

## The Ageless Self: Sources of Meaning in Late Life (Life course studies)

*Sharon R. Kaufman*

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**Sharon R. Kaufman : The Ageless Self: Sources of Meaning in Late Life (Life course studies)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Ageless Self: Sources of Meaning in Late Life (Life course studies):

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Finally, something scholarly and thoughtful. I read and savored this well researched book because it depicted an insight into senior's actual daily lives and the thoughts and planning accompanying their life styles. I appreciated Kaufman's focus on individual life themes and how a person's younger years translate into self-identity and meaning in the senior years. The prospect of aging is not as foreboding when approached in this linear manner. Thank-you for a very well written book. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. The Ageless Self: By Susan D. The book does a nice job providing theme analysis though a case study format. Nice choice for a supplement to Human Development classes. 0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great book, delayed delivery by hipp... By jadaboo! Really great book, love the aspects the author took of the frail adult in later life. The only downfall is I needed it for class and it arrived a week after class, even though I ordered two weeks ahead of time. I aced my class and really enjoyed the book overall. I would read it even if it wasn't required for class.

Among the many studies of aging and the aged, there is comparatively little material in which the aged speak for

themselves. In this compelling study, Sharon Kaufman encourages just such expression, recording and presenting the voices of a number of old Americans. Her informants tell their life stories and relate their most personal feelings about becoming old. Each story is unique, and yet, presented together, they inevitably weave a clear pattern, one that clashes sharply with much current gerontological thought. With this book, Sharon Kaufman allows us to understand the experience of the aging by listening to the aged themselves. Kaufman, while maintaining objectivity, is able to draw an intimate portrait of her subjects. We come to know these people as individuals and we become involved with their lives. Through their words, we find that the aging process is not merely a period of sensory, functional, economic, and social decline. Old people continue to participate in society, and more important, continue to interpret their participation in the social world. Through themes constructed from these stories, we can see how the old not only cope with losses, but how they create new meaning as they reformulate and build viable selves. Creating identity, Kaufman stresses, is a lifelong process. Sharon Kaufman's book will be of interest and value not only to students of gerontology and life span development, and to professionals in the field of aging, but to everyone who is concerned with the aging process itself. As Sharon Kaufman says, "If we can find the sources of meaning held by the elderly and see how individuals put it all together, we will go a long way toward appreciating the complexity of human aging and the ultimate reality of coming to terms with one's whole life."

From Library Journal Despite the interest in the aging process in recent years, few researchers have asked the elderly themselves what it is like to grow old. Anthropologist Kaufman interviewed 60 Californians, aged 60 to 90, about significant events in their pasts, their day-to-day lives now, their thoughts about themselves, and their reflections on aging. She discovered that most older people retain a clear image of themselves over the course of a lifetime and use themes formulated in the past to help understand and cope with life in the present. The narratives developed from six of the interviews are the best feature of this book; the theoretical analysis is interesting but requires a knowledge of social gerontology to be fully appreciated. Karen McNally Bensing, Metropolitan General Hosp. Lib., Cleveland Copyright 1987 Reed Business Information, Inc. "I just saw some slides of myself and was quite taken aback. That couldn't be me. That's a nice looking woman, but it couldn't possibly be me. Even though I look in the mirror all the time, I don't see myself as old." Martha, age 70