A TASTE OF THE BOOK

Aging *Without* Feeling Old



SIGHT FOR LIFE

Because aging well starts by seeing well

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INTRODUCTION

This booklet offers a taste of *Aging Without Feeling Old*, a book to be published in the coming months, which explores the connections between sight, life and aging.

Written in French by an ophthalmologist, the book will soon be followed by an English edition. This edition will be adapted for English-speaking readers, rather than simply translated, particularly in the passages devoted to the songs that shaped the baby boomer generation.

THE FOUR PARTS OF THE BOOK

Part One — Understanding Aging

The first part of the book invites readers to better understand the effects of time on body and mind. It offers practical approaches with a twofold goal: to look younger, certainly, but above all, to feel younger as years go by.

Looking younger reflects an attitude that shapes how others see us. Standing tall, walking with a confident stride, choosing stylish, contemporary clothes, and taking care of our appearance are ways of expressing confidence and vitality. These habits do not mean refusing to grow older, they express our determination not to let age dictate the image we wish to project.

Feeling younger, on the other hand, is an inner state, one that fuels our confidence and our joy in living. It means staying active in both body and mind, continuing to learn, to discover and to pursue new projects, and above all, embracing with ease the changes that come with the years. Looking younger is reflected in the way others see us; feeling younger is revealed in the way we see ourselves.

In that first part, we will also see how our five senses change with age, subtly affecting our independence, our behaviour, and the way we perceive ourselves. We will explore intermittent fasting and its connection to autophagy, the body's natural cellular recycling mechanism, which is attracting growing interest in health and longevity research.

In the book, through authentic and inspiring stories, the author gives a voice to people who have learned to age better by taking an active part in their own well-being.

Part Two — Better Sight for a Better Life

The second part explores the meaning of the expression "Sight for Life." It takes us on a journey that is both scientific and deeply human: into the world of refractive lens surgery, which corrects certain age-related vision problems.

Around the age of forty, the eye's natural lens gradually loses its flexibility. This marks the onset of presbyopia, which often makes reading glasses necessary. Over the years, the lens may also become cloudy, a condition known as cataract, which leads to a progressive decline in vision.

Refractive lens exchange and refractive cataract surgery fall here under the same name, refractive lens surgery. They also rest on the same principle: replacing the aging natural lens, stiffened by presbyopia or clouded by a cataract, with an artificial intraocular lens. Depending on the type of lens implant chosen and the characteristics of each eye, these procedures can improve vision at different distances and greatly reduce dependence on glasses, particularly for reading.

In the book, the author invites patients to describe how their quality of life improved after refractive lens surgery, a fifteen-minute procedure. Their stories show the close connection between good vision, on the one hand, and autonomy and joy of living, on the other hand.

Part Three — Looking to the Future

The third part of the book invites us on another journey, this time into the future. It explores how artificial intelligence could accelerate research into the mechanisms of aging and help extend healthy life, notably through earlier detection of certain diseases.

We will also explore the growing role of artificial intelligence in eye surgery, particularly in choosing which intraocular lenses to implant. This way, it will help improve the quality of vision even further, to the point of inviting a fascinating comparison with the vision of an eagle and a reflection on the possibilities and limits of the human eye.

Artificial intelligence will not replace the surgeon; rather, it will become the surgeon's ally, helping to interpret the available data more effectively and to make more precise decisions tailored to each patient's needs.

Part Four — Looking Back

The fourth part takes us on one last journey back in time. It traces the evolution of refractive surgery, which in less than half a century has profoundly transformed the options available to patients.

It also briefly explores the history of the Montreal Eye Institute, awarded Accreditation with Exemplary Standing by Accreditation Canada for the periods 2017–2021 and 2021–2025, a distinction recognizing its adherence to national standards of excellence in health care. In 2024, its 32 ophthalmologists performed 15,618 cataract surgeries, making the Institute the largest cataract surgery centre in Canada. In 2026, Vision Group Canada announced that the institute, now called Institut de la Cataracte, ranked first in North America for the annual number of cataract surgeries.

SIGHT, LIFE, AND AGING

Between sight, life, and aging there is far more than a simple connection: a deep interweaving, an ongoing dialogue.

Life cannot be reduced to a length of time. It is an intensity of presence, a beating heart, a continuity. It is our own unique way of inhabiting time.

Aging, far from being synonymous with decline, can become a gradual transformation. Enriched by the experiences gathered over the years, it is also a maturing of the way we look at life.

As for sight, it acts as a bridge between life and aging. Far more than a mere function of the eye, it allows us to contemplate and understand the world around us. It also reveals the effects of age on others, but more importantly, it makes us more aware of the changes that time brings about within us.

