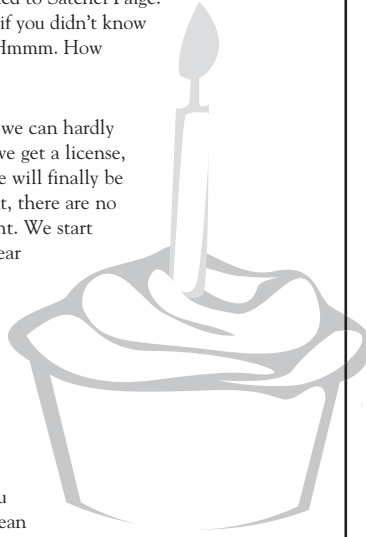


age

**Age.** A lot of people think about it. More to the point, they worry about it. I heard a great quote attributed to Satchel Paige. He asked someone, "How old would you be if you didn't know how old you was?" What a super question! Hmmm. How would you answer it?

Age is a funny thing. When we're younger, we can hardly wait to be 16 so we can drive. Then, once we get a license, we yearn to be 21—the golden age when we will finally be legal adults and bars will serve us. After that, there are no more ages to look forward to until retirement. We start to dread 30. After that, every five- or ten-year mark is cause for gag gifts of Geritol, black balloons, and those awful yard signs urging passersby to "Honk, Jane is 50 today." Puh-leeze.

I think we do ourselves a major disservice when we think this way. Our brains are programmed by the words we use and the pictures we create in our minds. Try this. Get a mental image of a 90-year-old. Are you envisioning some toothless old geezer or a lean gray-haired adult in jogging shorts crossing a marathon finish line? Sound far-fetched? It's not. Ninety-two-year-old Paul Spangler finished the New York Marathon (and in less time than



some of his "twenty-something" peers). I'm willing to bet he doesn't define himself by his age.

I had a great-aunt who used to say, "Honey, you can be twenty-five years old or fifty years young." And then she would tap her temple and say, "It's right here, baby. It's right here." She was right. A great deal of how "old" or "young" we feel has nothing to do with calendar years. Instead, it's based on how well we take care of ourselves in addition to how we choose to see ourselves at every age. I don't intend to be "old" for a long, long time. To quote Cavett Robert, "I intend to die young—at a very old age!"

