little quicker , you start to realize that time is catching up with you.

In more ways that I could ever count, I have been fortunate to be healthy, thanks to good genes. But, I think a lot of it is mental. I worked through my 65th birthday and continue to do consulting and volunteer work. I was surrounded by young people who brought excitement and challenges and looked to me to be their mentor. In truth they were my mentors and they taught me things I didn't know or was afraid to try (mostly computer stuff). We taught each other a lot but I was never treated as the "old guy".

My children help keep me young by having me help with their homeowner projects. My wife always has projects for me, particularly now that I no longer have to go to the office. And there are my grandsons, who always keep me physically active with whatever the sport activity du jour is. There is no nap time!

Relationships change over time. Some friends fade away; some pass away; but many friendships get stronger. Family relationships get rekindled as retirement allows more time to spend together. Being home full time has required some adjustment for my wife and I. Fortunately, we have found a balance with each of us having our own projects and we have joint projects allowing us to enjoy time together.

John - Born 1968

I've done stuff, achieved things, learned skills, checked things off the bucket list, blah blah blah. But every time I think that I've gotten older and wiser and all of that, the Universe knocks me on my ass and puts me in my place. I'm still making some of the same mistakes I made 30+ years ago. So many bad habits. So many blind spots. So much emotional work still to do. And time just flies faster and faster with each passing day. I'm running out of time and energy to become the person that I want to be.

I met a guy in Nebraska with a one-eyed dog. We sat on 40-year old lawn chairs drinking cheap beers out of cans outside his camper. Near 90 years old and still working, he said, "It's better to wear out than rust out." That's my plan, if you can call that a plan.

But we don't write our final chapter. Over the course of 12 years, a stroke and its aftershocks took my father's voice, his mobility, his joy, his independence, his beautiful mind, his will to live, and eventually, his life. I fear that kind of final chapter.

A time will come when my body will betray me. A time will come when my mind will disappear in a thick fog. Until then, I have no choice but to try and stay active, continually challenge myself intellectually and emotionally, and just keep swimming.



Dan - Born 1941

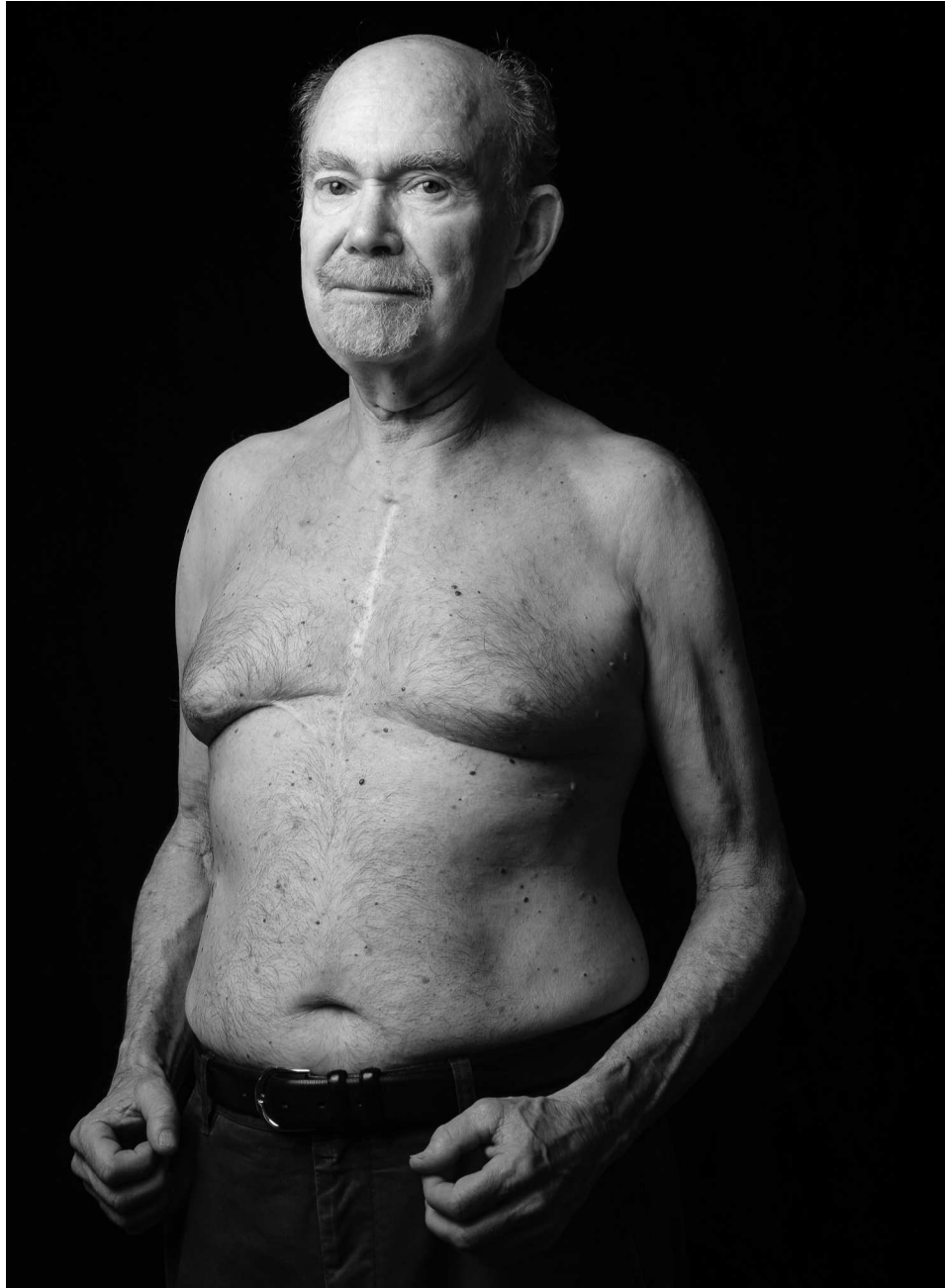
I revel in my aging as I've experienced the alternative. In 2013 I experienced a sudden cardiac arrest. Thanks to observers who used CPR, an AED nearby, and the skills of EMTs, trauma physicians and surgeons I woke up after 10 or so days and learned about my death and resurrection. The experience was more difficult for my family than it was for me.

