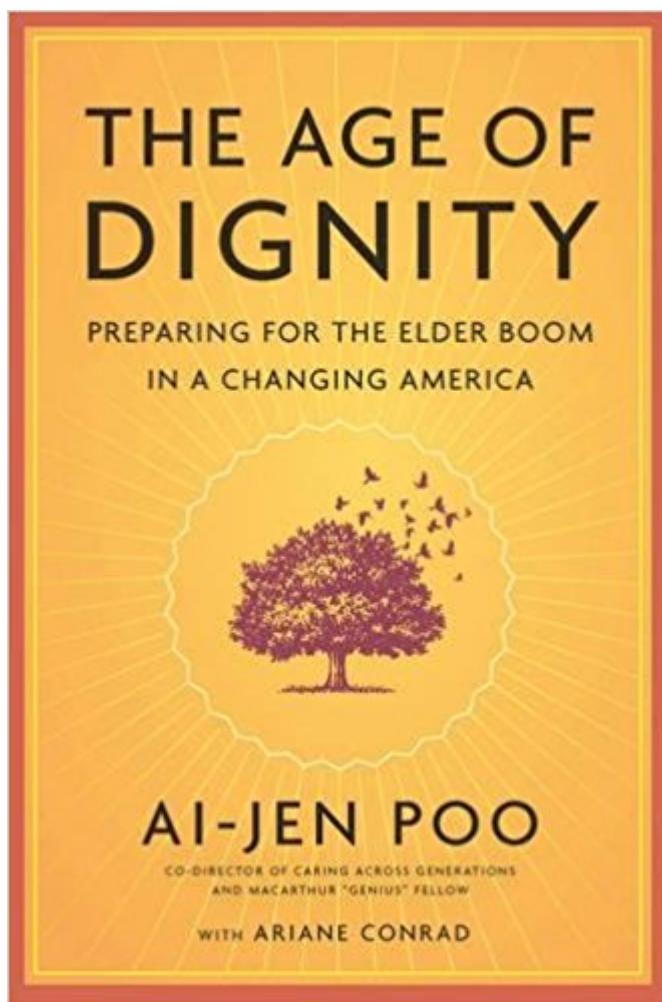


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# The Age Of Dignity: Preparing For The Elder Boom In A Changing America



## Synopsis

In *The Age of Dignity*, thought leader and activist Ai-jen Poo offers a wake-up call about the demographic reality that will affect us all. "We have more senior citizens in America today than we've had at any time in our history," Poo writes, pointing out that more than 14 percent of our population is now over sixty-five; by 2030 that ratio will be one in five. In fact, our fastest-growing demographic is the eighty-five-plus age group "over 5 million people now, a number that is expected to more than double in the next twenty years. This change presents us with a new challenge: how we care for and support quality of life for the unprecedented numbers of older Americans who will need it. Despite these daunting numbers, Poo has written a profoundly hopeful book, giving us a glimpse into the stories and often hidden experiences of the people "family caregivers, older people, and home care workers" whose lives will be directly shaped and reshaped in this moment of demographic change. *The Age of Dignity* outlines a road map for how we can become a more caring nation, providing solutions for fixing our fraying safety net while also increasing opportunities for women, immigrants, and the unemployed in our workforce. As Poo has said, "Care is the strategy and the solution toward a better future for all of us."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A big-hearted book [that] seeks to transform our dismal view of aging and caregiving."—Ms. Magazine "This book is a starter for conversations that are long overdue. If you are someone's child, a spouse, or concerned about yourself someday, *The Age of Dignity* will give you food for

thought." The Philadelphia Tribune "Poo's positive and inclusive approach is particularly appealing;[O]ffers a critical and complementary perspective on this important issue." The New York Times "[P]rovides an accessible and heartfelt look at a major problem looming for the United States; how we will care for baby boomer generation as it rapidly ages." Colorlines "This book fills a crucial gap in existing literature: it is now the foremost writing that demonstrates the interconnectedness of elder care issues with the rights of women, immigrants, and all workers." Feministing "This can-do book by an activist seeking to rouse the public into action has a lot to say to anyone who plans on getting old." Kirkus Reviews "Thoughtful, moving, and relatable, with numerous personal and professional anecdotes, Poo delivers a concise discussion recommended for readers interested in the social sciences or elder care." Library Journal "A strong argument for a cultural and governmental shift toward valuing older citizens and providing them with opportunities for rich, full lives." Publishers Weekly "People getting older is not a crisis, it's a blessing. That is the message of *The Age of Dignity*, an urgent and irresistible book by Ai-jen Poo. To benefit from this blessing of experience that comes with longer life expectancy, we'll need more well-paid and expert home care workers. In just the next four years, that demand will increase by more than 90 percent. This gives you some idea why every American should read this slender book. With luck, it will be the future for all of us." Gloria Steinem

Ai-jen Poo is the director of the National Domestic Workers Alliance and a co-director of the Caring Across Generations campaign. Her accolades include the Ms. Foundation Woman of Vision Award, Newsweek's 150 Fearless Women list, and Time's list of the 100 Most Influential People in the World. She lives in New York.

