



Pride at Every Age: **Contrasting the LGBTQIA+** **Journeys of Younger & Older** **Adults**


Morning Light
— STRATEGY —
The future is old.

AgeTech
Collaborative™
FROM **AARP®**

Morning Light Strategy is a participant in AgeTech
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LGBT+ Among 50+: What We Did

We surveyed n = 100 US LGBTQIA+ Adults 18+, covering topics such as:

“ *In your own words, how do you identify...?*

“ *Describe your personal experience/ journey as an LGBTQIA+ person...*

“ *Compared to 20 years ago, how if at all, do you feel things have changed...?*

“ *What would you like to see happen, if anything, over the next 20 years...?*

Method Details:

- Fieldwork Period: June 20-21, 2024
- N = 100 US Sample of 18+ adults that identify as LGBTQIA+
 - N = 50 Age 18-49
 - N = 50 Aged 50+



Executive Summary

Key Insights & Implications



Across age groups, people express a mixture of joy, anxiety, and resilience, capturing both the joys and the challenges of the LGBTQIA+ journey.



Key themes of Adjectives Used to Describe Journey:

- Freedom & Authenticity
- Love & Acceptance
- Joy & Fulfillment
- Challenges & Struggles
- Fear & Anxiety
- Loneliness & Isolation

Age 18-49

A journey that can be characterized as a **mix of optimism & struggle**. Younger individuals focus more on contemporary experiences & quicker acceptance.

Age 50+

The journey among people aged 50+ is a **balance of pride & resilience with acknowledgement of past hardships**. Older individuals often highlight the historical context and prolonged nature of their journeys.

A prevailing sense of optimism about acceptance and visibility, tempered with a nuanced understanding of progress and ongoing challenges, influenced by generational perspectives.



Key themes:

- Cautious Optimism
- Complexity of Progress
- Internal Dynamics

Age 18-49

Optimism with Reservations: Optimism about societal changes benefitting the community (increased visibility, legal protections, greater acceptance among younger generations) coupled with reservations about recent political trends reversing progress or increasing social polarization

Age 50+

Mixed Views with Historical Context: While acknowledging progress, some express caution about recent setbacks and ongoing discrimination. There's a focus on personal acceptance and visibility improvements over the decades, tempered by concerns about societal backlash and the need for continued advocacy.

A shared vision across age groups for a future where LGBTQIA+ individuals are fully accepted and treated equally under the law.



Key themes:

- Equality
- Safety
- Community Unity

Age 18-49

Younger individuals often focus on future legal protections and societal acceptance, and tend to be **more vocal about specific political issues and parties.**

Age 50+

Older individuals reflect more on historical context and present-day challenges, and tend to express **broader concerns about societal attitudes and historical progress.**

ENGAGING & SUPPORTING 50+ LGBTQIA+ PEOPLE

Key Implications for Authentic Engagement

Recognize the Journey & Acknowledge the History

- Be mindful of the unique perspectives of older LGBTQIA+ individuals, who may have faced greater societal stigma & discrimination in their lifetime. **Approach conversations & marketing with sensitivity to this context.**
- Highlight stories of resilience and personal growth among older LGBTQIA+ people to **showcase their contributions and lived experiences.**

Celebrate Diversity in Older LGBTQIA+ Voices

- Feature **diverse representations of older LGBTQIA+ individuals** in marketing, and media. Avoid stereotypes and tokenism. Use inclusive language and terms that respect diverse identities.
- Share personal stories and experiences that highlight the diversity within the older LGBTQIA+ community, **challenging stereotypes and increasing visibility.**

Lend Your Support

- Work to support or develop healthcare resources that **address age-related health concerns alongside LGBTQIA+ specific needs**, such as access to affirming care for older transgender individuals.
- Create opportunities to older LGBTQIA+ people to connect with peers, reducing isolation and **fostering a supporting community** environment.

Detailed Learnings

What adjectives best describe your personal LGBTQIA+ journey?

