Growing Old in a New Age

Intellect, Personality, and Mental Health

I think one of the most profound phenomena that's occurred is the growing number of positive models of what aging can be like.

The growing number of people who are aging, not only very well, but show the tremendous creativity that can flourish in later life.

Now, we've always had those models.

These are people like Sophocles, who wrote Greek tragedies in his 90s, Picasso painting in his 90s, Grandma Moses painting after 100, and a myriad of examples of that nature.

But now we're seeing not only larger numbers of the very creative, but everyday men and women, who are performing at a very high and useful level in their everyday work or hobbies.

This concept of what aging can be like I think is having a very profound effect on society and younger people as they begin to look to their future and think in new ways about preparing for it.

What happens to specific intellectual skills as we age? How do our personalities evolve over time? And which factors are important in promoting and maintaining good mental health? Next on Growing Old in a New Age.

How do basic intellectual skills -- use of vocabulary, computation, reasoning -- hold
UP OVER A LIFETIME? DR. WARNER SCHAIE AND HIS ASSOCIATE DR. SHERRY WILLIS HAVE BEEN INVESTIGATING THE RELATIONSHIP OF INTELLECTUAL FUNCTIONING TO AGE BY FOLLOWING PEOPLE THROUGHOUT ADULTHOOD IN THE SEATTLE LONGITUDINAL STUDY. ABOUT 35 YEARS AGO NOW, I, UH...GOT PUZZLED OVER THE QUESTION WHY IT WAS THAT OLD PEOPLE ARE SUPPOSED TO BE WISE, YET ON THE OTHER HAND, OLD PEOPLE ARE SUPPOSED TO LOSE THEIR MARBLES.

SAY IF AN OLDER PERSON MAKES A MISTAKE, THEY SAY HE'S SENILE.

IF SOMEBODY 35, 40, OR 25 MAKES A MISTAKE, THEY JUST MADE A MISTAKE.

SO I THINK IT'S THE WRONG WAY TO LOOK AT IT.

WELL, THERE ARE REALLY THREE TOPICS THAT WE, UM, NEED TO TALK ABOUT.

ONE IS THE QUESTION, IS THERE A DECLINE OF MENTAL ABILITIES AS PEOPLE GET OLDER?

SECONDLY, IS THIS A UNIFORM PHENOMENON?

IN OTHER WORDS, DOES IT AFFECT ALL PEOPLE?

DOES IT OCCUR EQUALLY FOR ALL MENTAL SKILLS?

AND THIRDLY, WHAT ARE SOME OF THE FACTORS THAT POSSIBLY EXPLAIN WHY SOME PEOPLE DECLINE IN LATE MIDLIFE AND OTHERS STAY BRIGHT AND CAPABLE TILL THE DAY THEY DIE IN ADVANCED OLD AGE?

DR. SCHAIE HAS SOME EVIDENCE THAT THERE IS SOME DECLINE FOR MANY INDIVIDUALS. HOWEVER, IT TYPICALLY DOESN'T BEGIN UNTIL THE 60s. THE DECLINE DOESN'T OCCUR EQUALLY FOR ALL MENTAL SKILLS. THERE ARE DIFFERENT PATTERNS. WE FIND THAT THOSE ABILITIES USED THROUGHOUT LIFE -- THE PEAK MAY BE REACHED IN LATE MIDDLE AGE.

VERBAL SKILLS TEND TO IMPROVE FOR MOST PEOPLE TILL THEY REACH AT LEAST THEIR 50s, AND FOR SOME EVEN LATER.
DECLINE ON THESE ABILITIES OCCURS VERY LATE IN LIFE.

I THINK I CAN READ BETTER.

I THINK, UH...

SOMETIMES I THINK YOU TEND TO READ -- YOU'RE JUST READING WORDS.

YOU DON'T READ WHAT THEY'RE SAYING.

I'VE LEARNED TO READ SLOWER AND THINK ABOUT WHAT THEY'RE SAYING.

IT'S MORE ENJOYABLE, AND YOU GET MORE OUT OF IT.

IT'S JUST ABOUT AS FAST.

ALTHOUGH WITH THE NEWSPAPERS, I JUST SCAN THOSE.

I GO OVER THIS WAY. YOU KNOW, I SPEED-READ THEM.

IN THE SEATTLE STUDY, FIVE INTELLECTUAL ABILITIES HAVE BEEN MONITORED OVER TIME. RETURN IT TO ITS ORIGINAL STATE.

PUT IT IN THE RIGHT SIDE OF YOUR FOLDER.

THESE INCLUDE PASSIVE AND ACTIVE VOCABULARY, NUMBER AND REASONING SKILLS, AND SPATIAL ABILITIES. IT TURNS OUT THAT BY AGE 60, VIRTUALLY EVERY ONE OF OUR STUDY PARTICIPANTS HAS SHOWN SOME SIGNIFICANT DECLINE ON ONE OF THOSE FIVE ABILITIES.

HOWEVER, EVEN BY THE LATE 80s, WE HAVE NOT YET FOUND ANY ONE OF OUR PARTICIPANTS WHO DECLINED SIGNIFICANTLY ON ALL FIVE ABILITIES.

RUTH DOW HAS PARTICIPATED IN THE SEATTLE LONGITUDINAL STUDY SINCE 1954. I WAS IN MY 40s WHEN WE STARTED.

IT'S BEEN INTERESTING TO ME.
I think that's why I've been in it.

We started with a large group.

I guess there aren't too many left in my age group who are still doing it.

I really look forward to it each time.

I feel a lot more sure that I'm still as smart as I ever were, you know, because the studies proved that.

Each time, there would seem to be an increase, which I would always hope would come with aging and which I always was cultured to believe would not.

You know, uh...

See, I'm almost 80, and when I was little, aging was completely different than it is now.

Health and activity make the difference in how long abilities can be maintained. Cardiovascular health is important because people with heart disease tend to decline mentally earlier. Activity level is equally important. [Dr. Schaie] it's very clear that people who are involved with their world, who are participants rather than spectators, are advantaged.

People who are highly active tend to decline later, if at all.

People who are couch potatoes typically go down first.

Being 73 years old, 74, whatever, you don't want to just say, "I'm old enough now. I've seen whatever I want."

I'm just going to sit down, take it easy. Do things.

Even if it's going to a ball game with your grandson.
JUST DON'T SIT AND DO NOTHING ALL DAY LONG.

DON'T SIT DOWN AND WATCH TV ALL DAY, EITHER.

BUT GET INTERESTED IN SOMETHING.

EVERYBODY SHOULD BE INTERESTED IN SOMETHING.

IN MY CASE, IT HAPPENS TO BE THE CIVIL WAR -- THE BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG -- SINCE I GREW UP HERE.

I'M GLAD FOR THAT.

AS I SAID, THE MORE YOU READ, I THINK YOU KEEP YOUR MIND FROM GETTING LAZY, SO TO SPEAK.

YOU'RE A LITTLE SHARPER WHEN YOU READ SOMETHING.

IF YOU DON'T READ, I THINK YOU'LL GET THAT WAY.

WE ALSO KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS.

IT'S VERY CLEAR THAT PEOPLE WHO ARE OPEN TO NEW EXPERIENCES, FLEXIBLE PEOPLE, TEND TO FARE MUCH BETTER AS THEY GET OLDER THAN PEOPLE WHO ARE RIGID AND HAVE TO HAVE EVERYTHING THEIR OWN WAY.

ONE OF THE INTERESTING THINGS ABOUT OLD AGE IS THAT THINGS DON'T BECOME SIMPLER.

THEY BECOME MORE COMPLICATED.

INDIVIDUALS COMFORTABLE ROLLING WITH THE PUNCHES TEND TO BE THE ONES THAT WEATHER IT BEST AND MAINTAIN THEIR ABILITIES.

THERE ARE ALSO SIGNIFICANT GENDER DIFFERENCES. MEN SEEM TO DO BETTER THAN WOMEN ON SPATIAL AND NUMBER SKILLS. WOMEN DO BETTER WITH VERBAL AND REASONING SKILLS. RESEARCHERS THOUGHT SPATIAL ABILITY WAS GENETICALLY BASED, BUT NEW STUDIES SHOW THAT THOSE ABILITIES ARE MORE RELATED TO EXPERIENCE THAN GENDER. EVEN AT ADVANCED
AGES, TRAINING IN SPATIAL SKILLS CAN REDUCE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN. SPECIFIC INTELLECTUAL ABILITIES SUCH AS REASONING OR THE SPATIAL ORIENTATION SKILLS NECESSARY TO READ MAPS ARE BASIC TO OUR EVERYDAY LIVES. WE FIRST BEGAN OUR TRAINING BACK IN THE SEVENTIES.

