

# Character and . . .

# Inevitability

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ANNALEE R. WARD

*Character and Inevitability*

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*The faculty essays presented here emerge from a semester-long process of reading and writing together in an environment of critique and review. Nevertheless, this invited journal of essays represents the authors' views and not necessarily the views of the Wendt Center for Character Education or the University of Dubuque.*

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# Aging Well

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Katie E. Boyer

## Abstract

*Aging is inevitable. Embracing the ages and stages through our whole lives with our whole selves can be rewarding with flexible mindsets, active/committed connections, and driven purpose. This article takes a look at the dimensions of wellness with a focus on healthy relationships as the central connecting piece. Here are research-based strategies for using those connections to help foster healthy choices and resilience against unhealthy actions, thoughts, and habits through all stages of life.*

## Embracing Age

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My daughter was so excited to be tall enough to ride the carnival rides at the fair. The first few years that she went, she was only tall enough for a handful of rides. Then, as she got older, she could ride all of the kid rides and was only left out of the adult rides, which she was terrified to ride, anyway. This summer, she was so excited to go on the rides with her younger cousins, only to find out that the first ride they went to, the speed boats, she was now too tall to ride. Aging is inevitable, and so are changes that come along with the progression of time—changes in the body, in the mind, and within the soul.

## Rites of passage

At first, getting older is encouraging; as a baby there is the new freedom of starting to walk and the advancement to being a toddler. Then preschool starts, riding bikes, graduating from toddlerhood to being a kid. When puberty begins, as awkward as it is, there is growing and that means more privileges,



*Different ages, different stages*

looking forward to being a preteen. High school brings the opportunity to drive, giving freedom to and from parents, and now being a teenager. Then aging becomes more personal as graduation awaits, with thoughts about what is next. No longer is it necessarily caregivers who encourage success, but oneself individually and uniquely looking to reach the next goal. High school graduation. What's next—college, tech school, gap year, work?

Societally, we age straight from a teen to being an adult. According to Cornell Law School Legal Information Institute, almost all states legally consider 18-year-olds to be adults,<sup>1</sup> as this is when we are said to have control over our own actions, affairs, and we are responsible for our decisions. Though most of us could probably not wait to grow up, the thought of being an adult was at the same time terrifying. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the retirement age on average is 63 for women and 65 for men.<sup>2</sup> So we spend midlife working for approximately 40 years, taking care of our duties as an adult and aging all the while. Think about what our purpose is in those 40 years. Is it merely to get to retirement so we can finally enjoy less than 10 youthful years?



*"Life must be understood backwards. But . . . it must be lived forwards."*

—Søren Kierkegaard<sup>3</sup>

Louise Aronson, a geriatrician and professor of medicine at the University of California, San Francisco, says, "We've added a couple of decades, essentially an entire generation, onto our lives, and we haven't kind of socio-culturally figured out how to handle that." Figuring out how to handle that, says Aronson, might just mean embracing the realities of getting older while realizing the end of working doesn't


have to mean the end of a meaningful life.<sup>4</sup> Viktor Frankl, award-winning author of *Man's Search for Meaning*, believes the primary human drive is the search for meaning.<sup>5</sup> We as humans survive with the tenacity and grit that get us through the challenges of life. Resilience and reactions to life stages and changes can have an impact on how we age.

How do we age well? Each stage of life—childhood, adolescence, early adulthood, middle adulthood, late adulthood, and eldership—brings on changes we may not be ready to accept. There is no magic potion, secret recipe, or ancient playbook with the key to living well. Some of us have heredity to blame or genetics to thank, but we have all made a variety of good and poor decisions. Yet despite the many paths aging may take, there are habits, routines, and choices we can consider to help make aging

easier on the mind, body, and soul. First, looking at changes, setbacks, and accomplishments as opportunities for growth will encourage a healthy state of mind and add meaning in our lives. Second, cultivating quality relationships and connections throughout the stages of life is the most important factor in nurturing mental, physical, and spiritual wellbeing.

### ***Aspects of Aging to Consider***

Every body ages in its own way. We may not be able to stop the hands of time on gray hair—we will all have some by age 50—but as we age we don't need to do less. We may just need to do things differently. In her bestselling book, *Elderhood*, Aronson writes about redefining old age. "I honestly think anybody who's lived past their 40s knows age matters," she said. "Your body changes, your brain changes. What I would like to see is a conversation where we actually discuss the things that matter."<sup>6</sup> Author Atul Gawande, in his *New York Times* best seller, *Being Mortal*, describes the story of aging as the "story of our parts," stating that each part of our body has its own aging process at different stages of our lifespan. Gawande goes on to say that our bodies fail the way all complex systems fail: randomly and gradually.<sup>7</sup> How we handle changes and choose to respond can determine our quality of life.



