

A Delightful Little Book on Aging

Stephanie Raffelock

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A Delightful Little Book on Aging is a lighthearted self-help book for seniors and soon-to-be older folks that encourages reflection, evaluation, and transformation.

Stephanie Raffelock's self-help book *A Delightful Little Book on Aging* forwards guidance and encouragement to help those who are aging to progress with grace and humor.

Raffelock is of a generation that was advised to "not go gentle into that good night." As such, her work encourages fellow seniors to consider the impact they want to have in their later years and the legacies they will leave behind. In service of this, the book is full of wisdom related to approaching one's later years not as an end to everything, but as a time when things are different, and positive changes can still be made. Raffelock relates that she made such changes in her own life, even taking up writing itself at a later age.

The book's essays have been taken from Raffelock's blog, and their background is reflected in the book's occasional use of "post." They argue that the retirement years are not just about loss, but also about regaining things that were pushed aside during the working years: "Getting older presents a clear and simple choice: you can resent what life takes from you and miss what life is presenting, or you can let go of what is past and embrace the gifts of the harvest."

The book advises seniors take up activities like volunteering, traveling, and renewing or developing hobbies and passions. Most often optimistic about the joys and opportunities of a person's later years, the book doesn't devote a lot of space to talking about death or serious illnesses, both of which might prevent people from doing what they want to with their time, nor does it acknowledge that not everyone will be financially able to retire when they want to. These are best-case scenarios for aging, in which continued good health, adventures with friends, and time spent with a person that you love are presumed.

Raffelock's personal stories cover becoming a writer at an older age, the advice she would give her nieces, and the joy of spending time with friends. She discusses not always being physically able to do what used to be easy to do, and having to navigate priorities based on decreased energy levels. Each entry is brief; most take just a few minutes to read.

The work is hopeful, aspirational, and encouraging. It suggests that happiness can be found even amid the losses that come with aging. Thought-provoking comments about what is most important are shared in a sweet, sometimes snarky tone. The book is arranged to reflect Raffelock's views of the main considerations that come with aging: grief, reclamation, vision, and laughter. Once such stages are acknowledged, the book argues, seniors can develop a wiser vision and pursue plenty of laughs to get themselves through the hard times.

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SARAH WHITE (January 20, 2020)

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