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The Age of Longevity: Re-Imagining Tomorrow for Our New Long Lives

Rosalind C. Barnett, Caryl Rivers

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Long, productive lives are the destiny of most of us, not just the privilege of our great-grandchildren. The story of aging is not one of steady decline and decay; we need a new narrative based on solid research, not scare stories. Today Americans enjoy a new, healthy stage of life, between roughly 65 and 79, during which we are staying engaged in the workplace, starting new relationships and careers, remaining creative and becoming entrepreneurs and job creators.

We are in the midst of a major paradigm shift in the way we live. Our major milestones are shifting. The definition of “normal” behavior is changing. Today, we marry later or not at all; cohabitation is not just a stepping stone to marriage, but a long-term arrangement for many. Women often have their first child in their 40s, and increasingly before they marry. People enjoy active sex lives well into their 6^{th}, 7^{th} or even 8^{th} decades. None of our institutions will remain the same.

People are working longer, and given the declining birth rate, older workers will be in great demand. Four generations are increasingly working side by side, learning from each other. But we must ensure that the benefits of long life are not limited to a wealthy few.

The *Age of Longevity* shows how we as a society can embrace the life-altering changes that are either coming in the near future or are already underway. The authors give readers a panoramic view of how they, the institutions that affect them, and the country as a whole will need to adapt to what’s ahead. They offer strategies, based on cutting-edge research, that will enable individuals, institutions, companies, and governments to make the most of our lengthening life spans. Using real life examples throughout, the authors paint a picture of what our new longer lives will look like, and the changes that need to be made so we can all make those years both more productive and more enjoyable.

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