*"If you don't take time for your wellness, you will be forced to take time for your illness."*

—Joyce Sunada<sup>8</sup>

I have spoken to multiple individuals in my own search for meaning for this essay. A mentor of mine, the woman who introduced me to the term "SuperAger" and whom I consider a "SuperAger," talked about the importance of human connections in life as well as developing the skills to be flexible when life hands us pieces that do not fit neatly into our plans.<sup>9</sup>

Starting in elementary school, health curriculums take up the topic of relationships with family and friends. We are taught at a young age about respect (for ourselves and others), communication, and authenticity in relationships with others. I will be using the term *relationships* to specify human connections with family and friends. In Erik Erikson's eight stages of psychosocial development, he stresses intimacy and making connections. Through the ages between 18 and 40, we explore personal relationships and start to form intimate connections. Between 40 and 65, we need to give to others and to feel needed by others.<sup>10</sup>

Developing habits now in preparation for progressive changes in life will help us to practice wellbeing in the six dimensions of wellness outlined in the next section.<sup>11</sup> Creating habits take time, whether it is the three weeks to form a habit or the three months to make it a lifestyle change.<sup>12</sup> One way to look at forming habits and keeping with routines is behavioral sustainability; we “need to know how to make the consistent decisions that underlie your lofty objective.”<sup>13</sup> Jim Romagna, EdD, a mentor of mine, director of MERGE Performance Institute, Certified Personal Trainer and Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist, states that it is better to do something than nothing at all. “Fitness is more of a behavior issue than it is a knowledge issue.”<sup>14</sup> While this advice was intended for a fitness goal, we can apply it to everything we do. Taking care of ourselves and investing in healthy habits isn’t just for young people or the elderly. As John Ratey, Clinical Associate Professor at Harvard Medical School, observes in his book, *Spark*, “Age happens. There’s nothing you can do about the why, but you can definitely do something about the how and the when.”<sup>15</sup>



*Habit formation through consistent decisions*

Don’t get overwhelmed with the complexity of it all. Finding a work/life balance with proper symmetry for the stage of life one is in is important for a healthy lifestyle, stress management, and being able to manage emotions at all ages. Gawande states,

. . . bolstering our resilience in old age, requires attention to the body and its alternatives. Requires vigilance over nutrition, medications, and living situations. Requires each of us to contemplate the unfixables in our lives, decline we will unavoidably face, in order to make small changes to reshape it. We need to accept that we are not ageless.<sup>16</sup>

Accepting that we are changing mentally, physically, and emotionally will help us adjust.

Each dimension of wellness plays an important role in the aging process. Let’s look at how to care for each of the dimensions, highlighting the function of relationships and connections within them.

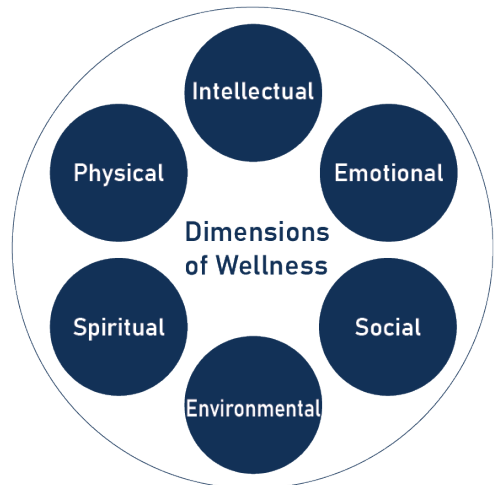
## Dimensions of Wellness

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The dimensions of wellness include intellectual, emotional, social, environmental, spiritual, and physical. Included within the dimensions, we can also examine our occupational, financial, and cultural wellness.<sup>17</sup>

