

From: Amir Moghaddam [mailto:amoghaddam@furst.no]
Sent: March 09, 2016 3:33 AM
To: Diamandis, Dr. Eleftherios
Subject: "The question I hate most"

Dear Dr Diamandis,

Your article in nature "the question I hate the most" is delightful.

I am 48 years old, in biomedical sciences, and about 12 years ago I got lucky in starting a private diagnostic company that has become viable. I am lucky because the laboratory has taken its own life leaving me free to read, to supervise students once in a while, to hold lectures and do some research and writing, as well take courses in programming and statistics at nearby university here.

Nobody has asked me when I am going to retire, except myself. To be precise about 15 years ago I decided that I am going to be conscious of getting older. I am not going to sleepwalk my way into my 50s, then 60s and 70s. So I started reading articles about getting old, not the biology of it, but the human side of it.

Some of the more informative reads includes the book "Why Life Speeds Up As You Get Older: How Memory Shapes our Past by Douwe Draaisma"; a depressive article in the new yorker "<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2007/04/30/the-way-we-age-now>" and so on. To cut a long story short, I have come to the conclusion that most people know they are going to get older but nobody believes it. Deep down I don't believe I will get old either so I have used an phone-app to make my face old and look at my older face once in a while. My intention is to live my days consciously.

I also took advice from Daniel Gilberts "Stumbling on Happiness" in trying to ask people who are older than me for their reflections on life, their regrets and the things that have genuinely made them happy. I have been hoping to connect to more experienced men, but men are not easy to get to open up, the way you have in your article. I think the only useful thing that I have learnt from the few older men that I have managed to talk to is that they regretted not spending enough time with their children. Luckily, that is not a regret that I have, I have given more than my fair share of time to my children.

For a while, I was thinking that in retirement I will move back to my home country, Iran, take a course in eco-tourism and become an eco-tour leader. Another plan was to take over my father's poultry farm in Iran and either turn it into a dog-shelter or even better, to turn it into a very humane and ecological farm. But deep down I know that I am only ever going to be happy in a laboratory.

Just knowing that you have consciously made such a plan for yourself, well beyond enough-money-to-live-on-when-I-get-older, is very inspiring.

If you ever want a visiting older scientist working in your yet-to-be-established laboratory, I may just send an application.

Best of luck.

Amir Moghaddam, D.Phil

From: "MORLEY D. HOLLENBERG" <mhollenb@ucalgary.ca>
Date: Tuesday, March 22, 2016 at 11:32 AM
To: Eleftherios Diamandis <ediamandis@mtsinai.on.ca>
Cc: Katerina Oikonomopoulou <oikoa@mail.med.upenn.edu>
Subject: Retirement? The word isn't in Morley's family dictionary

Eleftherios:

On Retirement:

Katerina passed on to me your great note on 'retirement'. I don't keep statistics, but expect I'm in the same league as you are re queries. Otto von Bismarck who invented the concept in the mid 1800s would be amused.

The answer I learned from my 91 year-old mentor, Paul Talalay, who is still directing his NIH-funded sulforaphane project at Hopkins is: I'll retire as soon as I find something more interesting to do!

An example of my mentors:

HKF Blaschko: Best friend with Hans Krebs who took care of the Krebs Cycle, while Blaschko invented the pathway of biosynthesis of catecholamines: Comment at the age of 91: they won't replace my hips on the UK med plan, so I now get into my office only three days a week, and must work at home on the other two.

Victor McKusik: Invented human genetics. Was in his office every day till the age of 91, when he passed on.

Paul Talalay: as above, at the age of 91, looking for funding to treat Autism spectrum disorder with broccoli extract, sulforaphane: see his PNAS 2014 article. Amazing.

Jacob Hollenberg: Physician/Surgeon in Winnipeg: Took care of his last patient in his office on a Friday to diagnose lymphoma; consulted with the referral oncologist Schacter in Safeways on the Saturday; checked out that night at the age of 85, still in the saddle.

Norm Hollenberg: Invented the use of chocolate as an antihypertensive 'alternative': still writing/commenting on the chocolate factor in his mid-80s.

So: my personal answer first is that the word retirement escaped my family genome. Second answer is as per Paul Talalay's answer above. I'm still more amused by my workplace than any other place.

I miss visiting with you, having spent since August writing grants to keep the lights on. NOT sure how that will work.

I'll keep you posted; and will keep in touch.
Very best to you Tasoula and Family!

Morley D. Hollenberg, D. Phil., M.D., FRSC

From: "McDonnell, Jeffrey" <jeffrey.mcdonnell@usask.ca>
Date: April 15, 2016 at 11:22:36 AM EDT
To: "Diamandis, Dr. Eleftherios" <ediamandis@mtsinai.on.ca>
Subject: great column

Dr. Diamandis,

Great column in Nature. It echos what I am hearing now at 56...your words are so useful as I navigate the work decade(s) ahead. Many thanks! -J

Jeff McDonnell, FRSC
President-Elect, AGU Hydrology Section
Professor | School of Environment and Sustainability; Department of Soil Science
Associate Director | Global Institute for Water Security
University of Saskatchewan | 11 Innovation Boulevard, Saskatoon SK S7N 3H5, Canada
Lab URL: <http://www.usask.ca/watershed/>
Executive Assistant: Michelle Martel-Andre (michelle.martel-andre@usask.ca)