

Constant Changes

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09/10/2019

It has been said that ***change is the only constant.***

Adopting that axiom might be important as we age. Instead of clinging to the past, or living life in nostalgia mode, maybe it would be better to keep adapting; just as we did through all the other stages of our life.

WikiHow provides a concise list of how to accept change as you get older.

<https://www.wikihow.com/Deal-with-Anxiety-Brought-on-by-Aging>

Have Realistic Expectations. "...try to develop a realistic (not pessimistic) expectation of what getting older will actually be like."

Relax. "...accept the changes that aging brings and find happiness in this new stage of life."

Avoid denial. Redefine attractiveness - as in being healthy and self-assured.

Be proud and grateful. Aging means you've survived! And all that life experience = wisdom.

If you were to write down just a few things that you're grateful for each day, it would probably increase your happiness and wellbeing. Remember that old tune "Keep Your Sunny Side Up"?

Be positive. It can improve your life. And it's contagious – in a good way.

Keep learning. Even if you've reached a point where you're physically unable to do some things, you can keep learning. Read books, watch documentaries, exercise your mind and keep life interesting. Learn to play an instrument, try a simple healthy recipe, or take basic art classes. If you have skills, maybe you can share your expertise in a volunteer capacity.

Stay social. Becoming isolated can hasten mental decline. Plus, it's just a bummer! "Make new friends and keep the old". Find something that gives your life meaning. There are people who need you. Talk to folks who are older than you. That can help demystify aging.

Manage your health. Stay physically active. If you're not, start in small ways and work yourself up. Have a chat with your healthcare provider first. Stretching, chair yoga, or Tai Chi can strengthen your core, improve your balance and keep you flexible. Feeling stiff? "Motion is lotion". Eat a healthy diet; lots of fresh plain vegetables and fruits, good fats such as avocados and fish, cut out the junk food and consume lots of good old fashioned water. Keep up on regular checkups with the dentist and doctor. Catching things early can keep it from getting serious. If you find these visits stressful, take a friend or loved one along.

Consider trying meditation. Some benefits include reducing anxiety and depression, and may even help you deal with physical discomfort. Start by clearing your mind of all thoughts and *focus on your breathing* for several minutes.

Perhaps the most difficult changes that come with aging involve loss. The National Institute of Health cites that "people typically lose almost one-half inch every 10 years after age 40". That's no "biggie". But there are serious losses to contend with as we age. The passing of loved ones,

friends, and pets, medical disorders and inability to take part in activities can take a toll on a person's emotional well-being. Failing eyesight, hearing loss, limited finances, and delayed reaction times can increase the hazards associated with cooking, driving and self-medication. The American Psychological Association states that "while aging is an inevitable part of life, **depression** need not be. Early recognition, diagnosis and treatment can counteract and prevent the emotional and physical consequences of depression".
<https://www.apa.org/helpcenter/aging-depression.aspx>

Keep adapting and pushing yourself a little each day to deal with necessary changes. Are there devices you can incorporate around your home to make life easier and safer? Maybe it's time to learn a new smart phone or add a voice controlled personal assistant like Alexa. Maybe you could give chair yoga a try, adopt a pet or travel somewhere. Things might take you a little longer than they used to, but patience is power.

The MARIELDERS Center is a good place to change and adapt. You'll make connections and friends here. We offer lots of things to do including free tech assistance. Check out our website MARIELDERS.org, or pick up our newsletter; better still – just drop in any day Monday through Friday 9 - 4:30. We would love to meet you.