

CNN Medical consultant Dr. Sanjay Gupta writes "...People who live better --- and longer--- are the ones who hold on to hope. They keep their chins up and often throw themselves into the service of others. "

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The older are wiser about COVID, even though they are hardest hit. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 93 percent of COVID-19 deaths nationwide have occurred among those ages 55 or older[MOU1] .2 **Despite this imminent threat to our older citizens, it is reported "As a group, older adults, appear to be withstanding the mental health strains of the COVID-19 pandemic better than all other age groups."** 3 **In other words, our seniors may appear to be more resilient in bouncing back from this COVID crisis.**

Our senior citizens' motto could be, **"What age dictates, we mitigate!"** says -senior learning consultant Dr. Ruth Woo of the Jacksonville's Senior Services dept. 4 Additional good news is "about one-half to two-thirds of people show PTG (Post Traumatic Growth.)5 **Post-traumatic growth (PTG) is a type of positive change which people experience as a result of struggling with major life challenges or a traumatic event. See the article Growth after Trauma (org). for more information. You have the Resiliency Gene baked into your DNA.**

This article will explore:

- 1. Six benefits of entering your golden years.
- 2. Tips on how to adjust to being among "The Rest of Us" (54 years+), including memory loss
- 3. How to communicate meaningfully with non-boomers (e.g., don't continually share "baby boomer fables.")

1. Six benefits of entering your golden years.

There are several advantages accompany aging 6.Older adults:

- Are less irritated by things
- Become reflective
- Grow wiser
- Spend less time worrying and fighting
- Improve mental performance especially in job-related and verbal skills
- Report positive life satisfaction

2. Tips on how to adjust to being among "The Rest of Us" (The oldest baby boomers just turned 74+ 7,8).

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1. Use it or lose it — your memory.

As stated previously, mental abilities can actually increase as we age if we use our skills. Problems with memory and computation result more from lack of practice than change in our physical thinking equipment. About 89 percent of elderly DO NOT experience Alzheimer's disease. "An idle mind is the devil's playground." (And that devil is Alzheimer.) About 11.3 percent of those over 65 have Alzheimers 9 *. **But brain disease can be slowed down by using your brain in particular ways... says Dr. Sanjay Gupta in his 2021 book "Keep Sharp."**10 Dr. Gupta offers 13 "Brain Muscle building" exercises to help you Use your brain (rather than lose it (p151-153).

Research[MOU2] has revealed that the best way to remember what you read or do is to concentrate on what you are doing or reading. Learning to concentrate on your breathing, will improve your overall concentrating ability and therefore your memory. Also, silently repeating to yourself, what you have just done (i.e., "I turned off the stove, brought in the dog,") will help you remember later that you did turn off the stove or brought in the dog.

A normal memory problem occurs when you can't remember where you put your keys. A serious memory problem happens when you can't recall what your keys are used for. In either case, you should go see your doctor.

Simple memory (and Whole Brain) boosters include:

- a. "The palest ink is better than the best memory," so **put it in writing**. Write notes to yourself. You can use sticky notes (those small yellow notes that allow you to cover an entire desktop or refrigerator with reminders). Leave messages to yourself on your phone. Like "location, location, location," remember, "repetition, repetition, repetition."
- b. **Play with your brain, that is, keep your brain in tune by playing games**. Bridge the gap. One of the brightest people this author knows plays bridge youthfully and expertly, yet technically qualifies for AARP membership. There are many resources for games to play. **Games, World of Puzzles**11 magazine is great. AARP offers a whole host of games and brain challenges, available online and on your iphone. Put down that TV remote and find something that fits your interests..
- c. **Create routines**. Remember the old saying, "A place (and time) for everything and everything in its place." It may be boring, but learn to routinely put your keys (and wallet, etc.) in one place. That will be one less thing you have to remember.
- d. **Tell jokes** to tested audiences, like your best friends. This requires timing and remembering the punch line. If you can't remember punch lines, write them down.
- e. **Communicate** electronically. If you are not computer phobic, join a group—there is one for everyone based on shared interests. Connect on the internet, make a call or write letters to your friends, using snail mail.
- f. **Take a course** that has nothing to do with what you have to do, but something you want to do (painting, coin collecting). You probably don't need credit but it will give you something to look forward to. Even your classmates can keep you young.

g. Finally ask your doctor about supplements that may help with aging. Many are advertised but only some, such as ginkgo, have research. Supplements and herbs may interact with other medications or conditions, so please check with your doctor.

h. Use the real “fountain of youth,” exercise, to add years to your life and life to your years. Following an exercise prescription from your doctor will retard the aging process, make you feel better and improve your stress-coping abilities. Exercise increases your brain size according to a 2014 article from Harvard Medical School 12

i. **Make Today Count.** The “**Make Today Count**” national organization focuses on helping mature but troubled adults cope with aspects of aging. As the name of the organization states, enjoy each day you are given by maintaining an “attitude of gratitude”. Keep a judgment-free journal of your daily gratitude.

Dr. William Osler (one of the world’s most famous Physicians) advised: “Live neither in the past nor in the future, but let each day absorb all your interest, energy and enthusiasm. The best preparation for tomorrow is to live today superbly well.” 13

3. How communicate meaningfully with the “Young.”

Due to sometimes being “COVID Quarantined” with multi-generations under the same roof, positive communication is extremely important for emotional fitness.

Avoid the temptation of telling “When I was your age” stories. These “Boomer fables” often elicit an “OK Boomer” 14 response from the young. “OK boomer” is a **catchphrase and Internet meme often used by teenagers and young adults to dismiss or mock attitudes typically associated with people born in the two decades following World War II, known as baby boomers..**

More about “OK Boomer Fables.”

There is almost a “knee jerk reaction” by boomers when listening to the complaints of the entitled-young. For example, in a reaction to “youngsters” complaining they don’t get “6 G”, an elder might say “when I was YOUR age, we had to walk to school in knee-deep snow, and it was Uphill both on the way to school AND back home.”

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Summary:

Some “words of wisdom” from an unknown author

VALUES

The best day . . .

Today

The greatest comfort . . .

Work well done

The greatest handicap . . .
Fear
The easiest thing to do . . .
Finding fault
The greatest mistake . . .
Giving up
The worst bankruptcy . . .
Loss of enthusiasm
The best gift. . .
Forgiveness
(Author unknown.)

Conclusion

The golden gift of time is Experience. Experience can be helpful in adjusting to life's occasional storms. As an "advanced scout" as you reach Your summit, you can offer the younger climber a "hand up" when necessary.

As the older-yet-wiser would say "Make today Count!" And say to yourself- "I am still standing" even after this COVID Crisis. Get ready for your Roaring Twenties, as your ancestors did after their 1918 "Pandemic Flu" was finally over.