

# What “Successful” Old Age Looks Like

Caleb Jones | 18 August, 2016 | by BlackDragon

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He was, perhaps, in his early seventies. Big guy. Broadly built like me but taller, well over six foot. Shaved head. Friendly, craggy face. Big pot belly. Clearly retired by the look of his dumpy, out of date clothing. He had the body language and demeanor of a man who was once Alpha long ago but had slowly surrendered to beta male status as he moved into old age, much like my own father.

We sat in the waiting room at the Red Cross donation center. I donate blood twice a year to keep [my red blood cell](#) count at healthy levels. He was probably donating blood just to be a nice person. Or perhaps he was there under his doctor’s orders to help keep his blood thin. You never know.

He looked across at me and read my name off the stupid name tag the Red Cross forces you to wear as you give blood. I was reading some economics articles on my phone when he struck up the conversation.

“The last time I heard your name,” he said, “Was in that Robert Redford movie where he was a mountain man and adopted that kid.”

“An old movie or a recent one?” I asked, looking up from my phone, “A Redford movie means it probably was an old one.” Robert Redford was a little before my time, but I knew enough about him to know I was probably too young to see whatever movie he was talking about.

“Oh no,” he said, “Just about 20 years ago.”

“Like the nineties?”

“Maybe. Just look it up in your phone.”

Being a movie nerd, my curiosity was piqued. I tapped the Android search app and spoke into my phone,

“Robert Redford mountain man.”

His eyes widened. He had probably forgotten that you can actually talk to your phone these days.

In about one second, my phone reported the film *Jeremiah Johnson*.

“*Jeremiah Johnson*,” I said.

“Yeah!” he cried, “That’s it! The little boy in that movie was named Caleb.”

“1972,” I said.

“What?” he cried, genuinely shocked, “That’s when it came out?”

“Yep. That’s what it says. December, 1972.”

“Jesus,” he said, his face contorted, “I sometimes forget how old I am. I’m closer to the grave than the cradle these days.”

“Statistically I’m exactly halfway there,” I said, smiling.

“No you’re not. You’re a young buck.”

“I’m older than I look. I’m 44. As a matter of fact, 1972 was the year I was born.”

“Jesus,” he said again, looking at me shocked, “You look much younger than that.”

I’m accustomed to people thinking I’m younger than I actually am when they first meet me. Just a few weeks prior, after moving into my new house, both the movers and my new next door neighbor thought my 18 year-old daughter was my girlfriend.

“Well, I’m old enough to know who Robert Redford is,” I said, still smiling.

“Good movies to watch with the wife,” he said, “You married?”

â"¢No,â"¢ I said, â"¢Iâ"¢m not big on the concept.â"¢

Had this been 10 or 20 years ago, he would have snorted and told me I was being immature, tried to convince me that marriage was great, and that I was missing out. But today, Western civilization has turned an irreversible corner, and even normal, everyday people deeply seeped in Societal Programming canâ"¢t ignore the obvious facts in front of them.

So instead of lecturing me, he looked slightly downward and nodded slowly. â"¢Yeah,â"¢ he said quietly, â"¢That was a different thing for my generation than it is for yours.â"¢

â"¢Very,â"¢ I said. Itâ"¢s funny when I have conversations with strangers like this. They have no idea who theyâ"¢re talking to.

â"¢Youâ"¢ve got to have a girlfriend then,â"¢ he said, confident in his assumption and perking back up.

â"¢Normally Iâ"¢m not big on that either,â"¢ I said, â"¢But since Iâ"¢m halfway to the grave, I have one now, yeah.â"¢ I smiled to make sure my sarcasm was being conveyed. I also made sure to use the term â"¢girlfriendâ"¢ instead of â"¢[OLTR](#)â"¢ which would just create a conversation I wasn't interested in having.

â"¢Well, good. Someone to watch movies with.â"¢

â"¢We watch a lot of movies. Almost every weekend.â"¢ It was the truth.

