

# Want to change people's minds about aging? I can help.



I'm **Jeanette Leardi, M.A.**, a writer, editor, and community educator with a passion for elder empowerment. As an older adult myself and a former family caregiver for 17 years, I have experienced ageism as well as the rich assets of growing older. My goal is to share what I've learned with others.

Because I want to tell the truth about aging — that it's a natural process that should be embraced and celebrated — I give popular presentations and classes in journaling, spiritual writing, memoir writing, ethical wills, personal mythmaking, brain fitness, anti-ageism, caregiver support, and intergenerational communication to people of all ages.

I also [contribute](#) to Dr. Bill Thomas' [ChangingAging](#) blog. My publishing experiences include staff positions at *Newsweek*, *Life*, *People*, *Conde Nast Traveler*, and *Sesame Street* magazines and *The Charlotte Observer*. I have a Master's Degree with Honors in English from Rutgers University and a Graduate Certificate in Gerontology from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. You can learn more about my educational and editorial services at [www.jeanetteleardi.com](http://www.jeanetteleardi.com).

## Selected Blog Posts on Aging and Ageism

[It's Time to Believe Older Adults, Too](#)

[From "Senior" to "Sully" Moment](#)

[Age and the Potential to Change](#)

[What's Your Relationship with Aging?](#)

[The Six Assets of Aging](#)

[Addressing the Character of Ageism](#)

[Aging's Big PR Problem](#)

["Successful" Aging – On Whose Terms?](#)

[Turning the Tide on the "Silver Tsunami"](#)

# Specific Programs on Ageism

## **What's Age Got to Do with It? Busting the Myths About Getting Older**

It's a fact of life that no matter who you are, you're aging. But do you really know what aging means? Is getting old something to fear and dread, or does it lead to surprising benefits not possible to enjoy at younger ages?

This engaging presentation will help you discover what aging is — and what it isn't. Drawing from the latest scientific research, it busts social myths and negative stereotypes about older adults and offers practical tips for disrupting the ageism that keeps people of all generations from fully contributing to society.

## **Disrupting Ageism: Turning Awareness into Action**

Ageism is often described as “the last acceptable prejudice of society” and ironically, the one to which everyone is susceptible because aging is a natural and inevitable process of life. The first step in eliminating ageist attitudes and behavior is to be aware of them. From this awareness must come action, if ageism is to be disrupted.

As you learn more about how ageism diminishes our culture and our lives, how can you use that knowledge to build a more supportive community for all ages? What actions can you take to obliterate it?

In this workshop, you will analyze ageist situations and come up with effective strategies for neutralizing prejudicial perceptions and bigoted language and behaviors, which you can then apply to experiences you encounter in the future.

## **In Other Words: Transforming the Language of Ageism**

One of the most important social issues of our time is the honoring of the aging process as not only a moral good but as a public necessity. The success of any program, product, or service that professionals offer to older adults depends on a willingness and ability to dispel the many unproductive American myths and stereotypes that have defined aging solely in terms of deficit and decline rather than as a social and economic asset.

Such myths and stereotypes are reinforced in the ageist language our culture uses to describe getting and being older. This presentation/workshop for professionals in aging services explores how ageist language informs our perceptions and how those perceptions, in turn, determine our language. Participants will learn practical strategies for helping others recognize and break that cycle by transforming ageist language into a truer expression of the older adult experience.

## What Others Are Saying...

“[Jeanette Leardi] combines laser-sharp social analysis with an accessible voice, a rare skill that makes her voice an important one in the emerging social movement to end ageism.”

“...In addition, I recently had opportunity to co-facilitate two conference workshops with [her] on ways to recognize and disrupt ageism....I'd happily work with her again, in any kind of setting, and heartily recommend her to any organization or business in search of an exceptionally smart and competent speaker or trainer.”

— **Ashton Applewhite**  
Principal at This Chair Rocks

“[Jeanette] has the ability to take challenging or abstract concepts and make them understandable and applicable, always with respect for her audience. [Her] presentation style is engaging, natural, and confident.”

— **Jessica McLaren**  
Program Coordinator, AARP Experience Corps, Metropolitan Family Service

“Jeanette Leardi is an exceptional instructor who inspires her audience and helps them embrace new opportunities to learn, grow, and develop....Her facilitation is warm, engaging, thought-provoking, and positive. Her presentations are clear, consistent, and enthusiastic. Jeanette is passionate about lifelong learning. That passion transcends all of her work and inspires us to live our lives as an expression of our values. Thank you, Jeanette!”

— **Steve Higgs**  
Executive Director, Senior Advocates for Generational Equity

“Looking for a multi-talented speaker, author, and teacher? Jeanette Leardi fits the bill.... Her presentation [on creativity and the older brain] engaged the audience, caused people to think, and succeeded in ‘busting’ many of the myths and negative stereotypes about aging. Jeanette is a pleasure to work with. She listens carefully to the parameters of any project or presentation in which she is involved. She is easygoing and smart. I recommend her to you without reservation.”

— **Katherine Foldes**  
Author, *Family Meeting Handbook*