IT IS QUESTIONABLE THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE WAY WE ASSESS MENTAL ABILITIES ARE THE WAY PEOPLE USE THEM IN THEIR DAILY LIVES.

SO WE DECIDED NOT TO USE THE WORD "INTELLIGENCE," BUT TO USE "PROBLEM SOLVING." WHEN MY TRAINER RECRUITED PEOPLE FOR TRAINING, SHE'D SAY, "WE'LL HELP YOU WITH PROBLEM-SOLVING ABILITIES." AND ONE LOVELY LADY SAID TO US, "NOW, DEAR, LET'S GET THIS STRAIGHT.

IS IT YOUR PROBLEM OR MY PROBLEM WE'RE GOING TO SOLVE?" I HAD TO ADMIT IT WAS OUR PROBLEM, NOT THEIR PROBLEM.

BUT THIS EXAMPLE HAS ALWAYS STUCK WITH ME.

AND SO, WE'VE ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT SOME OF THE ABILITIES OR MANY OF THE ABILITIES THAT WE STUDIED -- SUCH AS SPATIAL ORIENTATION, INDUCTIVE REASONING -- ARE RELATED TO ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING.

LONGITUDINAL DATA FROM THE SEATTLE STUDY ALLOWED DR. WILLIS TO CLASSIFY PEOPLE'S REASONING AND SPATIAL ABILITIES OVER A 14-YEAR PERIOD. SHE WONDERED WHETHER THOSE WHO DECLINED COULD BE TRAINED TO REGAIN SKILLS THEY HAD WHEN THEY WERE YOUNGER. [DR. WILLIS] THE TRAINING IN THE SEATTLE STUDY WAS DONE IN THE HOMES OF THE ELDERLY.

THESE PEOPLE LIVE IN SEATTLE, WASHINGTON.

THEY LIVE IN A LARGE, METROPOLITAN AREA.

THE MOST PRACTICAL THING WAS TO GO TO THEIR HOMES.

THEY WERE TRAINED IN FIVE ONE-HOUR TRAINING
SESSIONS.

78 01:10:03:27 IT WAS AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY.

79 01:10:06:03 WE WANTED TO SEE IF WITH THIS BRIEF INTERVENTION THERE COULD BE CHANGES IN INTELLECTUAL FUNCTIONING ON THE SPECIFIC ABILITIES WE WERE INTERESTED IN.

80 01:10:15:08 THE TRAINING INCLUDED PRACTICE IN REASONING SKILLS AND IN MENTALLY ROTATING OBJECTS. DR. WILLIS FOUND THAT WITH TRAINING, 60% OF THOSE WHO HAD DECLINED IMPROVED THEIR SKILL SIGNIFICANTLY. ABOUT 40% WERE ABLE TO REGAIN SKILL LEVELS THEY ENJOYED 14 YEARS EARLIER. IT SUGGESTS TO US THAT, AT LEAST FOR SOME OLDER ADULTS, UM...DECLINE IN FUNCTIONING IS REMEDIABLE THROUGH BRIEF EDUCATIONAL OR OTHER KINDS OF INTELLECTUALLY STIMULATING ACTIVITIES.

81 01:10:48:18 IT SUGGESTS TO US THE OLD "USE IT OR LOSE IT" PHENOMENA.

82 01:10:53:18 RETIRED ARCHITECTS WERE ACUTELY AWARE OF "USE IT OR LOSE IT." THEY HAVEN'T LOOKED AT A BLUEPRINT.

83 01:11:00:19 THEY DRIVE BY MEMORY BECAUSE THEY GO TO THE SAME PLACES.

84 01:11:05:02 THERE'S NO REASON FOR THEM TO USE THEIR SPATIAL ABILITIES.

85 01:11:09:03 WHEN YOU START TRAINING THEM, THEY'RE SLOPPY AT FIRST.

86 01:11:12:18 THEY GET SHOCKED AT THESE SIMPLE TASKS THEY CAN'T DO.

87 01:11:16:18 THEN THEY GET WITH IT. YOU SEE THEM IMPROVING.

88 01:11:20:01 THE ABILITY WASN'T LOST. IT JUST GOT RUSTY.

89 01:11:23:02 TRAINING HAS PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS. RENEWED SPATIAL ORIENTATION SKILLS MAY BE VITAL TO WIDOWS WHO DEPENDED ON THEIR HUSBANDS TO DRIVE. THEY NOW ARE AT A DISADVANTAGE.
THEM HAVEN'T PRACTICED THE SKILLS NECESSARY TO GET FROM ONE PLACE TO ANOTHER, TO READ MAPS AND THE KIND OF THINGS NECESSARY TO BE FREELY MOBILE.

TRAINING WOULD BE QUITE HELPFUL.

INDEED, IT'S BEEN SHOWN THAT VERY SHORT PROGRAMS OF EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION CAN BE QUITE EFFECTIVE.

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS IN ADULTS CAN BE STUDIED BY EXAMINING AGE CHANGES WITHIN INDIVIDUALS AS THEY GROW OLDER AND AGE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN DIFFERENT GENERATIONS. ONE QUESTION THAT OFTEN COMES UP IS, "WHAT IS MEANT BY AGE DIFFERENCES AND AGE CHANGES?" AGE CHANGES REFER TO THE CHANGES THAT OCCUR WITHIN AN INDIVIDUAL.

IF YOU'RE FOLLOWING AN INDIVIDUAL OVER TIME, WHAT WOULD YOU SEE AS THE CHANGES IN THAT INDIVIDUAL?

IF YOU'RE LOOKING AT AGE DIFFERENCES, IT MEANS SAMPLING A GROUP OF 25-YEAR-OLDS TODAY, 55-YEAR-OLDS, 75-YEAR-OLDS, AND LOOKING AT THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THESE AGE GROUPS.

SOMETIMES WE MAKE THE MISTAKE OF REGARDING THOSE AGE DIFFERENCES AS EQUAL TO AGE CHANGES.

THEY AREN'T NECESSARILY.

SOME OF THESE OLD PEOPLE MAY HAVE EXPERIENCED DIFFERENT CONDITIONS EARLIER IN LIFE.

MEN AND WOMEN THAT WENT THROUGH THE WAR IN EUROPE MARCH FORWARD WITH THOSE EXPERIENCES THAT MAKES THEM DIFFERENT BECAUSE OF THE EXPERIENCES.

AND THEN IF YOU ARRIVE AT AGE 75 AND COMPARE THEM WITH 25-YEAR-OLDS, IT ISN'T NECESSARILY THAT THEY'RE OLDER, IT'S JUST THAT THEY HAD THOSE DIFFERENT HISTORICAL EXPERIENCES, AND
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Sometimes those are very powerful.

101 01:13:15:18 [Dr. Schaie] Numerical skills reached a peak for the cohort born in the 1920s and has been declining ever since.

102 01:13:24:08 We don't know whether it's the introduction of cheap calculators, but in any event, you'll find that it will look like the average older person does a lot better than younger individuals on adding numbers.

103 01:13:40:02 That does not mean your skills in adding numbers increases as you get older, but simply that you have a younger cohort who does less well than the older cohort.

104 01:13:52:09 We find frequently that the age effects are actually smaller than the cohort effects.

105 01:13:58:11 Cohort is a very important factor in aging research.

106 01:14:02:03 And really what we mean by that, the context in which we grow older is probably a very important factor in determining how we age -- our abilities, our personality, our quality of life.

107 01:14:17:13 What is the nature of personality? Does it change as we grow older? It's hard to think of a single definition of personality. Personality focuses on traits and the enduring characteristics that make each person unique. Dr. Paul Costa has been studying personality and aging for many years. [Dr. Paul Costa] As we follow individuals over 6, 12, 18, and even 25 years of their life span, there's a pretty remarkable set of findings -- that age, per se, does not usher in any set of changes.

108 01:14:53:12 So the individual who is active and alert and bubbly and enthusiastic and warm and outgoing with other people stays that way as they traverse their 50s and 60s and 70s and 80s.

109 01:15:08:17 And barring the development of a major
DISEASE, PARTICULARLY THE DEMENTING DISORDER -- SOMETHING LIKE ALZHEIMER'S OR HUNTINGTON'S -- THEIR PERSONALITY DOESN'T CHANGE AT ALL.

PERSONALITY IS QUITE STABLE.

