

Natural Healing Express Weekly

Column Volume 86 Longevity, Part Two – Wisdom of Age

As we discussed last week, this series will be dedicated to Longevity and stories of lives well lived. Last week we shared Erickson's Eight Stages of Life which chart all the theoretic stages of one's life. This week, in keeping with our topic, we will discuss the 8th stage, Old Age, while sharing the learned Virtue of Wisdom.

To begin, I would like to share a quote, "Life is a trust, given into our hands, to hold carefully, to use well, and to give back when the time comes." I haven't found the author of that quote, but it is listed with Elizabeth Gray Vining's, "Being Seventy" which is a diary of sorts regarding her 70th year. You may like to borrow it for an amazing read. And, if any of you know the author of the quote, please do share.

Now we delve into "Old Age" according to Erickson. It is his theory that in Old Age, we reconcile the Age of Integrity or the Age of Wisdom versus despair. When healthy, we look at how much experience has taught us and how all of our life has benefitted us, with the opposite being feeling in despair.

This might take a little time to digest but in this state, we begin to look at what we would like to accomplish before we die. I am not trying to be morbid here, let's keep it all in context, but what if you knew that you only had until Christmas to live? What would you do differently? Prioritize more? Let the little things go? Resolve feuds? What would it be? How would it change the way you currently live?

The theory here is the faster/earlier we take the attitude of "what do I want to do before I cease"; the faster our lives take on a much deeper meaning, hence the more gifted our remaining days become. Sooner or later we all come to the conclusion (maybe somewhat of an identity crisis) that we are what survives us.

In this regard, there is a story of an elderly lady who wanted to literally share her life (and its contents) with her friends. In her will she left what she wanted for her family and then went through her home with post its notes and taped the names of her friends on her various treasures. At her funeral, tables were set up so friends could claim their gift in remembrance of her. Not sure how many friends she had or if she was a hoarder, but nonetheless a prime example of Erickson's theory. She became what survived her and that brought happiness. I bet the attorneys had a ball with that request. Maybe she left them a pen set or something sharp.

The point is that growing into the Age of Wisdom requires a certain mindset and the ability to look at positive memories. In health, we look at positive memories for all stages of life and this one is no different. We need positive memories of seeing other growing old and leaving a good life so we learn how to process this age as we begin that stage in our lives.

In our own experience, we may ask ourselves, "Who are the most alive elderly persons I have known?" Just being with or recalling those blessed souls who have truly embraced life to its last breath removes the fear of growing old ourselves.

This is the point of this series on Longevity; featuring information and creating good/positive memories of those who have done it well. I want to showcase those in our community who have gracefully transitioned this Age of Integrity and share their Wisdom as they allow. I have a great interview scheduled for next week as we meet a shining example of Longevity. Please share your other candidates for this series by phone or email.

Enjoy! Hope to see you soon and as always, please contact us via one of the following methods. Natural Healing Express: Phone 815 990 8732, email: skscham@aol.com 204 W Main St, Lena, IL 61048.

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