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or plan to be!

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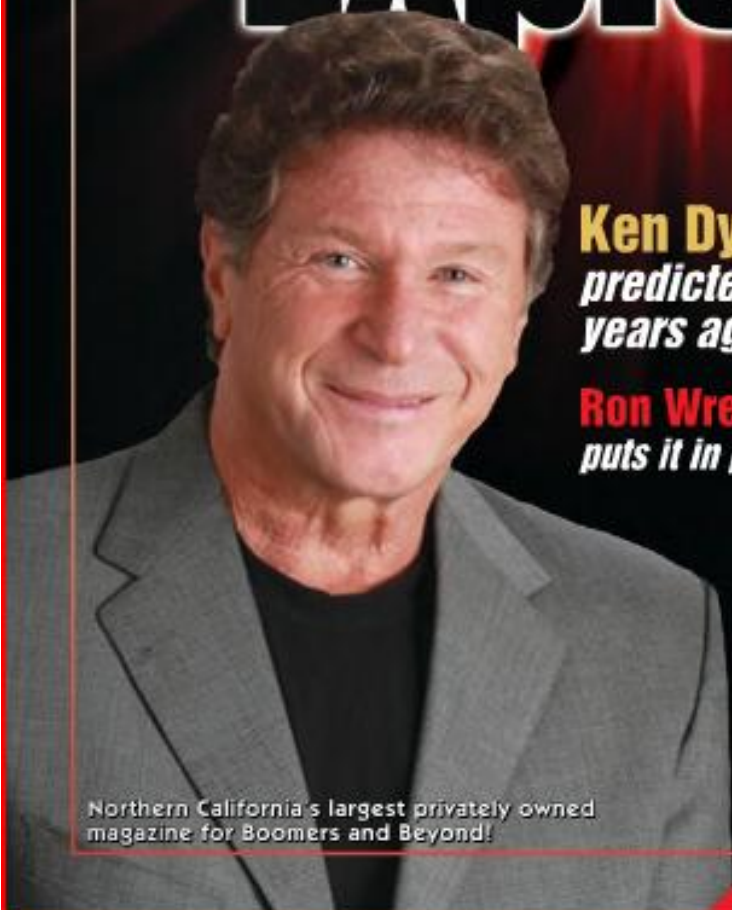
M A G A Z I N E

January 2011

## The Alpha Boomer Explosion

**Ken Dychtwald, Ph.D.,**  
*predicted the Age Wave  
years ago, and it's here!*

**Ron Wren**  
*puts it in perspective!*



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## Ken Dychtwald, PhD, Catch the Age Wave

By: Nan Mahon

The generation that vowed as youths that they would change the world may get a second chance to do so in their golden years. This month the first Baby Boomers will turn age 65 to begin an 18 year Age Wave into retirement.

"We are at the dawn of a new image of aging," says Ken Dychtwald, PhD, a celebrated author, psychologist, gerontologist and public speaker. "The new model of maturity is hopeful and high spirited. It means new beginnings and reinvention."

Dychtwald, born in 1950, is a member of the first decade of the Baby Boom that he has studied and written about for 25 years. He has taken his message to the public, speaking to some 2 million people, served as a consultant to large corporations, and has written 16 motivating books, including one for children.

Born and raised in Newark, New Jersey, Dychtwald entered college to study physics but changed directions completely when he took his first psychology class. "I loved the subject so much it felt like the 4th of July," he said. "I developed an interest in the mind, body and spirit." Like others in his age group, Dychtwald grew his hair long and donned the colorful clothing and manner of style that defined the times. Living and teaching at the Esalen Institute in Big Sur, he began writing his first book, *Bodymind*. He was working on his PhD in 1974 when he was called to Berkeley to work on the SAGE Project, a study of aging. It was a life changing move.

He became fascinated with aging and the relatively new field of gerontology. His interest grew even more as he looked at his own generation, and because of its size, the social and economic impact it would have as it grew into retirement.

Following the hard times of the Great Depression and the end of World War II, the world relaxed, looking hopefully toward more prosperous and happier times. The result was that between the years of 1946 and 1964, 76 million children were born. All of society's institutions expanded to meet the demand for services and products. Business was the major benefactor of this expansion. Soldiers returned from the battlefield and moved to new places, left farms for factories, and bought tract houses in city suburbs.

"We were a youth oriented culture," Dychtwald said. "But Baby Boomers growing up and growing old would change all that. All of life would be altered."

In 1983, Dychtwald married Maddy, an actress and author. The two started their company, Age Wave, three years later. After the arrival of two children, the family settled in Orinda, an upscale community in the East Bay. From his office in Emeryville, Dychtwald has traveled the globe, giving lectures and learning from great teachers. Large corporations such as

# The Alpha Boo

Johnson & Johnson, Charles Schwab, Chrysler Automobile, General Mills, RJR Nabisco, and Genworth Financial have sought out his advice on marketing to this age tidal wave.

"The twin dynamics are that business grows in industries such as adult housing, travel, and entertainment, said Dychtwald. "The other side is that government services will be strained. It's a lava flow. Adjustments will be made."

While Generation X will support the Boomers in retirement, the highly educated elder boomers will bring their skills in law, medicine or money to volunteer work.

