

old ~~=~~ sick

**How Ageism Warps Our View
of Long Life**

by Ashton Applewhite

ThisChairRocks.com

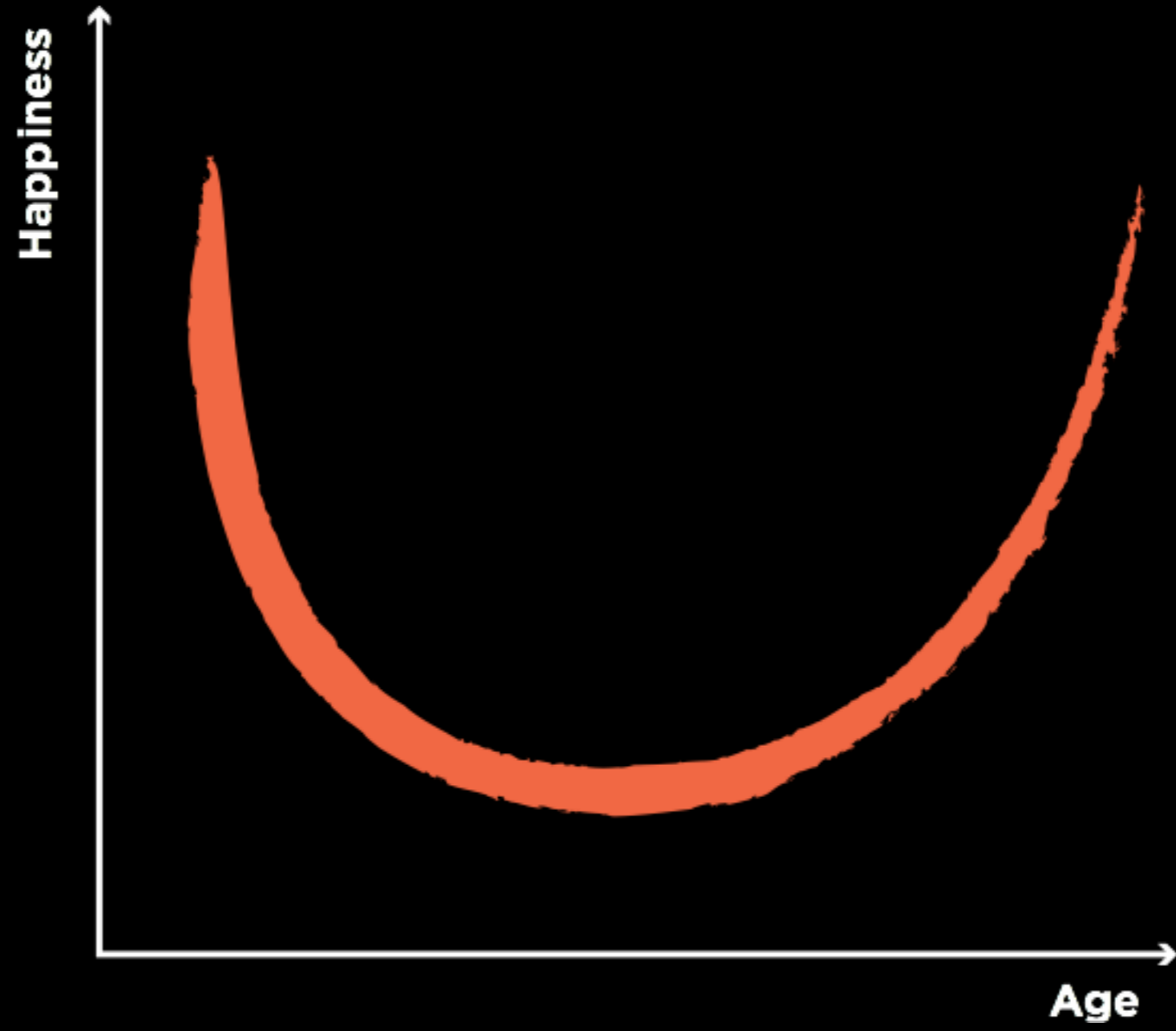
“Old” to me used to mean sad and sick.

4%

of the population over 65 is in nursing homes

90%

of the remainder is cognitively fit



ageism

discrimination and stereotyping
on the basis of age



**Old?
Not me!**

**80 years
young!**

She's ageless.