I HAPPEN TO BE AN INDEPENDENT PERSON.

SO I LIKE TO TRY TO DO EVERYTHING FOR MYSELF, WHICH IS POSSIBLE, BUT SOMETIMES IT CAN'T BE DONE BECAUSE, WELL...

SOME PEOPLE ARE NOT CAPABLE OF DOING IT.

BUT IF YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN AN INDEPENDENT PERSON, BECAUSE YOU'RE OLD DOESN'T MEAN YOU'LL STOP BEING INDEPENDENT.

IF YOU'RE ILL, YOU TRY TO MAINTAIN YOUR INDEPENDENCE.

I THINK IT HELPS YOU.

OTHERWISE, YOU'LL JUST LAY DOWN AND DIE.

AS YET, NO ONE KNOWS WHAT FACTORS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR PERSONALITY STABILITY. [DR. COSTA] OUR LONGITUDINAL DATA DON'T GIVE US ANY CLUE AS TO THE CAUSES.

IT'S POSSIBLE THAT IT'S GENETIC.

WHETHER OR NOT THEY ATTEMPT TO MAKE CHANGES IN WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY ARE, IS POWERFULLY INFLUENCED BY THEIR ENVIRONMENT, THEIR OPPORTUNITIES, THEIR ROLE MODELS.

ALTHOUGH PERSONALITY TRAITS AND STYLES TEND TO BE CONSTANT OVER THE LIFE SPAN, CHANGE IS POSSIBLE. IF YOU'RE EMOTIONALLY, UH... MALADJUSTED, EASILY UPSET, AND UNHAPPY AND YOU'RE 30 OR 35, YOU'RE GOING TO STAY THAT WAY.

YOU'RE NOT GOING TO MELLOW OUT.

YOU'RE NOT GOING TO GET BETTER.

THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT PERSONALITY IS FIXED AND
SET IN PLASTER AND CAN'T BE CHANGED.

PERSONALITY CAN BE CHANGED.

IF YOU'RE UNHAPPY WITH YOUR PERSONALITY, YOU CAN SEEK WAYS...

EFFECTIVE THERAPY, COUNSELING.

WORK ON IT TO CHANGE IT.

I THINK IT'S A WONDERFUL CHANGE FROM THE PESSIMISTIC VIEW THAT WHAT YOU GOT YOU'RE STUCK WITH.

BUT I THINK WE NEED TO HAVE REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS FOR WHAT CAN HAPPEN.

BUT IF YOU HAVE TO MAKE A CHOICE, BE OPTIMISTIC.

TRY CHANGING IT, AND YOU MAY SUCCEED.

DR. GENE COHEN DESCRIBES THE RESPONSES OF OLDER ADULTS WHO SOUGHT COUNSELING AFTER THAT SERVICE BECAME AVAILABLE IN THEIR APARTMENT COMPLEX. WHAT HAPPENED WAS THE INTERESTING OTHER SIDE OF NEGATIVE STEREOTYPES ABOUT AGING.

SO MANY OLDER PEOPLE THEMSELVES HAVE SUCH LOW EXPECTATION ABOUT WHAT CAN HAPPEN IN DIFFERENT INTERVENTIONS OR GROWTH EXPERIENCES THAT EVEN A LITTLE PROGRESS WAS SO SAVORED, THEY WERE JUST, IN MANY WAYS, TREMENDOUSLY APPRECIATIVE AND GRATIFIED OF THE PROGRESS THAT THEY MADE.

AND SO THE IRONY WAS THAT OLDER PATIENTS ARE SOME OF THE MOST RESPONSIVE AND SATISFIED OF ALL THE PATIENTS.

THEY SURPRISED THEMSELVES, AND THEY TYPICALLY SURPRISE THE INEXPERIENCED CLINICIAN WHO HAS NOT WORKED WITH OLDER ADULTS.

IT'S ANOTHER SERIES OF MYTHS THAT JUST WERE SMASHED.
MARY SUE WONSON IS WORKING ON BECOMING MORE ASSERTIVE. [MARY SUE WONSON] IN MY CASE, I'VE NEVER FELT I WAS IN CONTROL.

I'VE ALWAYS DONE WHAT OTHER PEOPLE WANTED ME TO DO.

I'VE BEEN FRUSTRATED A LOT.

I LIKE PEOPLE SO MUCH THAT I WANT TO PLEASE THEM RATHER THAN MYSELF.

TO DO WHAT I'D LIKE TO DO IN A SITUATION SEEMED SELFISH.

BY NATURE, I'M NOT A SELFISH PERSON.

MY DOCTOR TOLD ME IT ISN'T SELFISH, IT'S SENSIBLE...

TO THINK OF YOURSELF.

IT'S GETTING BETTER.

AT TIMES, I CAN SAY NO, AND THAT'S REMARKABLE.

AND NOW THAT I HAVE ROGER HOME ALL THE TIME, I HAVE HIM AS A SUPPORT.

HE CAN ANSWER THE PHONE AND SAY NO FOR ME.

DAVID REESE HAS DISCOVERED THAT AGE HAS OFFERED HIM OBJECTIVITY AND A NEW TOLERANCE OF OTHERS. [DAVID REESE] MY WORK IN THIS STATE OVER THE PAST 20 YEARS HAS INVOLVED ME WITH GROUPS OF PEOPLE OF ALL RACES, ALL LEVELS OF EDUCATION.

YOU LEARN TO TAKE AN OBJECTIVE STANCE ON PRACTICALLY ANYTHING THAT COMES UP IN LIFE.

I DO THAT WITH THE PROBLEMS OF -- INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS TODAY.

I THINK I'M A LITTLE BIT MORE OBJECTIVE IN MY ANALYSIS OF WHAT'S HAPPENING IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE WORLD.

I DON'T THINK I WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO MAKE
THE SAME KINDS OF JUDGMENT WHEN I WAS 25 AND 30 YEARS OF AGE.

155 01:19:46:22 YOUR EXPERIENCES ACTUALLY BUILD UP IN YOU A TOLERANCE FOR THOSE WHO ARE DIFFERENT FROM YOU.

156 01:19:53:12 RUTH DOW DISCOVERED NEW CONFIDENCE AFTER SHE WAS WIDOWED. AT FIRST YOU THINK, "HOW WILL I EVER COPE?" THEN GRADUALLY, AS YOU FIND -- THE FIRST TIME I DID MY OWN INCOME TAX REPORT BY MYSELF, THAT WAS A BIG EXPERIENCE.

157 01:20:10:09 AND, UH...YOU JUST...

158 01:20:12:17 YOU JUST GAIN SO MUCH CONFIDENCE AS YOU GO ON.

159 01:20:16:23 VI SMITH LEARNED TO BE MORE ASSERTIVE AND INDEPENDENT AFTER WIDOWHOOD. I NEVER USED TO DRIVE THE WAY I DO NOW.

160 01:20:25:10 I WAS ALWAYS THE PASSENGER IN THE CAR.

161 01:20:28:09 EVEN THOUGH I DROVE -- BUT I JUST DROVE, YOU KNOW, TO SHORT DISTANCES AND BACK.

162 01:20:34:08 NOW I DRIVE EXPRESSWAYS, AND I DROVE TO AN ELDERHOSTEL DOWN IN KENTUCKY.

163 01:20:39:09 AND THEY HAD ROUTED ME THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS.

164 01:20:42:09 AND SHE HAD TOLD ME IT WAS TWO-LANE HIGHWAYS.

165 01:20:46:09 I DIDN'T REALIZE IT WAS ONE LANE GOING ONE WAY AND ONE COMING THE OTHER AND THAT I WOULD BE GOING AROUND IN CIRCLES, BUT I DID IT.

166 01:20:57:09 WHILE I WOULDN'T WANT TO DO IT AGAIN, I FOUND OUT THAT I COULD DO IT.

167 01:21:03:09 IF YOU JUST TAKE ONE DAY AT A TIME, YOU DO GROW, AND YOU DO CHANGE.

168 01:21:09:25 YOU LEARN TO DEPEND ON YOURSELF.

169 01:21:12:09 I THINK THAT'S WHAT I'VE LEARNED TO DO...
IS THAT I CAN DO IT AND THAT I CAN DEPEND ON MYSELF.

CREATIVITY AND SPIRITUALITY MAY EVOLVE IN NEW WAYS WHEN THERE ARE FEWER PRESSURES FROM WORK. I'VE BEEN INTERESTED IN PHOTOGRAPHY, AND I HAVE MY OWN DARKROOM DOWNSTAIRS, AND SO I CAN DO SOME CREATIVE THINGS DOWN THERE.