*The Age of Dignity* takes a refreshing look at the issues - and solutions - our aging, multi-cultural society face. Through the power of story-telling, Ai-jen Poo puts human faces on the seemingly intractable issues of long term care and caregiving in the United States. The beauty of this work is that the answers are laid out before us: connect the needs of an aging (and disabled) population with the needs of a growing workforce that cries out for basic labor rights, education and training. "Dignity" and "care" are not exclusive concepts - we all need them. Poo shows us a way to get there.

I'm a homecare RN. *The Age of Dignity* is a clarion call, pointing not just to the impending

crisis of Aging America, but to the heroines and heroes who are already guiding the most vulnerable among us to safety and dignity. It is to Ai-jen Poo's great credit that she came to the problem of caring for elderly Americans 14 years ago, before it had even occurred to most of us that the Baby Boomers were going to grow old en masse. That long-term familiarity is clearly evidenced in the wide scope of strategies she explores. Rather than pointing to a panacea, Ms. Poo knows that only a mosaic of creative and dedicated solutions will offer success in tackling what will surely be the greatest social policy challenge of the first half of this century. And even more inspiring, Ms. Poo understands that this struggle will ultimately be won not by policy, but by the women who actually devote their hearts and lives to caring, day after day, for our elderly and frail. This book, then, is not ultimately Ms. Poo's story: it is the story of the skilled and loving women she brings so vividly to life from the pages of *The Age of Dignity*.

This is a very timely and important book that brings together the challenges we face in immigration, creating skilled jobs, addressing the needs of both the "sandwich" generation and the booming (and aging) Baby Boomers. Articulate, engaging and strategic, Ai-Jen Poo makes the case for a "caring economy." She skillfully uses storytelling to demonstrate where we are, what's coming, and where solutions are that can address all these personal and societal problems at the same time, in a humane, cost-effective way that provides dignity for all (the caretakers, the families who hire caretakers, and those who need care--that's pretty much ALL of us!). As she says, it's her intention to create a culture that "embraces the joys and complexities of aging, celebrates multigenerational relationships, and values care work--THE WORK THAT MAKES ALL OTHER WORK POSSIBLE."

*The Age of Dignity* is very well-written and lays out in a very tangible way many of the most pressing needs we have as a society relating to the coming "age boom" and the corresponding care and support needs. It is really eye-opening with lots of personal stories. It helps families consider the fact that aging in place is often so much easier in theory than in practice, at least as things stand today. We are vastly under-equipped and it is time for action.

Great book. It offers practical steps to help all Americans age with dignity. But much work needs to be done, however, that work will create millions of jobs. We must uplift the caregivers' image, salaries and conditions. Also, we must regain our inter-generational ties to make this all happen--otherwise, we shall have a fearful, perhaps, even impoverished elderly population. So we can all benefit by lifting each other up--young getting paid to support the old while the wisdom of

elders can help the young with time-sharing et al. Fantastic author! She gets my vote. And I hope she's able to see her dreams come true for America! This is a 'must read' by anyone who can read! Our future is at stake without taking her book to heart.

Great first book. I like that she is Asian American and involved in a critical policy intersection of labor and care for elders with disability. She shies away from what separates home care from more skilled home health and personal care, a key factor in discussions of training & skill needed and pay. Otherwise She raises the most critical issues. Good read. I have recommended to many academic researchers & wonks

It's kind of a hard slog, but so important. Having cared for my own mother and my mother-in-law as they aged (to 93 years old respectively) this is a subject that is important to me -- at age 78, with my husband 81. We all have much to learn about caring for or overseeing the care of an aging loved one. I haven't gotten too far into the book; but I hope she also deals with adult financial abuse, with which I am very familiar. I am currently preparing to testify at the criminal trial of a man who ripped off a close friend after she trusted him to be her power of attorney.

I didn't have high hopes for this book, but was very pleased with its scope and detail. The book and thoughts are excellent, but the direct conflict with what is happening in our society is depressing....certainly no fault of the author, but hopefully enough to make us all reconsider the connection we ALL HAVE to care giving and care receiving.

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