My friend, DJ, was telling me that its tough getting old. Young folks don’t have the same work ethic, society is changing and who can get along with this younger generation. It is just difficult to teach old dog new tricks. He confessed, he’s an old dog.

I told my fifteen year old that I was going to write an article about grumpy old men. She replied, “That sounds about right.” She knows an expert when she sees one. Becoming a grumpy old man is a common malady that usually sets in between the ages of 40 and 60 years old. This problem can put a lot of stress on your Coupling.

It seems to be an intermittent disorder, sort of like Tourette’s. Several of my friends have it. It could be epidemic, even contagious, and the children are afraid. You can diagnose this problem by the common symptoms of crabbiness, cynicism, irritability and self-righteousness. You will find that those suffering also experience a great deal of frustration and are overbearing.

These criteria suggest that “Grumpy Old Man” or GOM may be a diagnosable syndrome therefore it’s not my fault. Watch for pharmaceutical commercials on your TV soon!

Of course, all of this is in jest, but fellows lets’ be serious, we have to take responsibility for our mood and behavior.

The origin may be our own proclivity for being a fuddy duddy. We get in a routine, we’re comfortable with our lives and we don’t want to be disturbed. We know how something needs to be done and the right way to do it, tried and true. Heaven forbid someone suggest another way.

We know now that dementia can be held at bay by staying active and creatively engaged. I’m convinced that old fashioned ‘hardening of the arteries’ was a condition brought on in the sameness of life. But life and therefore relationships are complex and ever changing.

Come on guys, roll with it, adapt. The world of the 1950’s or the ‘70’s or whatever generation you are from is gone. Letting go of the familiar comfort of the past is difficult. This is not a male dominated society. Women work, children grow up and make their own decisions, the pension plans of the past have evaporated. You can no longer rest in the selfish comfort of your routine.

Open yourself to change, expand the contract of your relationship to try new responsibilities, raise your eyes to new horizons. The boring stodginess of resistance to change yields a fine crop of resentment in a relationship. The world is changing and we have to be open to growth.

Remember to be kind, I know its tough, but you can do it. Try to allow for others to grow, make mistakes, and explore. These require patience, but mentoring and caring for the next generation could pay off when they shave your neck when you’re ninety. You might even try making some mistakes yourself.

I’ve omitted mentioning the ladies in this diatribe. Women have their periods of difficulty; and then there’s pre, peri, and post “men are d’causal.” We can address this later (not really, not as long as I’m married!)