

Are You Imprisoned by Ageism?

Analyzing Your Ageism Quiz Results

1 I am looking forward to my later years. (Correct Answer: True)

This is fundamental: if you do not have dreams for your future as an elder, take a few minutes a day to begin developing them.

2 I try not to think about what I'll look like as an elderly person. (False)

“Age shock” refers to that moment when you look in the mirror or try to run uphill and realize you have aged. Being surprised at the older version of your body is evidence that you are in denial; rather than preparing to like your older self, you have stuck your head in the sand.

3 I am impatient with older people who stall the line in grocery stores. (False)

Compassion for others, understanding, and, above all, patience, makes you a better human being, and changes the way you view advanced age.

4 I regularly discuss aging with people who have lived to advanced years. (True)

Having these conversations demonstrates that you are not afraid of thinking about the future, and you are actively searching for the right words to discuss it. Consider these ways of starting a conversation: (1) “what is it like to be old?, vs (2) “what is it like to live a long time?”

5 I take steps to appear younger than I am. (False)

There is a difference between trying to disguise the inevitable march of time and taking steps to be attractive or express yourself.

6 I know at least one elder I would describe as "cool". (True)

It is essential to find and emulate good role models who can show you the way.

7 I only think about my age when my knee hurts. (False)

The length of your life thus far is relevant to thinking about your history, finding happiness in memories, committing to a meaningful future. Many of us only acknowledge our aging in the context of physical or psychic pain.

8 I am envious of young people. (False)

When you begin to appreciate the gifts of maturity, you do not begrudge younger people their youth. You may start to see that experience, wisdom and boldness are equally worthwhile.

9 Most people in nursing homes do not mind being there. (False)

It is a rare individual who would prefer institutional living to greater autonomy. It is ageism to accept that model as an inevitable end-game to aging. Of course, there is a small minority of people with medical needs or physical disabilities that demand the care of a “miniature hospital”, but we should acknowledge that they make tremendous sacrifices to carry on their lives in that situation.

10 I have completed forms to enforce my end-of-life decisions. (True)

Coming to grips with your own mortality means accepting responsibility for decision-making and learning to live on your own terms as long as you can.

11 I did not know any of my grandparents well. (False)

Cross-generational role modeling – positive and negative – can teach us so much about aging. Those who did not have the benefit of it have to work a little harder to learn to love long life.

12 I prefer the company of young people. (False)

This statement reveals a tendency to judge others on the basis of age. There are plenty of vibrant, creative, fascinating elders; if you do not know any, go seek them out.

13 I spend time every week helping an elder. (True)

Providing support to elders lets you see aging challenges realistically. You may never require the degree of support you now provide, but you will learn something about interdependence. Equally important, giving even minimal aid to seniors around you will help to change things for them.

14 I feel freer to be myself than when I was younger. (True)

Most of us begin to perceive a lifting of social constraints as we age. It's a wonderful thing!

15 I believe society benefits from having more elders. (True)

When you appreciate the gifts of age in your own self, you begin to see the ways that a growing group of older persons can benefit humanity as a whole.