Demuth: Aging

Mallory Dudley

Western Washington University

HSP 315 Human Development

It was interesting how the author used the concept of resilience, such as the same type of resilience that adolescents and young adults use as a factor of aging. She mentions that theories do not talk about resilience, as a part of aging even though it plays a huge role where it’s counterpart would be the acceptance of aging and death. Our society views aging as a negative thing, especially for women. For a lot of women, being young and beautiful is how society views us and expects from us. Although you can be old and beautiful, the beauty of youth is what people struggle with and try to maintain. However, we will all grow old and will not be able to hold onto youth. It is a difficult thought for people to grasp.

 It is more of an expectation for women to keep up their appearance even at an old age. There are makeup products and medications to make you look and feel younger. Expectations for men are different at an old age. Their sexual performance slows down along with mental and physical change. However, there is no societal expectation to appear young even though they go through normal aging and denial.

 Demuth discusses aging as another stage of life. To young people, it does not seem that you are still developing and growing at that age even though just as young adulthood and middle adulthood, it is a new stage of acceptance and brings new physiological and psychological aspects. We know that many of the elderly are wise and have many life lessons to teach, even though they themselves are learning new things about acceptance and coming to peace with their life. It is the last stage of life and through retirement could be enjoyable for people willing to accept it. It is the one time in your life you have free time, and for privileged middle class people, the ability to support them through retirement. Some people who embrace aging are able to take care of their body and treat themselves as if they were still young. However, chronic illness and disease lack of health insurance, social security, or retirement compensation makes aging more stressful. This can lead to early disease and no access to treatment to live comfortably.

 Aging would be a difficult phase of life. Although it might be physically peaceful and calm, it would be very hard to deal with disease, loss of loved ones, being happy with your life to accept death. It is a lot to take in. I have personally had relatives who grow bitter the older they get. They have a hard time accepting their age and are still not comfortable with who they are. It could be a lack of satisfaction with their career, family, or personal goals. Or many times it could be that they lived in a marginalized population and never felt the satisfaction of an accomplished life. I have definitely noticed a difference between men and women in their older years and their attitudes. I am curious to see the overall “satisfaction” between men and women within middle class populations and low-income populations. It could be that men and women have different goals and aspirations, their attitudes about it, and overall ability to accept their life. It is an interesting time in life that is different for everyone. Although we go off of negative societal views of the elderly, it could be a positive and good experience.