In my eighth, and now ninth decade I'm thankful for continuing good health. I've found myself calmer, more understanding of other's needs and points of view and generally positive about the future.

Since my retirement, I've experienced the subtle biases of ageism from strangers as well as people close to me, but I get it, as stereotypes of the elderly persist even though 80 is the new 60.

Change is a constant. I exercise more but my physical abilities are still diminishing. I don't climb high ladders nor work much with chainsaws anymore.

Fortunately my mental acuity seems undiminished and I remain challenged by continuing scientific and technical work.





Salvatore - Born 1936

The human being is a complex combination of mind and body. But each of us is born with only so much energy to use the mind and body to manage a reasonable life style. As a young man I relied on my energy in the selection of my career, wife and family and friends.

As I grew older I came to terms with limiting work, physical activity to only tennis, to bring closer to me my wife and family and only a few closer friends. I imposed a limitation on travel as well.

My expectation as I age further is a more sedentary life style. I have to come to terms that I will eventually become a “homebody”. Sad but it is reality.



Kiran - Born 1964

Aging is a journey that's both inevitable and transformative. For me, reaching 60 has been an opportunity to embrace the changes in my body while cherishing the emotional maturity that has come with age. This blend of physical and emotional experiences has shaped my relationships and enriched my life in countless ways. By accepting and celebrating the journey of aging,

Embracing being 60 physically while my emotional intelligence remains in my 30s has taught me valuable lessons about resilience, adaptability, and the importance of self-acceptance. I was fortunate to be able to retire early as I had dreamed, from a very early age. Retirement for me was never about kicking back and relaxing, in fact, it was exactly opposite. I work harder now, more than I ever have during my corporate career and it has been a fulfilling journey doing what I was always passionate about. Theater and Film, have been a large part of my life and I am finally able to focus majority of my time working on creative projects that may or may not go anywhere but mere process of creating something that can be enjoyed by others, is the ultimate joy. I've come to appreciate the beauty of aging, recognizing that each stage of life brings its own unique gifts and challenges. By embracing these changes, I'm able to live a life that's rich in meaning and fulfillment. I'm grateful for the wisdom that comes with age, as well as the vitality that remains within me. Together, they create a harmonious balance that allows me to thrive in every aspect of my life. At this point it is all about the journey and not the destination!