*Intellectual/Creative Health* governs the ability to interpret, analyze, and act on information. It also includes a person's ability to reason (with oneself and others). "Start at the top," says Dan Johnston, former lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Army who also co-founded BrainSpan, a company and laboratory that develops products and programs to help people measure, track, and improve brain function. Johnston aims to shift the way we think about health. "Many of us immediately turn to things like weight, cholesterol levels, risk for cancer, blood sugar levels, and heart health, we forget about the brain." Focus on your brain and everything else will follow. "Without a healthy brain you cannot make healthy decisions." He explains that some of the most influential and modifiable factors related to cognitive decline are linked to lifestyle: physical inactivity, unhealthy diet, smoking, social isolation, poor sleep, lack of mentally stimulating activities, and misuse of alcohol.<sup>18</sup>

Taking precautions now will help ward off diseases and dysfunction. Literally exercising your brain by keeping it active will slow cognitive decline. In his book *Keep Sharp*, neurosurgeon and CNN correspondent Sanjay Gupta describes 5 pillars for preserving brain health: movement, discovery, relaxation, nourishment, and connection.<sup>19</sup> When we have a reason for being, it will encourage us to make those lasting relationships and do what is necessary to be mentally present.




*Six dimensions of wellness*

*Emotional Health* involves one's feelings and their expression. School districts around the country have been implementing social-emotional learning (SEL) into the classroom. The SEL curriculum helps students identify feelings and emotions and includes strategies to manage those emotions.

Developing the relationship one has with oneself is of primary importance. We can't take care of the other dimensions until we take care of our emotional health. The need to take care of ourselves before we can help another is like the oxygen masks on an airplane. We need to put on our mask first to have the mental and physical fuel, and then we can give love to others and nurture strong relationships. Research by Dan Buettner, who traveled to the Blue Zones (areas of the world found to have the highest percentage of people living long and meaningful lives), found strong social networks and community bonds have proved vital for people's mental and emotional well-being.<sup>20</sup>

*Social Health/Cultural Health* controls the ability to relate and connect with others in the world. The sense of belonging and acceptance carries us through the best and worst of times. Throughout our life we will have both personal and professional relationships. It is up to us to nourish them and determine which ones are worth investing the time. According to psychologist Helene Moore, "Time spent cultivating positive relationships throughout the lifespan—both in and out of the home—is time well spent, for relationships are *one of the most important sources of meaning, life satisfaction, happiness, and well-being.*"<sup>21</sup>



*"Relationships are one of the most important sources of meaning, life satisfaction, happiness, and well-being."*

—*Helene Moore*

In an 80-year study on human happiness, Harvard researchers established a strong correlation between deep relationships and overall well-being. The trick, according to Robert Waldinger and Marc Schultz, who wrote *The Good Life* about the Harvard study, is that those relationships must be nurtured. The trouble with this sentiment is that we don't always put our relationships first. Any given day brings many things to get done and we often take for granted that those who love us most will always be there or that unconditional love will prevail. But working on those relationships takes both parties involved. "*Positive* relationships are essential to human well-being."<sup>22</sup>

As a physical education professor, I particularly love the authors' statement that having healthy, fulfilling relationships is its own kind of fitness. Social fitness, like physical fitness, takes work to maintain. They state that social fitness should be taught to children and be a central consideration in public policy right alongside exercise, diets, and other health recommendations.<sup>23</sup>



It takes being honest with ourselves about where we are devoting our time and whether we are tending to the connections that help us thrive. Finding time can be hard and we may feel we are being selfish, but taking care of our social health can have mental, emotional, and physical benefits.

*Spiritual Health* determines the ability to deal with everyday life in a manner that leads to realizing one's full potential, finding the meaning and purpose of life, and experiencing happiness from within. It is not confined to sacred terms and practices. In one of the most influential books written on meaning and purpose in life, Viktor Frankl says, ". . . the meaning of life differs from man to man, from day to day and from hour to hour. [sic] What matters . . . is not the meaning of life in general but rather the specific meaning of a person's life at a given moment."<sup>24</sup> The center of that meaning is purpose, and that purpose is intrinsic motivation to keep going for someone or something. Whether that someone is ourself, a partner, or multiple someones, such as family, friends, children, co-workers, neighbors, or individuals in your community, the relationships with those external groups help us to find meaning and have purpose.

