



**(U) Virtual Mentor: Too Late to Try Something New?**

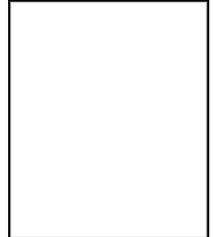
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- Dear Virtual Mentor, I've been in my job for a long time, and I'm rather bored. But I'll be retiring in a few years. Is it too late to teach an old dog new tricks? Signed, Stuck in a Rut



Dear S.I.R., I once heard an elderly woman observe that up until she was 18 years old, time dragged. Summer vacation was an eternity! Then after that age, time started to speed up and every year would go by a little faster than the one before, until, at her advanced age, time was flying by. Why is this so?

Not long ago I saw a mother giving her young son a banana to eat. "I don't think he's ever eaten a banana before," she commented. I was incredulous. Someone's NEVER eaten a banana before?? How can that be? Then I thought about what it must be like to be that age. One day you eat a banana for the first time. The next, you try turnip (yuck!) for the first time. At some point you ride on a school bus for the first time. Practically every day something is happening that NEVER HAPPENED BEFORE.

The point is that when things become routine (like eating a banana for the 1000th time), they don't make as much of an impression on you. And since nothing particularly memorable is happening, time just seems to fly by. (This is my theory anyway.)

But if you try, you can still experience new things even as a seasoned adult. Maybe not as momentous as the first time you ever jumped in the ocean, but still NEW. Taking on a new job, for example. Maybe PCSing to a different country. It'll be more memorable than doing the job you have now (and are bored with). As a worst case scenario, you won't like your new job -- but at least you'll learn something you didn't know before. Isn't that what it's all about?

One final mini-anecdote: I was riding on an elevator in 2B one day (and I'm not making this up), and two men who hadn't seen each other for a while greeted each other. "What are you doing these days?" one asked. "Oh, I'm coasting... Just 10 years to go to retirement!" the other said.

Ten years! Imagine if you had "coasted" those 10 years from say, age 18 to 28. What would you have missed out on? Or if you were convicted of a crime and the judge sentenced you to "10 years of boredom, watching the clock and agonizing routine." You'd scream bloody murder! But some people do this to *themselves*. You want my advice? Don't be one of them.

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