

YOU AND I ARE WITNESSING something that is unprecedented in the history of the United States. The number of people getting old is at record rates. And I am helping. Yes, I am one of the 76 million babies born after World War II during the years 1946 to 1964. We are called the Baby Boomers. We are the largest generation of older people ever assembled in the US and we started turning 65 in 2011. And I, being born in 1946, was in the first class of Boomers to turn 65. But when I had my 65th birthday I was not alone. On my birthday 9,999 other Boomers had their 65th birthday. That's right, 10,000 Baby Boomers per day are turning 65 and they are joining the 45 million people who are already there. Folks, that is a lot of old folks.

Look at it this way. There are a whole flock of people age 50 and above who are being herded toward the gate marked "65" and 10,000 per day are going through it. What does that gate lead to? For the minority it will lead to a pasture of green grass, financial security, comfort and years of good health. For others, it will open on to a rocky pasture with an oasis only now and then to sustain them. And for others, what lies beyond the 65 gate is a desert of poor relations, lack of finances, and poor health—a life full of emptiness. Statistics show that not many of us are prepared for what is on the other side of the gate. Many do not have a plan, a map or a blueprint for being 65 and beyond. Wise counsel for contentment in old age is needed.

How many old people are content with being old? We are human beings and not human doings so maybe contentment hinges more on being (the kind of person we are) than on doing (what we fill our time with). Many old people are finding things to kill time while they are waiting for time to kill them. That is not the kind of old man I want to be.

Old people pass through the gate and enter the pasture. On the other side of the pasture, opposite the gate, is a door—death's door. We don't know how long we get to stay in the pasture, but we do know that everyone who enters the gate will leave by the door. Are we prepared for that door to open for us? Are we prepared to die? I certainly want to be the kind of old man who is content to live and content to die. That is real contentment. I will have more to say about contentment throughout the book. I just want you to know that we can learn a lesson about contentment from Henry Ford, the founder of the Ford Motor Company. He retired a millionaire but he was content to live and to die never having owned a Cadillac.

If you have a question, somebody has already asked it, done the research to obtain the answer, and has posted the answer on the Internet. I was wondering at what age people consider themselves to be the most content. Sure enough, *Psychology Today* published some research done on the subject in the US. The winner was 41 as the age of contentment. In the UK, the Daily Mail reports the age of contentment to be slightly lower at 37. The majority responded that most of their life goals had been completed at that age. Why do I bring it up and why it is important to this work? I am concerned about older people being content in their old age. The *Psychology Today* article went on to say, "But once people hit 65, most people think their ideal age is behind them. For those over 65, the age of contentment is 59." My

purpose for this book is to convince people that the age of contentment does not have to be ahead of or behind you; it can be your age today and everyday of your life.

What would make a person content in their old age? The answer is obvious. People who have family close by, financial security, and good health are the most content. Remember that we Baby Boomers broke all the rules and we are paying the price as we enter old age. The divorce rate for this generation is the highest in US history. Families are shattered and scattered. Consumer credit has overextended us to where the markets cannot support us and the value of retirement funds has taken a severe hit in recent years. Good health can go in a second, and we are less likely to have it the older we get. The obvious basis for contentment in old age is not the reality for most of us old people.