How have things changed vs. 20 years ago?
What should happen over the next 20 years?

In your own words, how do you identify?



**What adjectives best describe
your personal journey?**

Regardless of age, adjectives reflect a rich and varied spectrum of experiences, capturing both the joys and challenges of the LGBTQIA+ journey.

What 3 adjectives would you use to describe your personal experience or journey as an LGBTQIA+ person?





Freedom & Authenticity

Words like "*free/freedom/freeing*," "*authentic*," "*liberated/liberating*," and "*empowering/empowered*" convey a strong **positive sentiment** related to personal liberation and authenticity.

Love & Acceptance

Words such as "*love/loved/loving*," "*accepted/acceptance/accepting*," and "*supportive/support*" indicate **positive sentiment** of warmth, acceptance, and community support.



Joy & Fulfillment

Adjectives like "*happy*," "*hopeful*," "*joy/joyful*," "*rewarding*," "*wonderful*," "*amazing*," and "*complete*" reflect **positive emotions** and a sense of fulfillment.



OVERALL SENTIMENT

OVERALL SENTIMENT

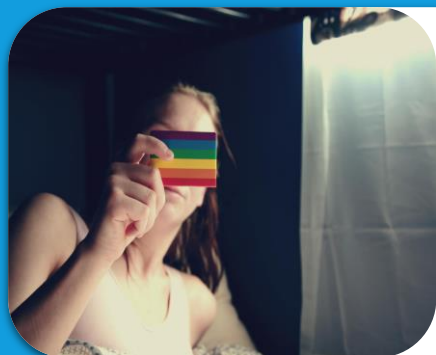


Challenges & Struggles

Words like "*difficult*," "*challenging*," "*hard*," "*struggle*," "*overwhelming*," "*tired/tiresome*," "*complicated*," "*pain*," and "*stressful*" convey **negative sentiments** associated with the difficulties faced by some in the LGBTQIA+ community.

Fear & Anxiety

Words such as "*scary*," "*fearful/fright/fear*," "*anxious*," and "*nervous*" highlight the fear and anxiety experienced by many.



Loneliness & Isolation

Adjectives like "*lonely*," "*misunderstood*," "*hidden*," "*closeted*," and "*privacy*" suggest feelings of loneliness and isolation.

Age 18-49: Sentiment is a mix of optimism and struggle.

While there is a strong focus on positive experiences like acceptance, love, and joy, there are also significant mentions of difficulties, fear, and confusion related to navigating their identities.

- Emphasis on words like "*happy*," "*hopeful*," "*fun*," "*joy/joyful*," "*free/freedom/freeing*," and "*authentic*" suggests a **generally optimistic and positive outlook**.
- Focus on "*love/loved/loving*," "*accepted/acceptance/accepting*," and "*supportive/support*" indicates the **importance of finding acceptance** and forming supportive relationships.
- Use of words such as "*difficult*," "*confusing/confused*," "*challenging*," "*hard*," "*fearful/fright/fear*," "*anxious*," and "*lonely*" reflects the immediate **challenges and emotional struggles** faced by younger LGBTQIA+ individuals
- Adjectives like "*questioning*" and "*curious/curiosity*" indicate a period of **self-discovery**, which can be both exciting and challenging.

N = 50 Adults Aged 18-49 that identify as LGBTQIA+



Age 50+: A balance of pride & resilience with acknowledgement of past hardships.

There is a strong sense of accomplishment, fulfillment, and satisfaction, tempered by the recognition of the challenges they have overcome.

- Frequent use of words like "*proud/prideful/pride*," "*happy*," "*rewarding*," "*hopeful*," "*complete*," "*satisfaction*," "*fulfilling*," and "*genuine*" indicates a sense of **achievement, contentment, and fulfillment**.
- Emphasis on "*strong*," "*brave*," and "*courageous*" highlights **resilience and positive self-regard** developed over time.
- Adjectives such as "*difficult*," "*challenging*," "*hard*," "*struggle*," and "*pain*" suggest that older LGBTQIA+ people have faced significant **hardships and discrimination** throughout their lives.
- Words like "*introspective*," "*real*," and "*reflective*" indicate a more **contemplative approach**, often associated with a realistic acknowledgment of past struggles.



