

I'm not aging, I'm ripening well!

by Mark Pavilons

The true tragedy of aging isn't that we grow old it's that our soul stays young. Oscar Wilde

Oscar sure hit the nail on the head with this observation.

And Keanu Reeves says he approaches aging with both wonder and terror.

This isn't the world I grew up in, and it's not exactly the same place as the one I raised my children in.

The pendulum the constant movement of time never stops to wait for us. We are often left, stranded on the platform, waiting for the next train.

And yet, the extraordinary experiences we amass as we age give us real clarity of the past, present and future. We become almost sage-like, if you will. At least that's what I tell my family members. And then the obvious similarities with Yoda pop up!

We can't slow down the aging process and try as we may to hinder it through diet and exercise and a boat load of supplements it catches up with us. Alas, the Grim Reaper, armed with his legendary scythe, will find us one day.

Is old age and death to be feared and dreaded, or somewhat revered?

Our lifespans were a lot shorter in ancient times so there really wasn't a period of aging gracefully or retiring. But in ancient Greece, men beyond 60 were expected to focus on wiser decision-making.

Many religions offer more beyond the physical realm, a sort of ageless beauty. Hinduism, via reincarnation, believes the soul remains young and vibrant.

Age is considered, by many, a work of art. I always wanted to be immortalized in marble, much like Rodin's The Thinker. But I also have a fondness for that inflatable tube man!

Uplifting sentiments tell us age doesn't really matter, that it's how we live our lives. Of course, the longer we spend here, the more we absorb, learn and tolerate. What a wonderful concoction we become in our advanced years!

I maintain that seniors whose in their 70s and 80s earned the right to speak their minds. I'll admit that I jumped the gun a bit in that department.

We can grow older without getting old, and laughter, in my opinion, keeps us young. I've never liked the word maturity associated with older adults. I want to be older and yet retain just enough immaturity to make life fun, at least in my own head.

The more I read and learn about the universe, the human brain, existence, Nature and well, everything, the more intrigued I am with what lies ahead.

The law of thermodynamics says energy (our body's electrical impulses or soul) cannot be created or destroyed, only transformed. What exactly does this mean for you and I? I hope it means that some part of us lives on forever, in some form of energy.

There are electrons that live for billions of years.

I am intrigued, and very confused, by aspects of quantum mechanics. The 'many-worlds' idea suggests that every quantum event results in a branching of reality, creating parallel universes. So, every decision we make could lead to alternate versions of ourselves in different realities.

Wait, what? We exist elsewhere in time and space? I wonder what myself is doing over yonder and whether he like chicken wings and beer. Who am I kidding, who doesn't love wings and suds?

So this, my friends, could very well be the youthful 'immortality' we've been searching for to live forever in other universes and dimensions.

Some scientists are trying to measure our consciousness, and determine what happens to it at the time of death.

According to Hameroff, there's a burst of activity that happens at the time of death. Called gamma synchrony, it's a wave pattern that's typically linked to our conscious thought, awareness, and perception. Scientists say it's picked up on an EEG for between 30 and 90 seconds, when we enter that white light.

Where does our consciousness go? Does it follow Peter Pan to Neverland?

While it's all up for debate, the bottom line could be that our consciousness is a low energy process. But I find it hard to swallow that in all of the mysteries of the universe, we are reduced to a 'low energy process.'

No. my friends, I will not go quietly into the dark matter, but rejoin the ocean of life from whence came.

How about you?

While it's common knowledge that our bodies and brains decline with age, there may be hope on the horizon.

Injecting hypothalamic stem cells into the brains of normal old and middle-aged mice whose stem cells had been destroyed lowered or reversed measures of aging. The researchers say that this is a first step toward slowing the aging process and potentially treated age-related conditions.

Sign me up! And hey, I love cheese, so if I end up adopting some mouse-like qualities, it's worth it.

Experts have found that eliminating mitochondria from the aging cells triggered a rejuvenation process, reducing markers of cellular aging to levels that are normally seen in younger cells.

While science marches on, looking for the proverbial fountain of youth, we have to make friends with time. We have to join hands with the hours and days and join them as we bask in the sunshine and enjoy one another's company.

I like to think I've aged well, like a fine Scotch and that my face reveals my travels. Wrinkles and creaky joints are a small price to pay for the wisdom in my heart and mind.

'Grow old along with me! The best is yet to be.' Robert Browning