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Reforging kinship bonds with older people

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In this paper I start with a provocative claim that a society is being constructed that creates - while simultaneously disposing of - older men and women. I argue that Western contemporary society is creating an environment that is increasingly hostile to older persons. Rather than organizing society in such a way that these older men and women can continue to be socially and politically included, medicine and other affiliated disciplines have created a lucrative market to mask the changes associated with aging, thus further reinforcing the hostility of the environment to older persons. Those older persons who are unable to conform are eliminated from society in subtle but pervasive ways. Through a number of examples, I then propose the retrieval of what I call practices and structures of kinship to restore our relationship with older persons. Through reforging kinship bonds with older persons in this way, they are no longer politically excluded but rather have their central place in society restored, for their own flourishing but also for the flourishing of society at large.