



Sunday, 13 March 2022

Staying Young, Part 2

Walking tall is how stars stay young

(This is the second of two articles on "The Power of Egocentric Thinking — How the Stars Stay Young.")

By MARILYN BECK

Gannett News Service

HOLLYWOOD — Plastic surgeons can take credit for the way many of the senior citizen stars look. But no surface restorative can explain the miraculous stamina enjoyed by show business personalities in their 60s, 70s and 80s — or the fact that such elders remain as sharp of mind as "kids" of 40.

Mae West credits her mental and physical vitality to good living and good food — and daily high colonics. A food faddist who neither smokes nor drinks, at age 82 she still works out each morning on an exercise bicycle and a walking machine. Bob Hope, 71, says his system keeps on constant because he doesn't smoke, drinks only in moderation, "and I watch what I eat."

He also makes sure he never misses his daily massage (even when a masseur has had to be flown to his side during entertainment tours in remote comers of the world). He also plays golf regularly. And he walks tall. "Walking tall might be the most important lesson I've learned," says the man who still has the stride and the carriage of a man of 30. "People start to look old because they let their posture go — so that their bodies actually do shrink and start to bow. You've got to stretch your frame each day, walk with your belly tucked in and your head reaching the sky."

Gale Sondergaard reaches for the mountaintops when she's not busy on stage. The 75-year-old, Oscar-winning character actress claims mountain climbing as her favorite relaxation.

James Stewart, at 66, continues to head for Africa when he wants to relax "When you're doing something like a safari, and camping out in the wilds, you don't have time to worry much about anything except survival. It keeps you feeling young."

Will Geer ("Grampa" on CBS' "The Waltons" series) is 72, and is the despair of his grown children because he refuses to grow up. He insists on sleeping outdoors each night, rain or starry skies. He also rides his bicycle around the heavy-trafficked areas of Hollywood each day, though he admits he's sometimes finding it hard to "push them peddles."

"You should pay as little attention as possible to old age," reasons Geer.

Jack Benny keeps up with all the best-selling sex manuals, though he enjoys boasting that he hasn't learned much from the texts that he didn't already know. "All you need is common sense," says the 80-year-old comedic great.

Whatever it is that's needed to make one a for-real sex symbol, Cary Grant most definitely has it — if one is to listen to the endorsements of the women in his life.

Greta Thyssen was a recent-Miss Denmark in the Miss Universe contest when she was first swept off her feet by the screen idol, who was then 56 years old. "He was older than my father," recalls Greta "But he was as romantic and virile as any younger man I ever dated. Cary never acted or did anything to make you aware of his age."

Aging — and the loss of virility — are simply a matter of mental attitude, Lorne Greene is convinced. The 58-year-old, silverhaired Pa Cartwright of "Bonanza" fame has two grown children and a daughter of six, and has been married for the last 13 years to a woman 18 years his junior. Lorne is a fearless skier, an expert tennis player. And he's a student of the study of geriatrics.

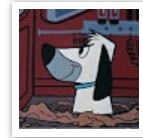
"There are sections in Russia (Abkhazia) where people live to be 130, 140 years old — and where men of 120 still father children!" he says.

It all has to do with a psychological attitude and continued physical activity, according to Greene.

Sen. Charles Percy received first-hand evidence of the validity of some of Greene's theories when he journeyed to the region of Hunza in Pakistan to observe individuals approaching the century mark who still enjoy active, fulfilling lives.

Percy, a member of the Senate Special Committee on Aging, met farmers in their 90s who put in a full day's

About Me



View my complete profile

Blogs to See

Fernando Llera Blog Cartoons
Mexico City's Ambulance Certification Process is due next week and still 100 ambulances remain to comply. - ©2022 fernandollera.com 3 hours ago

Yowp
Flintstones Daily Comics, Dec. 1961, Pt. 1 - There's a site which has posted the Monday-through-Saturday newspaper comic strips of The Flintstones. I wasn't going to post my copies because of that, bu... 7 hours ago