AND WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO WORK I THINK IN A COMPLEMENTARY ARRANGEMENT IN THAT MARY SUE LIKES TO WRITE, AND I LIKE TO TAKE THE PICTURES.

SO, IN THAT WAY WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO HAVE SOME FUN PRODUCING SOME ARTICLES WHERE I'LL DO THE PHOTOGRAPHY AND MARY SUE WILL DO THE WRITING.

I WAS A PROFESSIONAL MUSICIAN IN A CHURCH -- PLAYED THE ORGAN, DIRECTED MULTIPLE CHOIR PROGRAMS, THAT KIND OF THING.

ALWAYS ENJOYED IT VERY MUCH AND DID A LOT OF CREATIVE WORK EXPLORING MEDIEVAL MUSIC, MEDIEVAL DRAMA, AND COMBINING THAT WITH MUSIC.

SO IT'S ALWAYS BEEN A, UM...

MATTER OF REAL INTEREST AND PURSUIT OF NEW AREAS.

AND, UH...

NOW IT'S NO LONGER A PROFESSIONAL THING, AND I HAVEN'T DONE A GREAT DEAL RECENTLY BECAUSE OF MY HEALTH, BUT, UH...

I ENJOY MUSIC INTENSELY.

I DON'T DO A LOT OF LISTENING. I'D MUCH RATHER PERFORM.

MY CONCEPT OF SPIRITUALITY IN MY YOUNGER YEARS WAS INTENSE, BUT KIND OF ENCLOSED.

AND NOW THOSE BARRIERS ARE GONE, AND I SEE EVERYTHING AS SPIRITUAL -- ALL OF MY
RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER PEOPLE, MY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PHYSICAL WORLD.

I'VE ALWAYS ENJOYED NATURE A GREAT DEAL, BUT NOW IT'S A PART OF MYSELF IN A WAY IT HAD NEVER BEEN BEFORE.

SO MY SPIRITUALITY HAS GROWN.

IN FACT, WITH MANY OF THE MEN I TALK WITH, THAT'S AN AREA OF OUR EXPLORATION RIGHT NOW -- IS THE SPIRITUALITY OF OURSELVES AS BEING IN A RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PEOPLE.

ANOTHER ASPECT OF PERSONALITY IS WISDOM. DOES WISDOM DEVELOP AS WE MATURE? WHAT IS WISDOM?

IT TENDS TO BE LINKED WITH AGE.

IT WAS A TOPIC THAT WAS RATHER UNDEVELOPED IN PSYCHOLOGY.

IN FACT, I LOOKED A FEW YEARS AGO AT THE LITERATURE, AND I COULDN'T EVEN FIND ANY TEXTBOOK IN PSYCHOLOGY THAT HAD THE WORD WISDOM IN THE INDEX.

SO IT'S AN UNKNOWN AREA.

IT LOOKS LIKE WISDOM IS A COMPLEX TRAIT.

IT'S NOT A SIMPLE TRAIT.

YOU HAVE TO HAVE EXPERIENCE.

BY AND LARGE, YOU NEED TO WAIT UNTIL YOU GET ENOUGH EXPERIENCE, AND YOU NEED SOME TIME TO MATURE.

THE OTHER ASPECT IS THE EMOTIONAL TONING OF LIFE.

YOU HAVE TO HAVE A MORE REFLECTIVE QUALITY TO WANT TO SPEND TIME REVIEWING WHAT'S IN THE LONG-TERM STORE.

THAT'S THE STRATEGY ASPECT OF IT.
AND THEN THERE IS THE EMOTIONAL LINKAGE TO THESE THINGS THAT -- FOR EXAMPLE, YOU CANNOT DEFINE WISDOM AS SOLELY A PROCESS OF KNOWLEDGE OR KNOWING.

ONE HAS TO HAVE SOMEWHAT OF A MORE DETACHED VIEW, BUT YOU HAVE TO HAVE YOUR EMOTIONS UNDER CONTROL.

THAT'S ANOTHER REASON WHY YOUNG PEOPLE ARE LESS OFTEN WISE.

IT ISN'T THAT THEY DON'T KNOW, BUT THEY'RE IMPULSIVE, AND THEY HAVE YET TO MASTER THEIR EMOTIONS, AND, UH...

SO THAT IT LOOKS TO ME LIKE, UH...

WISDOM WAS LATE IN DEVELOPING AS A SUBJECT MATTER FOR RESEARCH BECAUSE IT WAS SO COMPLEX AND IS SO COMPLEX.

RESEARCH MAY EVENTUALLY HELP US UNDERSTAND MORE ABOUT HOW PERSONALITY RELATES TO SUCCESSFUL AGING. WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND THE INFLUENCE -- THE RECIPROCAL INFLUENCE, IF YOU WILL -- BETWEEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF AN INDIVIDUAL'S LIFE AND THE DISPOSITION, THE PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS THEY BRING, AND HOW THAT PLAYS OUT OVER THE LIFE CYCLE.

ONE OF THE INTERESTING THINGS WHERE, UM...

EVERYONE'S INTERESTED IN NOW IS SUCCESSFUL AGING.

WHAT ARE THE SECRETS OF LEADING A HEALTHY, HAPPY, PRODUCTIVE LIFE?

OF COURSE, THAT'S DEFINED DIFFERENTLY.

FOR SOME PEOPLE, JUST TO MAKE IT TO THE 90s IS, BY DEFINITION, SUCCESSFUL AGING.

BUT TO HAVE LIVED FOR NINE DECADES A LIFE FULL OF DISTRESS AND DISAPPOINTMENT IS NOT NECESSARILY SUCCESSFUL.
I'D LOVE TO HAVE THE SECRETS TO KNOW WHAT KINDS OF CHANGES OR INTERVENTIONS DO WE NEED TO DO FOR WHAT KINDS OF PEOPLE WHEN AND UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS THAT WILL ALLOW THEM TO LEAD THE LIVES THEY WANT?

I'D LIKE INDIVIDUALS TO REACH THEIR OWN GOALS, SELF-ACTUALIZE, IF YOU WILL.

VIRGINIA TEMPLETON ADMITS SHE'S A PERFECTIONIST. BUT AS SHE'S AGED, HER APPROACH TO LIFE HAS BECOME MORE RELAXED. I USED TO FEEL OR TO WANT TO BE, THAT I HAD TO BE ALL THINGS TO ALL PEOPLE.

THAT I HAD TO BE...


CHURCH WORKER.

THAT I HAD TO DO ALL OF THESE THINGS, AND I COULDN'T JUST DO THEM IN A SUPERFICIAL MANNER.

THEY ALL HAD TO BE DONE WELL AND WITH A DEGREE OF PERFECTION THAT WAS...

DIDN'T REALLY MAKE SENSE, BUT THAT THIS IS WHAT I MUST TRY TO DO.

AND THAT WASN'T GOOD BECAUSE IT WAS OBVIOUSLY AN IMPOSSIBILITY.

IT'S -- OBVIOUSLY.

IT CAN BE SELF-DESTRUCTIVE WHEN YOU FAIL IN SOMETHING YOU'VE SET YOUR MIND TO DO AND THAT YOU FEEL YOU MUST DO AND YOU'VE FALLEN SHORT.

I'M STILL COPING WITH THIS IN A WAY BECAUSE THE LIST OF THINGS I WANT TO GET DONE IN A DAY ALWAYS ENDS UP BEING TWICE AS MUCH AS I CAN DO, I DON'T FEEL SO BAD NOW.

I THINK I'M A MORE RELAXED AND NICER PERSON TO BE AROUND.
IT'S ALSO MADE ME A LITTLE MORE FORGIVING WHEN SOMEONE ELSE DOES NOT KEEP A PROMISE OR FULFILL A COMMITMENT.

I STILL GET A LITTLE BIT TICKED WHEN IT CAUSES ME PROBLEMS, BUT I THINK IT'S BEEN A GROWING PROCESS, AND I HOPE IT WILL CONTINUE.

MANY YOUNGER PEOPLE THINK OLD AGE IS A DEPRESSING PERIOD AND ASSUME THAT THE ELDERLY WILL BE DEPRESSED AND DISSATISFIED WITH LIFE. INTERESTINGLY ENOUGH, THIS DOES NOT SEEM TO BE THE CASE. DR. STEVEN ZARIT EXPLAINS.

