

What Will Your “Back In My Day” Be Like?

Have you stopped lately to consider what stories you'll be telling your children when you're 40? Your grandchildren when you're 80?

This is a useful thought exercise. If you are in your teens, 20s, or 30s now, it makes you think about what you're doing. And if you do not have a good answer, you might want to do something about it.

If you're spending all your time on Tinder, or shopping, or fighting about politics, or playing video games, or drinking, or watching Netflix, your children and grandchildren will be profoundly bored and unimpressed by 40 and 80-year old you. Think about that.

Then think about the stories that awed you that your grandfather/grandmother or father/mother told you about their youths. What were they like?

Odds are, they were stories about risk, adventure, struggle, mischief, heroism, friendship, and excellence – or some combination of those. They were stories about the outdoors, about work, about travel, about relationships (romantic and platonic), about stupid mistakes and chances taken, great feats of creativity or strength or courage, and the like.

Your grandfather went overseas with the navy. Your grandmother went to medical school when few other women did. Your other grandmother raced sailboats. Your mother saw Shakespeare performed in the Globe Theatre. Your father started a produce business with his high school buddies.

You want stories like these when you're old – but you also want stories of your own. And if you plan to be able to tell good stories about your youth, you'd better get started on making better stories now. If you think it will be fun to tell about these memories, imagine how much fun it will be to make them.