News From ME
ASK me: The Ranks of the M.M.M.S. - The other question put to me by Adam J. Elkhadem concerned Marvel's official, company-run fan club in the sixties, the Merry Marvel Marching Society... I was... 14 hours ago

Way Too Damn Lazy To Write A Blog
The Golden Age Of Radio Cartoons - "Pondering the links between animated cartoons and the... 21 hours ago

Old TV History
December 1945 - Santa Claus wasn't able to do it. Anyone expecting Jolly Old St. Nick to bring them a nice, shiny, post-war television for Christmas in 1945 would be dis... 22 hours ago

work at their fields, women of close to 100 involved in community activities and household chores.

His conclusion: active physical lives and the use of organic foods and mineral-rich glacier waters have much to do with the longevity of the residents of Hunza.

Carol Channing, 50, takes along her personal cook when she's working on the road — to make certain that nothing but properly prepared organic meals are served her. Carol analyses, "You have to keep in training like a boxer to remain active on the stage." She says that such esteemed theatrical greats as the Lunts and Sir Lawrence Olivier also believe, "The most important quality in theatre is not as much talent as health. It's the survival of the fittest."

Miss Channing, Miss Swanson, Miss Helen Hayes — at age 73, all exercise regularly and strenuously. So does in-his-70s James Cagney, who retired from the screen in 1961 to undertake an active life as a serious painter and operator of his 500-acre farm in New York State.

Cagney, who broke into show business 54 years ago as a hooper, stays in shape by tap dancing daily, and offers this stay-young advice: "You should work out enough to get out of breath two or three times a day."

George Burns makes it a daily ritual to do Canadian Air Force exercises — followed by the downing of a few cold martinis.

Buddy Ebsen, who, like James Cagney, started out as a dancer, practises tap routines during lunch breaks of his Barnaby Jones series. At age 65, Ebsen is still an active skier, races his 35-foot catamaran, works his 35-acre, Malibu Canyon ranch — and gives the impression he works to live for the next party. On more than one occasion he's served as a source of awe — and inspiration — to younger members of his series company by putting in a 12-to-14 hour work day, then organizing an on-the-set wingding that lasted 'till the liquor supply ran dry.

Some of the stars stay young in spite of on-going love affairs with the bottle, others with the aid of spartan food and drink regimes and diligent dedication to exercises.

But for all of them there's more to their secret of youth than diet and/or physical workouts. There's a stay-young attitude they share that seems to have miraculously translated itself into stay-young bodies and minds. They don't accept themselves as old, and neither does an industry that continues to employ them, and a public that continues to support their work.

"I'm a workaholic," is the way Buddy Ebsen describes himself. "To me retirement represents the pinnacle of boredom. I'm hooked on that intoxicated feeling one gets trying to do something — and having it turn out right. There's no better feeling than that — or anything more capable of making a man feel like he's still a kid." Buddy Ebsen is lucky. He's part of a privileged tribe of "kids" who are still allowed the luxury of work — at an age when others their age are considered fit for nothing more stimulating than retirement. To be old is a stigma in most modern day societies. To be 50 is usually to be over the hill — if you're not fortunate enough to be an entertainer.

The enormous increase in population after the Second World War brought about the practice of the mandatory retirement system — shoving old people out to pasture to make way for the young. However, what started out as an economic base has long ago become a psychological base.

In corporate quarters, your stability, wisdom and experience count for nil if you're 65 or over. At age 65, you're washed up, through.

At age 55, you can begin growing insecure over the fact you've only got a decade left to merit a paycheque. At age 45, you better face the sad fact that it will be next to impossible to switch jobs, because few firms want to take a chance on someone of "advancing" years.

Society constantly reminds us in subtle — and not-so-subtle ways — that life's opportunities are mainly for the young. That's the way it usually is — unless you're lucky enough to be in show business.

As far as Robert Young is concerned, there's no business like show business — in spite of its pressures and demands. "How many other fields are there like acting," he asks, "in which you can keep working when you're 90?"

To the 67-year-old Young, "real fulfilment is knowing what you want to do — and being allowed to do it."

