

## Boomers have become wise ?elders?

by MARK PAVILONS

?If future generations are to remember us more with gratitude than sorrow, we must achieve more than just the miracles of technology. We must also leave them a glimpse of the world as it was created, not just as it looked when we got through with it.? ?  
Lyndon B. Johnson

Respect for our elders seems to be waning.

When I was young, this was a given, an unwritten rule.

As we Baby Boomers age and wade into retirement, our accomplishments, and legacies should be recognized, not ignored.

Okay, I?realize that respect has to be earned, but most of us born in the 1960s have become society's wise ?elders.?

Boomers are generally defined as those born between 1946 to 1964 and are often parents of Gen Xers and Millennials.

Some have referred to us as ?The Elders.??I?kinda like it. Very catchy.

Elders, in Indigenous North American cultures, are repositories of cultural and philosophical knowledge within their tribal communities, as well as the transmitters of this storehouse of information.

They are regarded as living libraries, with information on a wide variety of practical, spiritual and ceremonial topics, including ?basic beliefs and teachings, encouraging ... faith in the Great Spirit, the Creator.?

And certain people in those communities are seen as being ?ultimately qualified reservoirs.?

I've been called a lot of things in my life, but reservoir was not one of them!

Elders emphasize listening and not asking why. Apparently, the Cree language doesn't even have a word for why.

A learner must sit quietly and patiently while the elder passes on his wisdom. Listening is considered to be very important.

This is key to every generation, every relationship, every human interaction.

A Native American is usually considered an Elder when they are above 60 to 65.

Elders are the heartbeat of their tribes. Their age and wisdom allow them to perceive clearly from a cultural perspective and understand deep truths about God and nature. It is of utmost importance that Elders be treated with respect and reverence.

Well, I don't like to brag, but yes, I?am happy to be revered. If only this were true in our household.

Back to we Boomers, who grew up in the ?70s and studied in the ?80s.

We went out into the world in the ?80s and ?90s and likely settled down in the 2000s. It's said that we became wiser in the 2010s.

I never gave it much thought, but we lived in seven different decades, two centuries and two millennia.

We have evolved from the rotary dial phone to smart phones and video chats. We had slides and took our photos to be developed and printed. We also had vinyl records and record players. I am happy to note these are standing the test of the time and even making a comeback, just like our music.

When was the last time anyone wrote a letter? Yes, we did it, posted it and waited patiently for a response.

I had a black and white TV growing up and when we moved to Caledon, rabbit ears and a rotating antenna were our means of accessing the airwaves.

We rented video tapes and then DVDs and was sad when these places went by the wayside. During my career, we used floppy discs and made our way through every version of Mac computer.

We had a thermal fax machine and that high-pitched, dial-up computer transmission system. We lived through the swine flu, mad cow and SARS.

If we were lucky, we had a nice bike, perhaps roller skates and then inline roller blades.

We were literally thrown into the deep end to learn to swim. We were busy, out from sun up until the street lights came on. We were too busy to develop attitudes.

It could be said that our generation witnessed more than anyone else - from JFK to Trump; muscle cars to electric sedans; tie dye and bell bottoms to whatever is in style these days. I admit that I did own a pair of black leather pants.

Boomers are still willing and open to learning new things. We're still amenable to making major life changes when situations call for them, whether they involve work, relationships, where to live, romance, or spirituality.

Baby Boomers have been known for their creativity, in all forms. Research shows that creativity helps mid-lifers and older people stay engaged, feel good about themselves, and serves as a prime way for them to remain optimistic and excited about life.

We were encouraged to be ourselves. I am a leftie, and I remember my mom telling they wanted to get me to write with my right hand. My mom stood firm and would have none of that. She recognized my uniqueness.

We embrace our wisdom and don't brag about it. But we're happy to share it with others and spin some tall tales.

A lot of people talk about spirituality and the Boomers are leading the charge. I remember very well "pyramid power" and having a home-made one under my bed to benefit from its power!

Today, I look for new avenues to explore and expand my understanding of the universe.

We've been brought up as being close-knit members of society and our communities. I miss the days when we knew and spoke with each and every neighbour on our street.

They say Boomers are keen on giving back and passing on the gene for volunteerism.

We've brought up our kids with this in mind and I remember raising donations for Kosovo; cheering when the Berlin Wall came down, and the arrival of the internet.

Yes, we "elders" experienced a great deal in our journeys. So many stories to tell and so many fond memories.

While we're often referred to as "old school" and our reminiscences as "nostalgic," we are wise beyond our years.

And perhaps the youngins in our midst would do well to sit, listen and learn.Any takers?