Anika - Born 1988

I definitely notice changes. I don't bounce back the way I used to — whether it's after a busy day, a tough workout, or even staying up too late. My metabolism's slower, there's more stiffness here and there, and my skin's just... different now. But I've also gotten better at taking care of myself. I pay more attention to what I eat, I stay active, and I try to catch little things before they turn into bigger problems.

Emotionally, I'm more clear on what's worth my energy. I don't get caught up in drama like I might've before. I'm calmer in some ways, but I'm also more aware that time feels like it's speeding up — so I want to spend it well.

And relationships have changed. Some people are closer than ever, others I've naturally drifted from. I'm okay with that now — I'd rather have a few really good people than a lot of surface-level ones.

For me it's about keeping my body strong and feeling good in my own skin for as long as I can. I care about my health, but yeah, I also care about how I look — because when I look better, I feel better. Being a physical therapist means the work can be physically demanding, so I make a point to strengthen my body so I can handle it without wearing myself down.



Michelle -



Born 1976

Michelle - Born 1976

Aging didn't crash in—it crept in. Quietly. Predictably. Almost politely.

It started with the small betrayals: reading glasses became necessary, menus got harder to read in dim lighting, and suddenly every shampoo bottle font looked like fine print. The grey hairs howed up one by one—and then decided to colonize. The elasticity of my skin? Fading. My neck, my face—they're softening in ways I never signed up for.

Aging didn't hit me all at once. It whispered. And once I heard it, I couldn't un-hear it.

But here's what it didn't do: it didn't erase me. It didn't dull my edge. I've always been blunt, allergic to nonsense, and grounded in what matters. If anything, aging just helped me become more selective. I don't waste energy on battles that don't serve me—or people who don't get me. Aging didn't dismantle me. It clarified me.

Perimenopause threw a wrench in my cognitive gears. When the glitches began—blinking on names, losing words mid-thought—I panicked. I was convinced I had early-onset dementia. Or a brain tumor. But once I learned it was perimenopause, the anxiety immediately vanished.

But adjustment wasn't easy. Brain fog wasn't a joke—it was the atmosphere I lived in. One day I was fine, the next I was crying over movie trailers and snapping at people like I was being possessed by a sleep-deprived bear. Then there's the rage. And yes, it's real. Some days I feel the wolf in me pacing.

Now, I take Prozac. Not because I have clinical depression but because it keeps me from falling into hormonal quicksand. It gives me ground when my brain wants to go dark. But perimenopause didn't destroy me. It cracked me open. And I'm still here—slightly feral, occasionally weepy, but showing up anyway.

I've gained 50 pounds and I've gone from a size 6 to a 12. Do I love it? No, but I accept it. Do I grieve it? Absolutely. I still see flashes of the “before” version of myself. I miss her, sometimes. But I also admire the hell out of curvy women who walk around with confidence—unbothered, unhidden, unapologetic. I want to move like that. I want to strut, not suck it in. I am just not there yet.

Joint pain? Yeah, it's still here. But so am I. Still moving. Still showing up. Sometimes in spandex. Sometimes in whatever was clean. Always with grit.

The biggest shift? My heart. Especially with my son, Gavin. He's 17 now, and the thought of him going off to college guts me. He's my only child. My only family. I was orphaned at 14. He is my living legacy. My proof that love can be safe, deep, and lasting.

We've evolved. We're not just mother and son—we're confidantes. We talk about everything—life, girls, pressure, dreams. And I listen. He knows I respect what he says. He trusts me enough to tell me the truth, and I trust him enough to hear it—even when it's hard. And my husband? I see him differently now, too. Love in your twenties is about spark. Love in your forties is about presence. Partnership. Endurance. He's watched me evolve, fall apart, reassemble myself—and he still chooses me. That steadiness humbles me. That's love I didn't know I needed until I had it.

There's grief, too, in a different form: my 11-year-old Anatolian Shepherd, Anna—my hiking partner, my trail therapist—can't keep up anymore. Watching her slow down has broken my heart in a different way. A reminder that I'm not the only one changing.

I'm not trying to bounce back. I'm bouncing forward.

I want to be strong, grounded, mentally sharp, and full of life—but now I define those things on my terms. I want clarity. Peace. Strength. And humor—especially when everything's falling apart and I still can't find my damn glasses.