Young says. "I want to work 'till I die." He says this after having tested retirement for six years in the senior citizens' community of Rancho Santa Fe, near San Diego.

He looks back on those years as a time when, "I tried to live the life of a country squire — and filled my days with pseudo activities. I was marking time on a treadmill."

His retirement experience ended when he signed as star of ABC's Marcus Welby M.D. series in 1969, yet he can still vividly recall the vacuum that represented life in Rancho Santa Fe.

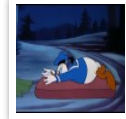
"There were some of the unhappiest men in that retirement community," he reveals. "Former chairmen of the board — some who had ruled business empires. I'll never forget day one of them complained, 'I woke up this morning and thought, what in the hell do I do today?'"

Robert Young is fortunate. He's an actor, not a former chairman of a business board. There was an active career for him to return to — when he chose to and even he can't get over how much he's changed as a result of it.

"I astound myself," he says. "I zing around the soundstage or jump on a plane to do a benefit, or handle activities as national chairman of the Easter seal campaign, or settle down to work at my Universal studio offices where I'm producing some movies for ABC. I've never had such vitality before."

Robert Young is just one member of an impressive league of Filmland elders who serve as living proof of

Movies with Michael



Some
Cartoons
for
Saturday
Morning
#189 - Hello

my friends and happy Saturday morning. Once again it is time for some classic cartoons. Today's cartoon selection begins with a delightful Donald...

1 day ago

Cartoon Research

The Problem with Pooh - Suspended Animation #385
Oh bother! The bear with very little brain through no fault of his own certainly seems to be a troublesome bruin and for many yea...

2 days ago

Pegbar Profiles

Pegbar Profile: Emery Hawkins (Part 3) - *Muriel Cigars spot, produced by Shamus Culhane's studio in New York.* Upon his arrival out East, Hawkins found work in film and television ad production...

6 days ago

AFRTS Archive

File download - So the good news is that I did receive a refund from our file host. Still no replies. I'll have to start over. So, do you know a file storage provider w...

2 weeks ago

Inbetweens: The Cult Classics of Animation

Throwing the Bull: Heckle and Jeckle in The Intruders

- Until the mid 40s, Fox had many issues with the Terrytoons Studio, and over the years complaints were regularly sent. Particularly, the lack of true s...

2 weeks ago

[Show All](#)

Dr. Grob's Animation Review

Thou Shalt Not Covet Thy Neighbours Wife - 'Thou Shalt Not Covet Thy Neighbours Wife' is the tenth and last of Phil Mulloy's Ten Commandment films. This installment is the longest of the ten, clocki...

2 days ago

Blog Archive

- ▼ 2022 (241)
 - August (22)
 - July (34)

doctors' claims that a vital life helps insure a longer life.



Molly Picon, the 76-year-old star of American and Yiddish theatre, has been spending the summer working on the boards in *A Majority of One*. You can witness the spring of her step, the sparkle of her personality yourself in the *For Pete's Sake* motion picture currently in release.

David Niven is 64, but has the bearing and manner of a man of 40. He still makes a picture a year, has just completed a television special, is writing a follow-up to his best-selling autobiography, *The Moon's a Balloon*. And somehow still finds time to conquer the most challenging ski slopes near his Gstaad, Switzerland home.

At age 69, Joseph Cotton isn't able to land the top-flight American movie roles that once made him an idol of the silver screen. However, he's still fortunate to manage to keep constantly on the run with occasional European film assignments and steady work as the star of U.S. straw hat plays.

Fortunate, too, is Walter Pidgeon.

still witty and spritely at 76, to have found a series of movie and television assignments in recent years . . . and Red Skelton, 61, who was able to return from a short-lived retirement he hated to find his services still in demand as a nightclub and country fair-circuit star . . . And Fred Astaire, 74, who tried retirement once, found himself bored to tears, and now has more performing offers than he cares to handle. He just completed one he cared about: a feature role in *The Towering Inferno* for 20th Century Fox.