THE PROSPECTS FOR GOOD MENTAL HEALTH ARE QUITE GOOD FOR MOST PEOPLE.

SOMEONE WHO'S BEEN IN GOOD MENTAL HEALTH ALL HIS OR HER LIFE CAN EXPECT THAT THAT WILL CONTINUE UNDER MOST CIRCUMSTANCES.

THERE ARE RISKS OF CERTAIN KINDS OF DISORDERS IN LATER LIFE, BUT THE MAJORITY OF OLDER PEOPLE AT ANY AGE -- IF WE WANTED TO TAKE 65 OR 75 OR EVEN 85 -- THE MAJORITY ARE IN GOOD MENTAL HEALTH.

MOST PEOPLE HAVE EVEN SURVIVED THE SUPPOSED MIDLIFE CRISIS WHICH HAS GRABBED SO MUCH ATTENTION. IT'S A POPULAR THING THAT'LL NEVER GO AWAY, THE MIDLIFE CRISIS.

SOME PEOPLE WANT TO HAVE THE SPICE OF A MIDLIFE CRISIS.

THEM PERHAPS NEED THE EXCUSE, "IT'S NOT ME."

"THE DEVIL MADE ME DO IT."

IT'S AN INEVITABLE CRISIS." FACT OF THE MATTER IS, A SMALL MINORITY OF PEOPLE, 5% TO 7% ONLY, EXPERIENCE A CRISIS AT ANY TIME AT ANY AGE IN THE ADULT LIFE CYCLE.

85% OF PEOPLE ARE NOT IN ANY CRISIS.

AND WHEN YOU LOOK AT INDIVIDUALS FROM THE 20s TO THE 60s AND TRY AND FIND A PEAK EMOTIONAL CRISIS AROUND MIDLIFE, YOU DON'T FIND IT.
BEN TAMASHIRO AVOIDED A MIDLIFE CRISIS IN HIS MARRIAGE BY EXAMINING HIS VALUES. [BEN TAMASHIRO] YOU READ SO MUCH ABOUT MEN AS THEY GO THROUGH THE MIDDLE AGE, YOU KNOW?

THEY BEGIN TO WANDER FROM THE NEST AT HOME AND THINK THAT IN TERMS OF REJUVENATION, YOU KNOW -- SEXUALLY, WHATEVER IT IS -- "OH, BOY."

"I THINK I'M GOING TO TRY THAT BEAUTIFUL LOOKING GAL OUT THERE." SHE MIGHT BE 20 YEARS YOUNGER THAN YOU ARE.

THERE'S SO MUCH OF THIS KIND OF THING, OF MEN PASSING THROUGH THAT MIDDLE STAGE OF LIFE.

I'VE OFTEN WONDERED ABOUT IT MYSELF ON THAT QUESTION.

BUT I GUESS, IN THE END, THROUGH CHRISTIAN ETHICS OR WHATEVER IT IS, YOU PUT THOSE THINGS ASIDE, AND YOU LOOK AT YOUR OWN WIFE AND SAY, "MY GOLLY, I GUESS THIS IS THE BEST OF THE LOT." ALTHOUGH THERE'S GREAT VARIABILITY AMONG OLDER PEOPLE IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES, INTERNATIONAL STUDIES SUGGEST THEY'RE, ON AVERAGE, CONTENT WITH LIFE. THERE IS AN EXCELLENT STUDY PUBLISHED BY TWO CANADIANS IN COLLABORATION WITH A JAPANESE GROUP, AND THEY DID A SURVEY IN 13 COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD WHERE THERE ARE GALLUP POLL ORGANIZATIONS.

THEY HAD 1,000 PEOPLE IN EACH COUNTRY, 500 MEN AND WOMEN.

IN EVERY ONE OF THE COUNTRIES, OLDER PEOPLE WERE MORE CONTENT WITH THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THEIR LIFE THAN WERE YOUNG PEOPLE JUST STARTING OUT.

NOW, THAT'S NOT ANTICIPATED BY YOUNGER PERSONS.

THEY PROJECT THEIR DISCONTENTS FORWARD ONTO THE OLDER POPULATION, AND THEY EXPECT THAT THE CONDITIONS OF LIFE ARE MORE ADVERSE.

BUT IN FACT, OLDER PEOPLE HAVE COME TO TERMS
WITH THAT, AND THAT'S OVERLOOKED A GREAT DEAL.

THERE HAVE BEEN SOME VERY RECENT STUDIES THAT HAVE LOOKED AT PEOPLE AT VERY ADVANCED AGES, INCLUDING 90-YEAR-OLDS -- A STUDY IN GREAT BRITAIN.

THE FINDINGS STUNNED, IN A POSITIVE SENSE, MANY PEOPLE.

THEY FOUND THAT THE VAST MAJORITY OF THESE INDIVIDUALS WERE RELATIVELY WORRY-FREE.

THEY HAD A VERY HIGH SENSE OF MORALE AND WELL-BEING, RATHER THAN WHAT MANY PEOPLE THOUGHT WOULD BE A MORBID ORIENTATION.

AND INDEED, DIFFERENT NATIONAL SURVEYS THAT HAVE BEEN DONE FIND THAT A SENSE OF WELL-BEING, OF MORALE...

LEVELS OF DEPRESSION ARE VERY SIMILAR IN LATER LIFE AS THEY ARE IN EARLIER PARTS OF THE LIFE CYCLE.

A VERY DIFFERENT PICTURE THAN WHAT MANY PEOPLE EXPECT.

AND AGAIN, THE BIG FACTOR THAT ALTERS THOSE THINGS IS NOT AGING, PER SE, BUT A NUMBER OF ILLNESSES THAT ALTER THE EXPERIENCE OF AGING.

AND AGAIN, INCREASINGLY, MORE AND MORE OF THESE ILLNESSES ARE MODIFIABLE.

TWO DECADES OF RESEARCH ON THE HAPPINESS AND LIFE SATISFACTION OF OLDER PEOPLE POINT TO THE SAME CONCLUSION -- DESPITE SERIOUS PROBLEMS, OLD AGE CAN BE A SATISFYING TIME OF LIFE. I FEEL FINE. I LIKE GETTING UP EARLY.

NOW I LIKE SLEEPING IN BECAUSE IT'S SO COLD.

ALTHOUGH WHEN WINTERTIME COMES, I GO ICE FISHING.

I DON'T KNOW IF YOU KNOW WHAT IT IS.
YOU CHOP A HOLE IN THE ICE, PUT A TRAP DOWN.

WHEN IT FLIES IN THE AIR, THERE'S A FISH ON IT.

THAT'S ANOTHER THING.

I LIKE THE REC ROOM.

I LIKE TO PLAY CARDS. MY WIFE DOESN'T.

[DORIS BIRCHANDER] WE KEEP BUSY DIFFERENT WAYS.

HE'S HAPPY REALLY BEING HOME.

I'VE HAD TO FIND MY WAY OUT.

ONCE HE GOT INTO MY KITCHEN AND STARTED COOKING -- THAT'S ANOTHER THING HE DOES VERY WELL -- I DECIDED THAT I WAS A MISPLACED HOMEMAKER, AND I HAD TO DO SOMETHING OUT OF THE HOUSE.

WHAT FACTORS AFFECT THE OUTLOOK OF OLDER ADULTS? I THINK, FOR ME, IT'S THE, UM...

TO HAVE A POSITIVE OUTLOOK IS TO BE ABLE TO LAUGH...

AND NOT ONLY AT OTHERS, BUT AT OURSELVES.

[ROGER WONSON] PEOPLE WHO ARE RETIRED, THAT CREATIVITY DOESN'T NECESSARILY MEAN HOBBIES IN THE SENSE THAT -- LIKE ONE OF THE THINGS THAT I LIKE TO DO IS PLAY THE SAXOPHONE.

WE HAVE AN ORCHESTRA, AND WE PLAY FOR THE RETIREMENT HOMES AND THAT SORT OF THING.

THAT'S CREATIVITY IN MUSIC.

IN OTHER WORDS, IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE SOME PHYSICAL THING.

BUT THE CREATIVITY, I THINK EVERYBODY NEEDS TO FEEL THAT THEY'RE DOING SOMETHING.

I CAME FROM A FAMILY WHERE EVERYONE HAD A POSITIVE ATTITUDE IN GENERAL, AND I THINK THAT
HELPS AN AWFUL LOT.

AND I WAS RAISED IN A VERY...

IT WAS THE DEPRESSION, BUT IT WAS A VERY HAPPY HOME.

