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Autor: MacArthur, Douglas
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YOUTH IS . .

YOUTH IS not entirely a time of life; it is a state of mind. It is not wholly a matter of ripe cheeks. It is a temper of the will, a quality of the imagination, a vigour of the emotions, a freshness of the deep springs of life. It means a temperamental predominance of courage over timidity, of an appetite for adventure over love of ease. Nobody grows old by merely living a number of years.

People grow old only by deserting their ideals. Years may wrinkle the skin, but to give up interest wrinkles the soul. Worry, doubt, self-distrust, fear, and despair — these are the long, long years that bow the head and turn the growing spirit back to dust.

Whatever your years, there is in every being's heart the love of wonder, the undaunted challenge of events, the unfailing child-like appetite for what next, and the joy and the game of life. You are as young as your faith, as old as your fear, as young as your hope, as old as your despair.

In the central place of every heart there is a recording chamber; so long as it receives messages of beauty, hope, cheer and courage — so long are you young. When the wires are all down and your heart is covered with the snows of pessimism and the ice of cynicism — then, and then only, are you grown old.

—From a speech by
General Douglas MacArthur
on his 75th Birthday