



The Relativity of Age

When I was young, I thought if you were going to accomplish anything in life, you had to do it by age 40. Otherwise, what would be the point; you would be old.

I worked furiously in my younger days. By 26, I was at once teaching at a college, anchoring the 11 o'clock news on a television network, taping two radio commentaries daily, writing a newspaper column, and was half-owner of a movie theater. I was drinking 15 cups of coffee and smoking 3 1/2 packs of cigarettes a day. I kept my glove compartment stocked with chocolate bars that I ate in lieu of meals while racing from one commitment to the next.

By 30, I had left my native Canada and moved to New York City, a jungle inhabited by millions of ambitious baby boomers like me, all racing against the clock (and each other) to be successful.

When I turned 40, my perspective changed. Suddenly 40 didn't seem that old. It wasn't my father's 40, that was for sure. Some PR people were even calling it the new 30. A widely referenced study claimed the years between 40 and 50 were a person's most creative decade. As it turned out, it was for me. I got off the corporate treadmill and out on my own. I had a handful of successes and some colossal failures, but on my own terms.

Fifty didn't feel that old, either. There were still plenty of reasons to achieve, although the definition of that word, I came to realize, is ever changing. For me, the older I got, the less achievement had to do with tangible things and

the more it had to do with fulfillment.

By now, I think you know where I am going with this. As we get older, we don't necessarily give up trying just because more of our life is behind us than in front. We can keep finding new enjoyments and new challenges; we can keep experimenting and learning. I was reminded of these truths recently at Time Travels, the inspiring variety show that singer-songwriter Krista Detor puts on each year as part of the well-named Creative Aging Festival.

By 60, if you are at all introspective, you know yourself pretty well. After 30 years in New York, I was feeling stale, in need of excitement and a challenge. Coming to Bloomington, where I knew one person, and starting *Bloom* did the trick. It's been more fun and more fulfilling than I ever could have imagined.

Next up for me is 70. That used to be really old, but now it's the new 60, maybe even the new 50. Many of my contemporaries are retired and doing all kinds of wild and crazy things. For my part, I plan on putting out *Bloom* for another 10 or 20 years and then looking around for new challenges. Who knows, I may yet take up the ukulele.

Malcolm Abrams
editor@magbloom.com