Both 18-49 and 50+ people express a mixture of joy, anxiety, and resilience, underscoring the complex and multifaceted nature of LGBTQIA+ experiences across different generations.



Younger individuals focus more on contemporary experiences and quicker acceptance



Older people often highlight the historical context and prolonged nature of their journeys

PERSONAL ACCEPTANCE & EMPOWERMENT

Many younger individuals describe feelings of empowerment and authenticity upon embracing their true selves.

Similarly, older people also express a sense of liberation and empowerment from accepting their identities, often after prolonged periods of concealment.

“

*It's so refreshing to finally be your **true authentic self** but you realize just how many people in this world still look down upon you.*



Age 18-24
Cisgender
Bi/Lesbian/Gay

“

Been hiding all my life and finally feel ready to live my proper life!! Anxious!



Age 55-64
Transgender
Bi/Lesbian/Gay

SUPPORT & RELATIONSHIPS

Among those aged 18-49, support from friends and family is a common theme, providing a buffer against societal prejudice.

Older individuals (50+) also highlight the crucial role of supportive relationships, whether from family, partners, or the LGBTQIA+ community

“

I am supported by my friends and family but strangers might not be so kind and mumble words under their breathe but it don't affect me.



Age 18-24
Cisgender
Bi/Lesbian/Gay

“

Fright for fear of threats! Accepted because it was so wonderful for my sister to say so! Love from my wife!



Age 55-64
Cisgender
Bi/Lesbian/Gay

CHALLENGES & STRUGGLES

Many younger participants mention challenges such as societal prejudice, internal conflict, and the difficulty of coming out.

Older respondents also recount significant challenges, often remembering the societal attitudes of earlier decades.

“

*It was challenging because I honestly **questioned myself my whole life** until I reached adulthood and finally admitted I was lesbian, and [non-binary] took me even longer.*



Age 25-34
Non-Binary/Fluid
Bi/Lesbian/Gay

“

In the 80s it was very much a taboo, and I always felt judged and awkward trying to find somebody that could relate.



Age 55-64
Cisgender
Bi/Lesbian/Gay

“ Age 18-24
Non-Binary/Fluid
Queer/Pan

The people I've gotten to meet through being a part of the LGBT+ community have been, generally, kind loving people and allow me to be myself in more ways than just gender/sexuality.



“ Age 65-74
Cisgender
Bi/Lesbian/Gay

*It was very difficult for me to be honest with myself and **spent much of my life in denial.** Finally I accepted who I really am.*

Notable Differences

HISTORICAL CONTEXT & SOCIETAL CHANGE

The challenges faced by younger individuals often center around contemporary issues and interactions, with less emphasis on historical context.

Older people frequently reflect on the historical context, noting significant societal changes over time and how these shifts have impacted their experiences.

“ Age 18-24
Cisgender
Queer/Pan

My coming out was never a large issue and I've yet to have issues regarding my sexuality. It was simple and gave me little issues.



“ Age 55-64
Cisgender
Bi/Lesbian/Gay

It took me a long time to accept my gayness. I chose those words [mysterious, fearful, wondering] because of the family I was born into, an Evangelical one.

Notable Differences

PROLONGED STRUGGLE VS. EARLY ACCEPTANCE

Many younger people report quicker acceptance of their identities, often supported by a more inclusive contemporary environment.

Older individuals often describe a prolonged struggle for acceptance, both internally and externally, due to more conservative societal attitudes during their formative years.

