

# EVOLVING THROUGH THE AGES

What do people find meaningful at each stage of their life?

Life at seven years old and life at 70 years old look vastly different. However, people across all ages find unity in their appreciation and prospect of aging, pride and success. Whether advocating for social causes, attending college or even completing a 500-piece puzzle, there is profound meaning in embracing change and growth throughout one's life.

## What are you most proud of?

"My parents."

Joni, 7

"Myself."

Evelyn, 6

"My team was second place in a soccer tournament."

Ryan, 7

"I finished a 500-piece puzzle by myself [in] a week or two."

Kaitlyn, 7

"I can do the monkey bars. I used to fall down, but I kept trying and never stopped."

Genesis, 7

"I have two things. One is my stuffed animals, and one is my jewelry. I have a lot of jewelry."

Renee, 7

"I'm most proud that I have so many friends in this school. One time there was a person crying because they said that no one wanted to play with them. So I said, 'You can play with us.'"

Spruha, 6



## Coming to college

Adelaide McCarter, 16, navigates the stress & excitement of her academic future

Junior Adelaide McCarter spends much of her time anticipating the next stage of her life: college.

"I'm excited to be able to study things I am interested in, live somewhere different and just explore a new area," McCarter said.

McCarter is overall looking forward to her time in college, however, she also feels daunted by the process. Focusing on the future constantly can be tiring for McCarter and she hopes to have less of that in later life.

"It's so easy to get caught up in worry and anxiety about the future," McCarter said. "Sometimes I forget to remind myself that everything will work out and it doesn't need to be perfect."

McCarter wants to have a future of comfort, where she can feel content with where she is in life and not feel stressed about basic needs.

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Adelaide McCarter, 16


"I would like to have the resources to be able to not work all the time and buy things I enjoy that make me happy and overall just be comfortable," McCarter said.

Despite the stress and pressure from school and college, McCarter looks forward to her future, regardless of where it takes her.

"I'm excited about getting older and I'm optimistic about the future," McCarter said. "I'm very excited to see where life takes me and what I end up doing."

## Success after school

A work-life balance is critical for Juliana Lee, 29



Poshmark Senior Marketing Associate Julianna Lee has lived in Los Angeles, CA, throughout her 20s. When she left her family in Seattle, WA, Lee experienced a significant loss of structure, as many people do after leaving their childhood homes.

"When you're a kid, you have so much being provided for you," Lee said. "Those steps are so clearly defined."

Lee said that the greatest difference between being a child and being an adult is the expectation of independence. Pursuing a career in Los Angeles, Lee felt eager to demonstrate her capabilities through hard work and financial success.

"After university, it feels like you're fully on your own," Lee said. "I was so eager to prove myself. That happens with many young people."

Without guidance, the privilege of unlimited choice afforded to those who leave their home can also be daunting. "You have all of these options, which is great because [everything]

is at your liberty," Lee said. "You can choose where you want to go and what you want to do. However, you're also overwhelmed."

Beyond personal freedom, familial expectations and obligations often dictate the decisions of younger people who are looking to make a living for themselves.

"I have such a money-oriented family," Lee said. "We exist to subsidize our parents' lifestyles now that they've paid our way through school and everything."

Lee said that when she first moved to Los Angeles, she sacrificed her well-being for her career ambitions.

"I didn't really see it then, but there are ways to go above and beyond without stressing yourself out and putting so much into your work," Lee said.

Throughout her personal growth, Lee has reassessed her definition of success.

"[Success] has always felt like having a lot of money, but [success] is not just that," Lee said. "Success is being really happy where you are. It's being really good at something. You don't feel like you're lost. You have clarity."

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Julianna Lee, 29



## A future after family

Mary Lynn Fitton, 59, appreciates her personal growth through aging

Mary Lynn Fitton, a parent of PALY alumni, has found a balance between her appreciation for life's simple pleasures and its greatest gifts.

"Of course, I am looking forward to waking up tomorrow morning and having a cup of coffee," Fitton said. "But I'm also looking forward to continuing traveling around the world and exploring and experiencing new and exciting things."

Fitton's family is a huge point of pride for her, especially her children and the people they have become.

"I am proud to have raised my children who have become considerate and respectful human beings, which would not

have been possible without finding the ideal partner," Fitton said.

"So many people see getting older as scary. In reality, it's just a part of life."

Mary Lynn Fitton, 59

Fitton challenges the negative perception of aging by feeling grateful for the knowledge she has gained over the years and excited to learn more.

"Though I'm almost in my 60s, I still have lots of energy and want to continue doing things," Fitton said.

"So many people see getting older as scary. In reality, it's just a part of life."



## Raging retirement

Activism transforms success for Ruth Robertson, 69

Ruth Robertson has been a vibrant member of Raging Grannies, an activist organization advocating for social justice causes, for 22 years.

"I'm proud of myself that once I was an empty nester, I didn't sit back and lick my wounds or only talk about my kids' accomplishments," Robertson said. "I did something."

In Robertson's experience, aging affects us in different ways, both mentally and physically.

"[Age] kind of creeps up on you," Robertson said. "You don't really know what's going on, so you have to take a look at your perspective."

From raising a family to protesting with Raging Gran-

nies, Robertson's perception of success has evolved to include her community contribution and civic engagement.

"I used to think success was my kids getting into good colleges," Robertson said. "But as they left the nest, I looked more at personal success. My success is being successful in the world [and] changing anything, changing something."

In the future, Robertson has a simple but meaningful activity she is ready to embrace: rest.

"I don't really feel like resting as long as I can enact change, but

at some point, I'm going to rest," Robertson said. "I'm looking forward to it."

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Ruth Robertson, 69