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BODY, MIND & SPIRIT

The New 60: Outliving Yourself and Reinventing a Future
Robert Levithan
CreateSpace
978-1-4680-0989-7
Five Stars (out of Five)

Robert Levithan, a twenty-first-century Renaissance man with a fascinating and highly urbane litany of passions and accomplishments, was moved to write about his life and worldviews on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday. The result is a gutsy, honest, and beautifully well-executed small book of essays, aptly and ironically titled *The New 60**. Apt, because Levithan is among the first wave of baby boomers to hit sixty. Ironic, because, as a gay man testing positive for HIV in 1984, Levithan never expected to live to the age of forty, let alone sixty.

In the more than thirty short essays, with titles such as "Sixty With a Six Pack?," "I Am Who I Am," and "When Monogamy is a Cop Out," Levithan leaves no personal stones—and few cultural stones—unturned. His scathingly frank and paradigm-challenging vignettes constantly prompt the reader to set aside beliefs and judgments. *The New 60** is a book that is difficult to read with a mind even a little closed, and that is its blessing. Levithan confronts issues such as homophobia, sexual norms, and ageism with an intimate guilelessness that is disarming. He is past game playing and euphemism and ego protection, if only on the written page. Levithan professes, "Our culture will attempt to seduce us to abandon ourselves and pretend to be who someone says we should be. The New 60 is my opportunity to leave behind inhibitions and made-up fears, and flaunt my unique qualities."

Levithan is a New York City psychotherapist. He is a regular contributor to the Huffington Post, and he has written columns for *Oprah at Home*, Out.com, and Advocate.com. As a young man he was lover and muse to photographer Peter Hujar, and was the subject of some of Hujar's well-known photographs. He is openly polyamorous, unabashedly dates men young enough to be his grandson, has many celebrity friends, and travels extensively; in these and other ways, he walks his talk. He writes, "I am fortunate to have created a life that is multidimensional, rich, and perfectly flawed."

*The New 60** is an inspirational manifesto that would appeal to a broad audience, especially members of the LGBTQ community of every age. Baby boomers, people touched by

AIDS, students and academics studying gay culture in the 1970s and 1980s, and anyone else who enjoys confronting their sacred cows will applaud Levithan's superlative prose.

Patty Sutherland