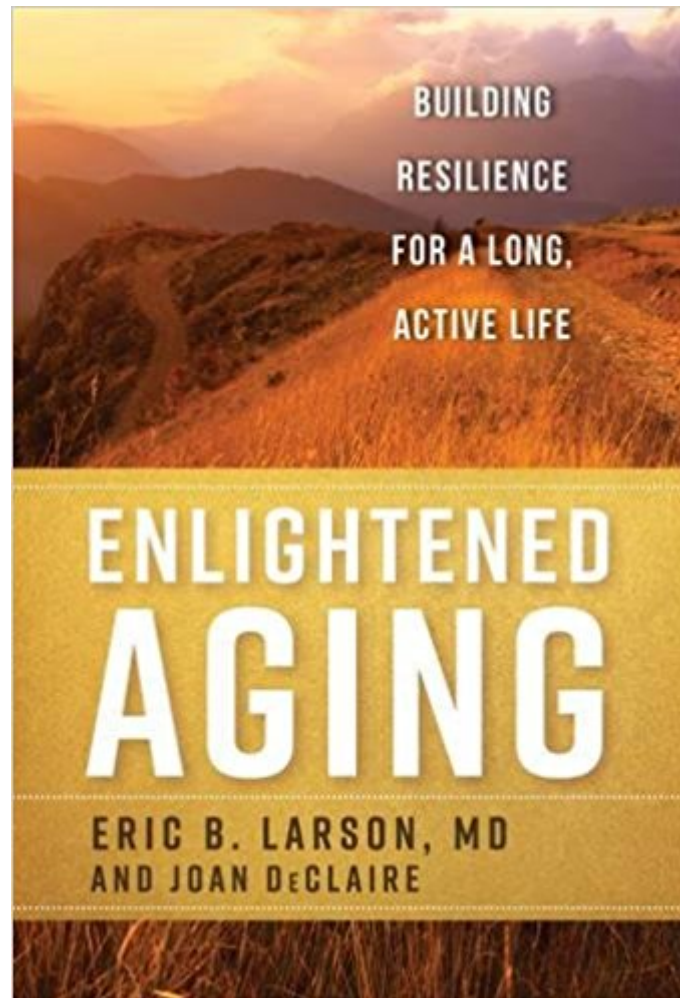




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# **Enlightened Aging: Building Resilience For A Long, Active Life**



## Synopsis

A leading expert in the science of healthy aging, Dr. Eric B. Larson offers practical advice for growing old with resilience and foresight. More than just canned advice, *Enlightened Aging* proposes a path to resilience—one that’s proven to help many stave off disability until very old age. The steps on this path include pro-activity, acceptance, and building and maintaining good physical, mental, and social health. Using inspiring stories from Dr.

Larson’s experiences with study participants, patients, friends, and relatives, *Enlightened Aging* will help readers determine what their paths can look like given their own experiences and circumstances. It informs readers of the scientific evidence behind new perspectives on aging. It inspires readers with stories of people who are approaching aging with enlightened attitudes. It offers advice and resources for readers to build their own reserves for old age. It recommends ways for readers to work with their doctors to stay as healthy as possible for their age. And it offers ideas for building better communities for our aging population. While especially relevant to the baby boom generation, this work is really for people of all ages looking for encouragement and wise counsel in order to live a long, active life.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Larson, a clinical professor of medicine, and DeClaire, a health journalist, offer an empowering exploration, targeted to baby boomers, of ways to age healthfully while staving off disability and maintaining an active life. Rather than suggesting some “magic bullet,” the authors focus on increasing resilience, the ability to recover from setbacks and adapt to changing circumstances,