*Vocational/Occupational/Environmental Health* prevents and controls disease or injuries related to the interactions between people and their environment. We need to understand our relationship with factors outside of our control. In her presentation for the Health and Longevity Summit, Christine Vatovec, professor at the University of Vermont, emphasizes our connection to the planet. Healthy planetary systems support our health: Clean air and water, stable climate, resilient ecosystems, biodiversity. All interconnect with our physical health, social health, cultural health, and



*"For people living in the Blue Zones, their longevity is a product of their environment."*

—Dan Buettner<sup>27</sup>

spiritual health.<sup>25</sup> Aronson points out that "We need ways of letting people work when they still can, and of helping them to stop working when that's in their interest the interest of the common good."<sup>26</sup> Lifestyle tools for health promotion and disease prevention includes nutrition, movement/physical activity, sleep, stress management, and our connection to/with nature and those we encounter as we go

through our daily lives.

*Physical Health* refers to the well-being of the physical body. It is the ability to maintain a healthy quality of life that allows one to get through daily activities without extra fatigue or physical stress. Ratey shows evidence in

*Spark* that exercise actually grows new brain cells and that physical activity is truly the best defense against everything from mood disorders to ADHD, to addiction, to menopause, to Alzheimer’s. “Physical exercise may offer the greatest return on investment in yourself, and it’s an antidote to many things that pay into your risk for decline,” says Gupta.<sup>28</sup>



*Physical exercise*

Physical health is shaped by our diets, sleep patterns, as well as fitness routines. Our physical health impacts all of those we interact with on a daily basis. For example, the rising cost of health care affects us all. Three key factors driving U.S. health care costs are prescription drugs (various conditions), chronic diseases (arthritis, obesity, cancer, and heart disease), and lifestyle choices (smoking, alcohol, dangerous activities).<sup>29</sup>

If we don’t start thinking about wellness early on and working on ways to fit it into a daily routine, we will be forced later in life to try to correct what we could have prevented. By improving in each dimension of wellness we can diminish our impact on the rising costs of healthcare, environmental hazards, emotional distress, social isolation, and accidents.

## Overall Well-being

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Wellness encompasses so much more than working out and eating right (although they are very important). Most studies or advice for aging well include some way of talking about finding balance and working on all areas of wellness. For example, a HelpGuide.org article on aging well suggests that the keys to healthy aging are learning to cope with change, finding meaning and joy, staying connected, getting active and boosting vitality, and keeping your mind sharp.<sup>30</sup> It is not just knowing the dimensions but the relationships you have within and the connections you have to each one. It takes commitment to exercise each dimension for your overall wellbeing.

The documentary *Live to 100* explores the main take-aways from those who live to 100: those featured emphasize moving naturally, having a positive outlook and real sense of purpose, and eating wisely. All have a sense of

connection. “Our lifespans are contingent on our health spans—not the other way around. . . . Obesity and loneliness will likely kill us faster than advances in medicine will help us. We shouldn’t seek to just live longer; we should strive to live healthier—longevity will follow from there.”<sup>31</sup> Look at wellbeing as multiple pieces of a puzzle fitting together, connecting the larger whole.<sup>32</sup>

My children have puzzles that challenge them to match words around a single related word in the middle. What if we looked at the dimensions of wellness as the matching words with “relationships” at the center of our wellbeing? As we age, we develop in each dimension. The stronger the connections within those dimensions may nurture our longevity and sense of belonging, connecting to the larger puzzle.



*Dimensions of wellness, depicted as a matching puzzle with relationships in the middle, by Veronika Boyer*

### ***It Takes Some Effort***

My teaching and coaching philosophies revolve around being a role model. My teaching profession involves promoting the wellness of our youth and teaching our youth lifelong skills to be well into older ages. I only get to teach students until their graduation, but if I get lucky, my passion for wellness will inspire others to keep well into adulthood. When the curriculum ends, I challenge students to continue to educate themselves and practice wellness in all dimensions. I often have had former students contact me to ask for advice and below is some of what I tell them. I also continue to seek advice from my role models and mentors like Romagna and my SuperAger friend.

*Find what works for you.* I stated earlier that there is no “one size fits all” when it comes to aging. Find what you enjoy and make it work with your schedule. When the number one suggestion for enhancing intelligence is Sudoku or crossword puzzles and you don’t like doing them, read a book, paint a picture, or take a class. New knowledge in any form helps, says Gupta. He even suggests speed games like video games instead of pills.<sup>33</sup>

Emotional health is in the hot spot with brain health issues on the rise (or just recognized). To foster your mental health, it is acceptable to see a mental health counselor even if you are not diagnosed with a specific disorder. If that is out of your comfort zone or filling out your gratitude journal causes more stress with finding the time or remembering to do so, taking just minutes to meditate or just two minutes to breathe can have a lasting impact.

