

AGE CHANGING COLORS

By

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Back in 1947 when I volunteered for military service, I observed that men in service were primarily white, black or brown in color. This was not really significant because we all wore the same uniform that covered our colors. Colors faded completely in the midst of battle because we were all on the same side and fought together as brothers in arms.

The other day, which happened to be January 23, 2014, I made a trip to the Michael DeBakey VA Medical Center in Houston for adjustments to my hearing aids. There are thousands of veterans going for medical care every day. Again I observed colors, but the original colors seemed faded and the most prominent color was gray. I realized we had gotten old along with the colors and exchanged our uniforms for civilian clothing. Most importantly, I knew we were still brothers in arms and fighting a different enemy. Our battle wounds, whether physical or mental, have taken a toll and worsened as age and ill health came upon us. Tears came to my eyes as I walked among these suffering brothers and sisters of mine. The ache in my heart and soul to help them was still there.

You see, I was a medic in military service and volunteered for Korea during that war. When I saw the wounded and suffering, I rushed to their aid and was able to care and relieve them. Now, I see my brothers suffering and wounded by age and circumstances and I am unable to help them. I do what I can for a few each trip to the VA, but helping 3 or 4 in the midst of suffering thousands just is not acceptable. Something must be done **NOW** to help these who made such a great sacrifice for this nation.

These old gray senior veterans need help immediately. They are victims to the onset of dementia and Alzheimer's while struggling to survive on crutches, canes and wheelchairs. Most have little income except disability pay and many have no caregiver or family member to help them. I am unable to describe the air of despondency and depression that prevails among them as they wait like sheep in long lines for some measure of care for their bodies. No one sees the bitterness and regret deep inside us as we finally realize the high price we paid back then, is of little value now. The people of this nation today only care about twitter, chat, text or internet for communication with others. This means most of us elderly will be ignored or get lip service only, because most of us are unable to use the devices in this new communications era and no one is taking action to remedy the lack of knowledge.

So my friend, when you happen to see one of us old folks and get angry or irritated because we are in your way or slowing your haste in life, remember these words. The importance of colors fades with time and you too will one day stand in life's long gray line. Don't count on your offspring to act as caregivers for you, because they have been brain trained with games and imaginary heroes to solve life's problems. You have endorsed a government controlled nation to act as a conscience on your behalf. Let them care

for the elderly and needy and support those too lazy for work or family. That's something for you to learn. Since my hearing was damaged in the war and I now live without it, I am learning that my "noble sacrifice" for your future and this nation is proving to be a waste of humanity. Words and expressions such as "I appreciate your service" and "I am sorry for your loss" have little significance unless they are accompanied by real action and support service. Put some meat on the bone. Take action now to improve the lot and lives of the elderly with emphasis on veterans.

Age changing colors is an irreversible process that each person will encounter in one fashion or another. You may be fortunate and age will be kind, but someone you love will surely travel this road.

Fifty percent of those over age 80 suffer with some form of dementia or Alzheimer's disease. By year 2050 the largest segment of our population will be seniors. Among those, 67% will be women. The great majority of those will be single, widowed or divorced.

You may be color blind now, but you will learn to see gray and find that age knows no boundaries.

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