Well-known science fiction author Isaac Asimov turned to tv writing earlier this year for the NBC News Presents: *The Pursuit of Youth*. And after researching the tragic waste of retiring individuals at a mandatory age, he found he could easily identify with the show business personalities who are relieved of such pressure. At age 54, Dr. Asimov doesn't feel he's getting old, because "My job is no retirement. I am working harder now than I ever did."

If Lucille Ball isn't working as hard as ever since retiring her TV series this year, she is certainly maintaining a pace that could tax the strength of a youngster. It's been a constant round of Mame promotional trips for the 63-year-old Lucy, who's now charting her upcoming specials for CBS, and planning another movie. If she finds time for a break this winter, she'll take off for a "take-it-easy" cross-country skiing vacation.

Lucy, like her buddies Bob Hope and Jack Benny, believes in being more than "star." All three of them retain control of the projects in which they appear, sitting in with the writers, serving as final editor of material, keeping a close finger on production.

If Lucy has the reputation among some in the industry as a hard women to work for, it's because she demands the same perfection of co-workers as she demands of herself — and work without let-up.

If Bob Hope's TV specials invariably land in the top 10 of the Nielsen ratings, it's because he leaves no promotion ploy to chance — and will spend weeks on the phone and on the road, personally plugging the show to newspaper men, television hosts and live audiences.

"Work keeps me young," says 80-year-young Jack Benny.

"I can't imagine what I'd do without work, says Jimmy Stewart.

"I regard the dawn of each new day as a new day in which I can discover new interests and new insights," observes 70-year-old Gary Grant, who now applies the energies he once devoted to acting to activities as board memberspokesman for Faberge Products.

"The longer you work and try to get the most out of life, the longer you live," is the philosophy of Lorne Greene. The *Griff* series has failed, which served as his *Bonanza* follow-up, but he's just completed a role in Universal's *Earthquake*, is planning to produce and star in a film early next year — and is urging his agent to find him another tv series starring assignment.

Some personalities have been able to keep working because of sentimental value attached to their names during the current, nostalgia craze. However, most remain in demand, not because of their age — but because they're regarded as ageless by industry and audience alike. They are citizens of a Never-Never Land where some idols never, never grow old . . . where Zsa Zsa Gabor at 51 is still playing at belft "The Dollink" . . . where men in their sixties and seventies romance younger-than-springtime starlets both on and off the screen.

- [June \(30\)](#)
- [May \(31\)](#)
- [April \(30\)](#)
- ▼ [March \(32\)](#)
 - [They're Still Hungry](#)
 - [Before Lucy](#)
 - [Look of the Cook](#)
 - [Flea Sees Flea](#)
 - [An Interview?](#)
 - [Sing Like Stalling](#)
 - [Not Enough Overlays](#)
 - [Becoming Mr. Mouse](#)
 - [New! Mild! Bob and Ray!](#)
 - [Cat Tail For Spring](#)
 - [Wolf, Stay Away From My Door](#)
 - [Writing For Jack Benny, 1941](#)
 - [Freddie Fudsie, Cartoon Star](#)
 - [Familiar Poses](#)
 - [Turnaround Cat](#)
 - [Desi](#)
 - [Flypaper Kitten](#)
 - [Smearing Bogie](#)
 - [Staying Young Part 1](#)
 - [Staying Young, Part 2](#)
 - [More Studio, Less Money](#)
 - [Noble's Suburbia](#)
 - [First Tooth](#)
 - [Comeback For Q](#)
 - [The Dirty What?](#)
 - [Hay and Hey](#)
 - [Stuntman Benny](#)
 - [Why Are Cartoons For Kids?](#)
 - [But It Works For Bugs Bunny](#)
 - [Spot the Radio Stars](#)
 - [Grey Hair on Red's Gags](#)
 - [Singing Faces](#)

► [February \(28\)](#)

► [January \(34\)](#)

► [2021 \(380\)](#)

► [2020 \(389\)](#)

► [2019 \(376\)](#)

► [2018 \(379\)](#)

► [2017 \(380\)](#)

► [2016 \(396\)](#)

If geriatricians need additional proof that mental and physical stimulation can keep one vigorous and virile, they need look no further than the movie colony, where such men as Dean Martin, Bing Crosby and Henry Fonda keep wives 20 and 30 years their junior content . . . where Crosby, Anthony Quinn and Lorne Green became fathers in their 50s, "and Cary Grant a first-time father at the age of 62.