If your spiritual health is confusing or lacking, pausing to be thankful for all you do have and recognize all that is good in your life also counts as nurturing your spiritual health.



My personal wellness goals

You do not have to be on the neighborhood association committee to work on your social health. Simply taking a walk around the block or attending a local farmers market can help you feel a part of something. Another piece of advice from my friend, the SuperAger, is to spend time with the older and wiser. You just might learn something.


Don't let your carbon footprint hinder you or overwhelm your mindset about your environmental health. Starting small by shutting off the sink while brushing your teeth can foster healthy habits.

Physical health encompasses nutrition and diet, sleep, and physical activity. Find what you like to do, and do it. Fit it into the little spaces of time you have. Extreme solutions (such as fad diets, over exercising, and use of substances) hurt our well-being.<sup>34</sup> Choice matters—find something you enjoy. The result may be less exercise at any given time, but framing exercise as an integral part of your life will keep you on track and active.

How intensely you focus on each dimension of wellness may vary. As long as we are conscious of the role each plays in our overall well-being, we are working on them.

*Your wellness matters to others.* My dad just turned 68. Honestly the age doesn't sound that old to me but to others that is "getting up there." He has now outlived his own father by 8 years. My Grandpa Ron, Ronnie, died of a cardiac arrest in his work boots at age 60. When I was a kid, my dad didn't seem unhealthy, besides his sports-related injuries (torn Achilles, hernia surgeries). In his early 40's he started experiencing a racing heart. I remember seeing his heart beating out of his chest after a city rec basketball game while relaxing in his recliner. He had his first and second ablation surgeries at age 47. We have come to learn his condition is hereditary, as three of his sisters have since been diagnosed, so my dad started paying attention to his wellness instead of assuming he was healthy. The healthy habits he has invested his time in will keep him around for my mom, my brother and me, and our children, his grandchildren. His wellness matters to us.

*Be proactive instead of reactive.* I worked in a shoe store for 15 years through high school, college, and adulthood. We fit and sold functional training shoes and we worked with local podiatrists in town. The shoes were pricey, and we would often get asked about the high costs. My response was proactive health care. Pay for quality shoes now that will help with stability, cushion, and balance, or be ready to pay a chiropractor, physical therapist, or orthopedic surgeon for ailments that could have been prevented by knowledge and proper care early on in life. "Prevention is the most powerful antidote to illness."<sup>35</sup> If you do the work today, it will make tomorrow easier.



*"The future depends on what you do today."*

*—Mahatma Gandhi*

*See the meaning in the small events.* It doesn't have to be life altering events that define who you are or motivate you to do better. Gawande notes,

If we shift as we age toward appreciating everyday pleasures and relationships rather than toward achieving, having and getting, and if we find this more fulfilling, then why do we wait so long to do it? Why do we wait until we are old? The common view is that these lessons are hard to learn. Living is a kind of skill. The calm and wisdom of old age are achieved over time.<sup>36</sup>

I love a story I read about a woman who, at her 70th birthday party, said, "That was the best day of my life." She concluded she wanted her to have more best days.<sup>37</sup> Our society puts so much pressure on weddings, birthdays, and graduations, but why not strive every day to feel the best in the little

things? Finding purpose in everyday events and activities will cultivate a purpose and self-worth.

*Nurture meaningful relationships.* Everyone needs to work at their relationships, keeping in mind that they are two-sided. You have to give as much as you receive. Not all days may be the same—some days you have more to give, and some days you need more grace. Positive attitudes are vital in maintaining relationships. My SuperAger friend noted that sharing humor with others helps her in the aging process. She told me a delightful story about an elderly couple; the wife had fallen in the kitchen, she could not get herself up and her husband did not hear her cries for help. Likewise, she was not responding to his calls for her in the next room. Once he realized he should go find her since she was not answering him he found her on the floor and rushed to her side. Once he realized she was ok and just stuck, he noticed he himself could not get up. They both started laughing hysterically and once they regained sanity he scooted to a chair, hoisted himself up, then scooted the chair to her from his knees and she managed to get herself up as well. Being able to laugh at yourself and with others will make the aging process a little less intimidating and maybe even fun.

