

How I Aged Younger and How You Can Too – Health & the Successful Life Series

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To be honest, people have been talking about the subject of aging for a very, very long time. The fountain of youth, a way to stay young forever, is the subject of legends, stories, and even Hollywood films. It would be interesting if someday we could figure out how to extend human life like that, but unfortunately that is not what this post is about. Turning back the clock is, as far as we know impossible, at least if you look at it from the perspective of chronological time. But does this have to be the case?

Chronological age vs. Biological Age

In his book titled, *The Metabolic Plan*, Stephen Cherniske details the difference between chronological age (the age most of us think about) and biological age (the measure of how you look, feel, and perform)¹. We tend to have a certain picture associated with age. For example, when you turn 40, you are over the hill, or one might say in response to a condition, “Well, he’s 70 so it’s to be expected.” What if that wasn’t the case and your chronological age didn’t have anything to do with how you look, feel, and perform?



Jack LaLanne

Already, we have examples of this if we look at the world around us. You may have noticed in the news recently that Diana Nyad accomplished the amazing feat of swimming the 110 miles from Cuba to Florida, at the age of 64. Jack LaLanne, a legend in the health and fitness world, also did something quite remarkable. Handcuffed, shackled and fighting strong winds and currents, he towed 70 boats with 70 people from the Queen’s Way Bridge in the Long Beach Harbor to the Queen Mary, a total of 1 ½ miles. He did this on his 70th birthday.

Please resist the urge to think that these people are just extraordinary and abnormal individuals with good genes. In the world of aging and health, extraordinary should be the new norm. Let me talk about this for a minute.

I used to worry a lot about getting older. After I turned 25, I already felt that I was on the decline and that the time of my prime was already long gone. Isn’t that scary? I also looked at my family, and I saw many examples that gave me cause

for concern. My great-grandmother had Alzheimer’s, my great-grandfather was generally healthy but lived his last years in assisted-living, my great uncle died of a heart attack, my grandmother has diabetes, my grandfather was recently diagnosed with Alzheimer’s, and I had two great-aunts who died of Cancer. If you look at your own family, you may see something similar. Let me ask you this. Does this seem normal to you, or does this occur to you as being a bit strange?

Let me say this, no matter how much this may seem “normal” in our society today, it is not. Human design cannot possibly be that flawed. However, when we are exposed to this kind of reality day in and day out and we see it even in ourselves, it is hard to really see what is normal anymore.

What about genes?

There are many people who believe that poor genetics are the cause of many of their problems. Besides the fact that it is terribly dis-empowering, there is significant research that demonstrates that nutrition and lifestyle have a much bigger effect on your health than your genes.

In Dr. T Colin Campbell’s book, *The China Study*, he writes:

“One of the more exciting benefits of good nutrition is the prevention of diseases that are thought to be due to genetic predisposition. We now know that we can largely avoid these ‘genetic’

diseases even though we may harbor the gene (or genes) that is (are) responsible for the disease.
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In 2009, Dr. Brahman Guyuron conducted a study titled, “Factors Contributing to the Facial Aging of Identical Twins.”³ Although the study was conducted from a cosmetology perspective, the results are really quite striking. For example, look at these two women, identical twins.



If you look at aging as simply a matter of genes, then identical twins should age roughly the same, but we see that this is not necessarily the case and that lifestyle plays a crucial role.

Turning back the clock on aging

It turns out that even though we can't turn back the clock on our chronological age, there is actually a lot we can do to turn back the clock on our biological age. If you read my previous post, New Series on “Health & the Successful Life”, you can see a before and after picture of myself. The difference still shocks me sometimes. Not only did I lose weight, but I feel and look younger, and people tell me all the time how amazing it is. I think it would be fair to say that my biological age at 25 was probably 35 or 40 and my biological age now at 29 is probably 20.

Through all this, I discovered that how I age (biologically) is really in my own hands. To be able to sufficiently cover this topic in a way that informs and empowers you, I will devote each of my next few posts to specific points that will allow you to take your aging into your own hands.

Think about what it could mean for you in your life to have an extra 10 or 20 years of quality health.

1. Cherniske, Stephen (2007-12-18). The Metabolic Plan: Stay Younger Longer. Random House Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

2. Campbell, T. Colin, and Campbell, Thomas M. The China Study. BenBella Books, 2005.

3. Guyuron, Bahman, et al. “Determinants of Facial Aging in Identical Twins.” (2007).