

**SENIOR MOMENTS**  
By *jean cherni* Column for 03/14/2010

**ARE YOU DATING YOURSELF BY THE WAY YOU ACT?**

Browsing in what is considered the best independent bookstore in the Northeast, R.J. Julia in Madison, I spotted a paperback with the intriguing title, “How Not To Act Old”. I purchased it on the spot... well, wouldn’t you?? I’ll save the readers of this column \$15 by summarizing what I’ve read; some of it rather humorous but most of it, advice I simply can’t take to heart. And if that makes me look or sound old, then so be it.

I always knew how we speak and the words we use, divided the young from the old; I just didn’t realize the degree of separation. I didn’t realize, for example, to respond to “thank you” with “you’re welcome” is out of date. The young will invariably reply, “No problem”. (I didn’t realize I had caused one). “Hot” has replaced “sexy” and “Whip me” replaces, “Can I get a ride?”. It is also okay to use the “f word” every other sentence although I still cringe whenever I just hear it and can think of a slew of other words to use if I get really angry. However, since slang is a shorthand to let other people know how old you are, and words like “keen” and “swell” are definitely out, the book cautions you against trying to use words like “awesome” if you are over sixty; sort of unbecoming for your age like wearing a miniskirt. Also, don’t be a human archive and recount stories about when you were young or if you work in an office, reminisce about when the company had manual typewriters. Also, no chronic health discussions or talk of menopause.

**Guess that leaves the subjects of death and taxes and those are pretty “uncool” as well.**

**I thought since I had learned at least three operations on my cell phone, I was pretty “with it”. (Is that still alright to use??) But now the book tells me I give my age away by talking more loudly when using the cell and also by using my index finger instead of my thumb when punching in the numbers. Anyway, e mail is already old fashioned; the young use text messaging and Facebook. Additionally, the young don’t wear watches to tell time... they simply flip up the phone with one hand, use their thumb to punch those miniature buttons and don’t need to put on their glasses to read the equally small print which gives the time.**

**Of course, they no longer look forward to spending a leisurely week-end reading the Sunday paper. They are too busy working out or making out and then updating their blog about both and anyway, there’s no need to read the paper because they feel if anything important happens, somehow the universe will text them.**

**Other “you’re acting old” give-aways.**

- **Telling perfectly competent other adults to: take an umbrella, wear a jacket, go to the bathroom before leaving.**
- **Saying, “Did you have enough to eat?”, “Are you going to be warm enough in *that*?” or “If you don’t hurry up, you’re going to be late.”**
- **Remarking to your friends, “They named the baby *what*??”**

**As for the looks department, and this is one area where I mostly agree, no cleavage, no brassy blonde, no all over animal prints. In other words, dim the glitz, lighten up the makeup. Be subtle.**

**My own feeling on this “remaining young” issue is that the words you use or the way you dress are not really important. Age is a number, not a destination.**

**What keeps people young at any age is their involvement with others, their sense of humor, their eternal curiosity, willingness to take a risk, and above all, a passion for life.**