*Work on resilience.* We will all make poor decisions when it comes to personal wellbeing. We all know that wearing sunscreen is important, smoking is bad, and fast food is not real food, yet there are individuals who choose to make less productive choices when it comes to their health. “Getting older is unavoidable, but falling apart is not.”<sup>38</sup> There are reasons we do things. Some things just need to be done and there will be no monetary prize or trophy.



*Resilience*

To age well, find the purpose inside yourself. Your reward will be the satisfaction of knowing you did everything well up to the current moment. But when you make a poor choice, learn from it and do better. Waldinger and Schultz make a good point in *The Good Life* about being flexible when it comes to mistakes or setbacks. “. . . coping strategies though our lives . . . can become set in stone. This kind of ‘strength’ can actually make us more fragile. In an earthquake, the sturdiest, most rigid structures are not the ones that survive. In fact, they might be the first to crumble.” They go on to say that, “being able to flex with changing circumstance . . . might be the difference between getting through and falling apart.”<sup>39</sup> In *The Joy Choice*, Michelle Segar introduces a



method called POP, an acronym for Pause, open up your Options, then play and Pick the joy choice.<sup>40</sup> There are those who naturally do this when plans change, while there are some who may need to practice resilience when plans are popped.

Viktor Frankl, stressing the freedom of will, argues humans have the freedom to choose their responses to any situation, regardless of external circumstances.<sup>41</sup> Ultimately, this inner freedom allows individuals to find purpose and meaning in their lives. Situations may happen that you did not choose or cannot control. If you can start training yourself to handle tough times, they will only be tough for a shorter amount of time. Flexible thinking will help if something does not go as planned. In *Option B*, a book that focuses on facing adversity, building resilience, and finding joy, the authors state that we need to have resilience in the ways we process negative events. "We all deal with loss: jobs lost, loves lost, lives lost. The question is not whether these things will happen. They will and we will have to face them."<sup>42</sup> It is important to recognize that we all go through the ages and stages in life. "People who can adapt to changing life circumstances and experiences may more quickly resume close-to-normal feelings and states of mental well-being," says Gupta.<sup>43</sup> Do things today that your future self will thank you for.

*"When you tolerate an error, you rob yourself of learning.  
When you ruminate on an error, you rob yourself of happiness.  
Notice it, improve it, and move on from it."*

*—James Clear<sup>44</sup>*

## Final Thoughts

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While my daughter has grown too tall to ride some rides at the fair, she is now tall enough to ride roller coasters and "older" rides with Mom! She embraced the change with the excitement for what's next to come and built a new connection with those close to her.


Paying attention to all dimensions of wellness and working on the connections between and within those dimensions will empower us through life to keep aging with grace. We can overcome the stressors that may

lead to toxic stress, depression, and other health issues, and instead find meaning and purpose to guide us toward a better future.

The good news is that “despite feelings of loss that often occur as people age, getting older does not necessarily mean people become less happy. On average, most people report greater mental well-being as they age past their mid-fifties into the later stages of life.”<sup>45</sup> In one of her most influential studies, Laura Christensen, Stanford psychologist, found that people reported more positive emotions as they age, contrary to beliefs that people grow unhappier as they age.

“When we are young and healthy, we believe we will live forever, we widen networks of friends and connections . . . but as our time becomes finite and uncertain we shift to the here and now, to everyday pleasures and the people closest to us.”<sup>46</sup> Her findings raise the question: if, as we age, we appreciate everyday pleasures and relationships rather than focus on achieving, having, and getting, why do we take so long to get there? Why wait until we are old? These lessons are hard to learn. Living is a skill, and the calm and wisdom of old age are achieved over time. But what if it has nothing to do with age, but merely perspective and a personal sense of how finite your time in the world is?<sup>47</sup>

Find motivation to pay attention to aging being inevitable and accept the changes. That motivation can only come from within. It is important to think about the effects of aging at all stages of life, not just when the culture labels us as old or when medical benchmarks require us to start our colonoscopies and mammograms. According to the text I use for a Coaching Decisions and Ethics course, *Coaching Successfully*, the best way to motivate is to challenge but not overwhelm.<sup>49</sup> While the thought of aging can be overwhelming, if we are aware of the changes happening with the inevitability of aging, we can accept the challenges and look forward to the new experiences. We can change our mindset from uncomfortable to content, accepting, and grateful.