Aging is not a sudden event: it is a continuous, almost imperceptible process that gradually transforms both body and mind. We can learn to recognize this process, observe it and respond to it with greater awareness.

Growing old is simply letting time pass.
Growing old well, however, is looking at ourselves into the mirror of time and paying conscious attention to the way we live, so that we can preserve, as long as possible, our independence and our vitality, day after day.

Aging is adding years to our life.
Aging well is adding life to our years.

THE MYSTERY OF THE GAZE

Vision has always intrigued and fascinated me.

Even as a child, with the limited knowledge we have at that age, I thought I could understand the apparent simplicity of familiar actions such as walking, running, eating or drinking. Yet vision remained a mystery to me, an almost magical ability whose secret I instinctively sought to uncover.

As a teenager, I began devouring everything I could find about the eye, its anatomy and its physiology, without ever managing to grasp its full complexity. That passion would become the guiding thread of my professional life, leading me to study medicine and then to specialize in ophthalmology.

Today I know...
I know how light makes its fascinating journey through the eye, following a carefully orchestrated pathway of remarkable precision. This journey begins the moment the eye opens, instantly dispelling the darkness and revealing the world. It ends when it closes, allowing darkness to return.

I know almost everything …
I know how light passes through the cornea and the lens to reach the retina, which converts it into electrical signals.
I know how these signals travel along the optic nerve to the brain, where something miraculous takes place: interpreted by the visual cortex, they give rise to images, colours, and faces.

I know all this. And yet…
Yet, there remains a shadowy zone, a blind spot, much like the one in every eye: the place where the optic nerve leaves the eye, where nothing is seen. The brain fills in that gap so seamlessly we never notice it, and we go on believing we see everything.

After months of research and reflection, I became aware of another blind spot, one that lets us believe we see, when we perceive only the surface. Neither books nor years of study had shed light on it. Yet it concealed the true mystery — and that mystery is not vision. I is what I call, in French, *le regard*, which I translate here as "the gaze": not merely how we see, but how we look into the eyes of others, at ourselves and at the world.

Indeed, the gaze goes far beyond visual perception. It allows us to grasp the silent nuances in a person's eyes and to recognize joy or sadness, sincerity or hypocrisy, kindness or cruelty, affection or rejection. It is also the gaze that, without our knowing why or how, sometimes makes a man's heart beat faster when his eyes meet, for the very first time, those of a woman he does not even know!

All the knowledge gathered over a lifetime devoted to the eye stops at the threshold of this mystery. The secret of the gaze stays invisible and elusive, like a truth that the mind cannot fully explain but that the heart knows how to recognize.

Throughout my career, I have helped my patients see better. Over time, I have come to realize that there is a vision even more precious than the one we measure with instruments: the one expressed in the way we look at the world — the gaze.

The true gaze is not the one that sees the farthest.
It is the one that reveals what the eyes alone cannot grasp.

In the book, I will explore the mystery of the gaze in depth.

BABY BOOMERS AND THE FEAR OF AGING

Starting in 2006, I became increasingly interested in the attitudes of my generation, the baby boomers, born between 1946 and 1964, and particularly in their relationship with aging.

In the years that followed, I gave lectures in Canada and abroad on how hard many of them found it to accept the very idea of growing old, which they often associated with deterioration, decline and a gradual withdrawal from active life.

As they grew older, many baby boomers seemed ready to give up the word "boomer," while fiercely holding on to staying "babies."

This ambivalence said a great deal about our era. We had grown up amid major upheavals: the Quiet Revolution in Quebec, the Vietnam war, the struggle for civil rights and the questioning of traditional values. Music and song then became far more than mere entertainment: a universal language, a means of collective expression and a rallying point for an entire generation.

Indeed, our generation had the privilege of witnessing the emergence of an exceptional constellation of singers, but also of singer-songwriters, who turned lyrics and music into a space for reflection, storytelling and sometimes protest. Their songs did more than entertain. They told of our dreams, our rebellions, our loves, and our doubts, and they described every major stage of our lives. It was as if history had suddenly decided to step out of its course and make these years a truly remarkable era.

We believed back then that we were witnessing the beginning of something that would last forever.

We did not realize at the time that we were lucky enough to be living through an unprecedented musical and cultural interlude — a golden age — born of the meeting of a large generation, a profound shift in values and immense creative freedom. Not to mention the new ways of carrying music around the world: first radio and television, followed by cassettes and VHS tapes, then CDs and DVDs, and finally streaming.

That interlude has now closed, and it will never reopen in quite the same way. But the songs will stay with us forever. A few notes are all it takes to bring back a face, a place, a season of our youth, reminding us that time has not taken everything away.



In those years, our generation was caught between two worlds: the world of yesterday and that of today. We grew up in a radically different environment: a world without the Internet, cell phone, email, or instant messaging.