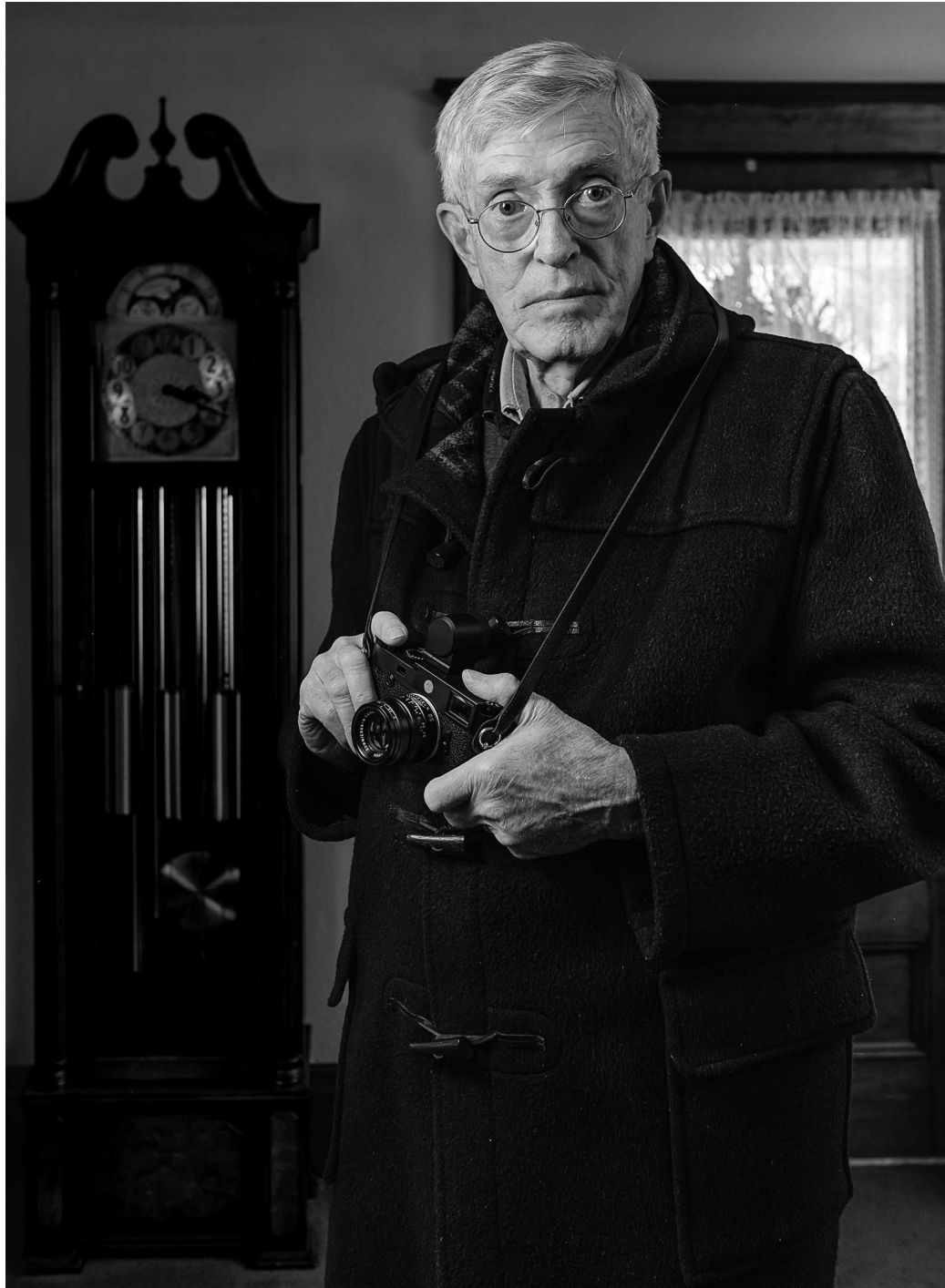
I'll keep building. Keep healing. Keep loving. Keep growling when I need to. Aging isn't the end. It's the unfiltered, un-beautified, unstoppable becoming. And I'm still becoming—wiser, weirder, wilder, and more me than ever before.

