

In this photograph, a male's hands take up most of the frame. The hands are turned upwards, with the palms facing the lens. The fingers stretch towards the bottom of the frame, while the thumbs jut outwards towards either side of the photograph.

There are no rings on the fingers, but the black strap of a watch peers out from under a sleeve in the top right of the image. The hands each have deep lines in the palms, and creases and wrinkles on the fingers and between the forefinger and thumb. In the background we can just about make out the creases in the man's trousers.

The wrinkles and the bumps on the flesh of the hands show the unmistakable signs of age, but they don't look frail or vulnerable, they look sturdy, exuding a wiry strength. Their nakedness and the welcoming position of them, palms up and open, suggest gentleness, kindness, and wisdom.

They belong to Henrikus Davenschot Augustus, who was 100 years old at the time I took this in the town of Vroomshoop, a town located at the centre of the municipality Twenterand, in the Dutch province of Overijssel.

My name is Humberto Tan, and as well as being a TV and radio host, I am a photographer.

I took this photograph of Henrikus's upturned palms using a Canon EOS 5D Mark IV. It is part of a wider series, where I photographed 100 people of 100 years and above in the Netherlands and the country of my birth, Suriname, in South America.

The series is called "Tomorrow Will Be Better", after a Dutch song, by Willy Derby, from 1939. I chose the name of my series because when I talked to people like Henrikus, I noticed the majority of them are incredibly optimistic and positive, despite having been on our planet for more than 100 years. The song captures that positivity perfectly.

[Humberto hums the melody] That's about how it sounds: Really optimistic and positive.

The hands of the elderly are a curiosity. As you will see in this photograph, Henrikus's hands are in remarkably good shape, especially when you consider the age of their owner. Yes, they may be wrinkled and have deeper lines in the palms, but they have no wounds or blemishes, and they look stronger than you might suspect.

I found it fascinating that while the years leave their marks on the rest of our body, often our hands keep their integrity for longer. This is why I embarked upon this series.

For each person in the series, I took three photographs: a portrait, a picture of their hands and one that captured their way of life. I also interviewed them, to learn more about who they are, who they were, and their philosophies on life and longevity. On love.

When I photographed the people in these pictures, they were healthy, both physically and mentally, which was important in interviewing them.

I believe in the power of the elderly, and have been interested by them, and the wisdom they can impart, for a long time. They're often overlooked, undermined, or even marginalised. And that's not right.

I wanted to portray the elderly as they deserve to be portrayed: with respect, to show their experiences and wisdom that we can all learn from. When I sat with Henrikus and the others, I asked them all the same four questions:

*When was the happiest time in your life? Were you ever afraid in your life? Do you still have dreams? And, what has life taught you?*

For me, this series reframes how we see the oldest people in our society. It shows a strong group of people who have been living for at least 100 years and makes us ask: how have they done that? What are their secrets? Do they have secrets?

Those questions have led to a coffee table book in the Netherlands and an exhibition in the Photomuseum in Maastricht, in the south of the Netherlands.

Inevitably, images like this one make us reflect on our own lives. How can we age in a healthy way like Henrikus? What's the secret to their longevity? What can we learn from people who are fit and healthy at 100 years or more?

This photograph, and the entire series, are special to me, because I have learned so much from the people in them. These people taught me about being positive, about being optimistic, about being kind, and about being content with what you already have.

Just like everyone else, the elderly deserve our kindness and respect. They don't deserve to be alienated, ignored, and marginalised. Not only because they're human beings, but because there is so much we can learn from their experiences, wisdom, and attitudes of those who have lived for 100 years or more.

So, talk to your grandparents. Ask them when they were happy. Ask them if they had fears in their lives. Ask them if they still have dreams. And ask them what their life has taught them. And be inspired.