

DISPOSABLE!

Where Is The Outrage?

I am a 75 year old woman. I am smart, a life long learner, and curious. I have a good sense of humor and love to laugh. I work hard to be kind, a patient listener and open minded. I am a valued friend. I love animals and the outdoors. I am a writer and photographer. I have health challenges, especially in the last two years, that have changed my physical abilities. I have 7 decades of experiences, both good and bad, and life lessons that I am happy to share and make me a helpful mentor. There is more to me too. But you would find that out as you got to know me.

I AM NOT DISPOSABLE!!

I am frightened, horrified and sickened by the growing movement, spurred by the pandemic, that my age renders me useless. Somehow, I am a burden to society. I am a costly, time consuming old person, of little if any value, who should be allowed, even encouraged, to die in order to make room for younger people.

We have become a nation afraid of growing older. We hate what "old" is (whatever age that is - it differs for everyone). We do everything we can to avoid or delay it. Hundreds of products, commercials, seminars, political speeches, cartoons and memes are dedicated to the elimination of "oldness". But since it is inevitable, we try to make it go away.

We hide the elderly in segregated housing, encourage "villages" for the over 60, and use nursing homes as the last resort when we have no other alternatives. We avoid intergenerational interaction. Comedians and politicians make jokes about it, some of which are crude and worse - cruel. And now - we have elected officials, those running for office and "bioethics" folks openly saying WE ARE DISPOSABLE!! Some go so far as to say it is our duty to give up our place in the world to make resources and room for

the younger among us! After all, they say, we are going to die soon anyway.

But perhaps, the worst is, we allow this to happen! Where is the outrage? The protests? The articles and media saying NO!! Where do we find intelligent people talking and writing about being old and it being ok and normal? Where are the busloads of old people driving to their state capitals, calling their elected officials, flooding their inboxes with emails?

And why, oh why, do we, the old people, post cartoons and memes mocking ourselves! You see them everywhere - those nasty, disrespectful bits that create the impression that being old is pathetic and ugly. That old is useless.

Until growing old is recognized as normal, and a source of valuable experience and expertise - until what we have to offer is respected and welcomed - nothing will change. And worse yet, who comes next? The disabled? The homeless! The poor?

It begins with us. It is our moment, our time to raise the banner that proclaims Old Is Good! When was the last time you heard someone talk about it with pride and exhort it's value?

2020 will be a historic year. Citizens will address and demand change. Racism. Social Justice. Sexual Harassment. Equal Opportunity For All. And more.

Where is our outrage? Our voices? Our activism? When will Ageism be added to the list? Isn't it our time too?

Carole Leskin

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