through building mental, physical, and social reserves. They state that baby boomers have a better chance of aging healthfully than any generation before them, and identify factors that lead to better aging, including proactivity, attitude, and acceptance. They also caution against overdiagnosis, overtreatment, and new but not necessarily improved medication, instead lauding lifestyle changes as solutions to age-related problems. Larson and DeClaire advise readers to make decisions that are right for them and be proactive about their healthcare. Building on the subject of attitude, they recommend making aspirations more focused and attainable as one ages, something they see as leading to greater happiness and life satisfaction. Though no one can guarantee a long, healthy life, Larson and DeClaire help stack the odds in readers' favor with their informative work. (Publishers Weekly) This can-do guide gives commonsense, doable advice on how to proactively create a path to a meaningful life. Refreshingly, Larson, a physician studying how to delay and prevent Alzheimer's and declines in memory, promotes cost-free approaches rather than pushing particular medicines, supplements, or regimens. Instead, he recommends ways to build resilience by filling mental, physical, and social reserves. 'If you come to aging fully resourced, activated, and aware of the challenges ahead, you're going to have a much richer, more satisfying experience,' Larson writes. One challenge: dementia happens to one third of people aged 85 to 90 and half of those aged 90 to 95. Larson observes that employment can be an important part of identity and self-esteem, but he advises readers to make time for exercise, hobbies, and visits with loved ones, especially those connecting across generations. One 73-year-old, for example, teaches yoga every day and chauffeurs her grandsons. This thoughtful, easy-to-read book can help people of any age learn how to boost the likelihood of a long, fulfilling life. (Booklist) The recommendations in *Enlightened Aging* are based on a lot of evidence and draw heavily on Larson's research over a decades-long career. Anyone who is planning to get old should read it. (Columns: The University of Washington Alumni Magazine) Kudos to Dr. Eric B. Larson for inspiring readers to take a pro-active stance for their own health. He provides an informed approach to confronting the epidemic of over-treatment, over-diagnosis, and bad drugs older people face today. *Enlightened Aging* will help turn the tide, offering readers practical advice that leads to resilience and improved quality of life in old age. (Leana Wen, MD, MSc, Health Commissioner, City of Baltimore; author of *When Doctors Don't Listen: How to Avoid Misdiagnosis and Unnecessary Tests*) This uplifting account of what it takes to be prepared for an enlightened old age is a must read for all of us. It translates scientific research on aging to useful advice on building the physical, mental, and emotional reserves to help us age as we most desire. (Karen Davis, PhD, Eugene and Mildred Lipitz Professor; Director, Rogert C. Lipitz Center For

Integrated Health Care at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health) In *Enlightened Aging* Dr. Eric Larson offers a practical, positive, and humane perspective on the challenges of aging. He draws upon a rare combination of great clinical experience and in-depth knowledge of the research on aging. Dr. Larson is that caring physician who is dedicated to finding what will work best for each elderly patient. (Edward W. Campion, MD, Executive Editor, *New England Journal of Medicine*) The personal, professional and the public intellectual breadth of this book is mind boggling. Even more enlivening is the heartwarming embrace we feel from Eric Larson as the son, physician, and researcher. This is a truly enlightened book by a compassionate collaborative partnership that brings the wise messages to life through stories. Taking control of your own health and building biopsychosocial resilience are the essential and wise takeaways from which we can all benefit. Nothing less fundamental than enriching your story of your life (and death) is at the core of this book. (Peter Whitehouse, MD, PhD, Professor of Neurology, Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine) We all share the same two goals for our personal end game – a long life and one that preserves our vitality until the end. Yet, information on how to achieve those goals is cluttered, confusing, and replete with overhyped promises. *Enlightened Aging* cuts through the clutter and offers sound, evidence-based advice from a wise physician and geriatrician. He offers no magic bullets, but does present a wealth of common sense that will help you and your loved ones face the inevitable medical, social, and economic choices that come with aging. Spoiler alert: continued physical activity is the next best thing to that elusive magic bullet. (Steven A. Schroeder, MD, Distinguished Professor of Health and Healthcare, University of California, San Francisco; Former President and CEO of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation) Keep moving, learning, connecting. In *Enlightened Aging*, Dr. Eric Larson distills decades of research into lessons that can help all of us die young – as late as possible. (Harvey V. Fineberg, MD, PhD, President, Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation) *Enlightened Aging* distills and explains 30 years of gerontology about human aging into a wonderfully readable guide for anyone looking to make the kind of choices that lead to one to age well and happily. By peppering the science with stories about his patients, Dr. Larson spins an engaging narrative that should inspire every reader. (Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, MD, MBA, President and CEO, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation) Dr. Larson's easy to read, well referenced book contains a wealth of important information, and it should be read by everyone who is aging: all of us. (Catherine DeAngelis, MD, MPH, Professor Emerita, Johns Hopkins University Schools of Medicine and Public Health; Editor in Chief Emerita, *JAMA*) I can tell you that I read *Enlightened Aging* with trepidation. Yet as I read it brought a huge smile to my lips because here is sensible, research-based advice based on a huge population