Ageism feeds on denial.

old person in training



act of imagination



practical challenge

**Old person in training
was a surprisingly hard sell.**

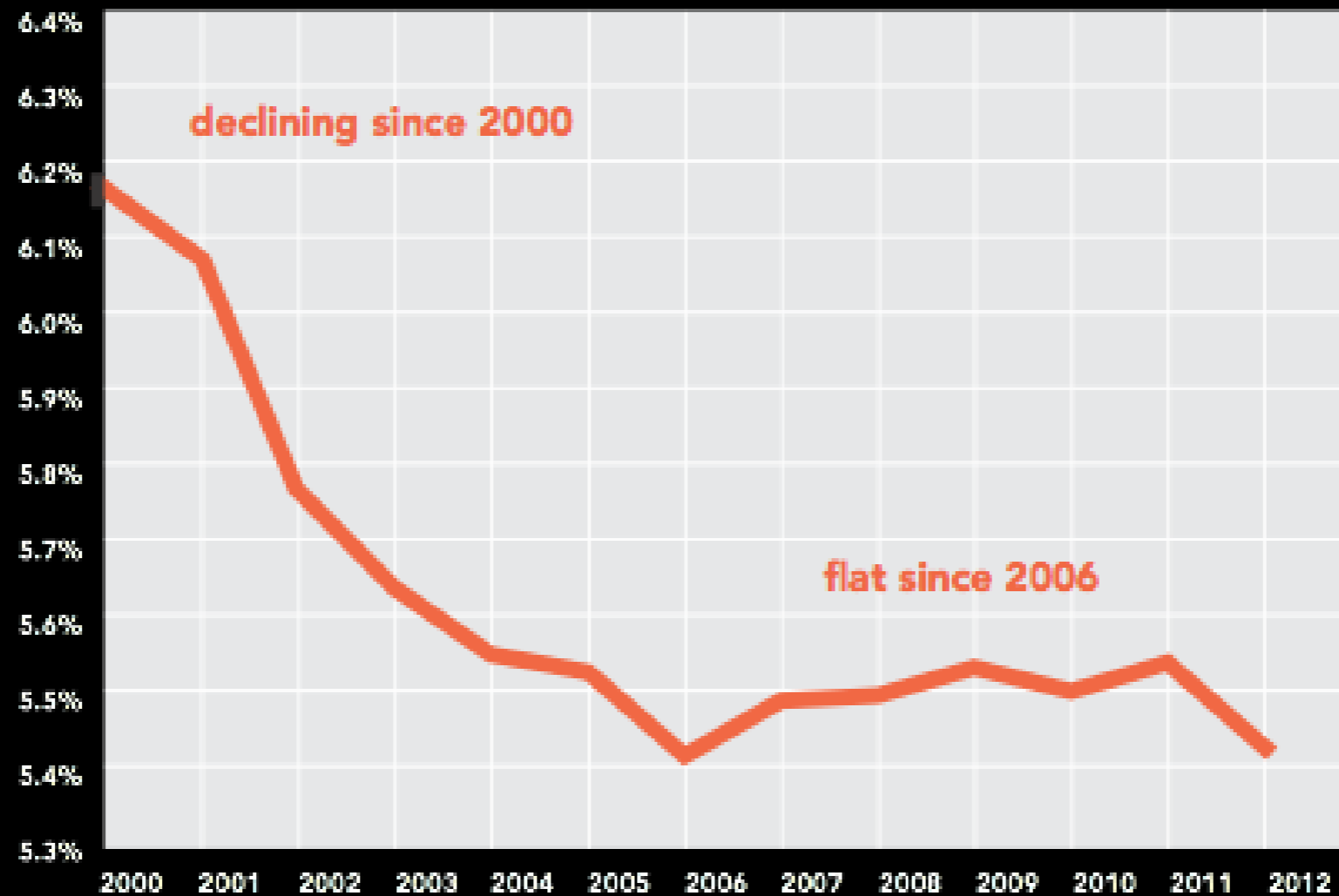


“And they lived happily ever after—except for the age thing.”

Society will be swamped by
all these **old** people!

Society will be swamped by
all these **SICK old** people!

Share of total U.S. health-care spending: nursing care facilities & continuing care retirement communities



Source: HHS—Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services

“The business of the old is to be sick.”

