

Up Front/Commentary Kathy Hedberg

I'll take the senior discount, thanks; just don't call me 'old'

Kathy Hedberg/Lewiston Tribune

I know I should not look a gift horse in the mouth but when the 20-something store clerk gave me the senior citizens discount recently without even asking for my ID, I was miffed.

Seriously, I had just dyed my hair. Did I really look that old? I appreciated the 10 percent off, but couldn't he at least have asked to see my driver's license before carte blanche giving me the cut?

And this wasn't even a Tuesday, which is the usual senior citizen discount day, which means that it was a sympathy discount. I wanted to slap the little twerp.

I never thought I would be bothered by getting older, and honestly there are many things to appreciate about gaining a few years under the belt.

Your body may start to have a few more problems as you age, but your outlook is so much more improved. Things begin to make sense - matters that you used to think were important problems, aren't, and, because you become increasingly more aware of your limited time left on this Earth, it's a lot easier just to feel grateful about every ordinary day.

Younger people may regard you as irrelevant and treat you like a dinosaur but that's fine because then they'll leave us alone to enjoy our pinochle games and cocktails after work.

And yet I have just enough of my Grandma Cris in me - who was a beautiful, yet gloriously vain woman - to want to not be seen as old.

When my 9-year-old granddaughter, Julia May, looked at me closely not long ago, studying me silently for several minutes, she asked: "Grandma, why are there cracks on your face?"

Those, I explained, are wrinkles and wrinkles are "in" - as in, fashionable.

Julia May was not convinced.

My sons keep pestering me to make retirement plans. Once, my older son found a letter from AARP I'd torn up and tossed into the garbage without reading it. He wanted to know what I was doing.

"I'm in denial," I admitted.

But AARP is for old people, he said. "They could help you out a lot, Mom. And at your age, you could use it."

I'd like to know who raised these smart-aleck kids.

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