

# GET YOUR HEAD IN THE GAME

CUTTING-EDGE RESEARCH IS SHOWING THAT YOUR OUTLOOK CAN CHANGE HOW YOU AGE—AT THE CELLULAR LEVEL. HERE'S HOW

BY JEFFREY KLUGER

WE TEND TO FACE AGING WITH FEEL-GOOD SLOGANS, bringing platitudes to a knife fight. "I'm 70 years young!" we say, ignoring the fact that, going by average U.S. life expectancy, it won't be long before we're 78 years dead. "Fifty is the new 40," we tell ourselves, when the mathematical reality is no, it's not. Fifty will never even be the new 49½.

Then comes a bit of wisdom that, if anything, seems like the most shopworn of all: "You're only as old as you feel." As sentiments go, it has the twin flaws of being both banal and blaming—as if feeling old is your own fault. It turns out, however, that whoever coined that one may have been onto something big.

It's no secret anymore that the familiar mind-body divide, with your head home to the abstract and ethereal and your flesh home to the messy and mechanical, is nonsense. Your moods, feelings and thoughts all influence your physiology. Learn to relax and your blood pressure goes down; emerge from depression and your immune system picks up; take a pharmacologically useless sugar pill that you're told is a powerful drug for your headache or backache or infection and as if by magic, you get better.

The tantalizing question, then, has always been this: If the mind can heal the body, can it also rejuvenate it? Can it make it physically, measurably younger or, at the very least, slow the aging process? The people who research such things already accept that the way we