“ Age 35-44
Cisgender
Bi/Lesbian/Gay

*Because it's was **confusing at first**
then **scary telling people** but then
amazing because of all the support
I got*



“ Age 65-74
Cisgender
Bi/Lesbian/Gay

*Pretty low key and most don't
know. **In the closet** would be
accurate. I just **can't come out**.*

Notable Differences

MOMENTARY VS. PERSISTENT FEAR & ANXIETY

While younger individuals do express fear and anxiety, these feelings are often more transient and related to specific situations or periods, like coming out.

Older people often describe a more persistent sense of fear and anxiety, stemming from a lifetime of societal prejudice and the need to conceal their identities.

“ Age 25-34
Cisgender
Bi/Lesbian/Gay

Because being in the LGBTQ community is amazing with how people gather together, awesome because you learn you are not alone and wonderful because everyone is wonderful.



“ Age 50-54
Cisgender
Queer/Pan

So, took a while for me to figure out, have not always been directly connected to community so I have to catch up when I do, but times when me and partner reconnect to broader community is very joyful.

Notable Differences

COMMUNITY & CONNECTION

The importance of community and connection is frequently emphasized by younger people, who often find support and affirmation in the broader LGBTQIA+ community.

While older individuals also value community, their experiences often highlight the difficulties of finding and connecting with the LGBTQIA+ community, especially in earlier years.

How have things changed vs. 20 years ago?

While there is a prevailing sense of cautious optimism about LGBTQIA+ acceptance and visibility, results also show a nuanced understanding of progress and ongoing challenges, influenced by generational perspectives and historical context.

Cautious Optimism

Many LGBTQIA+ people of all ages expressed a **sense of progress and increased societal acceptance** vs. 20 years ago. Despite optimism, there are significant mentions of **ongoing challenges and setbacks**.

1

Complexity of Progress

The mixed sentiment reflects the complex nature of progress, **acknowledging gains while recognizing persistent challenges and potential regressions**.

2

Internal Dynamics

Both age groups recognize internal community dynamics and tensions, suggesting **ongoing dialogue and reflection within the LGBTQIA+ community itself**.

3

—— LGBTQIA+ Aged 18-49

Optimism with Reservations

Generally, individuals under 50 expressed optimism about societal changes benefiting LGBTQIA+ individuals. They highlighted increased visibility, legal protections, and greater acceptance among younger generations like Gen Z.

There were reservations about recent political trends potentially reversing progress or increasing societal polarization. Some mentioned internal community challenges, such as perceived overreach in advocacy efforts.

“

*It's definitely **more of an open conversation** rather than the "hush hush" way it was seen as when I was younger*

“

*Technically, there are more legal protections for LGBTQIA+ people in the U.S. compared to 20 years ago. There is a lot more queer representation in media, and it's getting better. **But it is a fragile situation**, with more and more bills/laws designed to hurt queer and trans people, especially. **We seem to be going backwards socially.***



— LGBTQIA+ Aged 50+

Mixed Views with Historical Context

Responses from older individuals were mixed, reflecting a historical perspective on the evolution of LGBTQIA+ acceptance. While acknowledging progress, some expressed caution about recent setbacks and ongoing discrimination.

There's a focus on personal acceptance and visibility improvements over the decades, tempered by concerns about societal backlash and the need for continued advocacy.

“

*I'm more accepting of who I am, more out and proud about who I am and **will not tolerate anyone disrespecting me** simply because of my sexual orientation.*

“

*More accepting and I **never thought id get to marry the** love of my life.*

N = 50 Adults Aged 50+ that identify as LGBTQIA+

What should happen over the next 20 years?

Age 65-74

"I would hope the next 20 year's there would be NO discrimination, harassment, or unjust laws or restrictions regarding the community."

Age 25-34

"I want us to just be free, that's all i want - free of judgement and free of drama where we can just be us."

— LGBTQIA+ Future

A shared vision across age groups for a future where LGBTQIA+ individuals are fully accepted and treated equally under the law.

While there are differences in emphasis and perspective, particularly around historical context and political concerns, the **overall themes of equality, safety, and community unity** are prevalent in both groups' hopes for the future.