"With the Baby Boom, we have the most highly skilled and educated generation as well as the most empowered women in history," said Dychtwald. "We are about to see a revolution in retirement construction. This generation will make their biggest contributions as elders, not as teenagers."

Dychtwald says he is a fan of this generation and that it will change ageism as we know it. Through his talks and writing, he has coined such terms as "bodymind," "middlescence," "eldercare" and "age wave." His latest book, *A New Purpose*, co-authored with Daniel J. Kadlec and published by HarperCollins, redefines the value of money, family, work, retirement, and success. Dychtwald and Maddy also teamed up with Dave and Grace Zaboski to produce an acclaimed children's picture book, *Gideon's Dream: A Tale of New Beginnings*.

A complete list of Dychtwald's work can be found on his website, [www.agewave.com](http://www.agewave.com)

Married for 33 years, Dychtwald and Maddy renew their vows every year, in a different place and in a different religion. He enjoys being with his grown children and spends time with them separately every year. Each day, he speaks with his parents and tells them he loves them. Reading, travel, and yoga are things he enjoys.

"Live your life with purpose and meaning," he said. "Continue to work,



Ken Dychtwald, PhD



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You are listening to My Generation by the "Who"

# mer Explosion

learn and contribute in maturity. "I'm a fan of this generation and we will stand tallest in our maturity." However, he adds that each generation will take its cue from the last one, so they must think of ways to give back. They must roll up their sleeves, take knowledge and implement it to the new generation. "Idealism is now married to wisdom and experience," he said. "Retirement is a time to dream new dreams, renew hope, and a sense of adventure."

Dychtwald adds that once retirement was the ninth inning and the life expectancy was short after the work years ended. But with the medical advances today, a health-conscious population can look at living longer, into their 80s and 90s. Retirement now will simply be a new chapter in life.

The generations before have charted the way into aging and retirement. It's a time of new-found freedoms and celebration as the Baby Boom generation marches toward what could be the best years of their lives.

## Are You an AlphaBoomer?

by Ron Wren

How have those marketing pro's pictured us? Common wisdom has us playing endless rounds of golf, napping in front of the TV, gazing off into the sunset and rocking away our days on the front porch. Who wants to pitch ads to those kinds of people?

That may have been the way it was. But now, no more. Thanks to a new study conducted by NBCU Research the admen have discovered something we've known all along: we're active. We buy things. We go places. We're challenging the rest of those so-called "desirable demos" and demonstrating to Madison Avenue that there's plenty of life left in us yet.

### Because we are--the AlphaBoomers!

Remember when the world was awed by the BabyBoomers? Those were the kids that tended to think of themselves as a special generation that was very different from those who had come before. Because of their sheer numbers the baby boom caught the attention of business. They had their day. Now, listen up, marketing folks, and respect your elders! The AlphaBoomers are here and we're--booming!



They used to figure we weren't prospects to buy anything. Even Nielsen, the guru of marketing research, didn't acknowledge that anyone over 54 existed. Now, we're the leading edge of modern marketing! The 55-64 demo --as the marketing people call it--is the new 18-34. Until now, a new car commercial would show a kid (barely old enough to drive) at the wheel of a hot new car. It was a blatant attempt to snag the young. There was only one problem: those under 25 have median household incomes of \$27,000. Even those "prime" 25-34-year-old advertising targets have a median income of just \$58,000.

How do we stack up? Our median household income is a whopping \$69,000! Another study reveals that 69% of us "retirees" continue to work because we want to--not because we have to.

Yes, the critics grudgingly agree, but we don't do the cool things like buy HD TVs, use DVRs or broadband. Oh? We do-- in numbers equal to adults 18-49. Some 90% of us own a cell phone, 83% of us have a DVD player, and 83% have a digital camera ( I just can't figure out where the film goes, though).

But...but...stammer those who haven't studied the numbers, you oldsters don't need furniture or appliances. You already have what you need. Oh?? We spend more on home furnishings, large appliances, home improvement products, beauty and cosmetics and casual dining than your precious 18-49 demo!

What do we do if we're not wistfully gazing at a sunset or playing another round of golf? We're selling our homes, moving into retirement communities, taking cruises to Hawaii, flying to see grandkids, doing a little nip and tuck with a plastic surgeon, talking to our financial advisor about our growing "fixed incomes" that involve 401(k)s and stock dividends, and...and.... I think I'll sit down and rest for a minute.

There are 35,000,000 of us AlphaBoomers. And every seven seconds another turns 55 and joins our ranks. We're the fastest growing demographic in the nation. So there! But surely we're not as computer savvy as our kids. Oh? How about this: 70% of us buy something on line every month and--hold onto your cane-- 59% of us send text messages via cell phones!! hi honex i luv u 2.

### Ok. Here are our AlphaBoomer demands.

1. We want to see a balding guy with a gray haired girl beside him in that BMW convertible ad.
2. Cut out those motorized wheel chair ads and replace them with some shots of us working out at the gym. And none of that rap music in the background. Some Tommy Dorsey will be just fine.
3. Who needs all that "cute" put down talk on the sitcoms? How about a nice couple chatting about the good days of World War II?
4. We eat all kinds of things. Not just corn on the cob to prove our dentifrice works. Not just pills. We don't survive on regularity medicine. Or get indigestion all the time! I want to see an AlphaBoomer devouring a steak as hearty as he is.
5. Ah...there was one more demand, but I can't remember it.