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Maturity

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Maturity is one of those concepts whose meaning has changed through my life.

As a child, maturity was something we wanted to achieve. Being mature was equated with acting in a dignified, grown-up manner. In voices dripping with sarcasm, “Oh, that’s really mature,” was a common insult among my brothers and sisters. “You’re being childish,” was another. Other, similar chastisements came from parents, teachers and friends, as well as siblings.

“Grow up!”

“Act your age!”

“Behave yourself!”

“Quit being such a baby!”

So, I strived to be more mature. Through my childhood, and right on into adulthood, I worked to control my temper and my tears. Both have always been my most common responses to frustration or stress. Those, and sometimes a case of the giggles at the most inappropriate times. They still are. Clearly, none are very mature ways to deal with difficult situations. I still try to do better.

Something changed, though, while I was rehearsing conversations, practicing alternate reactions to possible scenarios, and reading up on *The Gentle Art of Verbal Self-Defense*. I got old! Wrinkles and gray hair would give me away if I tried to deny it, which I don't. But, you know how old age is referred to? Maturity!

So, maturity has finally found me, though not in any of the ways I went looking for it. I still lose my temper more often than I'd like. I continue to embarrass myself by my inability to control my tears when I'm frustrated by a confrontation. Sometimes, still, I laugh when it is definitely not the proper response. I doubt anyone, though, looking at my wizened countenance, is going to tell me to "grow up," or "act my age." Clearly, I have matured. I'm just not yet very mature!