Healthy Aging: What it Means to Grow Old with Gusto

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Healthy Aging = Successful Aging

• Looking into the eyes of aging our entire lives
• Looks different as we get older
• Is living well the same as aging well?
• Never too late to begin
Willard Scott: Honoring Aging with Gusto & Grace

“I hope that I shall never be too old to live life gracefully.”
Why Do We Age Differently?

- Quality of life and rate at which we age can vary
- Events outside our control
- Choices we make
- Behaviors and attitudes
- Habits - mental, physical, emotional and spiritual
- We can make worthwhile changes throughout our lives, even into old age

Attitude is Important

- Attitude: the way you communicate your mood
- Attitude: the way you look at things mentally; your mindset.
- The attitude you send out is usually the attitude you get back
“If you get up in the morning expecting to have a bad day, you’ll rarely disappoint yourself.”

Wayne Dyer

What is Grace? Does it Relate to Aging?

- Disposition to an act of kindness, courtesy, or clemency
- A charming or attractive trait or characteristic
- A pleasing appearance or effect
- Ease and suppleness of movement or bearing
- Unmerited divine assistance given humans
- The state of being considerate or thoughtful
There Can Be Wisdom in Aging

- **Knowledge:** accumulated philosophic or scientific learning
- **Insight:** ability to discern inner qualities and relationships
- **Judgment:** good sense
- A wise attitude, belief or course of action
- The teachings of the ancient wise men

Model based on S. Michal Jazwinski work
Illustration by Tracey O’Donnell
Healthy Aging Model
Original Content: Teresa Andreoli, Psy.D.

Model of Successful Aging
Original Content: John W. Rowe, M.D. & Robert L. Kahn, Ph.D.
Common Themes?

- Avoiding Disease & Disability
- Diet and Nutrition
- Exercise
- Genes
- Stress Management
Avoiding Disease & Disability
Research by Rowe & Kahn

- Absence or presence of disease
- Absence, presence or severity of risk factors for disease
- Heredity
- Lifestyle
- Age-related risk

High Cognitive & Physical Function

- Cognitive Training
- Productive Pursuits
- Exercise
- Stress Management
High Cognitive & Physical Function
Research by Rowe & Kahn

- Allows participation in productive life
- Four variables in predicting cognitive function:
  - Education
  - Strenuous activity in and around the home
  - Pulmonary flow rate
  - Self-efficacy; belief in our ability to succeed
- Moderate movement or exercise

Engagement with Life

- Social Support/Social Activity
- Spirituality
- Productive Pursuits
Engagement with Life
Research by Rowe & Kahn

- Two major areas for successful aging:
  - Maintenance of interpersonal relations
  - Maintenance of productive activities
- Emotional support – positive predictor of physical performance in both men and women; married men especially
- Isolation is a risk factor for health

Engagement with Life Continued
Research by Rowe & Kahn

- When people remain active and productive, they do not view themselves as old; nor do others
- Contrary to the stereotype of unproductive old age, most older people make productive contributions
- Education is a predictor of sustained productive behaviors
- Self-efficacy and related concepts of mastery and control are predictors of sustained activity in old age
**Spirituality**

- Can take many forms
- Organized religious observation
- Other personal practices that help one gain access to a higher power or consciousness
- Whatever you perceive it to be

**Resilience**

- Extraordinary and positive response to a challenge
- Ability to tolerate the ups and downs of life
- Ability to recover from a stressor
Resilience & Flexibility

- Maintaining a positive attitude and effective coping strategies in adversity
- Not showing negative outcomes compared to people with similar experiences
- Learning to do things differently
- Accepting change

Nutrition: Feeding the Body, Mind & Soul

- General health – live longer and stronger
- Sharpen the mind
- Feel better
- Accommodate special diets
- Enjoy the pleasure of eating
What Can Affect Diet?

- Loneliness and depression
- Death or divorce
- Inability to buy food
  - Lack of money
  - Lack of mobility
  - Lack of transportation

What Else Can Affect Diet?

- Difficulty chewing or dry mouth
- Loss of appetite
- Digestion problems
- Medications and illness
- Nothing tastes like it used to
Wholesome Eating Guidelines
- Eat nutrition-packed food
- Protein from various sources
- Whole fruits vs. juices
- Veggies; color is key; dark, leafy greens plus orange and yellow
- Get calcium through dairy or non-dairy sources
- Get variety in your diet

More General Eating Guidelines
- Whole grains vs. white flour
- Get more fiber through whole grains, fruits and veggies, beans
- Eat less salt and sugar
- Drink water
- Don’t skip meals
- Take small steps to enhance your diet
Identify Your Own Healthy Aging Goal

- Write it down
- Tell someone about it
- Believe it

Healthy Aging Goal

1. Goal is something YOU want to achieve
2. Goal is achievable
3. Goal is actionable (i.e., action specific)
4. Goal should answer the following:
   - What are you going to do?
   - How much will you do?
   - When will you do it?
   - How often will you do it?
5. On a scale of 0 (no confidence) to 10 (absolutely confident) your goal is at least a 7
Remember to Live with Gusto!

Break