studied with the best methods that tells you to become RESILIENT as you get older, how to stay vital and vibrant. Get this book! And let it be your wise guide for getting better as you get older. (John M. Gottman, Author of The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work; co-Founder of The Gottman Institute)

Eric B. Larson, MD, MPH, is a leading expert in the science of healthy aging. Since 1986, he has led a large, longitudinal research program focused on delaying and preventing Alzheimer's disease, other forms of dementia, and declines in memory and thinking. Called the Adult Changes in Thought (ACT) study, this program is the world's longest-running study of its kind and includes one of the largest research populations age 85 and older. ACT is a collaboration of Group Health (a Seattle-based health system) Kaiser Permanente, the University of Washington (UW), and the National Institute on Aging. Dr. Larson is also executive director of Kaiser Permanente Washington Health Research Institute (formerly Group Health Research Institute), a public-interest research center. In addition, he is a clinical professor of medicine at the UW School of Medicine and of health services at the UW School of Public Health. He also maintains an internal-medicine practice, providing primary care to his patients since 1975. Before joining Group Health in 2002, Dr. Larson served as medical director for the UW Medical Center and associate dean for clinical affairs at its medical school from 1989 to 2002. He is a member and past president of the Society of General Internal Medicine; member and former chair of the Board of Regents of the American College of Physicians; a master of the American College of Physicians; and an elected member of the National Academy of Medicine (formerly called the Institute of Medicine) of the National Academy of Sciences. Dr. Larson has published hundreds of research papers in peer-review medical journals—including the Journal of the American Medical Association, the New England Journal of Medicine, and Annals of Internal Medicine. Joan DeClaire is a journalist specializing in health, psychology, and family relationships. She is co-author of three books: Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child: The Heart of Parenting (1998); The Relationship Cure: A 5-Step Guide to Strengthening Your Marriage, Family, and Friendships (2002); Ten Lessons to Transform Your Marriage: America's Love Lab Experts Share Their Strategies for Strengthening Your Relationship (2007). DeClaire's work has appeared in many consumer magazines, including Readers Digest, People, Parents, Ladies' Home Journal, and Redbook. She currently works as director of communications at Kaiser Permanente Washington Health Research Institute, where she edits the Healthy Findings blog, and manages media relations, social media, scientific editing, and web content development.

Enlightened Aging is a gem of a book. The authors manage to present important research-based information on aging in such a way that makes it unusually accessible. Furthermore, the stories Larson and DeClaire include in their book not only engage the reader but also provide inspiration. It is a gift to read a book on aging that, rather than induce guilt for all the things I haven't done for my aging body-mind thus far, encourages me to accept the inevitable changes that aging brings as well as empowers me to make the changes that will build resilience. As John Gottman wrote in his endorsement of the book, "Get this book! And let it be your wise guide for getting better as you get older."

