

# Senior Moments #3

## November 10, 2025

### Ageism

Communism, feminism, racism, sexism, – all terms most people are familiar with. But there is one “ism” far too many people are not familiar with, and that is ageism.

Ageism is a widespread and often overlooked form of discrimination that affects people of all ages—but especially older adults—and has serious consequences for health, dignity, and equality. Simply put, ageism is [prejudice](#) or discrimination, based on a person's age. My comments tonight pertain to ageism as it affects senior citizens.

#### WHY ARE SO FEW PEOPLE AWARE OF AGEISM?

- Ageism against older adults is often overlooked because it is deeply embedded in culture, normalized in everyday language, and rarely challenged like the other forms of discrimination.
- Ageist stereotypes are everywhere — from birthday cards that mock aging to “anti-aging” products that frame growing older as a problem.
- These messages are so common that many people don’t recognize them as harmful. They’re seen as jokes or marketing, not discrimination.
- Unlike racism or sexism, ageism isn’t widely taught or discussed in schools, workplaces, or media.

#### AGEISM IS SOCIALLY ACCEPTABLE

- Ageism is often considered one of the last socially acceptable prejudices and form of discrimination.
- People may feel comfortable making age-related jokes or assumptions without fear of backlash, because society hasn’t stigmatized these behaviors the way it has with other biases.

#### INTERNALIZED AGEISM

- Older adults themselves may internalize negative beliefs about aging, making them less likely to speak out or recognize discrimination.
- This self-directed ageism reinforces silence and invisibility.

#### WHY AGEISM IS HARMFUL

- Mental health impacts: It can lead to feelings of worthlessness, isolation, and depression.

- Economic exclusion: Older adults may be forced out of the workforce prematurely.
- Healthcare disparities: Ageist attitudes can result in under-treatment or misdiagnosis.

## HOW TO FIGHT AGEISM

- Educate yourself and others.
- Learn about ageism and its effects on seniors.
- Challenge Ageist Language and Behavior.
- Speak up against ageist jokes or assumptions.
- Support workplace practices that value older employees and lifelong learning.
- Celebrate achievements and vitality at every age.

I'd like to end by sharing some examples of ageism.

First, as found in birthday cards:

- "Happy Birthday! Don't worry, you'll forget how old you are soon enough."
- "Happy Birthday! You're not old... just obsolete."

Compare the above examples with the following.

- "Happy Birthday! You're not old — you're bold, wise, and thriving!"
- "Happy Birthday! Another year of experience, resilience, and joy."

I know which options I would choose.

Further examples:

- Assuming someone's inability to use technology based on their age.
- Making jokes about forgetfulness as a "senior moment."

It wasn't an accident that I chose to name this time with you "Senior Moments", hoping to have those words viewed as positive rather than negative.

So, let's break the barriers of ageism, embracing the contributions of every generation. By valuing wisdom and fostering inclusivity, we can build a future where age is celebrated, not discriminated against. Thank you.

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