IT WAS A COMFORTABLE HOME, YET THERE WERE CRISES THAT HAPPENED.

I HAD A YOUNGER BROTHER DIE.


IF YOU'RE RAISED IN AN ATMOSPHERE LIKE THAT, YOU TEND TO BE MORE CAPABLE OF DEALING WITH THINGS THAT HAPPEN IN YOUR LIFE.

ELIZABETH ALLEN LIVES IN A RETIREMENT HOME FOR WOMEN. YOU GET 30 WOMEN IN ONE PLACE, YOU'RE LUCKY TO HAVE ANY HAPPY CONTACT.

BUT I THINK THE LADIES LIKE EACH OTHER, AND SOME OF THEM SPEND A LOT OF TIME.

THERE'S A SPECIAL LITTLE GROUP THAT SPENDS MOST OF THEIR TIME OUTDOORS, WHICH IS GOOD FOR THEM.

THEN THERE'S A GROUP THAT DOESN'T CARE ABOUT ANYBODY ELSE ANY MORE THAN I DO.

THERE ARE ABOUT FOUR OF US LIKE ME.

WE LIKE US.

THAT'S VERY SELF-CENTERED.

I DON'T KNOW WHETHER THEY'LL ALL AGREE WITH THAT, BUT YOU MUST CONFESSION THAT'S TRUE.

BUT AS FOR SOCIAL LIFE...

IF THERE'S SOMEBODY TO TELL THEM WHAT TO DO, THEY'D BE HAPPY TO DO IT.

BUT THEY DON'T SEEM TO HAVE ANYTHING.
THEY DON'T DO ANYTHING.

THEY DON'T SEEM TO HAVE ANY INNER RESOURCES TO TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES UNLESS SOMEBODY TELLS THEM WHAT TO DO.

SOME PEOPLE FIND RELIGION AN IMPORTANT RESOURCE. I'VE BEEN ACTIVE IN MY RELIGION ALL MY LIFE.

AND, UH...

I JUST FIND, FOR ME, IT WORKS.

IT GIVES ME A SATISFACTION.

IT GIVES ME A STRENGTH.

IT, UM...

A GOAL, MAYBE.

BECAUSE THERE IS -- IN MY BELIEF, THERE IS ANOTHER LIFE.

SO THAT -- I MEAN, THERE IS AN AFTERLIFE AND THAT IT'S SOMETHING TO WORK FOR AND TO ACHIEVE.

I THINK IF YOU HAVE THAT KIND OF AN OUTLOOK, THEN YOU DON'T FEEL THAT WHEN YOU DIE THERE'S NOTHING MORE.

YOU KNOW, I DON'T HAVE ANY LONG-TERM GOALS.

MY GOALS ARE SHORT-TERM.

MY PHILOSOPHY IS TO LIVE EACH DAY AND ENJOY IT TO THE FULLEST.

I'M REALLY AFRAID TO MAKE ANY LONG-RANGE PLANS.

UM...

I THINK THAT LIFE IS UNCERTAIN, AND YOU JUST HAVE TO ENJOY EACH DAY.

I LOOK TO PEOPLE IN THEIR 90s WHO ARE STILL...WITH IT, WHO STILL HAVE GOOD MENTAL
CAPACITY, EVEN IF THEY'RE WALKING WITH A CANE, BUT WHO STILL HAVE A POSITIVE OUTLOOK ON LIFE.

316 01:37:57:02 THOSE ARE MY ROLE MODELS.

317 01:37:59:01 AND HOPEFULLY, AT MY AGE, I CAN BE A ROLE MODEL TO PEOPLE WHO ARE YOUNGER THAN I AM.

318 01:38:06:17 I HOPE TO ALWAYS CONTINUE LEARNING.

319 01:38:09:03 ONCE YOU STOP LEARNING, YOU MIGHT AS WELL BE DEAD.

320 01:38:13:02 BY THE SAME TOKEN, I HOPE TO BE ABLE TO TEACH WHAT I LEARN TO OTHER PEOPLE.

321 01:38:19:16 IT'S VERY FLATTERING TO ME WHEN A PERSON 20, 25 YEARS YOUNGER THAN I AM WILL COME UP TO ME AND SAY, "YOU'RE A ROLE MODEL." IT HELPS CONSIDERABLY TO BUILD MY OWN EGO.

322 01:38:33:02 IT TOOK ME A LONG TIME TO BUILD MY SELF-ESTEEM.

323 01:38:37:18 I WAS ALWAYS SERVICING OTHER PEOPLE.

324 01:38:40:03 NOW...WHILE I STILL THINK IT'S IMPORTANT TO BE OF SERVICE TO OTHER PEOPLE, I ALSO TAKE MYSELF INTO CONSIDERATION.

325 01:38:48:17 I DON'T WORRY ABOUT MY FUTURE, BUT I DO HOPE TO KEEP IT ACTIVE, TO BE ABLE TO DRIVE, TO KEEP MY EYESIGHT GOOD, AND TO KEEP MY MENTAL ATTITUDE POSITIVE, ON AN OPTIMISTIC NOTE.

326 01:39:03:03 BECAUSE WHAT ELSE IS THERE?

327 01:39:05:17 THE ALTERNATIVE ISN'T ALL THAT GREAT.

328 01:39:08:02 COMMON MYTHS OF AGING SOMETIMES INTERFERE WITH OLDER ADULTS' MENTAL OUTLOOK. TO PROMOTE AND MAINTAIN MENTAL HEALTH, THE MYTHS AND FALSE BELIEFS HAVE TO BE CHALLENGED. ONE OF THE BIGGEST CONCEPTS REALLY FOCUSES AROUND SEPARATING NEGATIVE CHANGES THAT REPRESENT ILLNESS FROM THOSE THAT REPRESENT AGING.

329 01:39:28:03 AND SO MANY OF THE MYTHS RELATE TO A VIEW OF
ILLNESS AS OPPOSED TO A VIEW OF AGING.

330 01:39:36:03 SO INTELLECTUAL FUNCTIONING, FOR EXAMPLE -- THAT STAYS VERY MUCH INTACT IN THE PRESENCE OF HEALTH.

331 01:39:42:02 THE WONDERFUL EXAMPLES SUCH AS PICASSO AND GRANDMA MOSES ILLUSTRATE THAT.

332 01:39:47:03 DEPRESSION IS NOT A NORMAL PART OF AGING, EVEN THOUGH MANY PEOPLE THINK IT IS.

333 01:39:53:02 TO THINK OF SOMETHING AS PART OF AGING, THAT'S REALLY A PROBLEM.

334 01:39:57:17 YOU FAIL TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF INTERVENTIONS OR OPPORTUNITIES TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.

335 01:40:03:03 IT'S SO IMPORTANT TO DIFFERENTIATE WHAT'S AGING AND WHAT ISN'T.

336 01:40:07:18 DEPRESSION IS THE MAJOR MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEM OF OLDER PEOPLE.

337 01:40:11:16 BUT THE OTHER SIDE IS, MOST OLDER PEOPLE ARE NOT DEPRESSED AND DEPRESSION, INDEPENDENT OF AGE, Responds TO TREATMENT.

338 01:40:19:18 THE BIG PROBLEM HAS BEEN WHEN PEOPLE THINK THAT THAT'S ONE'S DESTINY WITH AGING, BUT IT'S NOT ONE'S DESTINY.

339 01:40:27:02 THERE ARE PROBABLY ABOUT 15% OF OLD PEOPLE WITH SIGNIFICANT SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION.

340 01:40:32:03 THAT'S A HIGH PERCENTAGE, BUT AGAIN, IT'S THE MINORITY OF OLDER PEOPLE.

341 01:40:36:18 BUT THAT DEPRESSION IS TREATABLE.

342 01:40:38:18 IT SHOULDN'T BE IGNORED BECAUSE SUICIDE IS GREATEST IN LATER LIFE THAN IN ANY PART OF THE LIFE CYCLE.

343 01:40:46:01 DEPRESSION IS THE NUMBER-ONE RISK FACTOR FOR SUICIDE.

344 01:40:49:18 SOME OLDER ADULTS HAVE FOUND THEIR OWN
FORMS OF THERAPY. I ALSO THOROUGHLY ENJOY THE THEATER AND CONCERTS AND GO TO MANY, MANY MATINEES.

345 01:41:00:03 WHEN PEOPLE ASK ME HOW I CAN AFFORD TO GO FREQUENTLY, MY ANSWER IS, "IT'S CHEAPER THAN PAYING A SHRINK." BECAUSE TO ME, THAT'S THERAPY.

