

You Won't Recognize Yourself in Ten Years (Maybe that's good!)

Most of us believe that we are now the same person that we will be in ten years, according to Dr. Daniel Gilbert of Harvard University. "All of us seem to have this sense that development is a process that has delivered us to this point and now we're done." However, Dr. Gilbert's longitudinal research reveals that personalities, interests and preferences actually do change markedly from one decade to another for much of the population. While some may consider this unsettling, the possibility of change may be more of an asset than a liability.

For example, in the same week that Dr. Gilbert's study was published in the journal *Science*, the *Journal of the American Medical Association* released findings that baby boomers "have more chronic illness and disability than their parents." This study is the first to compare generations and shows that those born between 1946 and 1964 become sicker earlier in life than their parents and are more likely to eventually need a cane or walker. Boomers do live longer than previous generations because of improved medical care; but the quality of these extended years is often significantly diminished.

Dr. Dana L King, lead author of the JAMA study, asserts "We have to fight to live well, not just live long. We like to say that 60 is the new 40, but you can't be that 40-something if you are just sitting on the couch."

While fewer boomers were smoking or had emphysema than their parents' generation, more had hypertension, higher cholesterol and were taking maintenance medications.



So clearly, those of us in the boomer generation and perhaps some Gen-Xers should use the JAMA study as a springboard to a healthier lifestyle. Your EAP can help!

- **Take stock:** There are multiple health risk assessments - including alcohol, cardiac, diabetes, and fitness - available under *Physical Health* at your Information Resources site. Each assessment will culminate in recommendations for making specific improvements.
- **Explore your EAP wellness discounts:** These are described in detail under *Lifestyle Benefits* and include offerings from WeightWatchers®; Jenny Craig®; SmokEnders®; Nutrition®; Healthtrax Fitness® and Workouts for You®.
- **Explore your video library:** Also located under *Physical Health*, you can access 900 health and wellness videos, many of which deal with nutrition, weight management and exercise.

To access your Information Resources site, log on to the web address listed below and let your EAP assist you on your transformative journey. It need not take ten years!