-Margaret Cruikshank



"I would go to the doctor, but I can't afford to take on any new conditions at this time."

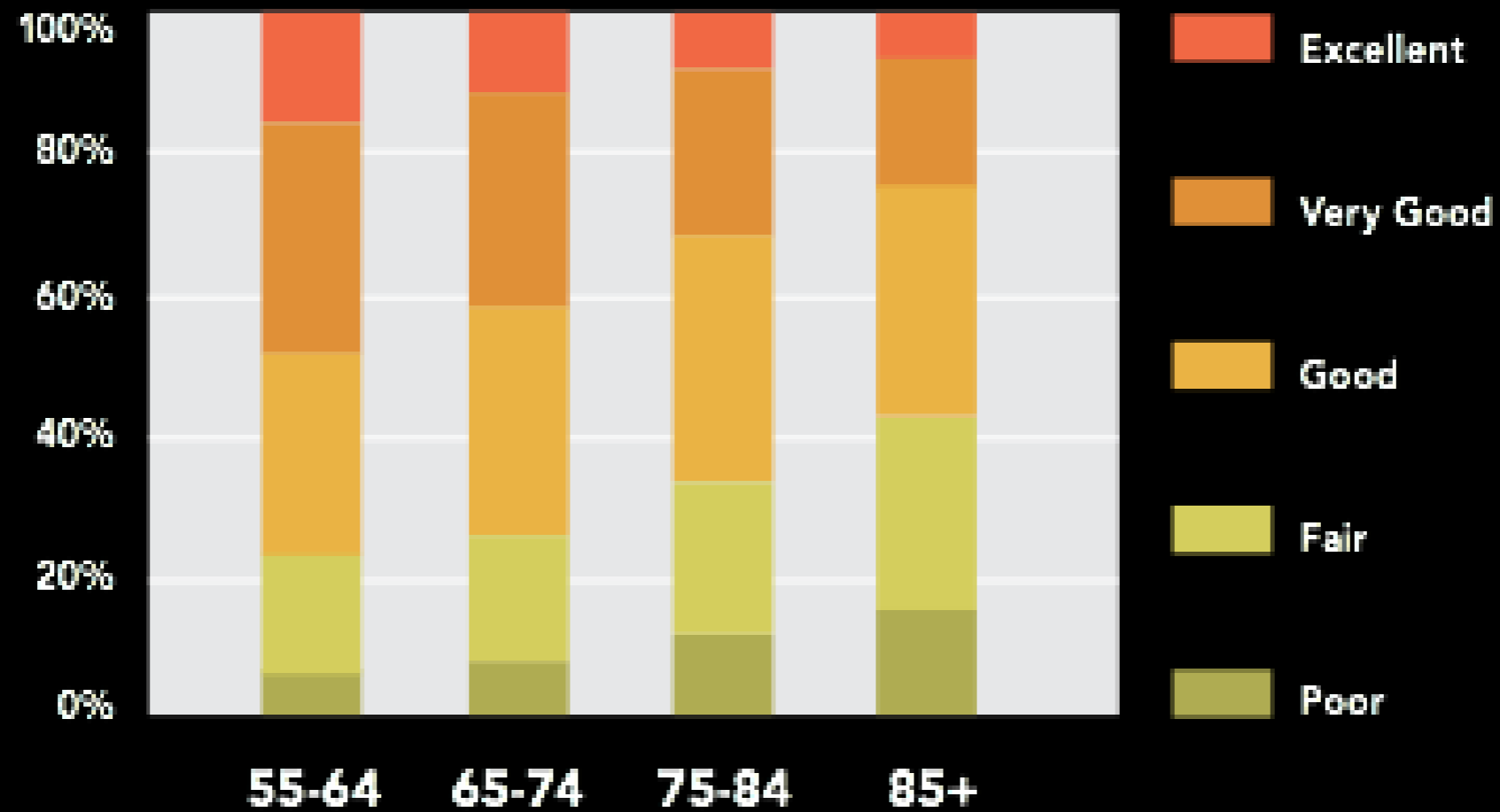


Who benefits when aging is reduced
to illness?



Mobility is relative.

Health status by age




Source: Growing Older in America: Health & Retirement Study, NIA, NIH, 2002

Illness and aging are strongly associated.
They are not equivalent.

Most of us will land **in the middle.**

Shame and stigma maintain
the status quo.



