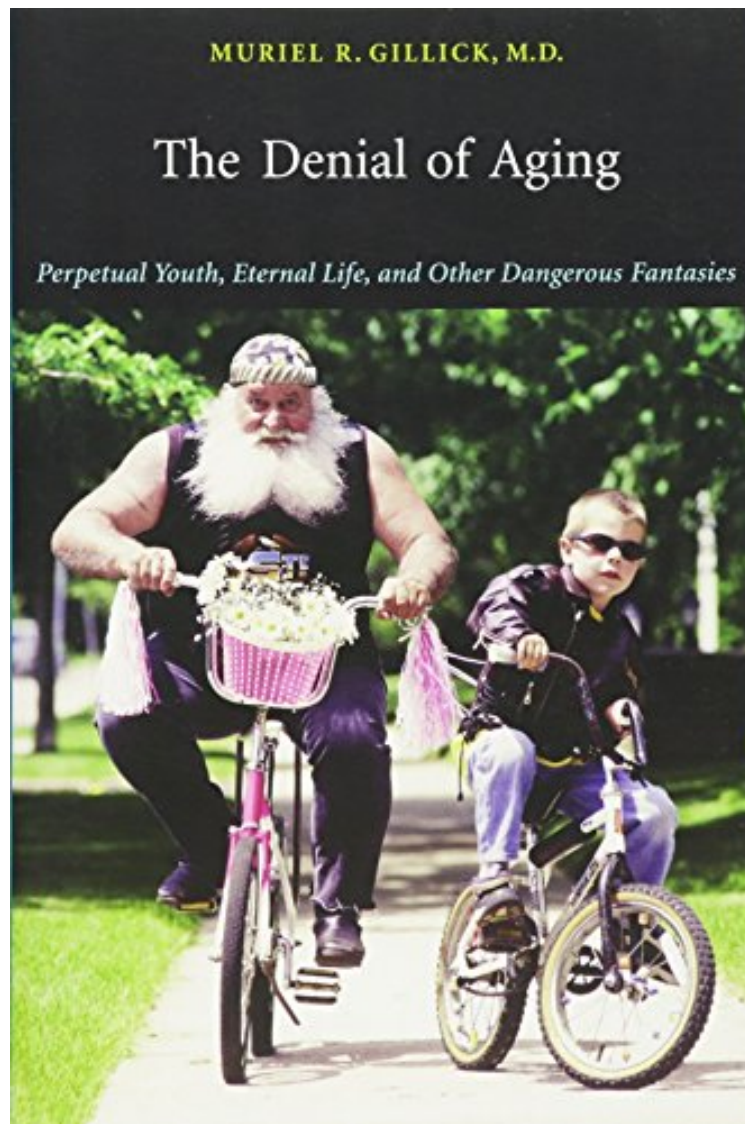


(Free read ebook) The Denial of Aging: Perpetual Youth, Eternal Life, and Other Dangerous Fantasies

The Denial of Aging: Perpetual Youth, Eternal Life, and Other Dangerous Fantasies

Muriel R. Gillick M.D.

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Muriel R. Gillick M.D. : The Denial of Aging: Perpetual Youth, Eternal Life, and Other Dangerous Fantasies before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Denial of Aging: Perpetual Youth, Eternal Life, and Other Dangerous Fantasies:

21 of 22 people found the following review helpful. Don't judge it by the coverBy Fred McGunagleDisregard the 1-star rating. I intended to rate it 5 (best), but I can't find a way to to edit the rating.This is a very good book with a bad

title and a very bad cover illustration. The publisher must have had it in for the author. It might better have been called "Facing Old Age - Yours Or Your Parents" As Dr. Gillick uses the term, "Denial of Aging" simply means that pretending you're not getting old doesn't work. "Eternal life," in the subtitle, is not a theological concept but a reminder that, eventually, you will die. Muriel Gillick is a geriatrician and medical professor whose concern for her patients has turned her into an advocate for the elderly in assisted living facilities and nursing homes. At times she can even be their advocate against their caregivers. It is to caregivers that she addresses her most heartfelt advice. Paraphrasing, it is that ultimately, when hope is gone, it's OK to let go. At the end, the answer to "We can't just let her die", is "Yes, you can." In the rest of the book, she offers advice to caregivers looking out for their relatives. She considers assisted living and nursing homes to be a continuum. The former, after a time, leads to the latter; meanwhile, the cost increases as the assisted living facility finds - or asserts - the need for added services. I gave copies of this book to my two sons, who may someday have to be my advocates. I told them that I hope they don't need it for a while and, when they do, they should check to see if Dr. Gillick has updated her advice to deal with our ever evolving health care system. But until that happens, this is the book I want them to have.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Informative and well written. Some of her suggestions for ...