Jack - Born 1934

I always had difficulty dealing with my own mortality. I always felt uncomfortable when I visited a cemetery.

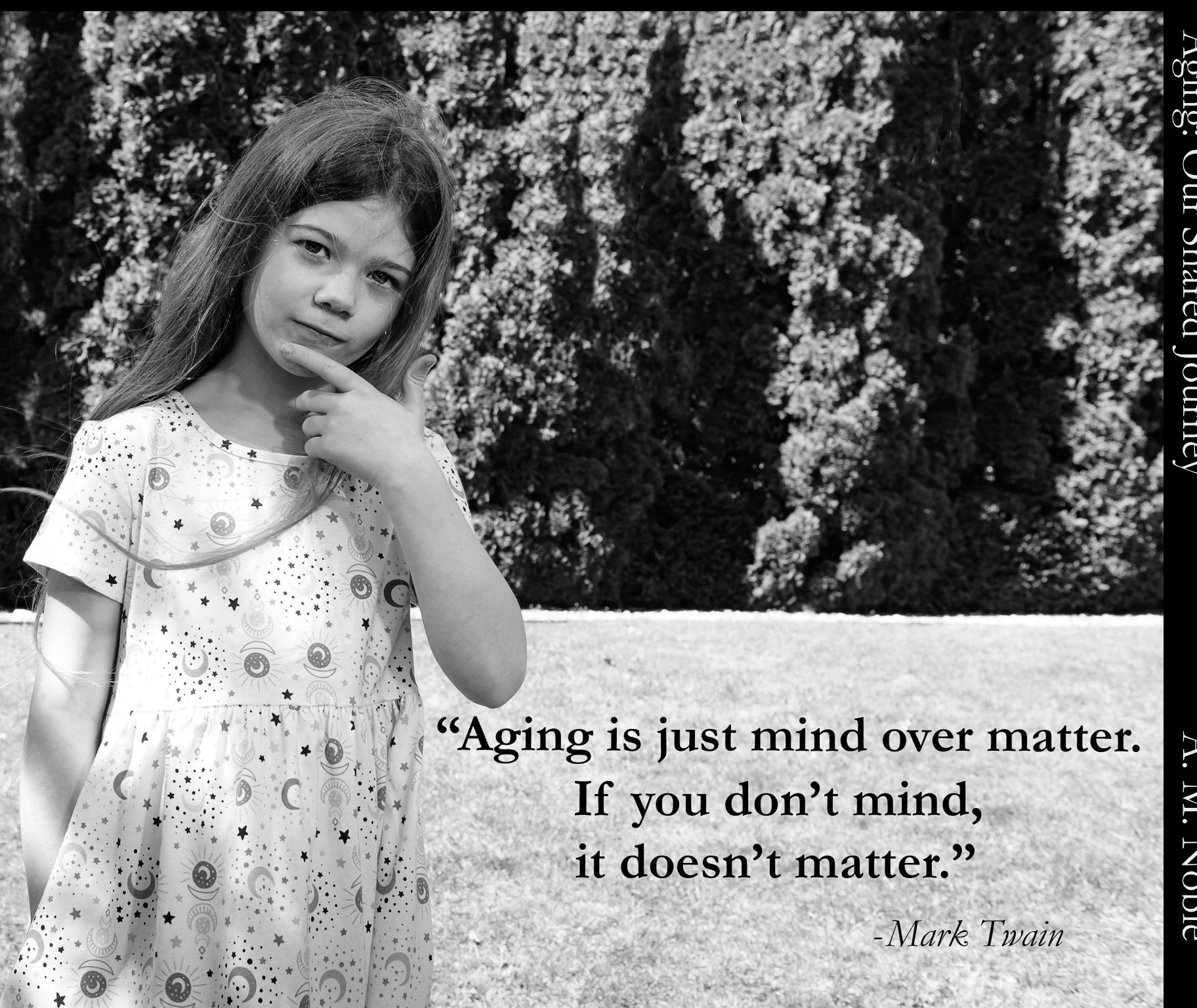
When my dearest friend Susie passed away, I now feel very at ease visiting her grave.

The inevitability of my death causes me no fear.





Designed using Adobe Photoshop Lightroom



**“Aging is just mind over matter.
If you don’t mind,
it doesn’t matter.”**

-Mark Twain