â"¢The wife and I have been watching movies for almost 50 years. Sheâ"¢s a little picky though. She doesnâ"¢t like the shoot-em-up ones.â"¢

â"¢You can still watch the shoot-em-up ones by yourself, or with buddies,â"¢ I said, leaning forward and in a stronger tone of voice than I had been using.

â"¢Yeah, but itâ"¢s not the same,â"¢ he said, his body language caving inward slightly.

Confirmed. This was a former Alpha turned submissive beta by almost 50 years of monogamy. Thatâ"¢s how it works. If you look carefully, you can see the tiny, crushed Alpha Male in these menâ"¢s eyes. The shiny glint is still there...but thatâ"¢s all that remains.

Ten years ago I would have been a little upset, and would have told him to man up and take charge. If he was 30 or 40, I probably would have. But Iâ"¢m older and wiser now, and having observed old men like my dad and older clients and co-workers go through this, I knew it would have been a waste of time. It would have just made him feel less. Hell, this guy was probably north of 70 years old. Whatever path heâ"¢s on, heâ"¢s on. Thereâ"¢s no changing it at this point. He probably doesnâ"¢t even care.

So I simply replied, â"¢Yeah, I know what you mean.â"¢

He slowly pulled out his wallet, withdrew a picture with pride, and showed it to me. â"¢My wife, and my two daughters.â"¢

I tried not to smile, because it showed *exactly* what I expected. A short, chubby, homely-looking wife with Coke bottle glasses, two intense looking over-33 women, and himself with a beaming grin, a picture taken perhaps ten years ago. He was the happiest person in the picture; all three women bore stiff, unfriendly smiles.

â"¢You look very happy there,â"¢ I said, trying to find something to compliment without lying.

â"¢It was my birthday,â"¢ he said, shrugging, â"¢I get whatever I can take these days.â"¢ With a sad smile, putting the picture back in his wallet, he asked, â"¢You have kids?â"¢

â"¢Two,â"¢ I said, â"¢A boy and a girl.â"¢ I pulled out my phone and showed him individual pictures of each. One was my daughter on one of our recent trips to Vegas. The other was a picture of my

son dressed in a suit and tie right before a job interview. Both of these were pictures I specifically kept in my phone to show people when they asked about my kids, since before that I was making people uncomfortable when I told them I didn't have any pictures of my kids in my phone.

He complimented both. He didn't react to my son being black, which was a nice plus, considering the guy's likely generational views on such things.

"What about your lady?" he asked.

I paused, hesitated, and considered, but then figured what the hell and said, "Hang on." I smiled slightly, knowing what was coming. I scrolled through a small pile of women pics I had on my phone, found her, and showed it to him. It was just a selfie she had taken in her car on the way home from work one day.

"Oh my god!" he said, staring bug-eyed at the pic of the striking, platinum blonde, high cheek boned, porcelain skinned beauty who could easily be a model, "You must be doing something right."

"I try," I said, shrugging. If he were 30 years younger, I would have told him to check out my blog and books, but again, with a married, monogamous man this age, there'd be no point. He'd just feel either sad or angry.

"Janice was a looker too, back when we were younger," he said, "We were married by a river. That kind of thing was simpler back then. Nowadays everything has to be a big production, like those Bachelor shows."

"Tell me about it," I said, nodding in genuine agreement, "That crap just makes it more expensive for the rest of us."

"Yeah," he said, nodding, "Things are different today."

They called my name. I put my phone away and rose. I asked for his name. It was Jonathan. I wished him well, shook his hand, and moved into the clinic.

Just before rounding the corner, I took one quick look back at him. A lonely, chubby old man, slumped in his chair, staring down at the floor. Still with some kindness, but his passion, freedom, masculinity, drive and joy mostly long gone. His biggest sources of happiness were far in the distant past.

This is the man I would have ended up as if I had never gotten divorced so many years ago. I shuddered. This is the old man that most younger men aspire to be someday, including [those in the manosphere](#) who call themselves red pill.

This is the man society considers a success.

I walk a different path.

Thank goodness.

*Edit/Update: Looks like many of you misunderstood the quotes and sarcasm in the title of this post. If you're looking for what really is the successful way to get old, read the article I wrote about that [here](#).*

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