

Self-Awareness

In the modern world self-awareness is a valuable asset. Taking another look at pressing issues of the day cwg would like to give assistance to the SEL u3a readership and suggest vital tools for self-understanding and tips to enhance our quality of living at an important milestone in our lives.

How to Spot if you are an Old Aged Pensioner:

1. It seems that everybody on television is mumbling.

Top Tip

Turn up the volume control using the remote which should not be confused with early models of the mobile phone.

Further suggestions

Check that you have your hearing aids in and switched on. If this fails make an appointment at Boots Audiology. Or try Specsavers. Or a High Street audioculist. You can combine an eye examination with a hearing test, making for an afternoon well-spent. But remember not to confuse contact lenses with ear pieces.

2. You do not understand why children are given very strange names these days. You do not approve of names for girls like 'Sloane' and 'Harlow', 'Wynette' (sounds too much like pyjamas), Vietta (an ice-cream?) Sonnet (surely not?) and 'Seraphina'. You do not like names for boys like 'Ace' 'Atlas', Iago' (have the doting parents ever seen 'Othello'? And Othello is probably another name best avoided as he turned out to be a perpetrator of serious domestic violence). You also disapprove of 'Maverick', 'Commodus' (Nero and Caligula are also not advised) and 'Jacob Rees-Mogg'.

Top Tip

Note that the Beckhams called their children 'Brooklyn', 'Romeo', 'Cruz' and 'Harper', thus setting a trend and you may just have to get used to your grandchildren having weird names in the future.

3. You don't like noisy restaurants packed full of people hoping to get a meal just the same as you.

Top Tip

A noisy restaurant is likely to be a sign that the food is good. An empty restaurant is probably poor value for money.

Further suggestion

On this basis head for 'Muffin King'.

4. You prefer a quiet evening in with your partner rather than a night out at a High Street Disco.

Top Tip

You can create a disco atmosphere in your own sitting room by dimming the lights

or rapidly flicking them on and off and putting on well-chosen music at full blast. We suggest anything from 'Saturday Night Fever' or 'Dancing Queen' by Abba.

Further suggestions

Turn down the music when the neighbours complain or the police arrive. Don't try out too many ambitious moves on the dance floor (called 'shapes' by the youngsters) or you risk doing in your back and a lengthy visit to Lewisham A&E.

5. You can't remember why you just went to the fridge.

Top Tip and further suggestion

Perhaps you went to get something to eat or some milk? It is a fridge after all.

6. You are worried about what is going on in 'The Archers' particularly at the moment concerning what is happening to younger people living in Ambridge. Chelsea, Ben and Beth have caused you sleepless nights. And that one who is training to be a Vicar and has serious vocational doubts. And the Grundys of course and their dodgy seasonal enterprises usually involving pheasants. There is also Linda handing over the Christmas show to Jolene who has no time to direct it as she runs a pub. And the fact that Peggy now seems to be too old to deliver any of her own lines. A huge amount to be anxious about indeed.

Top Tip

Try not to worry. Ben has supportive parents and the Grundys never seem to get caught even though there is a police sergeant living in the Village. Peggy is now such an unpopular character with her wisdom and 'know-it-all' attitude and an obsession with stained glass windows at St. Stephen's that R4 listeners are pleased to see the back of her.

Further suggestions

Turn the radio off or at least do not listen to the programme at lunchtime and again in the evening and then binge on the Sunday morning omnibus edition. Try Melvyn Bragg instead or Moneybox (no, not Moneybox, just more to worry about) or 'You and Yours' but this usually has an item about phone scams so probably best avoided also.

7. You are worried that with the arrival of the new monarch your postage stamps will no longer be valid. You stashed away a large amount of 2nd class before the last price rise and now you cannot use them.

Top Tip

Stay calm. You will be able to use these stamps till 31/1/23 so send out more Christmas cards this year and include recipients you took off the list last year. They will be pleased to be reinstated and you won't be wasting the stamps.

Further suggestions

You could also start writing to your MP more frequently and as the stamps will still be valid next January you could send out numerous early Valentine cards, even to people you do not know, have never met and do not like.

8. You are grateful to have a Freedom Pass but are secretly annoyed that you can't use it on the bus before 9:30am.

Top Tip

Tell the driver you have an emergency health appointment with the GP/hospital at 8:50am and look stressed. (S)he will probably let you on.

Further suggestions

If you really have an important medical appointment look even more stressed.

Say you are in labour (if female) or delivering a sperm donation (if male), must get to the medical centre quickly and your bike has a puncture.

9. Your 'bucket list' is getting ridiculously long and unrealistic.

Top Tip

Learn to compromise if you feel time is running out.

So, for example, delete climbing Kilimanjaro before Christmas and settle for Blackheath (almost all flat), don't attempt to write your autobiography or emulate the success of the late great Hilary Mantel, (have you seen the number of pages in the last volume of her trilogy on Cromwell?), don't apply to do a Masters at LSE and hope to become a future Chancellor of the Exchequer (and anyway it has got to be Oxbridge I am afraid). Please note however that at the rate we are getting through them you may still be in with a chance with this one. Or Home Secretary or even PM.

10. Digital Technology Alert!

You used your Nationwide PIN to get into your Barclays account online by mistake and now they have blocked access (the b****y b*****s) so you have to apply for a new card which will take 10 days to arrive and then you have to go to an ATM (or is it an AFC or a TLS) to activate it at the Bank so you might as well have gone to the Bank in the first place.

Top Tip

Don't write any cheques. No one under the age of forty seems to know what they are any more.

Further suggestions

If you are single you could consider dating apps online but approach with caution. People lie through their teeth about their age and post photos of themselves taken in Torremolinos fifteen years ago and say their interests include the arts and history and doing voluntary work when in fact they sit on the sofa most days in their pants watching Michael McIntyre and Master Chef the Professionals whilst eating oven chips and Cheesy Wotsits.

Finally, if you suspect you are becoming an OAP be grateful for your:

- *Freedom Pass*. But this would be enhanced by a complimentary gin as you board the bus.
- *Winter Fuel Allowance*. This is to be welcomed but if you were given free entry to discos and nightclubs instead you could keep yourself warm trying out some of the moves you have seen on 'Strictly' and then might not need the Fuel Allowance thus saving the Government money and avoiding being a drain on the NHS because you would lose weight and be super fit.
- *Free Prescriptions*. Might these include party drugs and Viagra and a bottle of

Lucozade please.

- *Free TV Licence.* You have to be over 75 and receiving Pension Credit to qualify for this one. If you are prepared to move into a Care Home prematurely you may qualify for a reduced rate TV licence so it is worth investigating this possibility.
- *Membership of u3a.* Might this include other perks like guaranteed entry to the final round of the 'Mr. Universe 'Competition (for all our gorgeous male membership but women can of course apply too if they wish), a course of Botox and a scintillating night out with one of the following- Sir Gavin Williamson, Matt Hancock or Elon Musk

A lot to enjoy.