

Live forever and day at a time

LIVE JUST one day at a time. Live as though you were going to be here forever. These two philosophies appear to be in contradiction. They are not.

Live one day at a time, is often suggested as a view which will help us to overcome our problems.

It is easy to get into the habit of worrying about what will happen tomorrow. Particularly when one has a serious illness we worry about what the future will bring. "Be not anxious about tomorrow" is the advice we read in the Bible.

Such a philosophy will help us to live in the present. We can be thankful for today. We can face tomorrow when it comes. We can trust that we will have the capacity to deal with tomorrow.

THE PHYSICIAN William Oster recommended to his medical students that they live one day at a time. He likened life to a grocery store where the major safety feature was its many water tight compartments. Live in "day tight compartments" was the advice of Oster. He believed that his physicians in training would need such a philosophy.

Plastic bottles live on and on

What happens to the returnable plastic pop bottles?

The plastic pop bottle made its appearance on the grocery shelf in 1978 and rapidly captured more than 21 percent of the soft drink container market. Five hundred million pounds of the plastic bottles are manufactured yearly, but only one fifth are recycled. And this is attributed to the nine states in the U.S. which have bottle bills requiring beverage bottle deposits.

Kathy Reid, consumer representative for Pepsi Cola in Troy, told us Pepsi shreds the plastic bottles and sells them to a recycler. The shredded plastic is resold for use as a sleeping bag filling. (It takes 36 bottles to "fill" one sleeping bag.) A second use she said was using the melted plastic to make plastic piping.

A representative from the Coca-Cola Co. in Detroit said that Coca-Cola only recycles the black plastic cap on the bottom and the rest is discarded. Recycled plastic can be purchased at half the price of new plastic. And 50 to 67 percent less energy is used when making a product from recycled plastic rather than "virgin" plastic.

The society of Plastics Industry says by 1984, 100 million pounds of plastic beverage bottles (known as PET - polyethylene Terephthalate) will have been recycled. Innovative uses of recycled plastic include securing pads, paint brush bristles, sails and foam insulation.

ECO-TIP: Concern Detroit, has a speakers bureau available to all community groups, organizations and schools on environmental and consumer topics. For more information or to request a date, call 963-6082. Or send your request to the address below.

The Consumer Mailbag answers your questions. Address mail to The Consumer Mailbag, Concern Detroit, 1025 Shelby, Detroit 48226.

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moral perspectives

Rev. David Strong

Worry and anxiety about the future can destroy a person. It can rob today of its value.

On the other hand, it can be tempting to live only for today. Too many seek only the short-term advantage. Our youth want instant incomes large enough to buy a new car and set themselves up in a place to live.

Even some clergy that I know move every four or five years. They can only become acquainted and accomplish a few short-term goals. It is often easier to move on than to struggle with the more difficult problems.

A NEIGHBOR once told us that they would be moving on in four years. It was not surprising that they did not get in-

volved in the neighborhood or in the community. Their most important concern seemed to be their landscaping for it would return a good short-term investment.

Rarely does a person come into a community and become very involved though they know that they will only be there a short time. I have a great admiration for such people. They become involved and they then suffer the pain of leaving friends. Yet their life is full and rich.

It is a difficult balancing act to live both philosophies at one time. Live for today and live as though you were going to be here all your life. If we fail to creatively combine these two elements we either are not involved fully in life or we burn out.

One way to help us to balance these two philosophies is to keep a daily journal. Writing down our daily experience helps us to see the significance of this day.

We are more apt to objectify those worries which tend to creep up upon us. Dag Hammarskjöld's book "Markings" is just such a journal.

Here we see a wonderful mix of one who paid attention to the day and put down his anxieties and concerns for the future. It is an ongoing challenge.



consumer mailbag

Terry Gibb

Elderly are injured more

Dear Jo:

Are older people more accident prone or is it just my imagination? I seem to be spending a great deal of time lately just going back and forth to the hospital. Most of my friends are there because of a fall or other such accidents. Please address this subject in your column.

Mrs. R.

Older people make up about 11 percent of the population yet suffer 233 percent of all accidental deaths. According to the National Institute on Aging, in North America, each year about 24,000 persons over age 65 die from accidental injuries and more than 800,000 others sustain injuries that are severe enough to disable them for at least one day.

So to answer your question, it is not your imagination. Older people are more accident prone, and the reasons for this are many. The natural process of aging is a slowing process.

Older people can't move as fast, their eyesight dims and their hearing decreases. If you add to that the disabilities associated with certain geriatric diseases such as arthritis and parkinsonism, along with the side effects of various medications, it's amazing that there aren't more accidents.

The greatest number of accidents in this age group occur in the home; falls and burns are the most prevalent. Outside the home, motor vehicle accidents rank first.

Because of their tendency toward accidents, older people have to be more cautious so they can prevent accidents.

Falls can be prevented by:

- illuminating all halls and stairways;
- using night lights in the bedrooms and bathrooms;



gerontology

A. Jolayne Farrell

- installing handrails on both sides of stairways;
- tacking down carpeting and scatter rugs (if I had my way all scatter rugs would be hung on walls or stored in attics. . . they are lethal);
- installing grab bars on bathroom walls;
- using nonskid mats in the bathtub;
- keeping exterior steps free of snow or other obstacles.

Burns can be disabling in the elderly since the healing process is slower. To prevent burns, good habits should be continued such as, never smoking in bed or when drowsy, avoid wearing loose fitting flammable clothing around stoves and fireplaces, and by planning emergency exits in case of fire.

Most elderly people are very aware of the hazards of driving and make a conscious effort to drive more slowly and avoid rush hour traffic, particularly on freeways. Night driving for some is hazardous because of problems with glare and decreased night vision while others have no problems at all.

I hope I haven't painted too dim a picture of aging and accidents. As a health care professional I have seen so much suffering due to accidents in older people, that I can not say enough about prevention.

"I owe these people my life."

— Larry Peck

It was just last November that Larry Peck was admitted to our cardiac care unit for triple bypass surgery. But as soon as he stepped through our doors, St. Joseph Mercy's highly skilled professionals dedicated themselves to his total care. And within a few weeks after his surgery, Larry was on the road to a full recovery.

For many years, St. Joseph Mercy has offered a wide range of services for the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of heart disease. We stress personalized care, with a one-on-one relationship between patients and team members. Our cardiac rehabilitation program, for example, helps patients like Larry adjust to a new lifestyle and educates them in ways to reduce the risk of further heart disease.

Today, Larry Peck, a musician and photographer, is back in the mainstream of life. But he finds time to counsel other patients scheduled for cardiac surgery at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital, as a member of the Cardiac Connection Heart Club. Says Larry, "St. Joseph Mercy helped me through the most traumatic time of my life. This is my way of thanking all the people who cared so much for me."

For more information about joining the Cardiac Connection Heart Club or a referral to one of St. Joseph Mercy Hospital's cardiologists, call 858-3162.

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