

The notion of being older but wiser doesn't really impress me all that much now that I'm , well, older. The older one gets, the more experiences one has which does not increase your intellect as much as it increases your common sense, which we all agree that common sense is always wiser than intellect.

I'm in my 50's right now and I can tell you that I certainly do not think I am more intellectual than I was in my youth, which is also not very impressive given the academic resume of my youth. But my common sense has increased ten fold as I join the ranks of senior discounts.

A good example of this happened to me this week.

I can tell you with absolute certainty that the person who coined the phrase, "common cold" was in his twenties. I know this not by reading books or becoming an intellectual genius, but because I am in my fifties and want to find this person and slap him silly for saying such a thing.

When you are in your teens or twenties and catch a cold, you are likely to simply scoff at it as a mere inconvenience. You continue on with your daily adventures with the only difference being that you are a bit snotty, tend to sneeze more and you hear people say, "Dude, you sound like ya gotta cold or somethin'" to which you brush them off with an intellectual response that salt water is the perfect cure for the common cold, so let's blow the afternoon classes and go surfing.

When you are in your thirties and forties and catch a cold, you are smart enough not to skip work and go surfing as it has always been hard to sell employers on the benefits of salt water for the common cold. The cold is more of an annoyance than inconvenience, however, and you are likely to take a day off from work in the best interest of not spreading germs to your co-workers. And although you lack a good measure of energy, you still have enough in the tank to spend the day writing and catching up with some of those projects that you always seem to be behind on. Having a cold in your thirties and forties can actually be a nice break for you. Your spouse, kids and co-workers all feel sorry for you, and don't think for a moment that there isn't one soul alive who doesn't take advantage of this scenario. We all know how to use the common cold to get us out of many of life's chores.

When you are over fifty, there is nothing common about catching a cold. Simply put, you

want to die. You force yourself to get out of bed around noon and go lie on the couch. This gives you a sense of actually doing something. You might turn on the TV, but your brain is in no condition to even try and comprehend daytime television, so you're better off leaving your world quiet and still. You stare blankly out your window, as your biggest achievement is in using your eyebrows to lift your heavy eyelids when you occasionally blink. You want to sleep but it's the middle of the day and after all, this is just a common cold for crying out loud. Your mind is debating back and forth on whether it's starve a cold, feed a fever or feed a cold, starve a fever. It doesn't matter however, because the kitchen is well over five feet away and there is no way in hell you are ever going to make that journey.

The hardest part of a common cold after fifty is not the physical, but the emotional beating you take. You are constantly reminding yourself that this is just a cold as your mind plays back those days of surfing and laughing through this very same disease. You ponder the paranoia in thinking that if a common cold can reduce you to hours upon hours of glazed staring, what could possibly happen if you actually got sick with something that is not considered common.

When you finally go back to work, you never tell people that you had a cold. These people are younger than you and will just laugh at you for taking four days off for a cold? So you call it something like bronchitis and try to make it sound like you are a gallant warrior for surviving.

Yes my heightened common sense clearly dictates that those who refer to it as a common cold are too young and stupid to have any say in the matter.

I must stop here. My eyebrows are exhausted from holding up my eyelids through all of this and I desperately need a nap. And I'm only on day four of this common cold.

Somebody just shoot me already.

Just A Thought