*"The time is now.  
Do the work."  
—Brian Knight<sup>48</sup>*

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## Notes

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1. Cornell Law School, “Legal Age.”
2. Center for Retirement Research, “Average Retirement Age.”
3. Kierkegaard, *Papers and Journals*, 161.
4. LaPook, “Redefining Old Age.”
5. Frankl, *Man’s Search for Meaning*.
6. Aronson, *Elderhood*; LaPook, “Redefining Old Age.”
7. Gawande, *Being Mortal*, 29.
8. Marketplace speakers, “Joyce Sunada.”
9. Niewijk, “The University of Chicago Welcomes Dr. Emily Rogalski.” Emily Rogalski PhD, leading neuroscientist at University of Chicago Healthy Aging and Alzheimer’s Research Care (HAARC) Center, coined the term “SuperAgers” 15 years ago to describe people older than 80 whose memory is as good as those 20 to 30 years younger (or as well as that of someone in their 50s or 60s). What researchers are learning from SuperAgers could allow us to discover new protective factors in lifestyle, genetics, and resilience for common changes that arise with aging. Becoming a SuperAger is partly dependent on the genetic lottery, but our lifestyle choices – food, exercise, social connections and taking on new challenges—make a difference.
10. Lewis, “Erikson’s 8 Stages of Psychosocial Development.”
11. Evans and Sims, *Health and Physical Education*.
12. Clear, *Atomic Habits*.
13. Segar, *The Joy Choice*, 19.
14. Jim Romagna, personal communication.
15. Ratey, *Spark*, 224.
16. Gawande, *Being Mortal*, 46.
17. Evans and Sims, *Health and Physical Education*.
18. Gupta, *Keep Sharp*, 75.
19. Gupta.
20. Firpo-Cappiello, “Blue Zones’ Author Dan Buettner.” After collecting data on diet, exercise, social interactions, and other factors, Buettner and his team discovered patterns: The people in these areas (Blue Zones) mostly eat a whole-food, plant-based diet; they have strong social connections; and they participate in regular physical activity.
21. Moore, “Bridging the Gap between Our Minds and Bodies.”

22. Waldinger and Schulz, *The Good Life*, 29 (emphasis added).
23. Waldinger and Schulz, *The Good Life*.
24. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, 108.
25. Vatovec, "Healthy Aging."
26. LaPook, "Redefining Old Age."
27. Buettner, *Live to 100*.
28. Gupta, *Keep Sharp*, 101.
29. Blue Cross Blue Shield, "Why Does Healthcare Cost so Much?"
30. Smith, Segal, and White, "Aging Well."
31. Finkelstein, "'Blue Zones' Have Captivated Health and Longevity Experts."
32. It took me years to find my symmetry in the wellness dimensions and I am still working on it as it is ever-changing. It has evolved with my ages and stages in life. After college, in my 20s, I was very selfish, but not in the negative way everyone perceives selfishness. I took care of me. I had to. I took courses in wellness and physical education, I had a strong social group playing rugby, relationships with my co-workers, and I have a very close family. My spirit was uplifted by the many gifts and talents I had and knowing I was never alone. I was single until I met my husband at age 30 and my priorities changed. I have not always been keen on changing my hobbies, but realized the change is for a good reason, and I have found my joy in new and different routines. Now, in my 40s, married with two children, the balance revolves around 3 other people in my life. While I still find time for me, I chose to be a mother and my family is an extension of myself. I write goals on my birthday each year. I don't do New Year's resolutions on January 1, I make them on MY New Year's. I started the habit of writing a goal for each of the dimensions of wellness and I don't get discouraged if I don't meet them all in the year. I simply put them on next year's list and continue to work on at least a small percentage of each dimension in my everyday life.
33. Gupta, *Keep Sharp*, 124-125.
34. Segar, *The Joy Choice*.
35. Gupta, *Keep Sharp*, 95.
36. Gawande, *Being Mortal*, 95.
37. Mannarino, "Embracing Your Age," 186.
38. Ratey, *Spark*, 221.
39. Waldinger and Schulz, *The Good Life*, 147.
40. Segar, *The Joy Choice*, 151-62; chap. 12.
41. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*.
42. Sandberg and Grant, *Option B*, 29.
43. Gupta, *Keep Sharp*, 155.
44. Clear, "3-2-1".
45. Gupta, *Keep Sharp*, 155.
46. Gawande, *Being Mortal*, 97.
47. Gawande, 95-97.
48. Knight, "What Could This Cost Me?"
49. Martens, *Successful Coaching*.

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