By Barbara Surian Informative and well written. Some of her suggestions for improving the quality of life for the elderly are unrealistic in terms of cost.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This book helped me to understand and accept my situation ...

By Joyce T. Lewis This book helped me to understand and accept my situation as daughter to an aging father who died in hospice at 92. Thank you Dr. Gillick!

Listen to a short interview with Dr. Muriel Gillick

Host: Chris Gondek | Producer: Heron Crane

You've argued politics with your aunt since high school, but failing eyesight now prevents her from keeping current with the newspaper. Your mother fractured her hip last year and is confined to a wheelchair. Your father has Alzheimer's and only occasionally recognizes you. Someday, as Muriel Gillick points out in this important yet unsettling book, you too will be old. And no matter what vitamin regimen you're on now, you will likely one day find yourself sick or frail. How do you prepare? What will you need? With passion and compassion, Gillick chronicles the stories of elders who have struggled with housing options, with medical care decisions, and with finding meaning in life. Skillfully incorporating insights from medicine, health policy, and economics, she lays out action plans for individuals and for communities. In addition to doing all we can to maintain our health, we must vote and organize--for housing choices that consider autonomy as well as safety, for employment that utilizes the skills and wisdom of the elderly, and for better management of disability and chronic disease. Most provocatively, Gillick argues against desperate attempts to cure the incurable. Care should focus on quality of life, not whether it can be prolonged at any cost. "A good old age," writes Gillick, "is within our grasp." But we must reach in the right direction.

From Publishers Weekly

From diets to cutting-edge diagnostic technology, Americans spend billions of dollars not to mention untold hours of anxiety staving off the aging process. In this readable examination of growing old and learning to live with it, Gillick, a Harvard Medical School associate professor, is pitiless as she critiques the current medical mantra of "health maintenance," observing that warding off death via endless testing and dangerous invasive procedures is "a hopeless and counterproductive aim" hurting, rather than helping, the elderly. She persuasively argues for "intermediate care," "a middle ground between maximally aggressive care and exclusively comfort-oriented care" involving, among other things, less expensive screening for some ailments after a certain age and, when possible, treating patients at home. This means fewer trips to the emergency room and fewer admissions to hospitals, which, in addition to being the most expensive means of delivering health care, also have proven to be places where the elderly actually suffer unnecessarily and often die prematurely. Gillick concludes that "a good old age is within our grasp," provided we rethink our approach to urgent or acute care, provide compassionate support to the elderly, and accept the fact that no one lives forever. (Mar.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From Booklist

Harvard physician Gillick lines up all the baby boomer antiaging fantasies--diet and exercise can conquer all, youth can be preserved, there is such a thing as an eternally healthy life, and, best of all, everyone will simply drop dead at the curb one day as he/she takes out the garbage--and systematically shoots them down. The simple truth, she says, is that no one passes through this mortal coil without illness or injury, particularly at the end, so we'd better start planning for the inevitable. With personal anecdotes and stories taken from the files of her practice, Gillick demonstrates how current medical practices don't always correspond to patient expectations. Particularly when it comes to making decisions about aggressive medical intervention with a close-to-death patient, she suggests a middle road is often preferable though too seldom taken. In language straightforward enough to draw the occasional wince, she points out inadequacies of most individual end-of-life plans and existing support agencies' woeful underpreparedness for the looming needs of aging millions. Donna Chavez Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved

Finally, a book that tells the truth about aging, starting with the fact that eating right and exercising will not prevent it. Dr. Gillick provides a fascinating guide for the journey into old age, and shows us how to make the best of it. Boomers (and most other grown-ups) will find her book right on target. (Marcia Angell, former Editor in

