

LETTERS TO
DR. BORTZ

MID-LIFE
DEPRESSION

"HOW I STAY
ACTIVE AT 101"

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ACTIVE

Over 50



KEN DYCHTWARD, PH.D.
Age Wave

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Bay Area Edition

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Ken Dychtwald, Ph.D.

Age: 59

Education: Ph.D. in psychology from Union Graduate School, BA from Lehigh University

Marital status: Married to Maddy, with two children, Casey – 22, and Zak – 19

Occupation: Psychologist, gerontologist, entrepreneur, best-selling author and acclaimed public speaker

Residence: I grew up in Newark, New Jersey and initially moved to California to live and study at the Esalen Institute in Big Sur in 1970. That's when I wrote my first book *Bodymind*. I migrated to Berkeley in 1974 and then our family moved over the hill to Orinda in 1989.

What is Age Wave?

Age Wave is the nation's foremost thought-leader on population aging and its profound business, social and cultural implications. I founded the company more than 20 years ago with my wife, nationally recognized author and speaker Maddy Dychtwald. I'm very proud to say that Age Wave has provided breakthrough research, compelling presentations, award-winning communications, and results-driven marketing and consulting initiatives to over half the Fortune 500.

How many books have you written? Number of speeches and presentations?

Sixteen, including *Bodymind*, *Age Wave*, *Age Power*, *The Power Years*, *Healthy Aging*, *Workforce Crisis: How to Beat the Coming Shortage of Skills and Talent* and *Gideon's Dream: A Tale of New Beginnings*. My new book is entitled *With Purpose: Going From Success to Significance in Work and*

Life. In the last 30+ years, I've addressed more than two million people worldwide in my speeches to corporate, association, social service and government groups.

In your new book, "With Purpose," what do you mean by "going from success to significance in work and life?"

Several years ago, I was about to publish *The Power Years*, and my favorite chapter in it was called "Leaving a Legacy." Two weeks before the book was to be launched, Katrina hit New Orleans and my wife and kids and I, like most Americans, were home watching this terrible event. I made a simple decision that day: to donate all the future earnings from that book to the rebuild of New Orleans through Habitat for Humanity.

But, the story got interesting when I had my phone meeting with Jonathan Reckford, Habitat's Executive Director. Jonathan was very gracious as I explained this

pledge and he said to me, "You know, Ken, there are a lot of people your age going through what you're going through now." And I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "You know, you've got that gnawing feeling." So I said, "What gnawing feeling?" And he said, "You know, you're trying to make the transition from success to significance." This really got me thinking: "Is this it? Have I done my best?"

This period of reflection caused me to further reconsider our modern notion that youth is a time for creativity and accomplishment and maturity is a time for retreat and withdrawal. In *With Purpose*, I have tried to offer an entirely new model for maturity—and retirement—as a time of growth, reinvention, aspiration and vital contribution.

How is the fact that we're "living longer" changing our lives?

For the first time, it is possible for the average person to experience a

healthy and robust period of longevity—a “longevity bonus.” This is relatively uncharted territory. I hear more and more people asking, “How do I start a new career at 55?” “How can I do something important with my skills and time?”

Embarking on this adventure and getting the next stage of life to unfold in a positive fashion can be both unsettling and liberating. And, because this is a new phenomenon, the maturity-driven marketplace will multiply. Even with the current financial crisis, since more than 70% of America’s wealth resides with those who are 50 plus, whose ranks will be multiplying as the boomers continue to age.

We are about to see an explosion of maturity-oriented products and services such as: nutraceuticals, cosmeceuticals, fitness communes, re-careering, long-term care and longevity insurance, college philanthropreneuring, campus-based retirement housing and Internet cemeteries.

What are the keys to happiness in later life?

The popular fantasy is that a leisurely retirement is a delightful, satisfying state of bliss, which most people can afford. Yet, the majority of people who step to the sidelines and pull out of an active life go through a period of sadness and profound disorientation. In contrast, people who live their later years with the desire to make a contribution, who stay engaged, who reinvent themselves, all over the world, are statistically happier, healthier and think of these as the best years of their lives.

You mention “everymanthropy” in your book.

What does it mean?

Philanthropy is, like the institution of retirement, undergoing a profound change. New generations of givers want innovative solutions and they demand swift and measurable results to the problems they care the most about. To be an everymanthropist, you don’t need boatloads of dollars. You just need compassion, time and a desire to give back. And many people would much prefer to dream up a charity’s new slogan, rescue injured wildlife in the mountains, enter the Peace Corps – or use their business skills to make an organization run more efficiently.

The fact that you and your wife Maddy get remarried every year is a bit unusual. Why do you do this?

When we originally married, on Thanksgiving in 1983, we had such a great time that I asked Maddy if she’d consider remarriage every year. And, to add a bit of spice (and I suppose, guerilla theater) to this ritual, we decided that we would do so in a

different religion and in a different location each year. We’ve been remarried by a tribal chief in a Navajo ceremony in Tucson, Arizona, by the skiing judge on the slopes of Vail Mountain, and in a Tai Chi ceremony in Big Sur, California.

Most recently, we celebrated our twenty-fifth anniversary by having Maddy’s mom and stepdad and my parents perform our remarriage – and then we headed off to Tahiti

where we were betrothed in a traditional Polynesian ceremony.

Of all the books

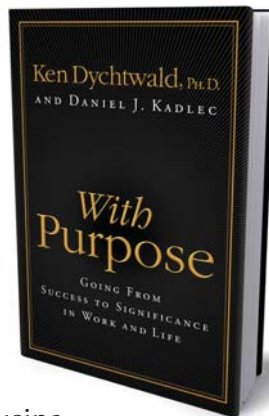
you’ve written, do you have a favorite?

For me, books are like children and you love them all equally in special ways. The most fun book to create was *Gideon’s Dream: A Tale of New Beginnings*.

Why is that?

As we were raising our children and reading them stories each night, we were struck by the fact that fables about personal transformations in adulthood just didn’t exist.

Maddy and I teamed up with a magically talented artist and former Disney animator Dave Zaloski and his seven year old daughter Grace, to create a wonderful, hopeful children’s book that playfully and lovingly introduces children - and their parents and grandparents - to the idea that it’s never too late for dreams and new beginnings.



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Ken Dychtwald is widely viewed as North America's most visionary, original thinker regarding the personal, social and global impact of increasing longevity and the “age wave.” To contact him, visit www.agewave.com.