

Is it really true that we have to die?

by Wolfgang Sonnenburg

When we talk about ageing, most of us think about an age which is simply related to our birth. But there are three different ages we should be aware of. The chronological age (the Greek have two words for time, Chronos and Kairos. Kairos is the right timing and Chronos the time we measure and mostly think of). Then there is also the mental and the biological age. What we most focus on, the chronological age, is the least important one. On today's TV shows, when relatively physically fit people are presented and the host mentions that they are in their 70s or even 80s, the audience responds with amazement. This amazement tells us that their belief system can't classify this age as normal. Furthermore, they think it's unbelievable to be so fit at that age. In this concern, it is important to understand the difference between 'natural' and 'normal'. We are 'normal' when we do what everyone else does. But does this correspond with nature? Because the majority of people act in a special way, this doesn't mean that this is automatically healthy and natural.



That is why we have to see the difference: what age should we be able to reach naturally in the country we live, and what is regarded as the usual age? The bible in the book of Genesis states, 'His days shall be 120 years'. Modern scientists seem to agree that our body is built to reach an age of 120 to 150. Time Magazine's cover recently stated that children, born today, can live to 142 years by natural means.

But is this correct? Before delving into this question, I think it is necessary to understand that we and our body are not one, but we own our body. Figuratively speaking there is no compelling link between the age of a car's bodywork and the age of its driver. This is how I understand this quote from Barbara Rütting:

'The soul withdraws from the body and it is not damaged! It withdraws from the 'vehicle.'

I had a personal experience with this last November when my father passed away. All the nurses I spoke to and some of the people who work in the hospice said, 'Yes, the soul usually leaves when nobody is in the room'. So, the dying person waits on purpose, noticing everything.

This is what was written about the body of Paramahansa Yogananda, the Indian yogi and guru: "Especially it is verified: 'On March 27th, shortly before the bronze cap was put on his coffin, Yogananda's physical appearance looked the same as on March 7th, when he has left his body. On March 27th, his body looked as fresh and remained as unaffected from death like the evening he died. There was no reason to claim that his body has shown any signs of alteration.'" Harry T. Rowe, Director at Forest Lawn Memorial Park cemetery in Los Angeles.

The body, or the bodywork, remained intact, although the driver had left it. But isn't it logical after all? We know that veteran cars can last forever when properly maintained. Yes, it may not be the latest model and you probably would have to retrofit it with seat belts and a GPS system. Yes, it isn't the most modern and perhaps a not the fastest, but it is still running! It doesn't have to die simply because of old age.

Nowadays, there is an increasing number of spare parts and technical devices for us humans. 3D printers are available now and can print an ear or other parts of the body. Medical scientists have made enormous progress in stem cell research and even expect to replicate many body parts in the near future. Reptiles can regenerate lost tails, so why shouldn't we as human beings be able to regenerate as well? In YouTube, there's a video showing a youngster whose finger was regenerating. Are our beliefs to blame or is our inability to do so due to the limitations of our brain?

Recently, I attended the brain training seminar '40 Years of Zen', where I intensely studied body hackers who investigate the real powers of our body. In his book 'Tools of Titans', author Tim Ferriss describes the effects of extreme health and talks about the research into the real capacity of our bodysystem in terms of performance. The bodyhackers in Silicon Valley don't deal with normal or average, but rather with what's individually outstanding and extraordinary.

Today, technologies, suits and supportive garments exist that enable weakened persons to gather enough strength to lift a crate. Much will be possible for us in the future, whether it's from medical science or technology.

We need to constantly remind ourselves that 99% of all inventors who ever lived on this planet are alive today! This will have an enormous impact on our way of life, our life span, and the overall quality of our lives.

But let's come back to current facts: Centenarians represent the fastest-growing population group, and guess how many are of them? In Germany, where I am from, there are many, many thousands of them, about 14,000 to be more precise. Do you know a city with 14,000 inhabitants? Imagine, if all of them are 100 years or older.

A friend of mine wanted to buy an insurance policy for his 11-year-old daughter and the insurance company told him her average life expectancy was 107 years. The German insurance industry, nowadays, is calculating an average life span exceeding 100 years!

Facebook and the internet in general, play a key role in questioning our belief systems concerning age. All of a sudden, there are videos and posts from octogenarian body builders and from active people who are 100 years old. I recently posted an example on Facebook of an 89-year-old female surgeon who still works four days a week and who basically asks herself, 'What else, as a surgeon, should I do?!'

Warren Buffett, who is one of my role models in the investment world, is approaching his ninetieth birthday, and for him, it's perfectly normal to follow his daily work, to build his financial empire and to campaign for socio-political topics. So, many things just happen in our brain.

As for me, I sincerely hope that my personal fight against the effects of aging will soon come to an end. When I turned 50 I noticed that I had accumulated a lot of baggage. Among other reasons, this had to do with my family situation. My father had three brothers and none of them lived to be 50. This is why my dad felt guilty when he reached and surpassed this 50-year threshold. This whole family environment, this drama, felt like a real burden to me. This is why I had a video produced on the topic 'Fitness in Old Age' with the objective to separate the chronological age from

