

SAGE-ING AGE-ING NEWSLETTER

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NAMASTE!

Living Your Best Life as You Age

You can't stand in a checkout line without seeing at least a few magazines featuring articles about Aging! What does it mean to age gracefully?

Aging gracefully isn't about trying to look like a 20-something—it's about living your best life and having the physical and mental health to enjoy it. Like a bottle of wine, you can get better with age with the right care. Read on to find out what to do and what not to do on your quest to age happily.

BE KIND TO YOUR SKIN Your skin is your body's largest organ. If you treat it with care, it can better protect your body from the elements, regulate your body temperature and provide sensation. To keep it looking and functioning at its best: wear sunscreen and protective clothing when outside. Get yearly skin cancer screenings.

EXERCISE regular exercise significantly lowers your risk of diseases, such as heart disease and cancer, and helps you retain your mobility longer. Exercise also lowers stress and improves sleep, skin and bone health, and mood.

MIND YOUR DIET Healthy foods are the way to go when it comes to aging gracefully. The

Healthy Guidelines for Americans recommends that you eat: fruits and vegetables, either fresh, frozen or canned, lean protein, such as fish and beans, at least three ounces of whole-grain cereals, breads, rice or pasta, three servings of low-fat or fat-free dairy, such as milk, yogurt or cheese that are fortified with vitamin D. Avoid using solid fats for cooking and use oils instead. Stay away from processed foods, refined sugars and unhealthy fats. You should also keep your salt intake to a minimum to keep your blood pressure down.

MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS Being happy and keeping your stress down goes a long way in helping you live and age well. Spend time with friends and loved ones. Accept your age. Do things you enjoy.

STAY PHYSICALLY ACTIVE Numerous studies have linked a sedentary life to an increased risk of chronic illness and early death.

GET ENOUGH SLEEP Good sleep is important for your physical and mental health. It also plays a role in your skin's health. Getting enough sleep has been proven to: lower the risk of

heart disease and stroke, reduce stress and depression, lower risk of obesity,

FIND NEW HOBBIES Finding new and meaningful hobbies can help— you maintain a sense of purpose and keep you engaged throughout the course of your life. Evidence shows that people who engage in hobbies and leisure and social activities are happier, experience less depression and live longer.

PRACTICE MINDFULNESS Mindfulness is about acceptance and living in the moment by focusing on the present. Practicing mindfulness has many proven health benefits that can help you age better, including: improved focus, better memory, lower stress, improved emotional reaction, relationship satisfaction, increased immune functioning. To practice try yoga, tai chi, coloring.

DRINK PLENTY OF WATER Drinking enough water helps keep you regular and improves your energy levels and brain function.

TAKE CARE OF YOUR MOUTH It's important to see a dentist regularly.

SEE A DOCTOR REGULARLY Aging gracefully is more about being healthy and happy than keeping wrinkles at bay

After The Rain, The Rainbow...

In every person's life there are those times when we are confronted with challenges that test us to the limit. These are the times when we feel the rug has been pulled from under us, and all that we value is threatened. This is often called "the dark night of the soul." We may enter this state through a variety of major life changes. These events usually cause us to search for answers about why this happened in our lives. We turn to a Higher Power for support which strengthens our feelings of being spiritually connected.

Through the pain and grief, we seek meaning and understanding. It is appropriate that we grieve our losses, allow ourselves to be nurtured and supported by others. At some point it is necessary to put the tragedy in the past so we can move on.

We can learn through joy or pain. Most of us would rather learn through joy and yet when things are going well, we don't have the motivation or incentive to make necessary changes. Healing and change usually come from crisis because it is at those times when the need for change becomes a must rather than a should. First we realize that something must change. Secondly, we need to believe that change is possible and finally, we realize that we, ourselves must change. Problems are the gymnasium of life, they make us stronger.

There is no problem without a gift for you in its hands. You seek problems because you need their gifts. In nature it is the overcoming of obstacles that develops strength. Great trees don't grow with ease, the stronger the wind, the stronger the trees.

Life is like an ocean. Sometimes there is turbulence. The waves knock us around. We crash into the rocks. We may feel some pain. It's OK to acknowledge that pain and to see what we can learn from that experience. We may need the support of others to regain our footing, but we need to look ahead. If we keep looking back at the rocks, we may find ourselves stuck or in a worse situation. By looking at the rocks too long, we may miss some exciting opportunities along the way. We can ride those waves. We can come out stronger and wiser than before.

Jane Zoltek, ssj-tosf, Editor

August Tidbits...

*If we all threw our problems in a pile and saw everyone else's, we'd grab ours back.

*Don't audit life. Show up and make the most of it now.

*Get rid of anything that isn't useful, beautiful or joyful.

*All that truly matters in the end is that you loved.

*The best is yet to come.

*No matter how you feel, get up, dress up and show up.

*Take a deep breath. It calms the mind.

*Life isn't tied with a bow, but it's still a gift.

*Every day is a miracle. The smartest man on the earth knew that. Einstein said, "There are two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is miracle." Take the second approach for a test drive this week.

*Every day something is being born. Go out and find it.

*Live an entire day of life this way. Treat every experience as if you chose it.

*Before your feet hit the floor every morning, put your hand on your heart and give thanks for this new day of life. Then surrender your TO DO LIST to the red carpet that the Universe unfolds before you.