

Discovering You're Old

You know, now that I'm past that half-century mark in age, I wake up in the morning, look in the mirror and realize that the new me is now the old me.

Sigh.

I guess this thought crystallized last Saturday when I arrived at my first senior tennis match of the season. Yes, senior.

Senior.

In tennis terms, that means 55-and-counting. But the two gals my partner and I were playing against sure didn't look like seniors. They looked like hard-bodied, uber-energetic 30-year-olds who had forgotten their moisturizers that morning. I mean, really, until you got up close enough to see a few crows' feet and forehead creases, you'd never know these trim, pony-tailed, cellulite-free gals were past the potty-training years.

I had to fight the temptation to demand they cough up their driver's licenses.

Without meaning to, I became acutely aware of the gray sprigs sproinging wildly from beneath my terry-cloth headband and the ample thigh skin that kept jiggling long after I stopped running.

Hey—why can't women shed old, loose skin like snakes do? Every spring, we could simply scrape that saggy, baggy, crinkly wrapper encasing our youthful insides off on a sharp rock. We could start over fresh, with unmarred, supple, beautiful new skin, soft as a baby's bottom.

Reminds me of the day last April when I walked out my back door to empty a trash can and encountered a perfectly intact 4-foot snakeskin caught in the vines atop our wooden fence. It

was the perfect shape and markings of our serpent friend, Servius (Spouse and I named the pleasant reptilian fellow who likes to drape himself along the top of the fence). Only Servius wasn't in there. He was about 3 yards further down the fence, basking in the sunshine. He looked so happy and carefree—as happy and carefree as snakes can look—to be rid of that itchy, peeling, confining shell that probably felt like a too-tight sausage casing.

He appeared so jubilant, I thought he might burst into song at any moment: “I feel pretty, oh, so pretty ... “

How utterly wonderful for him, I thought. He gets a chance to start all over. To discard any flaws, pimples, age spots or imperfections that might have marred him in reptile world and enjoy a do-over. Better luck next time. A full-body makeover.

But alas, for some reason, Papa God didn't think this system would bode well for us humans. Pity.

So instead, I'll have to figure out ways to encase the jiggling thigh-u-lite in spandex, squeeze out the facial wrinkles with alligator clips behind the ears, grow bangs over the forehead furrows and invest in vats of moisturizer.

And be grateful that the new old me is still here to distress over it.

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