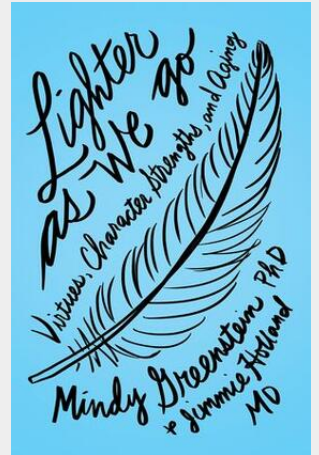


Greenstein / Holland

Lighter as We Go

Virtues, Character Strengths, and Aging

Fifty year olds fear what sixty-five will look like, while thirty year olds dread fifty, and twenty year olds thirty. The fears of aging are like one long cascading domino effect of the fears of aging. And there is something to worry about, though it isn't what you'd expect: research shows that having a bad attitude toward aging when we're young is associated with poorer health when we're older. But many eighty year olds would tell people old age is better than they think. In fact, worries tend to peak in midlife, according to the "U-Bend" studies (so-called because the pattern of well-being throughout the lifespan resembles a "U") that show that the older we get, the greater our sense of well-being. In the words of philosopher William May, we learn to "travel light." Over the course of a lifetime of crises and accomplishments, we learn who we are and what our character strengths and virtues are. And we discover we may actually like ourselves. Here, Jimmie Holland and Mindy Greenstein explore positive aging and the role of character strengths and virtues along the way. They touch on compassion, empathy, kindness, justice, beauty, optimism, and hope in the context of community, experience, and culture. They go on to explore self-control, humor, courage, and wisdom, and what elderly people can teach the young. Lighter as We Go--a joint venture by an eighty-five year old and a fifty year old--explores what it means to travel light, and the fascinating process of getting there.



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