- Both age groups share a strong desire for legal equality, societal acceptance, and safety for LGBTQIA+ individuals.
- There's a common concern about reducing hate crimes and ensuring protections against discrimination.
- Both groups acknowledge the importance of unity within the LGBTQIA+ community and fostering constructive dialogue.

LGBTQIA+ Future

A shared vision across age groups for a future where LGBTQIA+ individuals are fully accepted and treated equally under the law.

While there are differences in emphasis and perspective, particularly around historical context and political concerns, the overall themes of equality, safety, and community unity are prevalent in both groups' hopes for the future.

- Younger individuals often focus on future legal protections and societal acceptance, while older participants reflect more on historical context and present-day challenges.
- Older individuals tend to express broader concerns about societal attitudes and historical progress, while younger participants are more vocal about specific political issues and parties.

Age 55-64

"I would like people to not hate LGBTQIA+ people and especially harming us simply because of our sexual orientation and/or identity gender. While equality has come a long way, we still have a good ways to go."

Age 18-24

"More laws should be enacted to preserve human rights and trans rights. More gender affirming care and more education regarding LGBTQIA+ rights."

How Do You Identify?

LGBTQIA+ Aged 18-49

Exploration & Intersectionality

Exploration of Identity: Younger people often express a sense of exploration and openness in their identity labels, using terms like pansexual, non-binary, and queer.

Intersectionality: For many younger individuals, there is notably an intersectional approach to identification, combining multiple elements of identity, including race, gender expression, sexual orientation, and other aspects of identity.

“

“I identify as a bisexual-sapphic asexual woman; I question sometimes if I’m aroace or lesbian.”

“I identity as Queer and nonbinary. My pronouns are they/them and I am currently on HRT.”

“Agender/genderqueer.”

“

“I am sexually attracted to all genders and races.”

“I’m a bisexual vers male straight-acting masculine male.”

“Bisexual or pansexual, or simply queer. Cis queer woman.”

LGBTQIA+ Aged 50+

Established Identities & Personal Journeys

Established Identities: Older individuals tend to use more established labels like lesbian, gay, or bisexual, reflecting identities shaped during different social contexts and historical periods.

Personal Journeys: For some older people, their gender identity and/or sexual orientation is heavily tied to their personal journey of self-acceptance.

“

“It took me a long time to accept my gayness.”

“I am a 100% gay male.”

“I’m bisexual and not ashamed. I don’t flaunt it but I don’t hide it.”

“

“I identify as a female lesbian.”

“Transgender, woman. I’m changing my sex to female.”

“Bisexual male.”



About Us

Accelerate Your Growth in the 50+ Market





The future is old.

We are an insights & advisory agency on a mission to help brands and organizations **plan and position** for the global shift toward an older demographic.

We can help you make the strategic business, marketing & innovation decisions that will **accelerate your growth among 50+ consumers and their caregivers.**

Founded by experts in human understanding.

We founded Morning Light Strategy to help organizations like yours plan and position for the global shift toward and older demographic.



Dana Keilman

CEO, Co-Founder

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For the past 25 years, Dana has worked with Fortune 500 clients to develop and launch new products and services. For Dana, innovation is grounded in thoroughly understanding people's needs and identifying opportunities for her clients to meet those needs better than competitive options. Dana optimizes initiatives for a successful launch by defining the core consumer target, ensuring the proposition is communicated clearly and the user's experience meets expectations.

Combining her interest in human culture with business, Dana has a B.S. in Russian Area Studies from The Colorado College and an M.B.A. from George Mason University.



Nicole Munsey

President, Co-Founder

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Nicole is an innovative, senior human insights leader with a proven track record of consultative business growth. She is adept at delivering strategic recommendations that enable clients to position their brands for success. Nicole is a trusted advisor to senior-level marketers (including the C-Suite) and insights clients. Her 20+ years of consultation span a wide variety of business challenges across sectors, including FMCG, Durables, and Pharma. Additionally, she is experienced with global work in developed and emerging markets.

