

Book review

Spirited Ageing

Cultivating the art of renewal

Category: Book Reviews / Self-help

Author: Juliet Batten

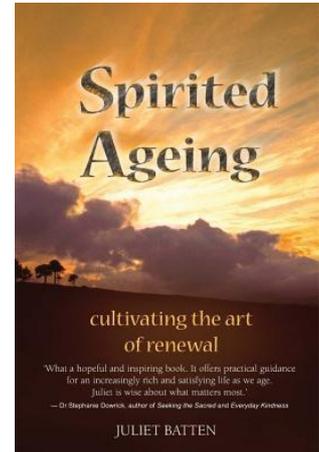
Year: 2013

Publisher: Createspace, NZ

ISBN: 9781495911033

Audience: Supporting Yourself

Summary: *Accept your physical decline while you expand your spirit and live a rich and satisfying life*



Like many people, I have not looked forward to ageing but I am retiring and it is important for me to make the most of this later stage of my life. I want to do ageing well and *Spirited Ageing* is just the book I needed to set me on the right course.

If you think successful ageing means sky-diving or running a marathon in your 80s, you're going to have to think again. The core message of the book is that if you recognise you are more than just a body you can accept your physical decline while you expand your spirit and live a rich and satisfying life.

Spirituality not necessarily religious

Spirituality is not defined in religious terms but rather as "connecting with the pulse of life through nature, creativity, love or spiritual practices". Accessing this power enables you to stay alive on the inside regardless of what is happening in the body.

Spirituality is just one aspect of the book. It also outlines the steps you can take when you are young-old (60s to mid-late 70s) such as taking better care of your body, practising mindfulness, fostering relationships, clearing clutter and letting go of attachment to things. There's plenty of practical advice such as deciding where to live, changing negative thoughts and appointing an attorney. Each chapter includes exercises to help with these tasks and suggests topics for reflection and there are useful templates in the appendices.

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Making a graceful exit

The final chapters address the aspects of ageing that are most feared such as dementia, pain and loneliness, and then discuss ways in which you can prepare to make a graceful exit.

As part of her research, Juliet Batten questioned many people, mostly New Zealanders in their 60s and 70s, and their responses are used as quotes throughout the book. I found this made the examples real and the advice particularly meaningful.

Despite tackling the hard issues, the tone of the book is entirely positive and uplifting and, when I had finished reading, I felt energised and enthusiastic about the years ahead. I intend to buy my own copy so that I can refer to it as I go along.

Reviewed by Jo Beck, information officer at the Mental Health Foundation

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