

Mister B: Living with a 98-Year-Old Rocket Scientist

A. Lynn Byk, Joseph John Byk



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The instructive and hilarious **Mister B** spreads inspiration to adult children daring to live with their elders. When a chauffeur-cook, on the verge of financial ruin, decides to help a 98-year-old rocket scientist by moving in with him, he decides to teach her a few life lessons. Together, they discover why they each still matter. It isn't rocket science. See why this 98-year-old rocket scientist is about to become America's favorite book club memoir! If you like Tuesdays with Morrie and Forrest Gump, you will love Mister B.

Born in 1916, to a Polish-speaking mother, Joseph Byk begins his early schooling in rope-tied-baggy-pants-poverty. He is every teachers' dreaded student. Ending his senior year at Woonsocket High, Rhode Island, however, he begs a high school counselor to help him make up the deficiencies in his missing math education. Why? Because, suddenly, he aspires to design vehicles that defy gravity. Mister B eventually helps design the space shuttle Gemini, the first moon landing gear for Apollo and the beginnings of Google Earth.

What Aesop and his fables are to children, Mister B is to adults. For curiosity seekers of aerospace and structural science, how did it all start? Greatest Generation story lovers, Cold War and World War II hounds, as well as family members caring for aging parents think Mister B is a national treasure.

Fast forward to age 98 where our story begins: Who knew life could be so happily transformed by a busy young couple merging households with that of an eccentric stress engineer? Being politically correct is not Mister B's style.

Arm chair philosophers, book clubs and would-be scientists will appreciate Mister B's wry interactions with his in-laws who move into his home after the death of his wife. The ol' man decides to teach these younger caretakers a thing or two: specifically that, his newest design is to live forever.

The reader is carried from tragedy to hilarity as Mr. B's companions seek to please him with foodie experiments while coaxing Mister B to upgrade his 44 year-old home. Too bad the only non-controversial place to renovate the HUD-styled real estate is in the weedy backyard. If only the younger couple had not promised to save their 97-year-old Polish father from the nursing home! A triangle forms as they study and tentatively approach one another.

The ol' man and his new companions gradually redesign a dry acre into a flowering conversation piece where mushroom collecting and the sources of hydrogen and iron are discussed. Interior design must take a back seat while the scientific engineer challenges them to consider theories of deflection, accuracy, stress variables, and material strengths. With all the delicacy of designing a conical intersection onto a space capsule, the threesome focus on integrating their relationships in 3-D.

With a shot of respect, Mister B's bygone family ideals confront the independence of a younger generation as he reveals a lifetime of secrets. Mister B's family gains more than a conversationalist. They gain a friend.

Mister B rolls through controversies of old age in a humor appealing to a variety of book clubs and social circles. It inspires us to learn from history, to give a little more to family relationships, and to seek scientific answers to life's little perplexities.

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