Nicole earned two Masters degrees from Tulane University: her M.B.A. and M.G.M. (Master of Global Management), after completing her B.S. in Marketing and Finance from DePaul University.

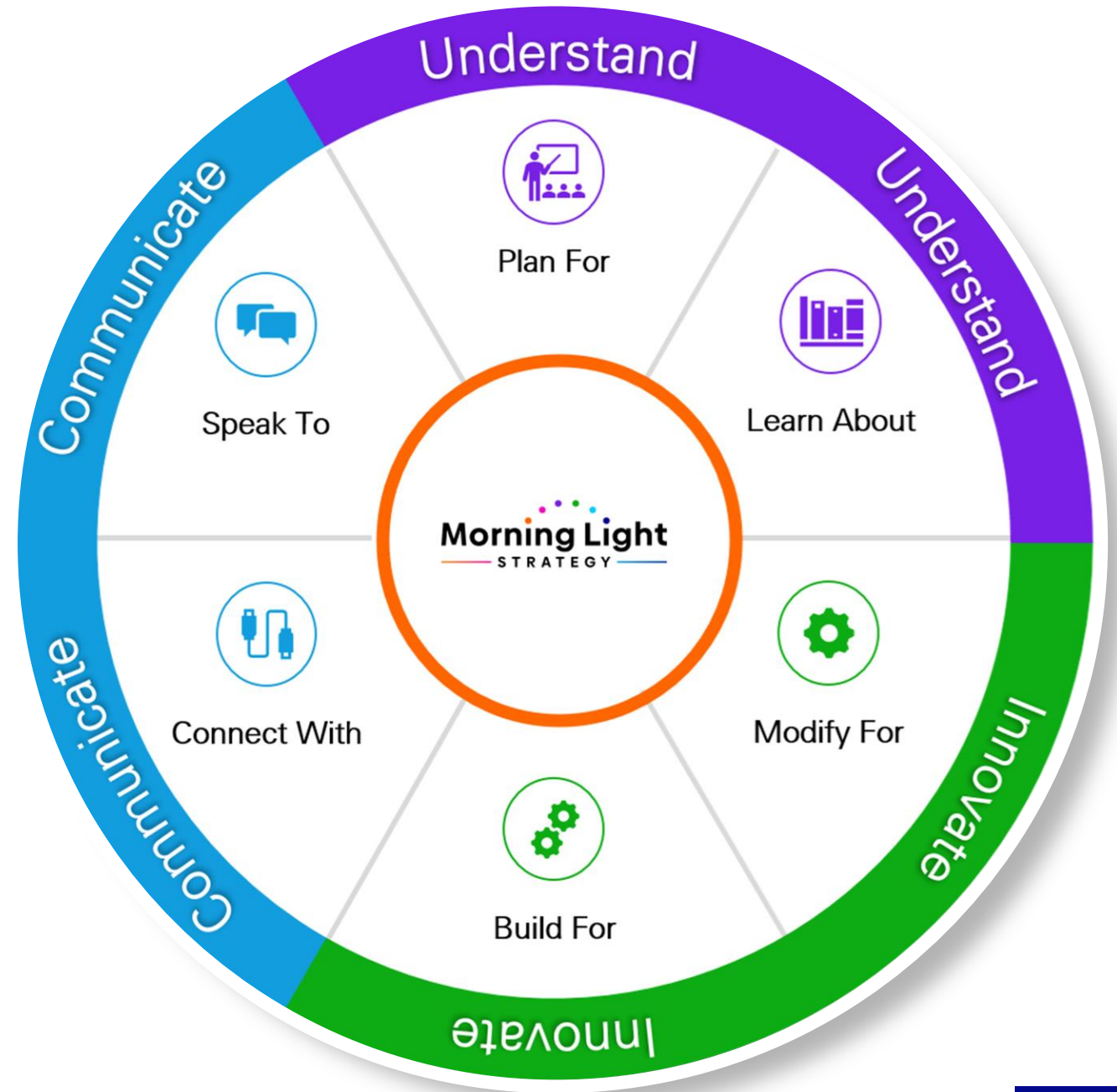


Future50

Growth Framework

Our proprietary framework based on 6 core pathways to strategically accelerate growth by leveraging learning among older adults.