Chief, New England Journal of Medicine, and author of *The Truth about the Drug Companies*) Get real. You are going to get old and die, if you don't die young first. Face it. Prepare for it. Gillick teaches us how to age with grace, spend healthcare money wisely, retire productively, and die with dignity. It's a great achievement. (George D. Lundberg, M.D., Editor in Chief, Medscape Core and Medscape General Medicine) From diets to cutting-edge diagnostic technology, Americans spend billions of dollars, not to mention untold hours of anxiety, staving off the aging process. In this readable examination of growing old and learning to live with it, Gillick, a Harvard Medical School associate professor, is pitiless as she critiques the current medical mantra of 'health maintenance,' observing that warding off death via endless testing and dangerous invasive procedures is 'a hopeless and counterproductive aim' hurting, rather than helping, the elderly. She persuasively argues for 'intermediate care,' 'a middle ground between maximally aggressive care and exclusively comfort-oriented care' involving, among other things, less expensive screening for some ailments after a certain age and, when possible, treating patients at home. This means fewer trips to the emergency room and fewer admissions to hospitals, which, in addition to being the most expensive means of delivering health care, also have proven to be places where the elderly actually suffer unnecessarily and often die prematurely. Gillick concludes that 'a good old age is within our grasp,' provided we rethink our approach to urgent or acute care, provide compassionate support to the elderly, and accept the fact that no one lives forever. (Publishers Weekly 2006-01-30) Blame it on graying boomers, medical advances or Hollywood: Americans are spending billions a year trying to stay young. Snap out of it, urges Dr. Muriel R. Gillick, and focus on things like overhauling Medicare. Read it before scheduling that facelift. (People 2006-03-27) [Gillick] challenges her generation to embrace the inevitability of aging and to make the most of it. (Tom Graham Washington Post Book World 2006-05-28) This is quite an amazing book. It ranks at the top of my "most important books to read" list--for people of all ages and, most particularly, those with political power. Gillick confronts tough topics with gentle wisdom. Nursing homes, right-to-life issues for the aging, Medicare morass. She lays bare painful situations and moral dilemmas and offers sound, practical advice to the anguished plea, "But what can we do?" All this and it is easy to read... Gillick is on the cutting edge of issues that our entire society must face. For Boomers, for Gen X and Gen Y, for politicians who determine how we spend tax dollars on Medicare and health funding, this is a must-read book. (Joan Ruddiman The Messenger-Press) Americans, [Gillick] asserts, squander resources on quackery and on futile but expensive treatments for people approaching the end of their lives, and risk not leaving enough money for more beneficial care.... Gillick's book raises important issues in a lucid and accessible style. The reader cannot help feeling that the problems of aging and longevity could be effectively dealt with by informed and intelligent political leadership. (John Grimley Evans Nature 2006-08-24) Gillick's reasoning is so efficient and well placed, and she illustrates it so well with cases... Her detailed descriptions are dazzling in their sensibleness... [She] is the informed, compassionate, realistic gerontologist you want for your grandmother, your mother, and eventually--if she is not too old by then--yourself. (Elissa Ely Harvard Medical Alumni Bulletin) It is not easy to review a book that is as good as this one as there is so much to say that is positive about this book and almost nothing by way of criticism. ... [T]his humane and compassionate book captures and retains the reader's interest throughout. It examines the denial of ageing and the associated "dangerous fantasies": if we continue to deny the realities of old age, we will, as a society, put our money into futile and expensive treatments, and will not have money left over to provide the beneficial care that older people actually need. It goes on to look at all the things that can contribute to a best possible old age, including appropriate medical care, housing support, a sense of purpose and meaningful activities. It does this for each segment of the older population, comprising "the robust, the frail and the dying." Best of all, it does all this with an impeccable blend of analysis, hard evidence and narrative about the lives of real people... In sum, this is a book that should be read by everyone who is interested in old age, and particularly, by those who allocate resources or deliver care. (Ros Levenson Age and Ageing 2007-01-01) Gillick's book could not appear at a better time. We should send a copy to every member of Congress, as well as to all those doctors peddling bogus antiaging remedies. Readers need her message more than ever, but, alas, they seem unlikely to hear it at all as they rush to pick up prescriptions for human growth hormone, antioxidants, or other dangerous fantasies that Gillick decries. (Harry R. Moody Hastings Center Report 2007-09-01)