# Aging Well George E Vaillant

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between 1939 and 1942 harvard university recruited 268 of its healthiest most promising undergraduates for a revolutionary study of the human life cycle vaillant the study s director took the measure of these men the result was this classic which poses fundamental questions about individual differences in confronting life s stresses

a preeminent american psychiatrist draws on his famous study of adult development to give an exhilarating look at how the mind s defenses work what we see as the mind s trickery vaillant tells us is actually healthy what s more it can reveal the mind at its most creative and mature soothing and protecting us from unbearable reality

an outstanding contribution to the study of aging from a psychiatrist and professor at harvard medical school publishers weekly in an unprecedented series of studies harvard medical school has followed 824 subjects men and women some rich some poor from their teens to old age harvard s george vaillant now uses these studies the most complete ever done anywhere in the world and the subjects individual histories to illustrate the factors involved in reaching a happy healthy old age he explains precisely why some people turn out to be more resilient than others the complicated effects of marriage and divorce negative personality changes and how to live a more fulfilling satisfying and rewarding life in the later years he shows why a person s background has less to do with their eventual happiness than the specific lifestyle choices they make and he offers step by step advice about how each of us can change our lifestyles and age successfully sure to be debated on talk shows and in living rooms vaillant s definitive and inspiring book is the new classic account of how we live and how we can live better it will receive massive media attention and with good reason we have never seen anything like it and what it has to tell us will make all the difference in the world a respected researcher offers suggestions for successful and happy aging highly recommended library journal astonishing observations aging well provides the only available longitudinal assessment of the factors that will permit us to age well new england journal of medicine perceptive understanding and often tinged with delightful humor booklist

at a time when people are living into their tenth decade the longest longitudinal study of human development ever undertaken offers welcome news for old age our lives evolve in our later years and often become more fulfilling among the surprising findings people who do well in old age did not necessarily do so well in midlife and vice versa

in our current era of holy terror passionate faith has come to seem like a present danger writers such as richard dawkins sam harris and christopher hitchens have been happy to throw the baby out with the bathwater and declare that the danger is in religion itself god hitchens writes is not great but man according to george e vaillant m d is great in spiritual evolution dr vaillant lays out a brilliant defense not of organized religion but of man s inherent spirituality our spirituality he shows resides in our uniquely human brain design and in our innate capacity for emotions like love hope joy forgiveness and compassion which are selected for by evolution and located in a different part of the brain than dogmatic religious belief evolution has made us spiritual creatures over time he argues and we are destined to become even more so spiritual evolution makes the scientific case for spirituality as a positive force in human evolution and he predicts for our species an even more loving future vaillant traces this positive force in three different kinds of evolution the natural selection of genes over millennia of course but also the cultural evolution within recorded history of ideas about the value of human life and the development of spirituality within the lifetime of each individual for thirty five years dr vaillant directed harvard s famous longitudinal study of adult development which has followed hundreds of men over seven decades of life the study has yielded important insights into human spirituality and dr vaillant has drawn on these and on a range of psychological research behavioral studies and neuroscience and on history anecdote and quotation to produce a book that is at once a work of scientific argument and a

lyrical meditation on what it means to be human spiritual evolution is a life s work and it will restore our belief in faith as an essential human striving

not since anna freud s 1937 book the ego and the mechanisms of defense has any one volume explored this topic as fully as ego mechanisms of defense by george e vaillant by summarizing the latest empirical studies proposing a universal language of defense mechanisms and demonstrating how various assessment methods can be used in diagnosis case formulation and treatment dr vaillant and an interdisciplinary group of contributors provide the groundwork for clinical practice as well as future research in the field

alcoholism is a disorder of enormous scope and destructive power that affects a third of all american families yet despite extensive research there are few uncontested answers to fundamental questions about this devastating disorder based on an evaluation of more than 600 individuals followed for over 40 years george vaillant s monumental study offers new and authoritative answers to all of these questions

a holistic view of human development that rejects the conventional stages of childhood adulthood and old age when we talk about human development we tend to characterize it as proceeding through a series of stages in which we are first children then adolescents and finally adults but as james bernard murphy observes growth is not limited to the young nor is decline limited to the aged we are never trapped within the horizon of a particular life stage children anticipate adulthood and adults recapture childhood according to murphy the very idea of stages of life undermines our ability to see our lives as a whole in your whole life murphy asks what accounts for the unity of a human life over time he advocates for an unconventional developmental story of human nature based on a nested hierarchy of three powers first each person s unique human genome insures biological identity over time second each person s powers of imagination and memory insure psychological identity over time and third each person s ability to tell his or her own life story insures narrative identity over time just as imagination and memory rely upon our biological identity so our autobiographical stories rest upon our psychological identity narrative is not the foundation of personal identity as many argue but its capstone engaging with the work of aristotle augustine jesus and rousseau as well as with the contributions of contemporary evolutionary biologists and psychologists murphy challenges the widely shared assumptions in western thinking about personhood and its development through discrete stages of childhood adulthood and old age he offers instead a holistic view in which we are always growing and declining always learning and forgetting and always living and dying and finds that only in relation to one s whole life does the passing of time obtain meaning

