



Resourceful Thinking

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AGING WELL: MIND, BODY & SPIRIT AWARENESS

WHAT CAN WE EXPECT AS WE AGE?

I began my social work career in geriatrics when I was in my early 20's. I was full of good ideas about aging well, and full of platitudes to make my clients feel better about their circumstances. Many of them gave me a kind look of tolerance and had I been wise enough, I would have caught on to the "Just you wait!" look. Fortunately, I wasn't wise. I am now running full speed toward the age of many of those clients. (Wow. They really weren't that old!)

God willing and we live long enough, we'll all get old. Things happen that are normal occurrences of aging, and, things happen coincidental to aging that can further complicate the process. Sometimes we start out with challenges that are complicated with age. (My vision was bad as a child and age has complicated that.)

What IS normal? Normal aging impacts many functions and systems.

- *Vision changes
- *Tactile changes (or skin sensitivity) and skin changes (wrinkles, thinning tissue)
- *Hearing
- *GI system
- *Muscle & skeletal system
- *Immune system
- *Urinary system
- *Hormonal changes
- *Increased risk of falls

Genetics, environment and lifestyle also impact the aging process.

We can have surgeries, use creams and dyes, take pills, use patches, and on and on (until we run out of money or die) but we cannot stop aging. We CAN however be proactive. Evaluate what we can control. What we need to reflect on when we look at these probable, changes was made famous in the hippie poster of the 70's - "Today is the first day of the rest of your life". Start aging better today.

THINK BODY / MIND / SPIRIT WELLNESS

Total wellness is a holistic concept. You cannot feed one part of your being and

withhold nourishment from the rest. When evaluating your 2015 Life Upgrade, think about how to care for and nurture Body, Mind & Spirit! Here are some ideas to get you started!

*Be aware of your body & note changes. LOOK at your body. Do you see anything you question? You know what is normal for you. Keep your doctor informed.

*See your primary care doc as recommended and prudent.

*Have recommended mammograms, prostate exams, colonoscopies, blood work and labs.

*Maintain a heart healthy diet.

*Exercise as you are able and as your doctor approves. (There are chair exercises and other exercise programs for those who have physical limitations/challenges.

*If you smoke, STOP! It's never too late to see a benefit.

*If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation!

*Take care of your dental health. Dental health impacts nutrition, immune

system and other systems. “Gum disease has long been linked to heart disease. New research suggests that for people with both conditions, treating the gum disease may lower their health care costs and the number of times they end up in the hospital, reports the November 2014 *Harvard Heart Letter*.” (www.health.harvard.edu)

*Be aware of your environment: noise levels, second hand smoke, chemical pollution.

>>Maintaining maximum health will help combat some of the more common risks of aging and if you do get sick, your body will be better equipped to fight the problem.

*Think brain health. (Diet, exercise, stimulation)

*Keep your mind active! Read, learn a language, do puzzles.

*Take a class. Community colleges, fine art institutes, and libraries offer classes. It can be a one-time offering or a class of longer duration. Some institutions offer discounts for seniors. Don't stop challenging your mind and don't stop learning!

*Attend the symphony / concerts, museums, art exhibits.

*Laugh. Read jokes or tell jokes. See the humor. Laughter is good for you on so many levels.

*Be proactive in stress management. Stress can have devastating physical and psycho/emotional effects!

*Nurture relationships. There are several sources that support the value of

human connectedness. “Social connections help relieve harmful levels of stress, which can harm the heart's arteries, gut function, insulin regulation, and the immune system. Another "connected" way to ease stress is with caring behaviors, which trigger the release of stress-reducing hormones.”

(www.health.harvard.edu)
Spend time with friends. Enjoy the companionship.

*Keep a positive attitude. Researchers continue to explore the effects of positive thinking and optimism on health. Health benefits that positive thinking may provide include lower levels of distress, greater resistance to the common cold, better psychological and physical well-being, reduced risk of death from cardiovascular disease, better coping skills during hardships and times of stress. It's unclear why people who engage in positive thinking experience these health benefits. One theory is that having a positive outlook enables you to cope better with stressful situations, which reduces the harmful health effects of stress on your body. It's also thought that positive and optimistic people tend to live healthier lifestyles — they get more physical activity, follow a healthier diet, and don't smoke or drink alcohol in excess.” (www.mayoclinic.org)

