

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

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### 1. **Second Journey's Resource Guide**

Second Journey recently put together a Resource Guide containing information gleaned during three years of Visioning Councils held across America. These councils are "Think Tanks" bringing people from different professions together to search for a new vision of aging in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They include architects, developers, educators, practitioners, health care professionals, writers, visionaries and catalysts of all stripes. The entire Guide is a work in progress, and they encourage others to check in with their ideas and suggestions. To view go to [www.SecondJourney.org](http://www.SecondJourney.org)

A few years ago I attended one of Second Journey's Visioning Councils held in the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains in Western North Carolina. This organization brings a breath of fresh air to the aging field. They are among a small number of emerging organizations helping birth a new vision of the rich possibilities of the second half of life.

That vision sees the *Longevity Revolution* – the dividend of extra years which in this past century has extended life expectancy by 30 plus years – not as a demographic time bomb threatening

the social safety net, but as an unprecedented *historic opportunity*.

An opportunity to open new avenues for individual growth and spiritual deepening – so that our *longer* lives become *more meaningful* lives; an opportunity to birth a renewed ethic of service and mentoring in later life; and an opportunity to encourage the growth of new communities – and new models of community – to support living, learning, and social change for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Second Journey feels that existing institutions – from senior centers to Sun City – are based on assumptions about “the elderly” that do not apply to the generation of Baby Boomers now poised to redefine later life.

They recognize that our culture is entering a fertile period of social experimentation. The current conventional “continuum of care” – which includes catered and assisted-living facilities and nursing homes, late life options are not find covered in their Resource Guide. Instead attention is focused on promising new forms, promising innovative solutions to the challenge of Creating Community in Later Life.

Go to their web site and look under Resource Guide to explore information about recent evolving communities for senior living, the new urbanism, intentional communities, and fresh ways of living. You may be surprised by all the innovative projects in the works.

## **2. Successful Aging vs. Conscious Aging**

Successful Aging has been defined in Karl Rowe and Robert Kahn’s book, *Successful Aging*, (Pantheon 1998) as manifested by; 1) a low risk of disease and disease-related disability; 2) a high

level of mental and physical functioning; and 3) a continuing active engagement with life.

Other authors have suggested that this definition which relies so heavily on good health, activity and busyness, leaves out another pathway to successful aging referred to as conscious aging. – a process of spiritual growth  
“characterized by increasing integration of divergent elements of the self both rational and emotional to yield a more complex structure.” (LaBouvie-Vief 2000)

Conscious Aging is one pathway for coping with the challenges of later life. It goes beyond patterns of ego strength acquired during youth and mid-life. It is a pathway of “individuation” (Jung) that includes growing awareness in later life representing a new stage or level of consciousness. This is not a new idea – many spiritual traditions depict later life as a time for growth of consciousness and wisdom. It involves “developing a psycho-spiritual wholeness and honoring what has hidden in our souls - becoming more of the person we were meant to be.

This spiritual aging casts off tasks of midlife, abandons attachment to worldly objects and points the way to becoming more conscious of ourselves and the cosmic mystery. It “embraces the losses (in aging) as a curriculum of the soul and confronts such questions head on.”

The conscious aging people say that the 80 year old on cross country skis may indeed, be a shallow chap despite having powerful thighs while the wheelchair-bound elder might be richer of soul.  
(Drew Leder)

One can be a successful ager without being a conscious ager. Conscious aging is an option which leads to establishing a deeper meaning in one’s life’s quest.

### **3. Aging at Home**

#### **A. Vermont's Choices for Care**

Medicare-eligible senior citizens who need someone to tend to their needs can be cared for at home by a family member, friend or neighbor who gets paid by the state. Florence "Tubby" Parsons has her cat, Buddy, her plants in her one bedroom apartment to attend to and a weekly poker game with neighbors. But best of all she continues to live at home with daily visits from a longtime friend who is paid \$10 an hour from the state to care for her. After one year with this program Vermont officials say it is reducing the number of people sent to nursing homes, cutting the cost of tax-payer-funded care and improving quality of life. (AP article Richmond Times Dispatch)

#### **B. A Nursing Home Kidnapping..**

Joseph Perez, an 85 year-old man in Center Line Michigan is accused of kidnapping his wife from a nursing home and taking her to Florida where they lived for nearly a year before authorities found them. He has been charged by the Father Murray Nursing Center with kidnapping.

#### **C. Germany**

In Germany seniors are banding together in connected suites of apartments in order to make ends meet and stay out of nursing homes. Nursing homes are too planned out with stiff scheduling and rigid rules, the say and no fun at all. "I feel like I have a family," one gentleman says. "It's like being a teenager all over again." Each person has a small apartment with bath and kitchen, and they share a community living room. This arrangement addresses isolation, one of frail senior's biggest problems, and helps with health issues as well.

[www.elderwebb.com](http://www.elderwebb.com)

### **4. Cell Phone Especially for Seniors**

“the jitterbug cell phone is my top senior-friendly technology of the year,” says a Richmond Times Dispatch writer. It is a simplified cell phone, with large buttons, simple operation, easy-to-read text, a cushion that cups around your ear to improve sound quality, volume control and more. Price \$147 for the phone plus \$10-\$40 per month for the service plan. [www.jitterbug.com](http://www.jitterbug.com) or call 800-550-6649

### **5. Dove Products Campaign**

Dove Products launched the *Campaign for Real Beauty* and as part of the on-going project is launching a global initiative designed to help debunk stereotypes among aging women. Dr. Butler of the International Longevity Center-USA is giving strategic counsel on the campaign as well as writing the forward to an upcoming Dove white paper on aging stereotypes of women. (The ICL Update, Fall 2006)

### **6. Volunteer Opportunities**

The 2007 edition of *Invest Yourself*, a catalogue of volunteer opportunities and a Guide to Action is just out. It is the most comprehensive listing of full-time voluntary service opportunities with non-government organizations throughout North America and the World. To order a copy send \$12 to Commission on Voluntary Service and Action, 1 Union Square West, Suite 902, NY, NY 10003 or call (646) 486-2446

### **7. Price Is Right Host Retires**

Bob Barker, silver-haired TV icon is retiring in June. “I will be 83 years old on December 12,” he said, “and I decided to retire while I’m still young.” He’ll hang up his microphone after 35 years as the host of “The Price Is Right” and 50 years overall in television. Richmond Times Dispatch 11/1/06

### **8. Retirement Living Web TV**

Last month a 4-person crew from Retirement Living, a program sponsored by Erickson Retirement Communities,

spent the day with me filming for a segment on their "The Art of Living" show. You can access this program, which spotlights seniors who are living interesting lives, by going to [www.rl.tv](http://www.rl.tv). It is on week days from noon to 12:30. In some cities you can watch it on channel 2.

### **9. Make It Happen! Schedule**

I'm hoping for some cross country skiing in Quebec Province Canada *with snow* next week. After speaking at the California Parks and Recreation Society and the Pacific & Northwest Annual Conference of National Recreation and Parks Association in Sacramento, I will hustle over to Chicago to offer two programs at the ASA-NCOA conference. After a break I'm off to a tennis elderhostel in Georgia and a 6-day bike trip in Florida with my adult son Josh...then on to New Hampshire to keynote their State Conference on Aging whose theme is "Climbing Mountains."!