

Make It Happen with Emily Kimball
.....Creative Aging Expert.....

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1. Successful Aging Study

A University of California at San Diego study interviewed 500 people ages 60-98 about successful aging. They found it was significantly associated with overall level of activities, number of friends, cognitive functioning, resilience, and a positive attitude toward aging.

“The most interesting part of the study is that people who think they are aging well are not necessarily the most healthy individuals,” said lead researcher Dilip Jeste, MD. “In fact, optimism and effective coping styles were found to be more important to aging successfully than traditional measures of health and wellness. These findings suggest that physical health is not the best indicator of successful aging – attitude is.”

—*International Council Active Aging, ICAA Research Review*, December 2005.

2. New Book on Creativity Coming Soon

Amy Gorman in her soon-to-be released book, *Aging Artfully*, profiles twelve women artists ages 85-107. These artists are all still active in their art form and all live independently. Her book consists of the answers they gave to the question, “What is creativity in your life?”

3. Interesting Travel Opportunity

The primary purpose of Seniors Abroad is to learn about lifestyles of active persons over

50 in other countries. Participants live with three families in very different sections of the country they are visiting – urban areas, rural areas, etc. In 2006, Seniors Abroad will visit New Zealand/Australia, Japan, Germany, or Portugal. Host families are also needed in the U.S. to welcome guests from Japan, New Zealand, and Australia. For more information e-mail defaz@visuallink.com or call 540-722-4232.

4. You're Never Too Old to Learn

Marion Koffords is joining throngs of students starting classes at Humboldt State University in Arcata, CA. But at age 93, Koffords stands out a bit on campus. The oldest student at Humboldt State has enrolled in two weekend seminars as part of the University's "Over 60" program.
—*Richmond Times Dispatch*, 9/10/05.

5. Improving Your Memory

In another study performed at University of California, Los Angeles, 17 people followed a memory improvement plan every day for 14 days. They engaged in memory training (brain teasers, crossword puzzles, and memory exercises emphasizing verbal skills); ate a healthy diet (5 small meals daily to prevent dips in blood glucose levels); participated in physical fitness activities (brisk walks and stretching); and reduced stress (stretching and relaxation exercises). A control group made no changes.

Participants following the memory improvement plan recorded a 5% decrease in brain metabolism in the dorsal lateral prefrontal region of the brain, which is directly linked to working memory and other cognitive functions, suggesting that they were using their brain more efficiently. They reported improved memory and demonstrated better performance on a cognitive measure controlled by this same brain region.

Most people do not realize that they are in control of their memory as they get older pointed out lead investigator, Gary Small,

MD. “This research demonstrates that it is possible in just 14 days to make simple lifestyle changes that will not only improve memory and brain function, but also will improve overall health and wellness.
—*International Council Active Aging, ICAA Research Review*, December 2005.

6. Getting Excited About Retirement

Nancy Spence from Idaho writes, “I was so excited to read about some of your outreaches/adventures. I am 64 and planning on retiring next April. I have been an ER nurse for 44 years and have loved my work. It has been satisfying intellectually, emotionally, and personally. I have also met and worked with some of the most dynamic people I have ever known. It is so bittersweet to leave this environment. I have always loved the outdoors and the adventures it holds. My favorites are kayaking and biking, plus hiking into new places. I will send for your Resource Guide and read it avidly. I am really excited about more adventures as life evolves into a different chapter.”

7. Daring Females

Nataly Kogan asked me to pass on information about her new web site and a book she is writing on Daring Females. It’s about living an adventurous and exciting life by taking risks and pushing the envelope. Interested readers – male and female – should visit www.daringfemale.com.

8. Feedback on Ageist Billboard

Here are some excerpts from replies to whether the Health Club billboard picturing an older woman working out coupled with the message “Be Young” was ageist.

New Mexico “Yes, the billboard is ageist and no, the person with whom you communicated doesn’t get it.”

Vermont “I am 56 and have no interest in being younger. I get frustrated when people

say, 'you don't look that old,' or 'I would look so much younger if I would just color my hair.' I think I have earned every gray hair on my head by the struggles I have overcome and by just living life – I am proud of the gray and all that it signifies. Wouldn't it be nice if the world recognized the joy of being older and wiser; rather than spending one's time trying to look younger – there are a lot more fun and worthwhile things to do than color my hair!"

Wisconsin "You are on the right track to challenge this thinking....The 'Be Young' attitude seems to be part of the denial of aging and death that doesn't serve human beings well."

Virginia "Yes, that most certainly is ageism. It is glorifying youth rather than celebrating (or encouraging) a life fully lived at any age. And it sets people up to achieve an impossible goal – that is unless the health club is recruiting only people who believe in reincarnation....I also disagree with the statement that everybody longs to be younger. I don't long to be younger – I long to be better."

Hawaii "Aloha from a very healthy woman of 74, actively busy with my farm, my business, swimming, and playing at the beach a few times a week as well as an active political dedication to improving the planet's environment....How boring when people say I am 'just like a young woman.' Nonsense! I am a smart old woman. It takes YEARS to figure out how to live right and be as healthy and happy as possible."

United States. "RIGHT ON SISTER. This whole 'young' thing is very irritating to me. I do not accept that saying I look young is a compliment....Maybe they could say, 'you look healthy, radiant, confident, carry yourself well, have energy, are vital.' I remember one man saying 'hello young lady.' My response with a smile was, I am neither young nor a lady. I think it is up to us to educate (reeducate?) the public about

'young' being a compliment. I like being old....and lively”

California “There is so much emphasis on looking younger today that it is no wonder there are so many depressed older people. What’s wrong with looking one’s age, when one is in good health and of sound mind?”

United States “You are definitely not making a mountain out of a molehill. But you are fighting an uphill battle. Keep it up! Here are some of the left-handed compliments we have received, along with their underlying messages.

‘You are not old, you look great.’ *Old is ugly.*

‘You are not old, you travel all over the world.’

Old is sedentary, maybe just plain lazy.

‘You are not old, you are healthy as an ox.’

Old is unhealthy.

‘You are not old. You read widely and are mentally alert.’ *Old is stupid.*

New Jersey “It’s there job to get bodies in the door and sign people up. If that’s what works for them so be it....Let’s you and I continue to work out past the age of 100 and use our creative energies in a more positive way than getting upset at a marketing campaign.”

Thank you all for responding to my question about this billboard. I will send a summary of your comments to the health club.

9. Happy New Year

I wish you lots of fun adventures and new insights in 2006. I begin the year with my leg in a cast due to a missed tennis ball, a hard fall on an asphalt court, and a broken knee cap. I have canceled two cross country ski trips, but am able to continue with my planned biking and hiking adventures. I will pull my tired leg down to Atlanta, GA, to keynote the Georgia Association of Activity Professionals Conference on January 23rd. There is life after injury!

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say delete.