



WHO ARE YOU CALLING OLD?

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Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young.

Henry Ford

CONTENTS

1. Anti-ageing?
2. The power of music
3. The brain
4. By royal appointment
5. The older brain
6. Acts of kindness
7. Give up your prejudices!
8. Born to run
9. Healthy body, Healthy mind
10. Write from the heart
11. Fluid and crystallized Intelligence
12. Partners in crime
13. Does it ring a bell?
14. Mature students
15. Learning a language

16. [Act your age!](#)

17. [Never too old to learn a language!](#)

[For teachers](#)

[Acknowledgements](#)

[About the author](#)

[Also by Sarah Curtius](#)

ANTI-AGEING?



Vocabulary

From all walks of life is an idiom to talk about people with various different jobs and levels of education. It's used to talk about people representing all of society.

I learned a lot from my German teacher at school. German, obviously! But life wisdom, too. Mr Rich was in his sixties when he taught us and had a life full of stories to tell. I remember one lesson especially. We were in our mid-teens and were talking about how awful it must be to grow old. He smiled at us and said, "It's better than the alternative!"

He was right, of course. In the 60s, Roger Daltry and his band *The Who* sang "I hope I die before I get old!". Roger is now in his late seventies and I think he is glad he did not die before he got old!

People have always wanted to stop the ageing process. The ancient Romans and Greeks were the first to believe in a philosopher's stone which could turn other metals to gold and the "fountain of youth". In the Middle Ages, people

called alchemists were still looking for the philosopher's stone and its special powers. Today, some people think they can find the same kind of magic in cosmetic surgery or Botox to get rid of wrinkles. Most of us hope we can find it in the anti-ageing creams we buy in the drugstore.

Why do we want to look younger? Advertising tells us that young is beautiful. We think that getting old means we cannot do certain things anymore and cannot learn new things. While being young is beautiful and healthy and exciting, being old means we become weak and ill and boring.

In this book I want to challenge the idea that ageing is all bad! We will learn about so many people who are still doing amazing and interesting things in 'old age'. We will look at people **from all walks of life** - famous people like singers, actors, a king and a queen, but also 'normal' people. Some of the people you will meet have always been active and successful in their area. Some only started something new late in life. What they all have in common is that they lived interesting lives and do not believe that getting old means becoming weak and ill and boring!

We will learn about what happens in our brains as we get older and get some tips to keep our brains healthy. We do not want to be 'anti-ageing'! We want to be pro-ageing! We all want to live a long and interesting life. If we do, it means we have to get old. Getting older means having a life of experience. Getting old does not have to be boring.

A group of 40 pensioners proved this in 2007. They recorded a version of *The Who's* song, *Talking about my generation* in Abbey Road Studios. After appearing on the BBC, the group were asked to give interviews all over the world and even travelled to America. The lead singer, 90-year-old Alf

summed it up by saying, "It's just brought me back to life. I was 90 and stuck in a rut. And now I feel that I have come alive again."