The rules that apply elsewhere don't touch the lives of the stars. The very society that has set 65 as mandatory washed-up age encourages show business personalities to retain-idol status as long as they can make it up the steps of a stage.

"That's what makes show business so great," analyses George Burns, who has spent months cutting a new recording and preparing for a one man show at the Los Angeles Shubert Theatre.

"There's something to look forward to all the time — and your age has nothing to do with it."

It's a mental attitude that has a lot to do with it — a refusal to accept that they are growing old. It's the power of egocentric thinking.

Charmed lives also have a lot to do with it — the opportunity to escape the retirement rules imposed on everyday society.

"When I stop hearing the audience's laughter, that's when I'll know it's all over," says Bob Hope.

Others in other walks of life should be so lucky, — of being accorded the opportunity to remain young until the day they die.

Read part one [by clicking here](#).

Posted by [Yowp](#) at [07:19](#)



No comments:

Post a Comment



Enter comment

- [2015](#) (389)
- [2014](#) (390)
- [2013](#) (388)
- [2012](#) (397)
- [2011](#) (106)

Labels

- [Aline Mosby](#) (18)
- [Art Davis](#) (39)
- [Bad Luck Blackie](#) (11)
- [Bob and Ray](#) (15)
- [Bob Clampett](#) (103)
- [Bob McKimson](#) (75)
- [Bob Thomas](#) (61)
- [Chuck Jones](#) (169)
- [Columbia](#) (56)
- [Counterfeit Cat](#) (10)
- [Cynthia Lowry](#) (35)
- [Dick Thomas](#) (18)
- [Don Patterson](#) (19)
- [Drag-a-Long Droopy](#) (14)
- [Earl Wilson](#) (17)
- [Erskine Johnson](#) (43)
- [Felix the Cat](#) (32)
- [Film Daily](#) (50)
- [Fleischer](#) (190)
- [Frank Tashlin](#) (35)
- [Fred Allen](#) (51)
- [Fred Brunish](#) (11)
- [Friz Freleng](#) (173)
- [Gene Deitch](#) (21)
- [George Pal](#) (11)
- [Grant Simmons](#) (9)
- [Hanna and Barbera unit](#) (121)
- [Hanna-Barbera](#) (4)
- [Harman-Ising](#) (83)
- [Henry Morgan](#) (14)
- [Irv Spence](#) (12)
- [Jack Benny](#) (561)
- [Jay Ward](#) (34)
- [Jimmy Durante](#) (21)
- [John Crosby](#) (99)
- [John Sutherland](#) (37)
- [Johnny Johnsen](#) (37)
- [Kenny Baker](#) (6)
- [King-Size Canary](#) (9)
- [Laugh-In](#) (16)
- [Legend of Rockabye Point](#) (6)
- [Little Rural Riding Hood](#) (7)
- [Magical Maestro](#) (9)
- [Maurice Noble](#) (12)

Newer Post

Home

Older Post

Subscribe to: [Post Comments \(Atom\)](#)

- Mel-O-Toons (5)
- MGM (678)
- Norm McCabe (6)
- Pat Matthews (12)
- Paul Julian (15)
- Sara Berner (5)
- Screwy Squirrel (38)
- Spider-Man (1)
- Terrytoons (104)
- Tex Avery (584)
- The Cat That Hated People (10)
- Toby the Pup (3)
- Tom and Jerry Human (45)
- Tralfaz Sunday Theatre (19)
- Ub Iwerks (110)
- UPA (69)
- Van Beuren (123)
- Vernon Scott (51)
- Virginia MacPherson (14)
- Walt Disney (182)
- Walter Lantz (293)
- Warner Bros. (756)
- Who Killed Who (10)