

# Book review: Taking Charge



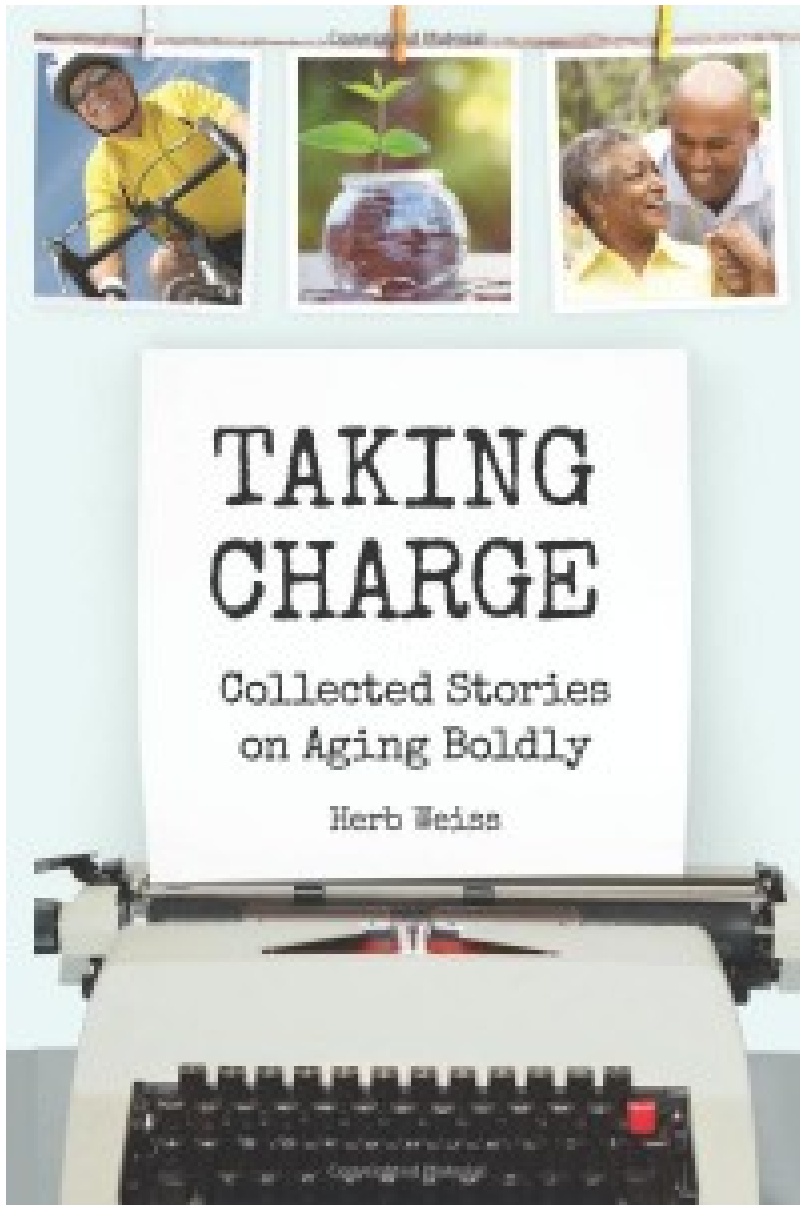
Herb Weiss

*Taking Charge: Collected Stories on Aging Boldly* by Herb Weiss, available in paperback and for Amazon Kindle

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/0692688706/>

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After 36 years in journalism Herb Weiss, known for his regular newspaper columns in *The Pawtucket Times* and *The Woonsocket Call*, has collected in book form what he regards as some of his best work. An eclectic and highly readable anthology of short pieces, each no longer than a few pages, are grouped under 13 topic headings: Caregiving, Consumer Issues, Employment Scene, Financial Issues, Health and Wellness, Long-Term Care, Mental Health, Pop Culture and Music, Relationships, Retirement and Leisure, Sage Advice for Grandchildren, Spirituality and Helping Others, and Veterans.



Weiss' primary expertise is in aging, and often his articles are usefully specific, such as "When It Is Time to Take Away Mom and Dad's Car Keys" and "Financially Surviving Your Retirement Years." Other articles are human-interest stories, such as "Childhood Dream of Becoming a Photographer Becomes Reality" and "Rediscovering Pawtucket's Red Pollard." Some are hilariously quirky, such as "Who Was Harry Weathersby Stamps?" about a humorous online obituary written by the daughter of the titular Stamps that eventually attracted over a half million page views.

The choice of articles in the book evinces a strongly optimistic outlook, such as "Healthy Attitude, Lifestyle Are Likely Keys to Living Past 100," and interest in alternative and metaphysical topics, such as "Hindu Spiritual Leader Heals with Hugs" and "Before 'Crossing Over,' Leave a Legacy of Love." Well-known Rhode Islanders are featured prominently, as in "Richard J. Walton's Great Adventure in Life and Death" and "Legendary Cowsills Come Home to Be Recognized by Their Own," about the real-life band who were the inspiration for the fictional "Partridge Family" on television.

In "Attack Stunned Area Vets: Pearl Harbor Survivors Recall Horror of Dec. 7, 1941," Weiss relates the personal accounts of Leo Lebrun of Woonsocket, Carl Otto of Newport, and Eugene Marchand of North

Attleboro who all, for various reasons, witnessed the attack. Weiss writes, “‘The battle went by so fast’ remembered Otto, stressing that his gunnery training allowed him to go into ‘automatic mode’ when preparing the powder charges at his gun battery. That day he clearly remembers looking toward Battleship Row and seeing heavy smoke, intense fire and oil drenched water, with some spots on fire. During the aerial battle, ‘we were credited with downing the first Japanese plane that day,’ Otto proudly recalled.”

According to the book’s “About the Author” section, Weiss in 2016 was appointed by the governor to the Rhode Island Advisory Commission on Aging. He has been honored many times for his writing, receiving the 2003 AARP Rhode Island’s Vision Award, twice (1994, 1999) receiving the American College of Health Care Administrators’ National Award, receiving in 1997 the Distinguished Alumni Award by the Center for Studies in Aging at North Texas State University. Also in 1997, he was selected by the prestigious McKnight’s LTC News to be one of its “100 Most Influential People” in Long-Term Care.

Author’s blog: [herbweiss.wordpress.com](http://herbweiss.wordpress.com)

*Disclaimer: The reviewer assisted the author in editing the book, but did not contribute content.*