*Have an attitude of gratitude! “In positive psychology research, gratitude is strongly and consistently associated with greater happiness. Gratitude helps people feel more positive emotions,

relish good experiences, improve their health, deal with adversity, and build strong relationships.” (www.health.harvard.edu)

*Feed your spirit. Seek spiritual wellness. The University of New Hampshire defines spiritual wellness as “...finding meaning in life events, demonstrating individual purpose and having the ability to be compassionate towards others' and goes on to cite signs of spiritual wellness:

+Development of a purpose in life

+Ability to spend reflective time alone

+Taking time to reflect on the meaning of events in life

+Having a clear sense of right and wrong, and act accordingly

+Ability to explain why you believe what you believe

+Caring and acting for the welfare of others and the environment

+Being able to practice forgiveness and compassion in life

Is spiritual wellness good for us? The University of New Hampshire Office of Health Education & Promotion tells us: “The human spirit is the most neglected aspect of our selves. Just as we exercise to condition our bodies, a healthy spirit is nurtured by purposeful practice. The spirit is the aspect of ourselves that can carry us through anything. If we take care of our spirit, we will be able to experience a sense of peace and purpose even when life deals us a severe blow. A strong spirit helps us to survive and thrive with grace, even in

the face of difficulty.”
(www.unh.edu)

*Pray, meditate, be still and in the moment.

*Seek the company of those who nurture and nourish your spirit.

*Personalize your spiritual wellness. Many factors play a part: faith, beliefs, values, commitment to a greater good – it’s YOUR personal journey. What makes the journey meaningful for you?

*Remember the Serenity Prayer:

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change;
courage to change the things I can;
and wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time;
Enjoying one moment at a time....

--Reinhold Niebuhr

What can you add to this list? Personalize it!

For you, for your health, for your well-being, for your family - STOP. Re-evaluate your life. How can you maximize the quality of the life you are living AND the quality of the life you want to live? Age well - In Body, Mind & Spirit ~

Age well. Make THIS the first day of the rest of your life!

[Sources:

http://www.health.harvard.edu/press_releases

[http://www.mayoclinic.org/health-living/stress-management/in-](http://www.mayoclinic.org/health-living/stress-management/in-depth/positive-thinking/art-20043950)

[depth/positive-thinking/art-20043950](http://www.mayoclinic.org/health-living/stress-management/in-depth/positive-thinking/art-20043950)

<http://www.unh.edu/health-services/ohep/spiritual-wellness>

RELATED READING

You may want to look into these books:

“Health: Mind, Body & Soul”, John Gray, Rita Rizzo & Lou Vincent, Earl Mindell, Norman Rosenthal, Insight Publishing, 2012

“Aging as a Spiritual Practice”, Lewis Richmond, Gotham Books, 2012

“The Gift of Years,” Joan Chittister, BlueBridge, 2008

“How Did I Get to Be 70 When I’m 35 Inside?”, Linda Douty, SkyLight Paths Publishing, 2011.

WE HAVE NEW DVDS!

We have added DVDs to our library. So many of our video resources are videocassette format and we are gradually adding DVD format. Some are new titles and some are replacing the videocassettes.

Here are our additions:

>”Dementia Care: Aggressive Behavior”, Terra Nova films, 37 mins

>”Is It the Right Time? The Nursing Home Decision”, Terra Nova films, 13 mins

>”Easing the Adjustment to a Nursing Home: Strategies for Families”, Terra Nova films, 12 mins

>”The Family Guide to Alzheimer’s Disease”, 5 DVD set (we have this in videocassette format also), Lifeview Resources, times vary.

We do have a videocassette player for those ‘old

favorites’ that can’t be found on DVD format. You are welcome to come to our office to watch those.

SAVE THE DATE: CAREGIVER SUPPORT FAIR

The 16th Annual Caregiver Support Fair is coming in May! The event will be held at the Ohio Valley Mall on Tuesday, May 5 from 10 am – 3 pm. We had a record number of exhibitors last year offering information on all types of elder care and services.

There was a learning curve to the layout last year due to the addition of Boscov’s to the Mall. We will be redesigning the design this year to better accommodate our exhibitors, Fair attendees and special events. Don’t miss this event that offers the opportunity to showcase your agency, distribute information and meet your consumers and colleagues. Call Ann at 304 243-0996 or email

akoegler@frontier.com to make sure that your agency is on the mailing / e-distribution list. We want to see YOU at the Fair!

Registration forms will be emailed or available in hard copy the first part of February.

Let us be your Gateway to Senior Care!

Call us with your aging & caregiving questions!