

BREAKING THE AGE CODE

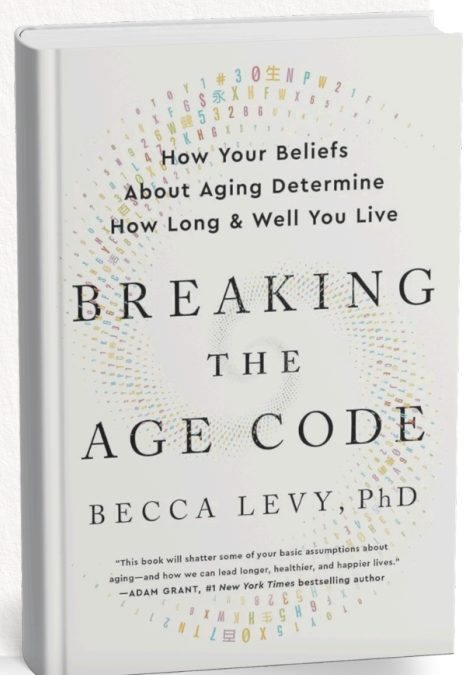
Becca Levy, PhD

In her groundbreaking book, ***Breaking the Age Code***, psychologist and researcher Becca Levy challenges one of the most powerful, and often invisible, forces shaping our lives: our beliefs about aging. These internalized age beliefs, which are formed in childhood and reinforced throughout life, affect our physical health, cognitive performance, longevity and overall quality of life. Medical diagnosis barring- you're not becoming forgetful just because you're getting older, you just hold negative age beliefs. If we absorb the idea that aging equals decline, irrelevance, or limitation, those expectations can become self-fulfilling.

But the opposite is also true. Dr. Levy's decades of research show that people with positive beliefs about aging live longer, recover more quickly from illness, exhibit better memory, experience lower rates of depression and maintain greater independence. This isn't wishful thinking. It's data-backed science. Her studies show that people with positive age beliefs lived an average of 7.5 years longer than those with negative beliefs. Our mindset about aging becomes a biological force.

Why I Enjoyed It...

This book shares the scientific truth that your brain experiences new growth of neurons in response to challenges throughout the lifespan. It's filled with anecdotes about aging well including one individual who memorized an epic 60,000 word poem after deciding to treat his brain like a muscle and exercise it starting at age 60. Dr. Levy not only inspires hope that change is possible, but gives clear instructions on how to age well. I recommend picking up a hard copy of the book so you can reference back and take notes.



How to Apply This in Your Life...

One of the most powerful ideas in this book is that we have unknowingly internalized ageism from society and that those beliefs can actually shape our physical and cognitive outcomes. Words matter. Beliefs matter. Expectations matter. Here are some takeaways from the book you can apply to your own life, today.

- ✓ **At any age.** Reading this book, applying changes to your life and caring about positive age beliefs is applicable to anyone and everyone. It is never too early or too late to pay attention to your age beliefs because they can, will and are impacting your lifespan and quality.
- ✓ **Reduce your Alzheimer's risk.** While genetics play a role, lifestyle and mindset play an enormous role as well whether or not you carry genetic markers. Positive beliefs around aging reduce your risk of dementia. So pay attention to the messaging you consume, the stereotypes you automatically accept and to the words you use casually in conversation.
- ✓ **Get moving.** Being older doesn't mean you are fragile. Most older people can exercise without risk of injury. Being active improves cardiovascular health, mental health and creates stronger bones and muscles.
- ✓ **Sit in a park.** Observing, interacting, learning, moving, and conversing across generations can stimulate the brain in ways far richer than solitary tasks like solving a crossword at home. No age-segmenting. Being around people who are not your age and interacting with them is beneficial for everyone.

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