when the natural history of alcoholism was first published in 1983 it was acclaimed in the press as the single most important contribution to the literature on alcoholism since the first edition of alcoholic anonymous s big book george vaillant took on the crucial questions of whether

alcoholism is a symptom or a disease whether it is progressive whether alcoholics differ from others before the onset of their alcoholism and whether alcoholics can safely drink based on an evaluation of more than 600 individuals followed for over forty years vaillant s monumental study offered new and authoritative answers to all of these questions in this updated version of his classic book vaillant returns to the same subjects with the perspective gained from fifteen years of further follow up alcoholics who had been studied to age 50 in the earlier book have now reached age 65 and beyond and vaillant reassesses what we know about alcoholism in light of both their experiences and the many new studies of the disease by other researchers the result is a sharper focus on the nature and course of this devastating disorder as well as a sounder foundation for the assessment of various treatments

no detailed description available for the sense of humor

weaving together scientific studies from clinical psychologists longitudinal studies of health and happiness historical accounts and literary depictions child rearing manuals and the language of online dating sites jonah lehrer s a book about love plumbs the most mysterious most formative most important impulse governing our lives love confuses and compels us and it can destroy and define us it has inspired our greatest poetry defined our societies and our beliefs and governs our biology from the way infants attach to their parents to the way we fall in love with another person to the way some find a love for god or their pets to the way we remember and mourn love after it ends this book focuses on research that attempts even in glancing ways to deal with the long term and the everyday the most dangerous myth of love is that it s easy that we fall into the feeling and then the feeling takes care of itself while we can easily measure the dopamine that causes the initial feelings of falling in love the partnerships and devotions that last decades or longer remain a mystery this book is about that mystery love lehrer argues is not built solely on overwhelming passion but fascinatingly on a set of skills to be cultivated over a lifetime

as american melancholy reveals if you read about depression anywhere today medical journal popular magazine national institute of mental health pamphlet or pharmaceutical company drug promotional literature you will find three main pieces of information either explicitly stated or strongly implied depression is a disease like any other physical disease it is extraordinarily prevalent in the world and it occurs about twice as frequently in women as in men yet depression was not classified as a disease until the 1980 publication of the american psychiatric association s diagnostic and statistical manual iii dsm iii how is it that such an illness thought to affect between 14 and 17 million americans was not specifically defined until the late twentieth century american melancholy traces the growth of depression as an object of medical study and as a consumer commodity and illustrates how and why depression came to be such a huge medical social and cultural phenomenon it is the first book to address gender issues in the construction of depression explores key questions of how its diagnosis was developed how it has been used and how we should question its application in american society

the impact of long term longitudinal studies on the landscape of twentieth century social and behavioral science cannot be overstated the field of life course studies has grown exponentially since its inception in the 1950s and now influences methodologies as well as expectations for all academic research looking at lives offers an unprecedented insider s view into the intentions methods and findings of researchers engaged in some of the 20th century s landmark studies in this volume eminent american scholars many of them pioneers in longitudinal studies provide frank and illuminating insights into the difficulties and the unique scientific benefits of mounting studies that track people s lives over a long period of time looking at lives includes studies from a range of disciplines including psychology sociology and education which together cover a span of more than fifty years the contributors pay particular attention to the changing historical cultural and scientific context of their work as well as the theoretical and methodological changes that have occurred in their fields over decades what emerges is a clear indication of the often unexpected effects these studies have had on public policies and public opinion especially as they relate to such issues as the connection between poverty and criminal behavior or the consequences of teen age pregnancy and drug use for inner city youth for example david weikart reveals how his long term research on preschool intervention projects begun in 1959 permitted him to show how surprisingly effective preschool education can be in improving the lives of disadvantaged children in another study john laub and robert sampson build on findings from a groundbreaking study begun by sheldon and eleanor glueck in the 1950s to reveal the myriad ways in which juvenile delinquency can predict criminal behavior in adults and arland thornton ronald freedman and william axinn employ an intergenerational study of women and their children begun in 1962 to examine the substantial relaxation of social mores for family and individual behavior in the latter decades of the 20th century looking at lives is full of striking testimony to the importance of long term longitudinal studies as a unique chronicle of the origins and development of longitudinal studies in america this collection will be an invaluable aid to 21st century investigators who seek to build on the successes and the experiences of the pioneers in life course studies

imprint in a series of studies harvard medical school followed 824 subjects men and women rich and poor from their teens to old age based on these studies this book evaluates ageing and offers the secrets to reaching a happy healthy old age

includes proceedings of the 54th 55th annual meetings of the association 1946 47 and proceedings of meetings of various regional psychological associations

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