346 01:41:10:03 NO MATTER HOW SAD I MAY BE FEELING, IF I GO HEAR SOME BEAUTIFUL MOZART OR BEETHOVEN OR BACH OR SHOSTAKOVICH, IT GIVES ME A SENSE OF BEAUTY.

347 01:41:22:01 I RECOGNIZE THAT THERE ARE MANY GOOD THINGS IN THIS LIFE.

348 01:41:26:18 MENTAL ATTITUDE IS VERY, VERY IMPORTANT.

349 01:41:29:03 EMOTIONAL SUPPORT FROM OTHERS IS IMPORTANT TO A PERSON'S MENTAL HEALTH. [MARY SUE WONSON] FOR ME, ROGER IS THE GREATEST HELP.

350 01:41:38:02 I TEND TO LET THINGS BOTHER ME MORE.

351 01:41:41:03 SO, IMMEDIATELY IF I HAVE A PROBLEM, I DISCUSS IT WITH HIM.

352 01:41:46:03 HE MAKES ME SEE THAT EITHER IT ISN'T WORTH THE CONCERN OR IF THERE IS A CONCERN, THERE'S A WAY TO SOLVE IT THAT'S NOT TRAUMATIC OR NOT DEADLY.

353 01:41:58:02 SO I FEEL ALWAYS SO MUCH BETTER IF I CAN DISCUSS IT WITH HIM.

354 01:42:04:03 AND SOMETIMES WE JUST DECIDE THAT LIFE IS TOO SHORT, AND WE'RE JUST NOT GOING TO LET IT UPSET US.

355 01:42:13:01 IT COULD, BUT WE JUST SAY, "WHAT THE HECK," AND WE'RE NOT GOING TO DO IT.

356 01:42:19:18 YOU KNOW, I GUESS THERE ARE CERTAIN THINGS THAT YOU CAN CONTROL IN STRESSFUL SITUATIONS AND THINGS THAT YOU CAN'T.

357 01:42:27:16 WE ALL REALIZE THIS.
I'M OF THE PERSONALITY TYPE OF "HEAD IN THE SAND." IN OTHER WORDS, WHEN THINGS -- I JUST IGNORE THEM OR TRY NOT TO -- PUSH THEM AWAY.

I GUESS MAYBE WHAT YOU COULD POLITELY SAY IS A POSITIVE PERSONALITY.

REALLY, I JUST -- WE HAVE A JOKE BETWEEN US.

SHE'LL SAY, "YOU HAVE YOUR HEAD IN THE SAND."

YOU DON'T PAY ATTENTION TO IT." IT'S A NATURAL WAY TO DEAL WITH IT.

I GUESS WE KIND OF BALANCE OURSELVES THAT WAY.

I'LL SAY, "WE'LL FORGET ABOUT IT IF WE CAN'T CHANGE IT." HAVING A CONFIDANT -- SOMEONE WHO WILL LISTEN, CARE, NOT JUDGE -- IS ALSO VITAL TO OUR MENTAL HEALTH. DORIS BIRCHANDER HAD A ROUGH PERIOD WHEN HER HUSBAND'S PARENTS AND HER OWN PARENTS NEEDED HER CARE. I WAS SCRUBBING THE FLOOR, HOLDING EVERYTHING IN, NOT KNOWING HOW TO DEAL WITH IT, HOW TO COPE.

I WAS SCRUBBING THE FLOOR -- MY OUTLET.

WHEN ANYTHING GOES WRONG, I SCRUB THE FLOOR.

THIS IS MY WAY OF DEALING WITH PROBLEMS.

I THOUGHT, "IS THIS GOING TO GO ON FOREVER?"

AM I EVER GOING TO GET OUT OF THIS? WHY ME?"

HIS SISTER -- SHE'S BEEN VERY SUPPORTIVE.

WE HAVE SUPPORTIVE FAMILIES.

SHE CAME IN THE DOOR AND SAID, "WHAT'S WRONG?"

I SAID, "I THINK IT'S AWFUL. I FEEL AWFUL." SHE SAID, "YOU LOOK AWFUL. COME WITH ME." SHE TOOK ME FOR A DAY, AND I LET IT ALL OUT.

ALL THE TEARS FLOWED. ALL OF IT RELEASED.

WE SURVIVED IT PRETTY WELL, I THINK.

WE SURVIVED IT A LITTLE CLOSER THAN WE
IT'S A WONDER WE DIDN'T KILL ONE ANOTHER.

UP TO A POINT, STRESS ACTUALLY INCREASES PERFORMANCE AND EFFICIENCY. BEYOND THAT POINT, IT'S DESTRUCTIVE. OLDER PATIENTS EXHIBIT STRESS-RELATED PROBLEMS THAT ARE MUCH THE SAME AS YOUNGER PATIENTS.

NAMELY, WHAT HAPPENS IS THAT PEOPLE FEEL ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, OFTEN ANGER, AND BLOOD PRESSURE IS HIGHER.

STRESS CONTRIBUTES TO HYPERTENSION.

STRESS CAN ALSO CONTRIBUTE TO CARDIAC ARRHYTHMIAS, TO ALTERATIONS WITHIN THE IMMUNE SYSTEM, MAKING ANY FORMS OF PAIN WORSE.

AND ALSO STRESS CAN CONTRIBUTE TO OTHER PROBLEMS THAT AREN'T STRESS-CAUSED, BUT PERHAPS COULD BE MADE WORSE BY STRESS -- SUCH AS INCONTINENCE, SUCH AS MEMORY LOSS.

MEDITATION HAS BEEN USED IN INDIA AND MANY PARTS OF THE WORLD TO DEAL WITH STRESS-RELATED PROBLEMS. DR. BENSON AND HIS COLLEAGUES HAVE DEVELOPED INTERVENTIONS USING THE RELAXATION RESPONSE. THE FIRST STEP TO RELAXATION INVOLVES SITTING QUIETLY WITH EYES CLOSED, RELAXING EVERY MUSCLE, AND REPEATING A CHOSEN WORD OR SOUND WITH EVERY EXHALED BREATH. THE SECOND STEP INVOLVES FOCUSING ON THE CHOSEN REPETITION, DISREGARDING ANY STRAY THOUGHTS. THE RELAXATION RESPONSE CAN PRODUCE BENEFICIAL CHANGES. AFTER PEOPLE ARE LESS ANXIOUS, WE USE THAT OPEN DOOR CREATED BY THE RELAXATION RESPONSE TO TEACH PROPER NUTRITION, TO TEACH PROPER EXERCISE, AND ALSO TO TEACH HOW PEOPLE CAN CHANGE THE VERY WAY THEY VIEW THEIR WORLD DIFFERENTLY.

A MORE PEACEFUL, TRANQUIL STATE HAS MARKED EFFECTS. PATIENTS GOING THROUGH ONE OF OUR STUDIES, FOR EXAMPLE, WHO WENT THROUGH OUR PROGRAM BASED ON THE RELAXATION RESPONSE --
NUTRITION, EXERCISE, AND COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING -- HAD LOWER BLOOD PRESSURES AND REQUIRED LESS MEDICATION.

AND OF THAT 80%, 20% WERE ABLE TO STOP THEIR MEDICATIONS COMPLETELY AND CONTINUED TO HAVE LOWER BLOOD PRESSURES.

WE'VE RECENTLY COMPLETED A FOLLOW-UP STUDY ON THESE PATIENTS AND FOUND THAT THEY -- FOLLOW-UP OF THREE TO FIVE YEARS -- AND FOUND THE CHANGES ARE MAINTAINED AFTER THAT PERIOD OF TIME.

THE BLOOD PRESSURE CHANGES WITH THE RELAXATION RESPONSE HAVE BEEN PROVEN BY MANY LABORATORIES FROM ACROSS THE WORLD.

WITH THESE NEW FRONTIERS, THERE'S BROADER INTERACTION OF BRAIN AND BODY.

MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH ARE VERY EXCITING.

THEY POINT TO NEW DIRECTIONS FOR HEALTH INTERVENTION AND HEALTH PROMOTION.

LAUGHTER, GOOD FEELINGS HELP THE IMMUNE SYSTEM, HELP THE HEALTH.

AND BY THE SAME TOKEN, DEPRESSION, ANXIETY UNDERMINES YOUR HEALTH.

AND IF THAT CAN HAPPEN, THEN WHY CAN'T LAUGHTER AND GOOD FEELINGS HELP?