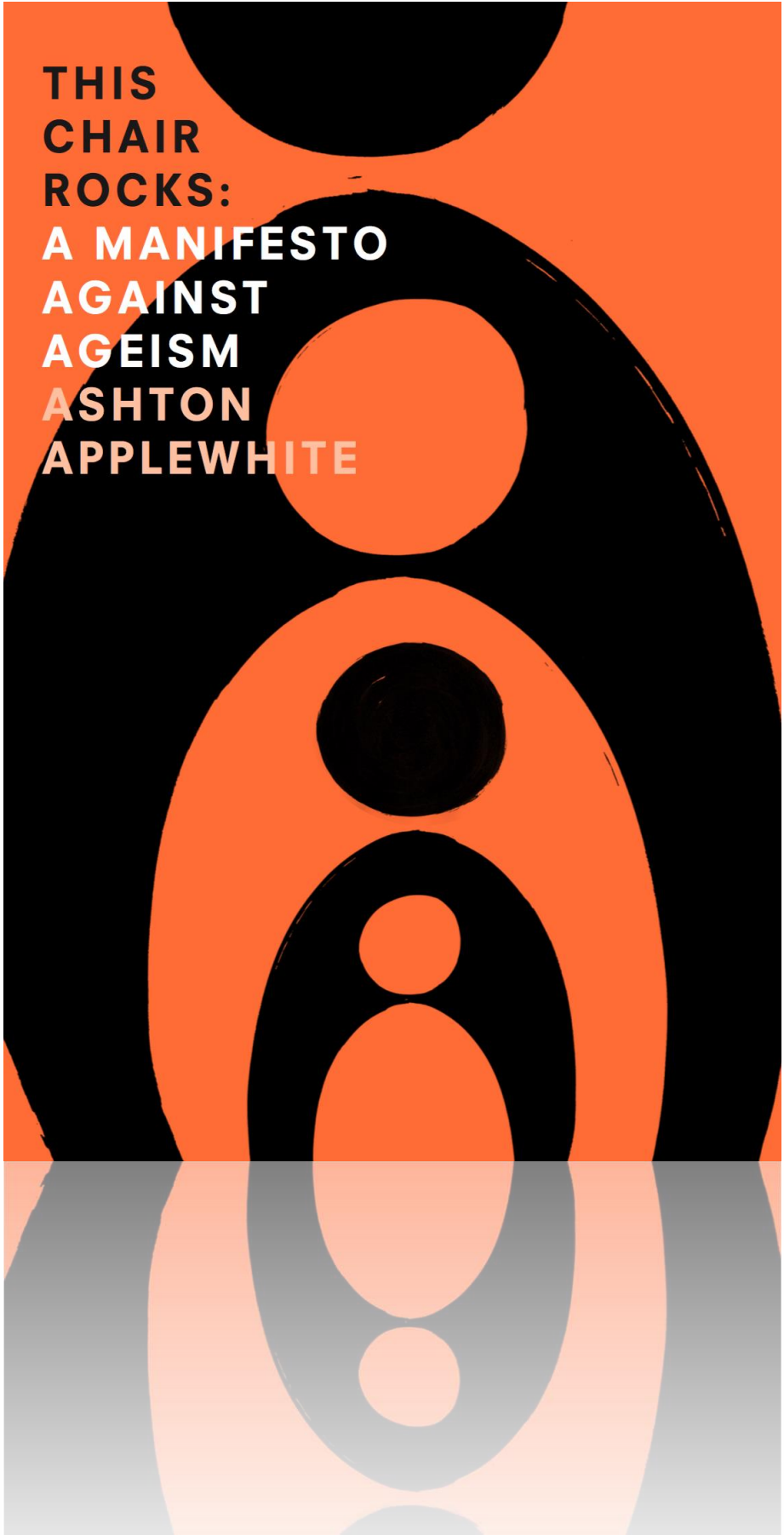
Discrimination
—not age or disability—
is the barrier

Ageism affects our health.

What else does ageism do?

- sanctions segregation and isolation
- makes elders seem less deserving of resources
- makes a good death more elusive
- underlies the geriatrician shortage
- legitimatizes substandard medical treatment

What kind of society
do we want to grow old in?



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thischairrocks.com

yothisisageist.com

 **ashton@thischairrocks.com**

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