



# **Aging with Grace: What the Nun Study Teaches Us About Leading Longer, Healthier, and More Meaningful Lives**

*David Snowdon*

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In 1986 epidemiologist Dr. David Snowdon embarked on a revolutionary scientific study that would forever change the way we view aging and old age. Dubbed the "Nun Study" because it involves a unique population of 678 Catholic sisters, this remarkable long-term research project remains today at the forefront of some of the world's most significant research on aging.

This remarkable book by one of the world's leading experts on Alzheimer's disease combines fascinating high-tech research on the brain with the heartfelt story of the aging nuns who are teaching scientists how we grow old — and how we can do so with grace. The Nun Study's findings are already helping scientists unlock the secrets to living a longer, healthier life.

Yet **Aging With Grace** is more than a groundbreaking health and hard-science book. It is the story of an altar boy who grew up to be a scientist studying the effects of aging on nuns. It is the poignant and inspiring stories of the nuns themselves. Ranging in age from 75 to 104, these remarkable women have allowed Dr. Snowdon access to their medical and personal records — and they have agreed to donate their brains upon death.

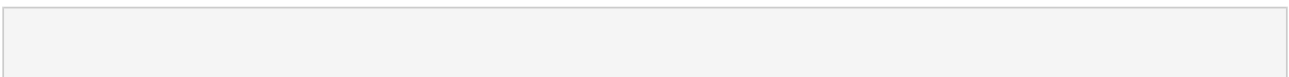
In **Aging With Grace**, we accompany Dr. Snowdon on his loving visits to nuns like Sister Clarissa, who at the age of 90 drives around the convent in a motorized cart she calls her "Chevy" and knows as much about baseball as any die-hard fan a third her age.

Then there is 104-year-old Sister Matthia, who until her death in 1998 knitted two pairs of mittens a day and prayed every evening for each of the four thousand students she taught over the years. These bright, articulate, and altruistic women have much to teach us about how faith, wisdom, and spirituality can influence the length and quality of our lives.


We also follow Dr. Snowdon into the lab as he and his colleagues race to decode one of the most devastating diseases known to humanity. We discover:

- \* Why high linguistic ability in early life seems to protect against Alzheimer's
- \* Which ordinary foods in the diet defend the brain against aging
- \* Why preventing strokes and depression is key to avoiding dementia
- \* Why it's never too late to start an exercise program
- \* What role heredity plays, and how lifestyle can increase our chances for a mentally vital old age
- \* How intangibles like community and faith help us age with grace

Both cutting-edge science and a personal prescription for hope, **Aging With Grace** shows how old age doesn't have to mean an inevitable slide into illness and disability; rather, it can be a time of promise and productivity, intellectual and spiritual vigor, and continuing freedom from disease.



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