

## Upon Reflection

### Ageing in a Timeless World

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It's just digits. That's what my sister told me when she purchased the land for her house, but digits add up to more than a down payment when the topic is one's ageing body. As our age increases so can our perceived lack — lack of opportunities for joyfulness, vitality or for challenging careers which stimulate our creativity. However, youthful abundance can be just a thought away.

Like ageing which occurs a wrinkle at a time, abundance accumulates gradually. Every area of life flourishes when we contribute daily, even hourly, to our gratitude jar. This jar can be a literal depository of blessings written on colorful paper strips or a figurative file stored in our minds. As long as regular contributions are made, the bank of prosperity increases, filling our environment with positivity and plumping our wrinkles with playfulness.

Gratitude is the most potent anti-ageing supplement on which a feeble soul can feast. Gratitude is wisdom on steroids.

Grateful I am indeed. I recently held my first grandbaby. I became a grandma to a beautiful baby boy and turned fifty within weeks of each other which inspired me to tune in to how I felt about ageing. I realized that it's not how I feel about getting older that disturbs me, but rather the negative social stigma that emanates from the silver screen in Hollywood and trickles into the neighborhood coffee shop that has me looking a little closer at the lines in my forehead and trimming the hair in my ears.

Granted, I don't want hairy ears, but I also refuse to conform to a depressing image of ageing due to social conditioning. I will not acquiesce to a conjured image of a limping, gray-haired granny wearing elastic-waisted pants and downing laxatives and medication for an overactive bladder. I will not complain about a bit of stiffness in the morning and give credence to the notion that I'm not only supposed to experience the stiffness, but to verbalize the injustice and inconvenience of ageing.

In my fifty years, I've acquired some wisdom in how to nurture my body by feeding my mind and my soul with gratitude.

I may not be ageless according to society's standards, but I'm old enough and wise enough to not care what others' standards are, how others judge me or assess my worth. I create my own rubric for approval. Self-approval may be the key to the door of endless; hence ageless opportunities.

## Under City Lights

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Every day I get older, not just every year, but I don't remind myself of that every morning. I just brush my teeth and smile into my slightly different image in the mirror. I feel better than I did at twenty, so maybe changing my age should be as simple as changing my phone number. The number is irrelevant until time to collect social security or get a free pastry at Panera. It's how I feel that matters.

This attitude allows me to experience the best of both worlds. I'm old enough to find shelter from the rain, but wise enough to know that feeling the rain on my face can be a sensory pleasure I don't want to miss. I'm old enough to not get carded when buying my favorite cabernet, and wise enough to sip it slowly — enjoying the subtle notes on my palette.

Despairing attitudes and lack of gratitude about the blessing of wisdom each year leads to unhealthy ageing. Lack of gratitude creates a lack of energy and forms a pattern of habitual resistance to life. By complaining and buying into the idea that ageing requires a stiff, cranky disposition, a person stokes the fires of the death they fear the most.

I'm not suggesting that dabbing on collagen cream is a futile act, but I am suggesting that smoothing on the gratitude cream creates a youthful glow only wisdom can provide — and that by acknowledging the timelessness of the essence many refer to as “soul,” we can gain the maximum enjoyment from the moments in which we find ourselves. An ounce of gratitude is the blissful equivalent of a mega injection of Botox.

If I gripe about time moving forward, I would create hostile conditions within — an internal torture chamber, knowing I can't stay in this physical form forever, but wanting to. I'd be less healthy, less vibrant by failing to embrace the timelessness of my being.

Sure, I take care of my body. I work out. I eat clean. But I value my inner landscape just as much as the flexibility I get from yoga.

Abundance begins in the brain. Abundance is an accumulation of wisdom — wisdom that's found by feeling gratitude for all aspects of life's journey, not just the shiny smiling times, but those darker moments in which we must polish the jewel of wisdom with our joyful intent if we are to see the gift. It is these tallies that mark our experiences in the eternal flow of our existence, rather than the tally of stretch marks, that ultimately count towards our happiness.

I often truly forget how old I am. It's not a lack of memory skills, but rather a skill for knowing what counts — and that is not how many candles are on my cake, but the thrill I get from making wishes when blowing them out.

Not knowing my age may give the impression that I am out of touch with reality when really it's just that my reality includes a different concept of time than the traditional birthday candle-blowing folks.

So, while you decide what to be grateful for as you finish reading this, I will open the gift from my mom — new luggage which I will pack for a road trip to my girlfriends, knowing the ageless gift of time is in the journey, not in a box — and gloriously eat my gluten-free carrot cake.

Ah, the annual birthday thing does have its advantages.

### Author Note

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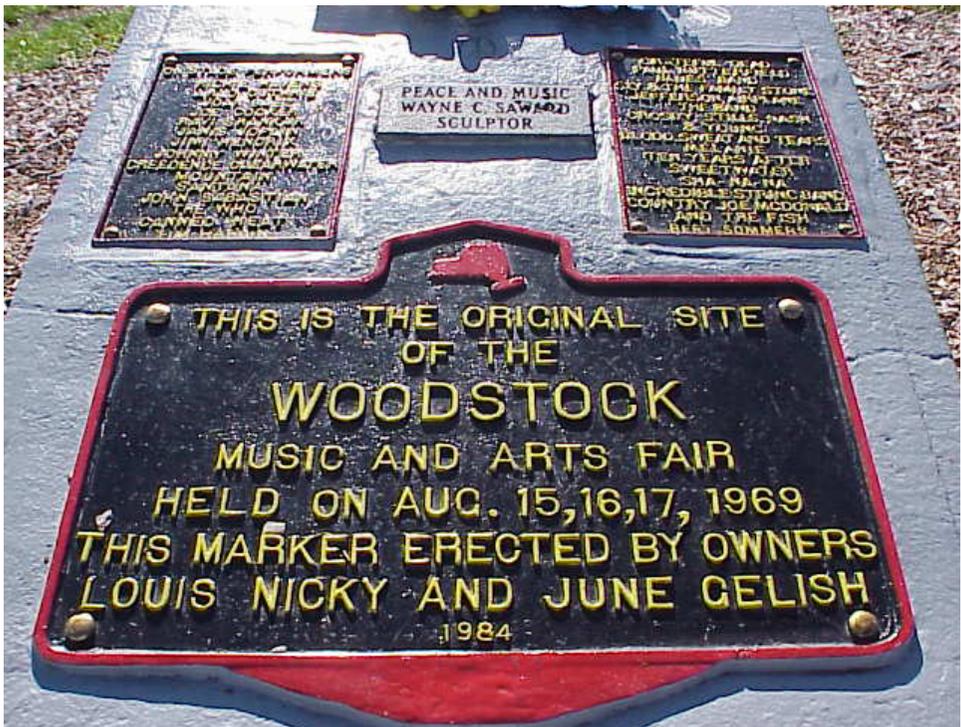


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