

How to be a Vigorous Geezer

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I listened a few days ago to an interview with an 83-year-old self-described geezer (aka “sage”) in the world of leadership development, Warren Bennis. He is currently Professor and founding chair of The Leadership Institute at the University of Southern California, and the author of 29 books. He brought up a subject I’ve thought about for at least thirty years: What can I do now that will lead to my growing into an optimistic, generous and vigorous geezer?

No one gets to his/her eighties without weathering a few difficult, life-defining events. So what makes some geezers hopeful, optimistic, challenged (and challenging) and “open to the unbidden?”

Just as important, what habits can pre-geezers build into our lives now so that our eyebrows are still up when we begin our eighth or ninth decade of life?

Acknowledging that he was “no longer on the varsity”, he talked about how he continues to contribute via “what life has pulled out of me.” I picked out four suggestions to pass along to you:

- 1. Use your creativity to inspire and your mind to invent; keep asking, “What is possible?”*
- 2. Make yourself not alone,*
- 3. Be a first-class noticer and responder; practice just being aware,*
- 4. Start now to diminish drivenness.*

My own personal action point? To let my life keep growing, knowing that if I have to let go of something I used to be great at, I’ll be making room for some new adventure to take its place.

Eyebrows up!