Grounded in the belief that the strategic path to future success for any organization is found at the intersection of understanding, innovating for, and communicating with older adults and their caregivers.



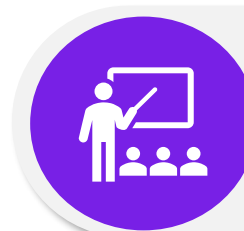


Future50

Growth Framework

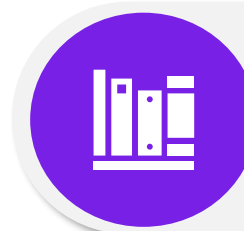
Understand

Build your strategic foundation for the future with organizational alignment based on consumer intelligence about people aged 50+ and their caregivers.



Plan For

Assess your organization's current practices, **create empathy** within your team and **identify** strategic focus areas.



Learn About

Generate **foundational intelligence** about people aged 50+ and their caregivers





Future50

Growth Framework

Innovate

Develop and launch new products, services & business models to meet the needs of people aged 50+ and their caregivers.



Modify For

Adapt existing offerings to better meet the needs of people aged 50+ and their caregivers



Build For

Innovate specifically for the needs of people aged 50+ and their caregivers.

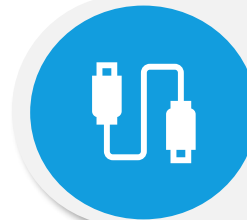


Future50

Growth Framework

Communicate

Optimize advertising, marketing and retail strategies & activations to reach and resonate with people aged 50+ and their caregivers.



Connect With

Develop **brand positioning and activation strategies** aligned with the decision journey and the ecosystem of decision makers.



Speak To

Create **marketing and sales materials and messages** that are relevant, unique, inclusive and effective

How we do it: Bringing the best thinking to every challenge

Insights & Strategy

By combining the voice of people aged 50+ and their caregivers with our consumer research, strategy & analytical capabilities, supported by the expert knowledge of our senior-level founders and network partners.

1 | Intel

Our Methods include:

- Quantitative survey (digital, mail, phone, mixed method)
- In-depth interviews (in-person, digital)
- Focus groups (in-person, digital)
- Ethnography/Immersion
- Product Testing
- Communities

2 | Insight

Our Analytics include:

- Segmentation/Clustering
- Equity Mapping
- Journey Mapping
- Perception Mapping
- Innovation Forecasting
- Discrete Choice/Conjoint/MaxDiff
- Text Analytics

3 | Impact

Our Network includes:

- Longevity/Aging Experts
- Agency Partners
- Qualitative/Community Moderators
- Ethnographic Experts
- UX/Design Experts
- Statisticians/Modelers
- Sample Recruiters

So, why work with us?

Experts on the Aging Population

- We focus specifically on the aging population and caregivers and engage a panel of relevant experts on all our engagements.
- You get tailored guidance and actionable recommendations grounded in key success principles, developed in consultation with thought leaders in the longevity space.



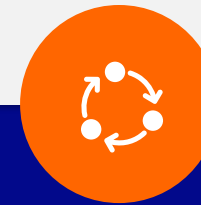
Strategic Business Impact

- Senior-level consultative support from consumer research and strategy leaders
- Richer, more powerful business recommendations through an agile, holistic approach to insight generation



Flexible & Comprehensive

- Total ecosystem engagement considers all influencers in the decision journey, such as caregivers and adult children
- We can partner to address your needs, from syndicated market reports to foundational learning to innovation & communication development





**The future is old.
Are you ready?**

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