

Facts About Seniors and Learning

By Larry Lambert

Can you teach old people new tricks?



Cartoon by Lambert-King

Generally speaking, I wrestle with technology. While I haven't embraced it, I at least say hi to it. Part of it, I like to think, is it just doesn't interest me that much. And I believe that's true of a lot of seniors. Like everybody, we learn more quickly if the subject interests us. That's my story and I'm sticking to it.

I decided to delve into this subject a little more. So, here are some things I found about seniors and learning.

1: Learning has a positive effect on your brain

By learning, seniors can actually grow new neurons and help stave off dementia. So, learn something new and grow a set...of neurons.

2: Creativity can be maintained as a senior

For example, Laura Ingalls Wilder published "[Little House on the Prairie](#)" when she was 65. Let's face it, when your body starts being uncooperative and your memory is sometimes iffy, you have to be creative and resourceful.

3: With increased longevity, it will become even more important for seniors to keep on learning

It's projected by 2040 the number of seniors will almost triple from 5.7 million to 14.1 million. It's also projected that average age of all US presidential candidates will be 84.

4: Nearly half of all seniors volunteer in some fashion

And most of them are aware that they have volunteered and even what they volunteered for. Actually, volunteering and helping others is a great way to stay as mentally sharp as possible.

5: A gang called "The Grandpa Gang" broke into a highly secured British bank and made off with \$20 million

The leader of the gang was 76. Sure, most of them got caught, but we're talking about cognitive ability, not speed. It makes me proud to be a senior. Well, maybe not.

6: Physical activity can slow down the aging process

Hmm, I'm pondering that while sitting here typing this and trying to decide if it's worth the effort. Ok, I guess it is.

7: Seniors don't appreciate people condescending to them

The fact is seniors have the ability to recognize when they are being talked down to. I had this happen to me. I was going over some new information and the instructor thought I was having trouble grasping the concept being presented. Actually, the issue was I'm a hunt-and-peck typist.

I really wanted to explain "*age disclination*" to her, but I don't think she could grasp it.

8: Seniors can still be successful entrepreneurs

Take Colonel Sanders for example. The Colonel founded Kentucky Fried Chicken when he was 65. And when it came to fashion, he was his own man. He dared to wear white after Labor Day.

9: Using a computer can also help seniors to maintain mental sharpness

That's great. If only I could remember my password.

10: Our brains never stop growing and reshape themselves as we get older

Who knew? I knew other parts of my body were growing and being reshaped, but I didn't know about the brain. I hope my head doesn't run out of space.

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