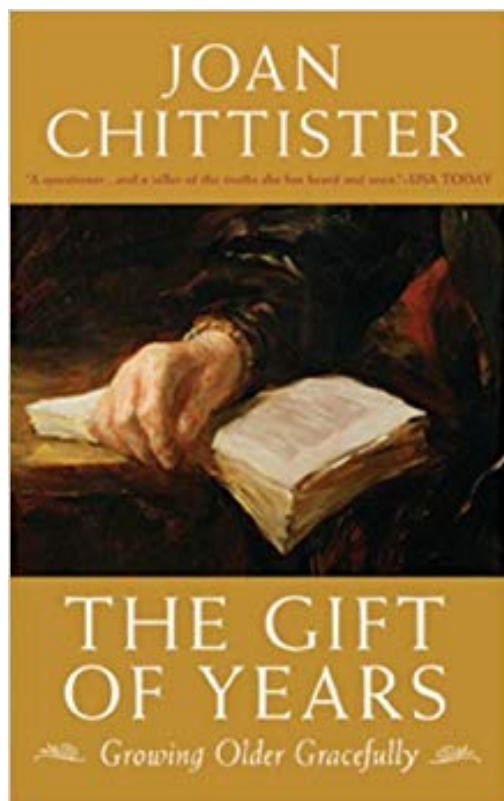


## Gift of Years (The) by Joan Chittister



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Joan Chittister, one of our most celebrated spiritual writers, invites us to embrace older age as a natural part of life that is both active and contemplative, productive and reflective, and deeply rewarding. She encourages us to cherish the blessings of aging and to overcome its challenges. And she shows us clearly that this is a special period of life—maybe the most special of them all. *The Gift of Years* looks at the many dimensions of aging, the purposes and concerns, struggles and surprised, the potential and joys. And perhaps the most important dimension of older age, Joan Chittister illuminates, is to become aware of its profound purpose: These are the capstone years, the time in which a whole new life is in the making again. The gift of these years is not merely being alive, it is the gift of becoming more fully alive than ever.



## Reviews of the Gift of Years (The) by Joan Chittister

Irostamore

In my mid-forties, I'm committed to aging well. I've seen how so many in our culture age, and I'm committed to do better, not just physically, but emotionally, as well. For me, a big part of that shift is ensuring that my mind-space is in a good place, and that largely translates (again, for me) into not trying to chase the fountain of youth, but rather, for celebrating the gift of years, and for being my best self at this given moment in my life history, wherever that may be. This book? Is such a gift in that respect. I've read a number of books on aging now, and this has been one of the most beautifully insightful, in fact, I had initially borrowed it from the library, but wound up purchasing it as I very much want to underline and make margin notes, as I'm sure I will refer to it time and again. I highly recommend this lovely, poignant work, that also happens to be wonderfully written.

Kefrannan

Growing old, that is age seventy and beyond, for the vast of majority of us is difficult. This book really does not delve into many obvious problems of growing old. Instead, it emphasizes the power of positive thinking when negative perceptions intrude on one's outlook. The book is written for upper middle class individuals who are less likely to have actual problems.

One will find scarcely mentioned, if at all, the very real problems of inadequate finances, health conditions, lack of access to health care, and the lack of supportive social networks. A feel good book is not going to be particularly helpful in the face of these situations. Growing old is a fairly recent phenomenon, and most societies fall well short in addressing the needs of old people.

Ndlaitha

I consider myself a spiritual person but not religious. When this book was recommended to me I was skeptical. However, after many life changes accompanied by some depression I decided to give it a try. I am so happy that I did. Ms Chittister's words reach deep and prompted me on many occasions to alternately cry or nod repeatedly. I can honestly say that this book has changed my outlook and I highly recommend it to anyone, but especially those of us over 60 years old.

Yllk

Joan Chittister writes so clearly there leaves no doubt this is not theory on her part. She has lived some of it already, knows elders who've told their story or whom she has observed, and has researched the topic carefully. The wisdom with which she builds her case is both down-to-earth and accessible to elders of all backgrounds - and professionally researched, giving teeth and credibility. The way the book is divided into short chapters on given topics, allows the reader to take on the topic in small pieces, the way you would eat a course of a meal and allow time to digest it before going on. Through the lenses of the different topics, the main points are shown to be relevant any way you look at them. This book is a "must read" for all people advancing in years or who have loved ones who are. It should be required reading for anyone entering the "young old" (65-74) years as Joan describes them. The best part is that she's writing for herself too, and her work couldn't be more credible. Don't wait. Order this book today. "The Gift of Years" will be the best gift you could give yourself if your desire is to live a vibrant, meaningful last chapter of life.

Golkis

The Gift of Years: Growing Older Gracefully by Joan Chitister is a hopeful commentary on the thoughts of well-known people and a few saints who ponder what it means to grow old in an environment such as the USA where youth is most valued and catered to in the creation and sales of various items. Older folk are not considered a good market for sales and are not considered in material goods being offered to the public. The author also shares her own thoughts of growing older. Turning 70 was the starting point when she began to see changes in her energy and interests. The importance of meditation is expressed. A good, all around book for those in search of a spiritual, thoughtful old age.

A. M. Seidler, S.F. Ca.

Survivors

One of the best book I have ever read! I am seventy and almost everything that this author says makes perfect sense to me. So much insight into what I am feeling. For the first time I truly feel normal and validated. I would recommend this book not only to those in their seventies and eighties but to their children and grandchildren so they might understand their parents feelings better. I volunteer at an assisted living home and I am going to give a copy to the staff to read. It might help them better understand some of the feelings of the residents. If you live long enough these are the feelings you will have.

Briciraz

Aging - its burdens and blessings - is the focus of this book. The author suggests that the elderly stop moping and find a committee to lead or book to write. She uses a number of examples, many from her own experience. As a member of a religious community, she infrequently speaks of spirituality as a guide to aging. More often she finds solutions to the challenges of aging in a feel-good-about-yourself-and-do-something modality. Little is found for those who face their final years with physical or emotional limitations. For the relatively healthy and active, there is abundant advice for finding ways to assist others, but for the bed-ridden and infirm no words of comfort or hope. This book might be more useful for those who are approaching the golden years in good health rather than those who have already reached them.

Rarely has a book touched my life in such a positive way. Joan Chittister's wise, encouraging insights have the power to turn around one's negative ideas about later life. She makes it refreshingly clear that we need not turn back the hands of time in order to enjoy a rich and satisfying life at any age. In addition, she points out the important position elders play in our, all too often, youth oriented society. In one profound statement, the author sums up the essence of this book.

"Age", she says, "is not a thing to be pitied, to apologize for, to fear, to resist, to see as a sign of doom. Only the old can make age a bright and vibrant place to be."

I highly recommend this book to anyone over 65!

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