

I have high hopes for the future of our cities. I have high hopes for the future of San Francisco. Grant^{ed}~~ing~~ its present problems, I have high hopes that the city of the future--our City of the future--will be one that will enrich the lives of all the people who live in it.

Most plans for the city of the future involve money--lots of it, more than any city could afford. But there are improvements that can be made in the city that don't necessarily involve lots of money. That require, instead, generous amounts of imagination--and heart.

Perhaps the most valuable resource of any city--and the one that's ignored the most--is the people who live in it, particularly the elderly. At present, we treat our senior citizens like so many beer cans, to be discarded after use. But the seniors are the very same people who made this city. They're you and I, twenty or thirty or forty years from now.

Senior citizens don't suddenly lose their expertise, their knowledge of what makes things work, and how, at the magic age of 65. Instead of scrapping them, why not use them? Why limit their contributions to civic life to service on the Commission for Ageing, or related agencies? Why not appoint them to other boards and commissions? Their feeling for the human dimensions of a city would make them invaluable.

And then are other ways in which we could use our "Senior Power." I would like to see a complex that we might call a "people-center"--a complex that contains schools, hospitals, child-care centers and senior centers. It might even have a center for minor criminal offenders.

In such a center, our Seniors could be employed in the hospital section to read to patients or as aides to the staff. They might help staff our child-care center. Those who commit minor crimes might also be employed to work

in various portions of the center. Perhaps the senior citizen would meet the "inmate" and discover that he's good at math. "They why aren't you an accountant?" "Because I never went to school." And the next day the "inmate" might enroll in the center school, with the senior citizen as a tutor.

Someday, the "inmate" would leave the center for a decent job. And the senior citizen--and society--will have discovered that his own talents are still worthwhile, that he qualifies for something more than "no deposit, no return."

And perhaps the child enrolled in the people-center school will learn much more than the Three R's. He will have discovered that prisoners, too, have hopes and aspirations, that being old need not be a period of uselessness, and that life is really about people helping people.

The great thing about imagination is that a little of it can go a long way. With not too much effort, we could turn small areas of our older hotels, or empty store fronts, into much-needed child-care centers. We might even pay some of our senior citizens to help staff them.

And we might consider employing some of our seniors as PSA's--"Practical Student Aides"--to help out as tutors. We could even include them in the school's hot-lunch program.

There are other problems that might yield to imagination. Why must an industrial "complex" be an area of brick buildings, railroad tracks and shanties that dies every evening at five when the workers go home? Why not intermix home and factory, make factories light and airy so people would enjoy working in them--and then ban the automobile!

Picture a city where the rush hour has been eliminated--because the factory and home are integrated into the same neighborhood and people walk to work!

Who would plan it? Who would build it? Who would pay for it? One of the foremost designers of "cities" are the people who built Disneyland. They originally created a miniature city for little people--children--that was a fantastic success. With the techniques they developed and the information gained, they went on to design Disney World--with hotels and a monorail system for adults as well as kids. City planners now come from all over the globe to study Disney World.

The point, of course, is that our problems require more than money to solve them. They require imagination, too. And they require compassion, too.

Why should we discard our Seniors after they've gained a life-time of knowledge that we can use?

What sense is there in building factories and huge high-rise office buildings that stand empty two-thirds of the day?

What sense is there in teaching prison inmates the valuable trades of license-plate manufacturing or mattress stuffing when there is ^{so} little demand _^ for either on the outside?

I have high hopes for our City of the future--and I hope you do, too. After all, without high hopes, Columbus would still be in Spain and Marco Polo in Italy.

Without high hopes, we condemn ourselves to a Tomorrow that ^{would} ~~will~~ be, at best, an instant replay of Today.