

Let the purging begin

Turns out your millennial children don't want your formal dining room set, your fine bone china, or the antiques you've been collecting.

They're also not too attached to mementos -- yours or their own childhood trophies, scrapbooks, and artwork.

See:

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/business/chi-millennials-nix-parents-treasures-20150328-story.html#page=1>

Many millennials are living compact urban lives, they have their own aesthetic sensibility, and they're cataloging their memories digitally.

Do your kids a favor. Let the purge begin.

Portrait of Decline

A combination of heartbreak, the unvarnished truth, and humor make Roz Chast's graphic novel, *Can't We Talk About Something More Pleasant*, a compelling read for anyone facing the health decline of an aging loved one.

The *New Yorker* cartoonist uses her formidable skills to deliver an unflinching look at what that decline really looks like, along with the effect that it all has on the caretaker-child.

Cartoons, drawings, and text convey the guilt, exhaustion, chronic dread, heartbreak, and the hemorrhaging of money associated with caretaking and when adult kids become their parents' parent.

Interspersed with the depictions of the indignities of extreme old age is a biting, dark humor.

Much of that stems from the chaos Chast faces in her parents' overstuffed Brooklyn apartment.

There's the "crazy closet." It's jammed with everything from tattered clothing and unusable record players, to ancient luggage and 40-year-old blankets.

Chast discovers a drawer full of old metal jar lids. She photographs what she names her dad's Museum of old Schick shavers.

And, like so many kids, Chast had neither the energy nor the desire to sift through the stuff. Eventually, she turns

to the building's super and asks him to take care of – dump -- virtually everything.

The book imparts numerous lessons. One critical takeaway: Don't do this to your children.

Listen to an interview with Chast at <http://www.npr.org/2014/05/08/310725572/a-cartoonists-funny-heartbreaking-take-on-caring-for-aging-parents>.

Seymour: An Introduction

Actor Ethan Hawke turns his attention to Seymour Bernstein in a documentary, "Seymour: An Introduction" that introduces viewers to an 88-year-old New York pianist who gave up the spotlight as a concert pianist to devote his life to teaching.

The movie (<http://www.seymouranintroduction.com/>) is sublime.

For one, there's finally a depiction of a senior who has contributions to make, enduring insights to share, and someone with abundant talent who's leading a rich, fulfilling life as he ages.

He's not playing tennis, he's not living in oh-so-perfect designer digs, and he's not dining on precious spa salads.

Instead he lives in a messy one-room New York apartment where he works magic.

He teaches tomorrow's musical superstars and passes on his genius and wisdom.

You see Bernstein giving master classes. You witness his pure joy when he finds the perfect Steinway piano for an upcoming performance.

But it's not just the music that's magic in the movie. His philosophy about life, competition, fear, mentoring, and the search for meaning are inspiring.

He says, "Life has conflicts, pleasures, harmony, and dissonance. The same thing occurs in music."

Bernstein, it seems, has found the perfect way to age – engaged, busy, and steeped in his art. And he's loved and respected.

Current and former musicians will relate to the bliss that making music brings. Bernstein notes that most people don't tap the god within and talks about how music can allow us to become one with the stars.

Even if music isn't your thing, you can find your own way to become one with the stars.

Digital life planning

Good planners get their home, will, and health care power-of-attorney in place. But what about your digital life, particularly Facebook?

Often when people pass away, friends and family "gather" on Facebook to memorialize a loved one.

It's helpful to have someone who can take charge of the Facebook page and share information and updates.

But if no one knows your password, no one can control your Facebook page. Facebook now allows users to designate a "legacy contact" to manage a user's Facebook account after death.

Here's how to designate someone:
<http://lifehacker.com/how-to-set-up-a-facebook-legacy-contact-for-when-you-1685544248> and
<https://www.facebook.com/help/1568013990080948>.

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