



Agging Well: Surprising Guideposts to a Happier Life from the Landmark Harvard Study of Adult Development

By George E. Vaillant

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

"We all need models for how to live from retirement to past 80--with joy," writes George Vaillant, M.D., director of the Harvard Study of Adult Development. This groundbreaking book pulls together data from three separate longevity studies that, beginning in their teens, followed 824 individuals for more than 50 years. The subjects were male Harvard graduates; inner-city, disadvantaged males; and intellectually gifted women.

"Here you have these wonderful files, and you seem little interested in how we cope with increasing age ... our adaptability, our zest for life," one of these subjects wrote to Vaillant, a researcher, psychiatrist, and Harvard Medical School professor, about how he was using this information. Vaillant took this advice to heart. In *Aging Well*, he presents personal narratives about people from these studies whom he interviewed personally in their 70s and 80s. He describes their history, relationships, hardships, philosophies, and sources of joy. We learn their perspectives and what makes them want to get up in the morning.

We also learn what makes old age vital and interesting. Vaillant discusses the important adult developmental tasks, such as identity, intimacy, and generativity (giving to the next generation), and provides important clues to a healthy, meaningful, satisfying old age. Health in old age, we learn, is not predicted by low cholesterol or ancestral longevity, but by factors such as a stable marriage, adaptive coping style (the ability to make lemonade out of life's lemons), and regular exercise.

Vaillant is empathetic and sometimes surprisingly poetic: "Owning an old brain, you see, is rather like owning an old car.... Careful driving and maintenance are everything." He freely includes subjective observations and interpretations, giving us a richer picture of the people he interviewed and insights into their lives. *Aging Well* is recommended for readers who are interested in learning about the quality-of-life issues of aging from the people who have the most to teach. --Joan Price

From Publishers Weekly

This groundbreaking sociological analysis is based on three research projects that followed over 800 people from their adolescence through old age. Subjects were drawn from the Harvard Grant study of white males, the Inner City study of non-delinquent males and the Terman Women study of gifted females, begun respectively in 1921, 1930 and 1911. In all three studies, subjects were interviewed at regular intervals over time, a design that prevented observations from being skewed by the distortions of memory and allowed for analyses that distinguished effect from cause. Vaillant (*The Natural History of Alcoholism*), a psychiatrist and professor at the Harvard Medical School, brings a nuanced point of view and an acceptance of the project's limitations. (Those followed were not randomly selected and were overwhelmingly Caucasian.) Nevertheless the author makes compelling use of his data, which is based on intensive contacts with a variety of subjects. Vaillant posits that successful physical and emotional aging is most dependent on a lack of tobacco and alcohol abuse by subjects, an adaptive coping style, maintaining healthy weight with some exercise, a sustained loving (in most cases, marital) relationship and years of education. This is good news since factors that cannot be altered, such as ancestral longevity, parental characteristics and childhood temperament, were among those ruled out as predictors. The book's academic tone will reassure some readers and put others off, but Vaillant's arresting interviews with selected subjects (recounted here) and his ability to learn from the subjects make this an outstanding contribution to the study of aging. National publicity.

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From Library Journal

A respected researcher, psychiatrist, professor at Harvard Medical School, and author of several books (e.g., *The Natural History of Alcoholism*), Vaillant uses individual life histories to illustrate how social and emotional development is an ongoing process. His work is based on Harvard's Study of Adult Development, which followed "824 individuals all selected as teenagers for different facets of mental and physical health more than half a century ago and studied for their entire lives." Participants answered biennial questionnaires and underwent physical examinations every five years. Vaillant points out that, while studies like this one are not representative, they do reveal how lifestyle choices can affect whether we reach a happy and healthy old age. He describes the developmental processes that make old age vital being ill without feeling sick, regaining the capacity of creativity and play, acquiring wisdom, and cultivating spirituality and offers suggestions for successful and happy aging. Highly recommended.

- *Jodith Janes, Cleveland Clinic Fdn. Lib.*

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Here thing why this specific *Aging Well: Surprising Guideposts to a Happier Life from the Landmark Harvard Study of Adult Development* are different and trustworthy to be yours. First of all examining a book is good but it really depends in the content of it which is the content is as yummy as food or not. *Aging Well: Surprising Guideposts to a Happier Life from the Landmark Harvard Study of Adult Development* giving you information deeper and different ways, you can find any book out there but there is no reserve that similar with *Aging Well: Surprising Guideposts to a Happier Life from the Landmark Harvard Study of Adult Development*. It gives you thrill reading journey, its open up your eyes about the thing which happened in the world which is possibly can be happened around you. You can actually bring everywhere like in area, café, or even in your approach home by train. For anyone who is having difficulties in bringing the branded book maybe the form of *Aging Well: Surprising Guideposts to a Happier Life from the Landmark Harvard Study of Adult Development* in e-book can be your option.

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