



Here Comes Summer!

'Goodness, is it really December already?' She asked. 'I don't know where the year has gone. Do you remember how long the years felt when we were kids? And how summer seemed to go on forever?'

Oh yes, those endless weeks of freedom at the beach, with day after day spent in, on, or under the water. Slathered in baby oil, with a light coating of sand and sun-baked to a crisp. Racing back to the beach for gallons of orange cordial, or to the dairy for TT2 ice blocks. Mum's picnic lunches of white-bread egg sandwiches, cold sausages and fresh peaches, meant we weren't allowed back in the water for an hour, so we headed to explore rock pools or to read in the shade. At night, we'd roam until dark with the other beach kids, lighting bonfires, toasting marshmallows, playing cards. Everything was an adventure in doing and discovering what we loved.

So if those younger summers felt like they lasted forever, why do the years fly by now?

We know that time flies when you're having fun, but our memory of those events makes them seem far longer than they actually were. Hence, the long, golden days of summer holiday at the beach that really only lasted for two weeks -and probably rained half the time! Much of what we did was new and exciting. Every year, a bit older, we got to stay up later, be more adventurous, more independent. Summer holidays were rites of passage as we moved from kids to teenagers. Time mattered less as we were fully in the moment of each new day. It was our parents who sighed over the all-too-brief break away from work and routine.



How then, can these rushing years be made to go a little slower? And would we want them to? After all, days that drag because there is little to fill them with meaning or purpose, offer a deathly lethargy of routine – same stuff, different day.

If the rhythm of life is continually heart pumping or flat lining, the net effect is the same. It is variety we need to make life interesting and newness that makes it memorable.

So what about your summer? Will it be the same as the preceding years or decades? Are you fiercely holding on to traditions of Christmas past that may no longer serve you or your family? Is it time to reinvent the old familiar, or at least introduce new flavours?

This year our Christmas will look different again, with grandbaby Jack and blended families. It's in all our interests to find new ways of celebrating that create happy memories.

The same philosophy applies to the coming year. So many of us set the same hopeful, yet hopeless, annual intentions to lose weight, get fit, spend less, save more... Yet as John Tarnoff says, in his book *Boomer Reinvention* (2017), 'We keep looking for a way to change our lives, without having to change our lives to do it.'

We want to get fit, without having to exercise. We want a new relationship, without reflecting on how we contributed to the demise of the last. We want a new job, without learning new skills. We want more fun in our lives, but still go home from work and sink into the couch in front of TV.

Those childhood summers linger long in our memories because they changed every year as we grew. As adults, things change more slowly, yet there are still so many adventures to be had, if we choose to have them. The more experiences and memories we make, the longer they last.

So, rather than going into this holiday season on Groundhog Day repeat, what will make it a time worth remembering, for all the right reasons? Sure, combine the best elements of the past – in our family it's croissants and bubbly on Christmas morning – with new ideas. A picnic at the beach? Volunteer to serve lunch at the local shelter? A treasure hunt?

Perhaps the greatest gift you can give yourself this year is permission to do things differently. To plan for a summer you'll look back on as being far greater, more memorable than the sum of its days. Enjoy!

Jenny Magee works with Boomers to make the most of the second half of their lives. Her latest book **A Bold Life – How Boomer Women are Reinventing Life Beyond Fifty** is available at good bookstores or from www.jennymagee.com If you are looking to make significant changes, contact **Jenny** via email to jenny@jennymagee.com