Our relationship with time was different too. Our days were not yet ruled by the frenzy of the immediate. We would get together with friends several evenings a week, long before screens and streaming platforms took over our nights.

These gatherings were a chance to talk about anything and everything, in conversations filled with anecdotes, smiles and bursts of laughter that sometimes brought us to tears. Only one thing mattered: savouring the present moment together, to the point of intoxication, without worrying too much about tomorrow — as Charles Aznavour sang so beautifully in *Sa jeunesse* ("The Wine of Youth"). He wrote the in Montreal, and it took him fifteen years to find the right melody for it.

At the time, we were also torn between two other worlds: the one we wanted to transform and the one our parents wished to preserve. We felt we belonged to a generation apart: freer, sometimes revolutionary, and often misunderstood. A generation convinced it saw more clearly than the one before it, and was wiser than the one that would follow.

This certainty gave us the illusion that we were sheltered from the limits of time. Growing old was simply not part of the plan. We refused to accept that, as we aged, we might in turn come to embody what we had so harshly criticized in our parents: wariness of the new, resistance to change and the desire to hold on to a familiar world.
So, we had to avoid growing old at all costs!
Or, more precisely, avoid growing old the way our parents had.



But over the years, baby boomers were confronted with a reality that was hard to ignore: that of an aging body. A gap then opened between the age they felt inside and the age their appearance revealed to others.

In this respect, reading glasses hold a special place. Once they appear, they become a daily reminder of the passing of time. Perched on the tip of the nose, they take on symbolic weight: they signal less a simple decline in vision than a change in status. They are the visible mark of presbyopia, which quietly sets in during our forties.

After refractive lens exchange, being free of reading glasses can take on a deeper meaning. Their disappearance does more than merely relieve us of an everyday inconvenience; it removes one of the most visible and widely recognized signs of aging, bringing the age others perceive closer to the age we feel.



Between all these worlds — the one of yesterday and the one of today, the one we wanted to transform and the one our parents wished to preserve, the youth we still feel and the first signs of aging — vision builds a bridge. It shapes what we see, what we feel, as well as the image we believe we project in the eyes of others.

In *Aging Without Feeling Old*, I will explore this remarkable era in greater depth, along with the essential role music and songs played in the lives of baby boomers, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s, when going out dancing with friends at the disco on Saturday nights was a cherished ritual. For us, *Saturday Night Fever* (1977) and *Grease* (1978) were much more than movies: they reflected the spirit of our generation.

But to see ourselves in those films, to keep on dancing, to hold on to our autonomy as long as possible, and even to live life to the fullest, we needed good vision — and we still do.

The profound connections between sight, life and aging find expression in a formula that is simple to state, yet truly challenging to put into practice:
Seeing better helps us live better.
Living better helps us age better.
And aging better helps us cherish every we have left.

AN ENHANCED READING EXPERIENCE

The book offers a feature still rare in publications of its kind: QR codes placed throughout its pages.

Simply scan them with your phone to access illustrations, animations, and short videos. These resources offer clear, accessible explanations of how the eye works and how we age. It also provides a simple, easy-to-follow overview of refractive lens surgery.

The QR codes will also invite you to revisit the music and culture that shaped the baby boomer generation.

In this way, the traditional book and the possibilities of the digital world come together to enrich your reading experience.

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

If this taste of *Aging Without Feeling Old* has sparked your interest, click the link below to sign up for our free newsletter.

You will receive a digital copy of this booklet in both English and French and, soon, a few selected excerpts from the book, with QR codes liking to short videos.

You will also be notified of the publication date of the book's English edition, as well as its availability in bookstores and online, including on Amazon. We will keep you informed, as well, of upcoming online presentations and social media events.

Feel free to share this link with your family and friends.

Link:

AGING IS ADDING YEARS TO YOUR LIFE

AGING WELL IS ADDING LIFE TO YOUR YEARS

For some twenty years, Dr. Fanous has observed a fascinating phenomenon: after the age of forty, when people regain good vision at all distances after an eye procedure, they don't simply see better. They regain a freedom they thought they had lost years ago: the freedom to drive, to enjoy their activities and, above all to read, without constantly relying on their glasses.

What's more, this newfound freedom comes with renewed self-confidence, a confidence often shaken by the gradual decline in vision that comes with age, first because of presbyopia and later because of cataracts.

This observation became the starting point for a broader reflection on the art of aging well.

In his upcoming book, through true stories, reflections on the connections between sight, life and aging, and simple advice on how to look and feel younger, the author invites us to take a fresh look at growing older.





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A pioneer of refractive surgery in Canada, Founder and Medical Director of the Montreal Eye Institute, which became, in 2024, the largest cataract surgery center in Canada.

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EYE INSTITUTE
SIGHT FOR LIFE