Clarion Review

Social Science

Stop Acting Your Age, Start Living Your Life
David James Demko
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Five Stars (out of Five)

Dr. David Demko, who holds certifications in gerontology and retirement planning, thinks Boomers—otherwise known as people born between 1946 and 1964—have a lot to learn if they are to live longer, healthier, and happier lives, and he is more than willing to teach them. In fact, in this breezy little book, Demko urges Boomers to become "Zoomers," a term the author coined to represent what he calls "Boomers with ZIP!"

Demko concentrates on nine traits he says Boomers can acquire to turn themselves into Zoomers: Food Fitness, Brain Fitness, Physical Fitness, Social Fitness, Identity Fitness, Spiritual Fitness, Retirement Readiness, Intellectual Fitness, and Constantly Curious. He devotes one chapter to each, providing quick doses of advice followed by additional reading recommendations. In the chapter on food fitness, for example, Demko offers the reader a "food fitness IQ" exercise, along with an overview of nutrition terminology, a six-step plan toward health maintenance, and a collection of eight weight-management concepts.

Enhancing the content are the profiles of thirteen Zoomers whose "stories of courage, innovation and hope have been a continuing source of inspiration" to the author. Indeed, some of the stories are absolutely remarkable. Michael Flynt, for instance, returns to finish his college degree and actually plays on the school's football team—at the age of fifty-nine. Sue Mead, age sixty, fulfills a lifelong dream and becomes the first woman to compete as a race car driver in a sixteen-day, 5,903-mile race called the Dakar Rally. Obviously, Demko intends these stories to illustrate that life isn't over even as a Boomer ages.

Demko is nothing if not encouraging, informing Boomers that “80 percent of longevity (how long you will live) is determined by lifestyle factors, not the aging process.” The advice he conveys in this volume, based on a decade of research, is clearly designed to target lifestyle and to convince baby boomers that retirement is not so much a stage of life as it is a state of mind.

Many books aimed at the large, aging baby-boom population have been published recently, so this work joins a crowded field. Such texts tend to delve deeply into financial requirements for retirement, or they explore specific options baby boomers should consider to keep themselves occupied in their later years. Dr. Demko’s approach is refreshingly different; rather than preach about one particular aspect of aging, the author covers the entire spectrum of how to be a “Boomer with ZIP.” He prescribes a formula that, if followed, has the potential to improve every Boomer’s quality of life during the aging process. *Stop Acting Your Age, Start Living Your Life* is a valuable addition to baby-boom literature.

Barry Silverstein