

# Letters to Dr. Walter Bortz II

*Dear Dr. Bortz: A little bird tweeted me that you have written another book. I have read and enjoyed your previous ones. So because of this, I plan to enjoy this one as well.*

– Joe Dearing, Pittsfield, MA

**Dear Joe:**

Your little bird got it right. Yes, I have written and now have seen a first copy of my sixth book. Two earlier ones were about diabetes and this third about aging. Its title is *“Roadmap to 100. The Science Behind a Long and Healthy Life.”* Its publisher is Palgrave MacMillan, which is a major coincidence because MacMillan published a book of my father’s *“Creative Aging”* in 1963.

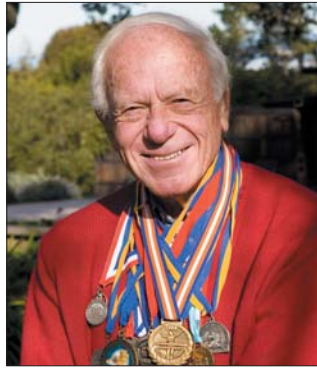
**On re-reading that book, one** recognizes the precociousness of his grasp of the ideals of a long life and the steps we can all take to increase our chance of reaching it.

I am proud of my earlier books on aging, *“We Live Too Short and Die Too Long,”* *“Dare to be 100,”* and *“Living Longer for Dummies.”* Each of these presented my best thinking of the moment.

**One feature that I find fascinating** is how much we have learned, even in the 29 years since the first one was published in 1981.

Much of the earlier reporting was guesswork, and frankly, not fully worked out yet. For example, from the beginning, I projected that the natural human lifespan extended at least to 100 years, 122 for Madam Calment.

Earlier readers were concerned that I was merely blowing smoke and that a hundred years was a mirage, reached by only a few artifacts.



Now, I believe that a hundred years is securely established as the human potential.

**Another early insight** was the fact that heredity was not as important as otherwise acknowledged. This is an important differentiation because you can’t do anything about heredity but you can do a great deal about how we age.

“It ain’t the cards you are dealt that matters, but how you play the hand.” This recognition goes by the relatively new term of “epigenetics” that is described in my new book. *Time* magazine recently had a cover story acknowledging this “new” insight.

**But even bigger than these** two major understandings is the fact that the last few years have opened the door as to what aging truly represents and not some mischievous divine retribution. Two years ago, my good friend Leonard Hayflick, Nobel candidate and eminent gerontologist, published an article in which he said “biologic aging is no longer an unsolved problem.”

This progress, which has been developed, particularly in this last book *“Roadmap to 100,”* helps to illustrate how the new powerful

basic understanding has evolved. I’m proud of being a part of it and hope you may enjoy this new telling.

*Dear Dr. Bortz: Of all your speculations and insights about growing older, I’m anxious to ask you if you had to nominate a single idea which is most important in the whole field, what would it be? --Jamie Crescent, Denver, CO*

**Dear Jamie:** Easy answer: engagement. That one word encompasses the force that allows life, not only just to happen but to be enriched. “Engagement” rules.

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Dr. Walter Bortz’s latest book, *THE ROADMAP TO 100*, shows how aging cannot be viewed as a disease that is curable by a never ending stream of medication. *THE ROADMAP TO 100* shows how physical fitness, social engagement, proper nutrition and even an active sex life can add years and immense quality to anyone’s life.

Published by Palgrave Macmillan. Available wherever books are sold.

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*Dr. Walter Bortz II is one of America’s most distinguished scientific experts on healthy aging and longevity. He spent his entire career at Stanford University where he holds the position of Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine. An active marathoner, he has written six books and is working on his seventh: Next Medicine. Would you like to contact Dr. Bortz? Email him at DrBortz@aol.com or visit www.walterbortz.com.*