



Dima: Hi, welcome to this edition of 6 Minute English with me, Dima Kostenko

Jackie: and me, Jackie Dalton.

Dima: As usual, I'll be relying on your help with the language Jackie. But first, I'd like to ask you a question...

Jackie: *Responds*

Dima: How do you see yourself when you've grown quite a bit older than you are now? What kind of person do you think you'll be?

Jackie: *Responds (active - not very active; hobbies - what likely hobbies? travelling? other activities? family? etc.)*

Dima: Well, I suppose we'll have to wait a few decades before we find out for sure - but this brings us nicely to the topic of this programme. Today we'll be talking about old age - and how some people just refuse to grow old gracefully.

Jackie: 'To grow old gracefully' - this is a common way of saying to become more tolerant, accepting and patient about your age, and to know and accept the limitations of what your body can do.

Dima: And while some people do exactly that, others are the opposite: they do everything they can to challenge their new, older selves. They take up activities that their peers from the past generations didn't dare to dream of! Like for example modelling, or even ballet dancing...

Jackie: Ballet dancing? Surely you don't mean dancing on stage, in front of an audience?

Dima: That's exactly what I mean Jackie! John Lowe, a grandfather of 11 who we'll be hearing from in a moment, has had his stage debut in a production by a dance company in Ely in eastern England. His performance in Prokofiev's classic ballet, *The Stone Flower*, drew quite a bit of media attention last year. And all that thanks to his rather respectable age... And here comes my question to you Jackie. How old do you think he was at the time:

- a) nearly 70
- b) almost 80
- c) close to 90?

Jackie: *Answers*

Dima: We'll check your answer later but first let's hear from the man himself. John, formerly a soldier, a teacher and a theatre company manager, says it wasn't until some ten years ago, after a long period abroad, that the ballet bug really took hold of him.

Jackie: 'The ballet bug really took hold of him' - in other words, he became very passionate about learning and practising ballet dancing.

Dima: As you listen, look out for these words and expressions:

Jackie: 'Tap'. 'Tap' is a type of dance in which you mark the rhythm by the noise of your dancing shoes on the floor. And the expression 'ever since' - a very common term used to say that something that's continuing even now was started by a certain event, or situation in the past. Most often you will hear this expression in sentences that use the present perfect or, like in this example, the present perfect continuous. That's 'tap' and 'ever since'. Ready? Listen:

Clip 1 **0'11"**

When I returned to this country, I asked if I could do tap and ballet at the local dance school in Ely. They said, 'of course you can!' Well, I was seventy-nine then and I've been doing it ever since.

Jackie: John says, when he went to the local dance school in Ely, he asked if he could do ballet and tap dancing. Even though he was 79 then, the answer was - yes, and so he's been dancing there ever since.

Dima: With practice, he's developed a better flexibility and strength, and he finds it very difficult to understand why many of his contemporaries decide to let themselves go!

Jackie: 'To let themselves go' - a useful set phrase that means to allow themselves to become less attractive or less healthy.

Dima: John says, there is a sure way of staying fit regardless of your age. And that is - ballet dancing!

Jackie: Listen to him again and try to answer this question: according to John, what is the reason why many men in Britain wouldn't want to take up ballet? Here is your clue: listen out for a word that means womanlike.

Clip 2 **0'12"**

I recommend it to anybody. Of course, men in this country, they think it effeminate to dance. I don't find it effeminate. I used to box for the army, so that's not effeminate!

Jackie: So why aren't many men in this country keen on ballet dancing? Well according to John, the answer is they don't feel it's something a man should do - it's too womanlike, and the word he used was 'effeminate'.

Dima: Now, before we hear the answer to this week's question, could you go through some of today's key words and phrases again Jackie?

Jackie: We began with **to grow old gracefully**, a commonly used expression meaning to become more tolerant, accepting and patient about your age. Then we had the expression **the ballet bug really took hold of him**, that's when you become very passionate about learning and practising ballet dancing. We mentioned **tap dancing**, or simply **tap** - a type of dance in which you mark the rhythm by the noise of your dancing shoes on the floor. And then we heard the phrase **ever since**, a very common way of saying that something that is continuing even now was started by a certain event, or situation in the past. We had the expression **to let yourself go**, meaning to allow yourself to become less attractive or healthy, and then the adjective **effeminate** - in other words womanlike.

Dima: Thanks Jackie. Finally, back to the question I asked you earlier. I asked how old John was when he had his stage debut?

Jackie: *I'm quite good/not too good at doing sums...(79 about ten years ago so...)*

Dima: Quite a character! I'm afraid that's all we have time for today. Until next week.

Both: Goodbye!