

It has been the idea (generation after generation) that elderly people are slow, they get in the way, they are incapable and their opinions are not necessarily a valuable contribution to society. Popular culture tells us how to reverse and avoid the aging process instead of embrace it, it tells us how horrible it can be but never how enriching of an experience and an inevitable part of life it is. However, these stereotypes about the elderly are changing, slowly but surely.

During my time abroad in Scotland, I took a class on Aging and Individual Differences. The topic of older age (70s, 80s, 90s, 100s) presented itself and I was immediately intrigued. The lectures delved deeper into a field of psychology that I did not know existed, gerontology. Gerontology, a field that is often undervalued, is the research of elderly people and their psychological functioning in society.

There have been numerous geriatric studies and publications about aging. My main interest lies in how people perceive aging. I am interested in looking at the correlation between one's percep-

tion of aging and how one ages mentally and physically. Many studies have found that a positive outlook on aging leads to a healthier older adulthood physically and mentally.

Before I design or launch any sort of research, I will investigate previous research on these topics. I have gathered material regarding perception of aging,



the prevalent gender gap regarding depression and stereotypes regarding aging. My hope is to work with the elderly from the local retirement community in focus groups and launch an online survey to collect information from the younger age groups, which are the ones most often online. My goal in my thesis is to examine what healthy and beautiful aging looks like. Hopefully, by working with individuals ages eighteen to eighty, I will be able to answer one question in some manner: is satisfaction with our own aging and feeling good about aging an indicator of positive experiences in later life?



Self Perception of Aging
and How it Informs Later Life

Mariah Jeremiah

Hometown - Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Thesis Advisor - Eden-Reneé Hayes

Psychology