

# Noriko Tsukada

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Dr. Robert N. Butler created the word, Ageism. He received the Pulitzer Prize in 1976 for his *Why Survive? Being Old in America*, and was the first director of the NIA (National Institute on Aging). He was a pioneer and a foremost expert in the field of gerontology. My memory of meeting him for the first time was that we met at the GSA (Gerontological Society of America) conference in 1991, when I still was a graduate student in gerontology. For some 20 years since then, he has given me friendly advice and instructions in a variety of areas.

At one of the meetings, he mentioned that “If you are going to study gerontology, you have to get to know people and organizations in the field of aging in your country. When you go

back to Japan, you should look them up and introduce yourself.” So whenever I took a trip to Japan, I made appointments and met with aging experts, as suggested by Dr. Butler. This was how I came to know Professor Atsushi Seike, Hidetoshi Endo, MD and Mr. Shiro Yamasaki. I also had a chance to visit ILC-Japan and the Tokyo Metropolitan Institute of Gerontology. I met with Professor Takako Sodei at Dr. Butler’s residence in New York (The picture shows Dr. Butler’s autograph on the book, which was given to me at that time). The priceless network of experts in aging that I have in Japan is entirely due to Dr. Butler’s influence.

Dr. Butler was kind enough to provide me with advice when I was writing my Master’s thesis and when I

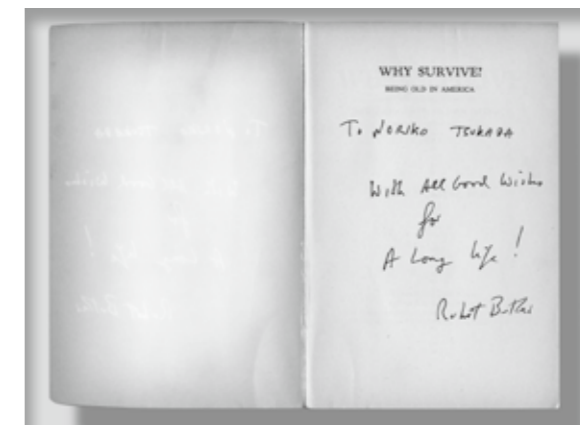
was a doctoral student. His advice was always right on target and has now become the advice that I give to my graduate students. He told me that “As for your research papers, you should write on the theme that you feel passionate about, because the passion would become an additional source of your energy to produce better products.” On another occasion, I was not sure about my ability to pursue a doctoral education in gerontology and confided it to Dr. Butler. He glanced at my grades and gave me a stern look. He then said that “Don’t these grades mean anything to you? These grades show your

accomplishments, and you should feel more confident about what you can do.” This advice helped me make the decision to continue my study in gerontology.

Sometime ago, I decided that my mission in life would be to become an educator and a researcher in the field of gerontology and train students who would strive for a society without ageism. I will always treasure the numerous teachings and memories that Dr. Butler left with me. Above all, I will never forget him being gentle to everyone but also being strong to be a tough leader, when needed.



Dr. Tsukada with Dr. Butler at the IAGG conference in Paris in 2009



Dr. Butler’s book autographed by him