This book is written in an engaging style, and combines what we know from research with personal stories that illustrate the points the authors are making. Eric and Joan do a great job. My takeaways: There is no magic bullet for avoiding issues associated with aging, but we can prepare better and live a quality life by building resilience in our physical, emotional, and mental health storage banks. Taking care of our bodies is good for our brain health. Physical activity every single day is important and good for us. This book is very readable, and provides very practical advice that we can all follow.

Enlightened Aging is an important, unique book of advice. The author is not just a scientist, but a primary care physician. And he's on a mission to tell people--especially fellow baby boomers--what he has learned about the aging process through decades of research and also his hands-on medical practice. His guidance is not exactly new, but it's based on large-scale studies combined with his years of caring for the elderly as they age. His recommendations are therefore trustworthy, and they're organized and presented in a way that will make this my go-to book as I grow old. I finished the book yesterday, and I'm already urging other baby boomers to read it too. Before I read the book, I viewed my future as one long decline. And while Dr. Larson encourages us to accept our growing limitations and the fact that we all die, he stresses resilience along the way. And in order to be resilient, we need to plan and fill our reserves, keeping ourselves moving, learning, and connecting with others. He offers stories about people who experienced setbacks but managed, through their reserves, to bounce back and adapt. In this way, a refreshingly frank, realistic book feels hopeful.

In his own words Dr. Larson has stated that he was aiming his book at Boomers, but it certainly plays well to those of us in the pre boomer period and would be a great resource for the younger

generation as well. For over 40 years I have been hearing much of the advice Dr. Larson gives in his "Enlightened Living" book. Yes, I am a patient of Dr. Larson's at the University of Washington, but not part of the aging study. Over those years much of the advice and comments have remained the same, highly recommending not smoking. Some areas have gained more importance as a result of the aging study at Group Health, like the importance of exercise. Keep moving in all aspects of life, physically as well as mentally is certainly a theme in the book. As a couple striving to get into the 'Old-Old' age group my wife and I believe that the mental aspects of aging gets the proper attention in the book. I (and my wife) personally disagree on Dr. Larson's thoughts on screening, like the PSA tests or Mammograms, but other than that believe that this book provides great information, based upon evidence, for people of all ages to become more Enlightened as they age.

A wonderful book identifying behaviors that lead to a more functional existence as we all age. Written with a very easy to read narrative style mixed with good science where we have data available. As a physician I found that this helped round out my knowledge about healthy habits that make a meaningful difference in prolonging an active, independent lifestyle. Dr. Larson has been a "real Doctor" as well as a researcher in the field of healthy aging. His vast experience in both arenas makes this book very valuable to anyone who reads it whether it applies to them or their parents or their patients. For all of us, our own lifestyle choices (smoking, alcohol consumption, exercise, nutrition, obesity etc.) will have a profound effect on our functional status later in life. The subject of "End of Life" decision making is also well discussed. The book is an excellent read for all.

This book is a must read for baby-boomers who have aging parents and are looking forward to their own retirement years. Dr. Larson is both a research doctor and a primary care doctor which gives him unique insight to the aging process with forty years of experience. The book will give you much to think about and how you can control your own destiny. The book is easy to read and has lots of practical advice that you can apply to your own life or aging relatives. He discusses important topics such as long term care, minimal treatment options and even options when facing death, which is an uncomfortable topic for many. Dr. Larson also uses real life stories of patients and how the decisions made along with life style choices impact for life and death. This book would make a good gift for cherished friends and family members.

This book is based on Dr. Larson's 40 years of research and his experience in medical practice. Although it is full of helpful facts and figures, Dr. Larson goes beyond the numbers to relate people's

stories. As an aging boomer who has dealt with elder care in my family, I am interested in how to prevent some of the problems normally associated with aging. This book has inspired me to be an informed, active, assertive participant in my aging, rather than sit idly by wondering where the years have gone. And although I will (probably) never be a competitive tango dancer at 102, I hope to have a story of my own before I'm through.

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