ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

PSYCHOLOGY

Do Not Go Gentle: Successful Aging for Baby Boomers and All Generations
Richard Kownacki
CreateSpace
978-1-4515-5525-7
Four Stars (out of Five)

Author Richard Kownacki uses the term "eldster" to refer to people who defy society's expectations for seniors by staying healthy and active or by functioning well in spite of disabilities. The famous artist Grandma Moses started painting at age seventy-six because her crippling arthritis made embroidering impossible. The author's mother-in-law celebrated her eighty-fifth birthday with a skydiving lesson, and numerous elders participate in extraordinary physical activities.

Kownacki stresses following good health habits to prevent so-called diseases of old age. This fits in with health psychology, a new specialty that "encourages individuals to be responsible for their health and wellness." Kownacki focuses mainly on exercise and adds, "Emotional balance, good social support, and low-fat, high-antioxidant diets also slow down the aging process." The book contains five graphs, one of which shows that middle-aged people have the highest obesity rate which affects aging.

Kownacki holds a doctorate in clinical psychology, as well as master's degrees in counseling psychology and history of religions. For the last fourteen years of his almost-thirty-year career in human services and mental health, he has worked as a clinical psychologist. He plans to supplement *Do Not Go Gentle* with *Successful Aging for Baby Boomers and All Generations: The Workbook*. He also plans a sequel, *Surfing the Silver Tsunami*, which will deal with broader health-maintenance issues.

Do Not Go Gentle makes an important contribution to understanding aging by dispelling the myth that old age is synonymous with decrepitude. The principles provided for maintaining or regaining health are sound. For example, Kownacki advises, "It's important that you recognize your limits and work into an exercise routine gradually."

Better editing could have eliminated numerous typographical errors found in the book. Other textual problems are minimal, such as referring to Stephen Hawking as both a paraplegic and quadriplegic. More contrast between lightness and darkness would have made four of the

black-and-white photographs clearer. The other two photos, which demonstrate the author's weight loss, have a nice sharp contrast.

The author's research is rigorous. He frequently cites experts and studies, using endnotes that relate to listings in the comprehensive reference section. For example, Duke University conducted a study that showed equal long-term results for treating major depression in elders with antidepressants or with walking. The author heightens credibility by sharing his experience of losing weight, building endurance, and lowering his blood pressure while using the suggested techniques. He reinforces credibility with numerous examples of "spunky eldsters," like a seventy-two-year-old attorney who bicycled 800 miles en route to his fiftieth class reunion.

This book will benefit adults of any age who want to maintain or improve their health. It is never too early to lay the foundation for healthy, active senior years.

Norma D. Kellam