

Increased longevity. There is such a dread about it. The assumption, spoken, unspoken is that with increased longevity, we'll have all these millions of miserable, smelly, sick old people around. Not that at all. If you increase longevity, what you'll have around is millions of people who... continue to be vital. The question is: What use for these new vital years of human life?

—Betty Friedan

Biography

- Born Betty Goldstein on February 4, 1921 in Peoria, Illinois.
- Graduated 1942 from Smith College, Summa Cum Laude (The then-college president has been quoted as saying Betty was the most brilliant of students in his experience.)
- Married Carl Friedan in 1947, had three children, and divorced him in 1969.

Authored

- *The Feminine Mystique* (1963)
- *It Changed My Life* (1976)
- *The Second Stage* (1981)
- *The Fountain Of Age* (1993)
- *Beyond Gender* (1997)

Shifting Priorities

- The women's movement energy should now be applied to shifting priorities for the whole culture.
- Suggests that the work of David Gutmann applies to her generation, but not subsequent ones. Gutmann theorized a "crossover" effect, wherein women after menopause became more assertive, and men in their later years explored their emotional side.

What about age?

- Imagery of age is outmoded and does not reflect the vital lives current elders are leading.
- Retirement is probably an outmoded concept.
- No serious social policy thinking on how to use the abilities of older people.
- Marian Diamond, Ph.D., University of California, Berkeley, discovered that enriched environments increased the size of the cortex in rats of all ages, including very old ones.

Wisdom

- Seeing new questions.
- Living with ambiguity.
- Trusting an instinct of what has to happen next.
- "Live the question," Rainer Marie Rilke, a German poet who lived 1875–1926.

Beyond Gender

- Women have at least as many years beyond their reproductive years as during and leading up to them. Society needs to move beyond defining women in terms of their reproductive role.
- The increased length of the life span enables everyone to have time for several careers and to pursue personal passions. One doesn't have to feel everything has to be done all at once.

Closing Statement

“Through our actions, we will create a new image of age—free and joyous, living with pain, saying what we really think and feel at last—knowing who we are, realizing that we know more than we ever knew we knew, not afraid of what anyone thinks of us anymore, moving with wonder into that unknown future we have helped to shape for the generations coming after us.

Related Films Also Available from Davidson Films

This is one of six films in Davidson Films' "Gerontology" series. The other titles are:

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| • <i>Aging Successfully: The Psychological Aspects of Growing Old</i> | (1997) | 31 Minutes |
| • <i>Erik H. Erikson: A Life's Work</i> | (1991) | 38 Minutes |
| • <i>On Old Age 1: A Conversation with Joan Erikson At 90</i> | (1995) | 39 Minutes |
| • <i>On Old Age 2: A Conversation with Joan Erikson At 92</i> | (1995) | 30 Minutes |
| • <i>Older Brains, New Connections: A Conversation
with Marian Diamond At 73</i> | (2000) | 30 Minutes |