



THE GODDESS SPEAKS

Sunny Massad

There's a cure for bouts of adultism

THERE IS A MALADY I like to call "adultism," a term you won't find in a dictionary or psychology textbook. Symptoms include making statements like, "I always wanted to do that but I'm too old, too out of shape, or too afraid to do it now."

If you always wanted to learn to play an instrument or travel somewhere or even learn to scuba dive but now feel that it's

When you were a kid, you didn't flinch at the idea that learning to ride a bicycle or skateboard would require a dozen spills that would result in scraped knees and bruised pride.

too late, you have caught a case of adultism.

Adultism is a malady of self-consciousness that plagues adults of all ages. It is the result of a crystallized ego that is afraid to look or sound like a novice; even while attempting something new!

When you were a kid, you didn't flinch at the idea that learning to ride a bicycle or skateboard would require a dozen spills that would result in scraped knees and bruised pride. It was worth the pain to discover the joy of riding that

bike with the wind streaming through your hair. Remember the seemingly endless first year of listening to another kid learn how to play an instrument? Kids simply suffer through the learning curve.

I'm unsure about what age adultism begins, but as years pass some grownups get so caught up in the routine of daily living that they simply forget to play. When was the last time that you went to the park or on a picnic? Have you taken a long walk or a dip in the water lately? If not, think about the reason why. Was it because you were too self-conscious about something? Do you hold yourself back from doing things you did when you were younger because you worry what others will think of you? Even if they are complete strangers?

HAVE NO FEAR. Adultism is a curable malady. Re-examine the attitudes, behaviors and standards that have turned you into a boring adult. Stop comparing yourself to anyone else, or even to a younger you. Enjoy the moment. Do you yearn to belly dance but think you are too old and out of shape to learn now? Humbug! Find a class and enjoy.

Get in touch with your dreams and your desires. Stop asking yourself what you "should" do and start asking yourself what you "want" to do. It is perfectly acceptable to make mistakes doing something you are just learning. It's admirable to see an older person trying something new!

You can recapture the joys of youth at any age. All you have to do is swallow your pride. Don't worry, though, you can wash it down with milk and cookies.

Sunny Massad, who has a Ph.D. in psychology, is the founder of the Hawaii Wellness Institute, which offers retreats and workshops for mind and body.

"The Goddess Speaks" runs Tuesdays. Write to: "The Goddess Speaks," 7 Waterfront Plaza, Suite 210, Honolulu 96813; or e-mail

features@starbulletin.com