



**#notafraidofmybirthday**

Just over a year ago [Changing the Narrative](#), [Canopy](#) and [Age Friendly Vibes](#) launched [Better Birthdays](#) a campaign which uses birthday cards as a platform for talking about age and ageism.

**We held a webinar on Tuesday 31st October to celebrate the highlights of the past year and to share what we have learnt about humour and internalised ageism.**

**Over a hundred people registered mainly from the US and the UK.**

### **Why Birthday Cards?**

Some people think there may be other more important topics, but here are some reasons:

- Birthdays are a logical time to think about age. And birthday cards are how many cultures celebrate birthdays.
- Birthday card messages reflect and reinforce our cultural beliefs about age and ageing. (it's troubling that so many older people buy ageist cards for their peers).
- Ageism doesn't just impact older people; it impacts us throughout the lifecycle.
- Birthday cards are an easy to understand example of ageism in our culture.
- Most of all, birthday cards are a great way to reinforce positive age beliefs.
- We wanted to create everyday conversations about how we feel about our ageing; birthdays and birthday cards provide opportunities with family, friends and colleagues to challenge and change our attitudes.
- Birthday cards publicly reflect the stereotypical attitudes and views about ageing – they are the cultural posters of our society's story of ageing.
- Birthdays get to core of our feeling towards ageing – ours and of others. If we are to challenge ageism – we need to examine and own our attitudes; ageist birthday cards don't get a pass because they are exchanged between older people and are "harmless fun!"
- By promoting pro-ageing/age friendly cards we show a positive perspective for celebrating ageing not lamenting and denigrating it.

### **Better Birthdays Campaign - Highlights of the first year**

As well as running a number of workshops with age organisations and networks using Birthdays cards to discuss ageing and ageism, we also focused upon

- making contact with a range of senior executives in the UK Greeting Card industry –including card makers, retailers as well as the Greeting card association itself.
- This was to raise awareness of the impact of ageism on people’s health, wellbeing and life expectancy.
- As a result of these meetings ageism has been added to the agenda for the **UK Greeting Card Association’s** diversity and inclusion committee and an explanatory blog post about the Better Birthdays campaign included on the [Association’s website](#).
- With the UK Silver Marketing Association, we created [a consumer survey](#) on giving and receiving “jokey” birthday cards

#### **In term of learning:**

- It’s sobering to realise a lot of people don’t know anything about ageism! Age discrimination yes but ageism - internalised ageism? NO!
- Some older people really enjoy these cards – they are popular and sell well.
- So what we need are great pro-ageing alternatives!

#### **In terms of IMPACT:**

- [PGBuzz](#) The greeting card industry’s news media has embraced and indeed championed the issue and ran a number of articles about ageism in cards.
- We were invited by one of UK’s top greetings card businesses to give a workshop to 50 of their staff about ageism and birthdays cards
- A leading chain of supermarkets is bringing out a range of Age Pride cards

#### **In summary**

We’re delighted and heartened by the good connections with the greetings card industry – their desire to explore and meet this new emerging market. (One senior buyer said she thought they had been missing a trick with emerging cohorts of older people)

Working with the greeting card industry has been great and we’re delighted with the response so far to listen and understand

BUT we also need to **be reaching consumers** - we need to be supporting each other to examine our internalised ageist attitudes.

**Internalised ageism**, the type of ageism we carry around in our heads.

There are many reasons for internalized ageism

- the pressure to maintain a youthful appearance in our culture
- societal expectations to achieve goals at certain ages
- unconscious bias about what it means to be old

## How you can take part in our latest campaign stage:

**#notafraidofmybirthday**

Birthdays are the perfect time to spread age-positive beliefs, which research shows can impact longevity by up to 7.5 years!

To reinforce this idea, at the webinar we declared November 2023 the month to own your age by proudly claiming you're [#NotAfraidofMyBirthday](#).

This campaign aims to start a conversation about age on social media and let the world know that we don't buy into the narrative of fear of ageing.

Even if your birthday isn't in November, use this time to show your support for positive age beliefs and let your friends, family, and colleagues know that you are not afraid to talk about your birthday and age.

It's easy to participate! Share a picture on social media with the hashtag [#notafraidofmybirthday](#).

Make sure to add some context to your post and include the hashtag [#notafraidofmybirthday](#) so we can find your post and share it on social media!

Learn more about the [#NotAfriadofMyBirthday](#) campaign and download the toolkit, which includes sample posts by visiting [Not Afraid of my Birthday Campaign — Better Birthdays](#)

