



How old am I? Old enough to remember when...

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I realize, in our youth-obsessed culture, being older is not always seen as something to be proud of. We are often criticized for being old-fashioned and out-of-touch.

But having a few more years under your belt is nothing to be ashamed of - and actually comes with many benefits. In fact, I wear my age as a badge of honor.

Honestly, a lot of the criticism about older people is self-inflicted. Too many of us sit around and complain about our aches and pains, talking constantly about what we can't do anymore.

By-the-way, if you are one of those annoying folks – cut it out! You're making the rest of us look bad. Instead, talk about what you're still pretty good at.

For example, with more birthdays comes the ability to instinctively see where we are now compared to where we used to be. Some call it institutional memory, which is not universally appreciated by all – especially the younger crowd.

OK. By this time, many of you are probably asking yourself how old I am. I know I would be. So without getting into specifics, let me answer you this way:

How old am I? Old enough to remember when we trusted experts instead of our own research. If you think access to the internet makes you as knowledgeable as those who have spent their lives studying something, you are a danger to yourself and others.

How old am I? Old enough to remember when we trusted our scientists. Climate change is real, caused by human activity, and will make the lives of our kids, grandkids, and great grandkids intolerable unless we do something about it now. Moreover, vaccines have saved millions of lives and have the potential to save millions more.

How old am I? Old enough to remember when we had an unwavering allegiance to the Constitution and anyone who deviated from its directives was immediately called out and subjected to the full weight of the law.

How old am I? Old enough to remember when members of Congress took their oversight responsibilities seriously and were not afraid to call out, and take action against, anyone who attempted to circumvent their Constitutional authority.

How old am I? Old enough to remember when the justice department was considered an independent agency with a wall between those who worked there and the executive branch - and even a hint of collusion between the two was considered improper.

How old am I? Old enough to remember when we appointed competent professionals to lead governmental agencies – not bungling dimwits whose only qualifications seem to be their unflinching loyalty to a narcissistic wannabe strongman.

How old am I? Old enough to remember when we were willing to lay down our lives to defend democracy. My grandfather fought in World War II. He knew fascists were the enemy and dictators were evil. He's undoubtedly turning over in his grave right about now.

How old am I? Old enough to remember when deploying the U.S. military against our own citizens would have been unthinkable. It's something they did in Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union – and something they still do in Russia, China, and North Korea.

How old am I? Old enough to remember when we saw huge banners of a leader draped down the side of a building, we knew we were watching a news report originating from a dictatorship that was suppressing the human rights of its citizens.

How old am I? Old enough to remember when we believed in the global free market instead of quasi-socialist crony capitalism. I also remember when we all knew tariffs were nothing more than taxes that are ultimately paid by American consumers.

Finally, how old am I?

Let's just say I'm old enough to remember when facts mattered, truth was pursued, sacrifice was honorable, the common good was valued, transparency was the aspiration, the rich were taxed appropriately, providing for the least among us was honorable, ideals were considered more important than agendas, cults were something you tried to get people out of, and there was a sense that we were all in this together.

In other words, I'm old – but not that old. Most of you remember what the world was like just a few short years ago.

Older folks know when we are headed in the right direction and when we're not. We intuitively know when things are going off the rails.

You youngsters out there might want to pay attention.



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