Hacking Happiness: Understanding What Drives Well-Being in Women Across the Lifespan

October 2018

Presented at the Marketing2Women Conference
The new normal

We’re living to 100 (or will be soon!)

In 2010, 82.8% of all centenarians in the U.S. were female

In countries aging is the best, half of 10-year-olds today may live to be 104

70% of 8-year-olds are projected to have a living great-grandparent by 2030
At AARP, we want to understand not only how we are living...
...but how do we WANT to live?

How to stay happy as you age...

according to AARP founder
Ethel Percy Andrus

Well-being is the key to hacking happiness

Well-being is defined as:

feeling healthy and feeling fulfilled with life

Today, Seniors have a higher average level of well-being than Boomers and Gen Xers.
What has the most significant impact on women’s well-being?

Large Positive Impact
- Being motivated...
  ...by self (self-reliance, enjoyment of life, etc.)
  ...by group/others (cultural pride, helping others, etc.)
- Feeling you have control of your time and low stress

Small Positive Impact
- Being busy
- Homeownership
- Time spent working/Retirement
- Income

Large Negative Impact
- Time spent on media (TV, social media, etc.)

Small Negative Impact
- Unexpected negative life events (divorce, major illness, etc.)
With age comes comfort and contentment

Significant Generational Differences in Description of Life Today Among Women

- Comfortable: Gen X - 23%, Boomers - 23%, Seniors - 31%
- Content: Gen X - 10%, Boomers - 10%, Seniors - 20%
- Quiet: Gen X - 6%, Boomers - 9%, Seniors - 20%
- Satisfying: Gen X - 9%, Boomers - 15%, Seniors - 16%
- Active: Gen X - 10%, Boomers - 12%, Seniors - 12%
- Overwhelming: Gen X - 2%, Boomers - 9%, Seniors - 2%
Women feel “blessed,” despite being more “stressed”

Top descriptions for women

- Blessed: 33%
- Happy: 29%
- Comfortable: 24%

Significant Gender Differences in Description of Life Today

- Blessed: 33% (Women), 20% (Men)
- Stressful: 13% (Women), 9% (Men)
- Satisfying: 19% (Women), 12% (Men)
- Active: 17% (Women), 11% (Men)
- Overwhelming: 5% (Women), 2% (Men)
- Expanding: 3% (Women), 1% (Men)
Reasons for being content and feeling blessed – family and independence, followed by faith and having fun

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationships</th>
<th>Cited Among Top 5 Items on List</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(children, spouse/partner,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grandchildren, friends)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spending time with my children</strong></td>
<td>55%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving or maintaining my health</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or fitness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spending time with my spouse</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/partner or significant other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving my financial situation/</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>becoming financially secure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>My faith/religion</strong></td>
<td>41%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spending time with my grandchildren/great grandchildren</strong></td>
<td>35%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traveling</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobbies/activities that I enjoy</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New experiences and personal</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>growth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Being with my pets</strong></td>
<td>23%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting or reconnecting with</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>friends</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteering or helping others</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Developing new skills/improving</strong></td>
<td>11%**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>existing skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**Working on my career/job or</td>
<td>9%**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>business</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning/on-going education</strong></td>
<td>6%**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significantly higher than men; **Significantly lower than men
And it only gets better - the best years are now or yet to come

Thinking about life right now, women say the best years are…

37%  Still ahead

36%  The years that I’m in right now

26%  Behind me

Differences in Assessment of Best Years by Generation Among Women

- Gen X: 54% Ahead, 28% Now, 18% Behind
- Boomers: 41% Ahead, 31% Now, 28% Behind
- Seniors: 49% Ahead, 44% Behind
The importance of relationships change as women age

Among the top things women look forward to about getting older (and more than men) are:

- **31%**
  - Spending time with grandchildren and great grandchildren

- **34%**
  - Having more time to spend with family and friends

- **19%**
  - Time with my grandchildren

- **17%**
  - Connecting with friends

- **26%**
  - Time with my children

- **30%**
  - Time with spouse or S.O.

- **44%**
  - Spending time with grandchildren

- **54%**
  - Connecting with friends

- **48%**
  - Time with my children

- **55%**
  - Time with spouse or S.O.

- **54%**
  - Spending more time with family and friends

- **51%**
  - Time with children

- **31%**
  - Having more time to spend with family and friends

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AARP RESEARCH | 12
Women look forward to freedom and fun

Among the things women look forward to about getting older are:

- **31%** Not having to follow a schedule
- **31%** Freedom to pursue activities I enjoy

Gen X and Boomer women are more likely to look forward to having less stress in their lives than Senior women – perhaps because Seniors are already enjoying it.

**Passion for FUN is a constant!**
Women want to remain independent as they age

Women’s top worries about getting older are:

- **37%** Losing my ability to think clearly/dementia
- **36%** Being a burden to my children/others
- **35%** Financial problems/not having enough money
- **32%** Loss of independence

**Changes in Worries**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concern</th>
<th>Gen X</th>
<th>Boomers</th>
<th>Seniors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Loss of ability to think clearly/dementia</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of independence</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial problems/not having enough money</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Changes in Passion for Independence**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Concern</th>
<th>Gen X</th>
<th>Boomers</th>
<th>Seniors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health or fitness</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving financial situation</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Women’s passion for learning and growing wanes

While almost a quarter of women overall include “new experiences and personal growth” among their top five passions (23%), fewer women look forward to this about getting older.

In addition, few include developing/improving new skills, working their career, or learning/on-going education among their top five passions.

What Women Look Forward to

- New experiences/personal learning: 23%
- Developing/improving skills: 16%
- Learning/on-going education: 10%

Passion for Learning and Growing

- New experiences and personal growth: 28% (Gen X), 22% (Boomers), 11% (Seniors)
- Developing/improving skills: 15% (Gen X), 8% (Boomers), 7% (Seniors)
- Learning/on-going education: 7% (Gen X), 5% (Boomers), 1% (Seniors)
Faith and giving back grow in importance

- Faith/religion: 38%, 40%, 49%
- Volunteering or helping others: 15%, 22%, 25%

[Bar chart showing percentages of different age groups in faith and volunteering activities]
As women continue along their life journey, they:

• are **optimistic** about their future selves and feel **blessed**
• value **freedom** and **fun**
• are concerned about their **independence**
• focused on **family**, **friends**, and **faith**
Alison Bryant
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About AARP

AARP is the nation’s largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. With nearly 38 million members and offices in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, AARP works to strengthen communities and advocate for what matters most to families with a focus on health security, financial stability and personal fulfillment. AARP also works for individuals in the marketplace by sparking new solutions and allowing carefully chosen, high-quality products and services to carry the AARP name. As a trusted source for news and information, AARP produces the nation’s largest circulation publications, AARP The Magazine and AARP Bulletin. To learn more, visit www.aarp.org or follow @AARP and @AARPadvocates on social media.

About Hacking Longevity

Hacking Longevity is a study conducted by AARP in partnership with The Business of Aging and Collaborata, with additional support from P&G Ventures, Well Fargo Advisors, and GreatCall. Data were collected online using the Research Now consumer panel. A total of 2,917 respondents completed the survey across three generational categories:

- Gen Xers: born between 1965 and 1984 (n=949)
- Boomers: born between 1946 and 1964 (n=1048)
- Seniors: born in 1945 or earlier (n=920)

Fielding was completed between February 2 – February 18, 2018. The data were weighted to the US population by age, gender, race/ethnicity, marital status, education, employment status, and region using U.S. Census figures.