

# Stay young while growing older

AS I ANTICIPATE marking another birthday, I note the loss of time with a measure of increased concern. When do we begin to get old? Or, more hopefully, is it possible to retain the spirit of youth despite the addition of years?

How do you know when you are getting old or staying young? Here is a handy checklist:

1. Do you find yourself unwilling to give up your smallest possessions, your petty rights, or your "last-word authority," fearing that without them you've lost your hold on the world?

2. Do you find yourself urged on, as if by some demonic force, to defend yourself against any possible loss of power or face, never admitting openly that the "other party" may be right?

3. Do you persistently refuse to make any plans whatever — even for tomorrow — resigning yourself to the indifference of the world, withdrawing from its trials as well as its trials?

4. Do you feel sorry for yourself — unwilling to be yourself, in the hopeless wish to turn



## moral perspectives

### Rabbi Irwin Groner

your back on the face of reality?

5. Do you reject everything that is new and untried, in the cory but false belief that "you've heard it before?"

6. Do you think more about the past than the future, discovering comfort in nostalgia, finding fault with modern times, and comparing today's unfavorable circumstances with "the good old days?"

When we master a new skill, learn a new idea, a new person, and entertain a new outlook we remain youthful regardless of our chronological age.

We all want to add years to our life. We should also ensure we add life to our years.

EVERYBODY GROWS older. Some, however, are just old — they've stopped growing. Growing

older can provide us with great and new joys. Being old, however, is a less pleasant matter.

The difficulty can be located in our earlier years when we imagined that we could forever continue to get something out of life without putting anything into it.

Usually, the degrading poverty of later years — poverty of mind and spirit — is the obvious result of past neglect: the failure to make regular deposits in one's spiritual account.

ON THE other hand, I have met older people who continue to meet life's challenges with zest and enthusiasm, who find constructive outlets for their energy, whose personal growth and creative development do not cease.

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Thursday, October 24, 1985 C-2

(1,549,000)

## Bizarre behavior not normal in aging

Dear Jolayne:

Could you please recommend a good source of information regarding behavior problems in older people?

My 84-year-old grandmother, in good physical health, has undergone complete personality change. She formerly was a very nice sweet tempered, gentle, happy and contented person.

Now she is angry, violent, and miserable. She swears, claws, bites and mimics people. She is in a personal care home, and has been there about 10 years. She eats and sleeps well, walks with some assistance, and is on no medication.

We, her family, are at a complete loss as how to handle her when she has these tantrums. Any advice, or recommended readings on the problem would be much appreciated.

Mrs. A. Concerned granddaughter

Dear Mrs. C.:

Your grandmother is in need of a complete physical and mental evaluation by a medical doctor and a psychiatrist. Her behavior is abnormal for a person of any age.

For me to recommend readings from the geriatric or medical literature would be inappropriate for me and confusing to you since as yet she is undiagnosed.

What I can say, as a gerontologist, is that the behavior that your grandmother is exhibiting is not a means part of the normal aging process.

There is no safe, proven way to rebuild bone. But all during your lifetime, the bone losses and gains continue. During the next 10 years the skeleton you have today will be totally replaced.

Can certain foods affect calcium absorption by the body?

Yes. Alcohol, caffeine, protein, sodium and smoking all hinder calcium absorption by increasing excretion through the kidneys. Lactose, fluoride, and phosphorus (still being studied) show indications of helping absorption and preventing bone loss.

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Ms. C. V.

The cost for the promotion and sale of artificial "cures" is estimated to be well over \$100 million annually. You are so right, it is appalling to take advantage of sick old people.

Persons, like your mother, who suffer from this disease should seek medical help regularly, not occasionally. They should never attempt to treat themselves.

To avoid such frauds people with arthritis should be suspicious of promises of a cure, vaccines, snake, bee, and cobra venom, special diets, special food supplements, megavitamins, bizarre methods such as a foot reflexology, hot baths, mud massages, bioelectric, or energizing devices and any other claim that promises quick, fast and easy relief of arthritis or any other arthritis related condition.

Dear Jo:

My mother, age 71, suffers, like so many other people do, from arthritis.

Dear Mr. C.:

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Teddy Bears & Other Nice Things

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