

## The Fountain of Youth

I've always thought that the 'Fountain of Youth' that everyone is searching for is not the oasis that most would hope for, but it is more likely found in a pool of sweat. I was pleased to find more evidence of this in the book '*Younger Next Year*' by Chris Crowley and Henry Lodge. This book is an 'easy to read- harder to apply' set of instructions on how to age gracefully, or rather, not to age at all. Henry Lodge is a medical internist who, in his practice, witnessed far too many of his patients deal with the ravages of aging. Chris Crowley was one of the good doctor's patients and, together, they wrote this book. Crowley provides anecdotal evidence of his aging experience and Lodge provides the science behind the principles presented in the book. I will summarize what I believe to be the most important of all the points made in the book.

From an evolutionary standpoint, the authors suggest that our bodies are just not made for the current century. Our ancestors survived only by making use of their physicality; 'only the strong survive' was the reality, not just a motivational maxim. Currently our lifestyle relies less on our physical abilities to provide the necessities of life for our selves and families. Our bodies have not adapted to the more sedentary lifestyle that we live, yet we are wired with the same 'use it or lose it' principles that served us well in the past. As a result, our bodies seem to be betraying us in ways that we don't understand. We are 'ageing' as a result of this sedentary lifestyle and most of this ageing can be avoided, or we can turn back the hands of time with some effort.

The human body is constantly in a state of change or more specifically; growth and decay. Aging is more a matter of 'decaying' than anything else. We are no longer getting the chemical messages to 'grow' that youth gave us. Converse to growth, our bodies will 'shut down' in an effort to conserve energy stores for tough times. Our lifestyle is such that the tough times never come and we end up with more 'junk in our trunk' than we would care to have. The book refers to decay as a form of inflammation with the anecdote to decay being growth. To simplify complicated biological processes, the authors refer to something called 'cytokines' as 'messenger molecules' that regulate both decay and growth in the body. Cytokine-6 (C-6) is the 'master messenger' for decay and cytokine-10 (C-10) is the 'master messenger' for repair and growth. C-6 is produced in the muscle and bloodstream in response to stress, including exercise, and C-10 is produced as a response to C-6. This is the body's brilliant way of breaking down and repairing itself. The main problem with our sedentary lifestyle, as well as with aging, is that the body undergoes stress and C-6 is constantly being released in small amounts. In short, the body is getting a constant message to 'decay' without the benefit of the repair and grow messenger, C-10. The body needs a *surge* of C-6, *as a result of exercise*, to have the surge in C-10 to repair and rebuild the damage or decay that is caused by C-6. The key is C-10's ability to build a stronger, healthier and younger body and C-10 is controlled by the release of C-6 which peaks after intense exercise.

All of these principles are obviously modified for us to understand, but the message is loud and clear; *exercise is the key to maintaining a youthful body*. The book goes on to explain in much more detail the necessity and details of a daily fitness regime as well as other lifestyle changes that are quite feasible with conscious effort. The sacrifices outlined in an effort to hold back the hands of time clearly outweigh the potential ailments and disease that lie ahead of us as we age. According to the authors, we may

unfortunately *look* our age, but with the addition of daily exercise and some other lifestyle changes, we don't need to *feel* old. I highly recommend this book to anyone that wants to live life to the fullest, as a contender in the game rather than an observer from the sideline.

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**Shawna is shaking up the fitness routines of several people in her Adventure Boot Camps. For more information, please visit her website.**