SO I TRY TO MAINTAIN A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF HUMOR AND SPECIALIZE IN GIVING TALKS ON HUMOR, WHICH SEEM TO BE ENJOYED.

'nombre de people after a talk say, "I wasn't feeling so well when I came, but you made me feel so much better." That's very rewarding.

RESEARCH ON AGING HAS HELPED CREATE NEW ATTITUDES ABOUT INTELLECTUAL FUNCTION AND HEALTH PROMOTION OF OLDER ADULTS. [DR. BIRREN] THE QUESTION FOR ME IS, WHAT WILL THE FUTURE
LOOK LIKE?

395 01:47:54:23 I LIKE TO REGARD THE PROBLEM LIKE ONE OF PEELING AN ONION.

396 01:47:59:22 THERE ARE DIFFERENT LAYERS OF EXPLANATION.

397 01:48:02:07 THERE'S THE LAYER OF PHYSICAL FITNESS.

398 01:48:05:03 THAT'S CONTRIBUTED MORE THAN WE THOUGHT.

399 01:48:08:03 THE OCCURRENCE OF LATE-LIFE ILLNESSES.

400 01:48:11:03 WE CONFUSED AGING AND ILLNESS.

401 01:48:14:26 SO AS WE PEEL THESE OFF, WE FIND THAT THE CORE CHANGES OF AGING ARE CONSIDERABLY LESS.

402 01:48:21:26 WE OVERESTIMATED IN THE PAST, SO THAT OUR ESTIMATES OF WHAT THE OLD PERSON OF THE FUTURE WILL BE LIKE ARE MUCH MORE FAVORABLE.

403 01:48:32:01 ONE CHANGE THAT'S ALREADY OCCURRING IS IN THE MOTIVATION OF PEOPLE THEMSELVES.

404 01:48:38:03 UM...

405 01:48:39:18 IF YOU DEPRECIATE YOURSELF, YOU DON'T CHALLENGE YOURSELF WITH NEW LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES.

406 01:48:47:02 THERE'S BEEN A CHANGE IN THE ORIENTATION OF PEOPLE.

407 01:48:51:02 MORE MATURE PEOPLE PRESENT THEMSELVES TO THE UNIVERSITY, TO COMMUNITY COLLEGES, TO OTHER LEARNING EXPERIENCES.

408 01:48:58:02 THEY FEEL FIT, AND THEREFORE THEY ATTEMPT IT.

409 01:49:02:03 SO THE LEVEL OF ASPIRATIONS IS GOING UP.

410 01:49:05:02 THE GRAYING OF THE UNIVERSITY WILL CONTINUE WELL INTO THE NEXT CENTURY.

411 01:49:10:16 THE YOUNG PEOPLE TODAY AS THEY CARRY FORWARD INTO THEIR LATER YEARS WILL HAVE HIGHER STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS.
Growing Old in a New Age: Intellect, Personality, and Mental Health

412 01:49:17:17 Our grandparents put up with things that we wouldn't put up with.

413 01:49:22:17 There was a kind of a stoicism about it, that that's just the way life was.

414 01:49:29:03 As the baby boomers move into middle age, the number of young people entering the labor force will be smaller. Contrary to the present trend of ever-earlier retirement, we may begin to see pressures to retain, retrain, and recruit older workers. This has interesting implications for intellectual competence. If we are going to retain people longer, then it becomes very important to maintain people's cognitive functioning longer.

415 01:49:56:02 It may even involve late-career retraining activities.

416 01:50:00:03 And as Dr. Willis points out, many of these older workers will be women. Because of the gender difference in life expectancy, the old-old and the very old are almost, um...

417 01:50:13:02 75% or 80% women.

418 01:50:15:02 So that when we think of intellectual functioning in the old-old and very old, we need to think of women, also women who will be in the work force primarily all of their lives.

419 01:50:29:02 The intellectual aging of women will be quite different than it is today.

420 01:50:34:03 How will psychology and technology be linked to help people maintain their cognitive abilities longer? I think we'll probably see more use of technology to -- with the elderly -- elderly's use of the technology.

421 01:50:48:18 We were just speaking a minute ago that since 1985, we've seen an increase in the number of elders that have become computer literate.

422 01:50:59:09 I think that will dramatically increase, and
NOT JUST THE USE OF THE, UM...PC, BUT ALSO ALL THE COMPUTER-DRIVEN TECHNOLOGIES -- UM...

423 01:51:10:17 BANK MACHINES, MICROWAVE OVENS, TELEPHONES.

424 01:51:15:02 THERE IS THE POTENTIAL THERE.

425 01:51:17:02 THE TECHNOLOGY IS ALREADY THERE, BUT THERE'S THE POTENTIAL TO USE THE TECHNOLOGY TO REALLY COMPENSATE FOR SOME OF THE AGE-RELATED CHANGES IN HEALTH AND VISION AND HEARING WITH AGE -- VOICE-ACTIVATED COMPUTERS, MEMORY DEVICES TO HELP PEOPLE SCHEDULE THEIR MEDICATIONS OR SOCIAL SCHEDULES OR WHATEVER.

426 01:51:40:02 ELDERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY CAN BEGIN TO INTERACT WITH EACH OTHER.

427 01:51:45:03 I CAN SEE A LOT OF COMPUTER INTERACTION AND, UM...

428 01:51:50:02 E-MAILING AMONG THE ELDERS.

429 01:51:53:01 A NEW FORM OF LETTER WRITING MAY GROW UP.

430 01:51:56:18 ONE OF THE PROBLEMS IN THE CURRENT COHORT OF ELDERLY PEOPLE IS, THEY'VE BEEN RESISTANT TO THE USE OF THIS TECHNOLOGY.

431 01:52:04:18 BUT I THINK AS WE SEE FUTURE GENERATIONS THAT HAVE USED THIS TECHNOLOGY IN THEIR WORK, THEY'LL EXPECT TO USE IT AND QUESTION HOW IT CAN HELP THEM IN RETIREMENT.

432 01:52:16:02 TELEVISION IS MOSTLY A PASSIVE ACTIVITY. WE JUST SIT AND WATCH. IN THE FUTURE, NEW GAME SHOWS MAY GIVE PEOPLE THE CHANCE TO PARTICIPATE MORE ACTIVELY. IF TELEVISION CAN BECOME INTERACTIVE, I THINK IT HAS GREAT MERIT IN TERMS OF INTELLECTUAL STIMULATION.

433 01:52:33:19 I SEE IN THE FUTURE A WHOLE CHANNEL FOR THE ELDERS IN WHICH THE GAME SHOWS ARE TAILORED FOR THEM.

434 01:52:41:18 NEW AREAS OF RESEARCH WILL LINK PSYCHOLOGY AND BIOLOGY. THERE ARE MANY NEW AREAS OF
Sometimes it would appear as though knowledge is a closed book. I'll give you just one example. It is estimated that the body manufactures some 30,000 proteins. 20,000 of those proteins are brain-specific. They're not found in the rest of the body. You got 20,000 proteins up there. We know relatively few of these at the present time. So in that complex computer there, we don't know many of the components yet and what they do.

These modulations of feeling tone and knowledge that go into complex reasoning... What makes the difference between a person who is creative in writing fiction versus solving a mathematical problem? So that's one area.

We must understand more of the use and functions of these different proteins.

And then the balance in the changes with age.

Another issue is, why don't the neurons, the fundamental cells of the brain, continue to divide? It's been found, for example, in some birds, uh, songbirds, in the spring and the fall of the year, these songbirds develop new neurons. Their brain cells can continue to divide, and so they sing different songs in the autumn than in spring.
NOW, THAT'S A PUZZLE.

WHY DOESN'T THE HUMAN BRAIN, THE NEURONS, CONTINUE TO DIVIDE?

SO, IF YOU'VE LOST SOME THROUGH ILLNESS, A STROKE, AN INJURY, WHY DON'T YOU REPLACE THOSE NEURONS?

AND WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO DISCOVER WHAT TURNS THE PROCESS OF CELL DIVISION ON AND OFF.

THEN PERHAPS IN THE NEXT CENTURY, WE CAN REPAIR SOME OF THE BRAIN DAMAGE.

APPLYING PSYCHOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE TO EVERYDAY BEHAVIOR WILL BE AN IMPORTANT AREA OF STUDY IN THE 21st CENTURY. [DR. SCHAIE] ONE OTHER AREA THAT I SEE STILL ONLY BEGINNING IN THE PSYCHOLOGY OF AGING IS A MORE SOPHISTICATED ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF PERSONALITY VARIABLES.

MOST OF WHAT WE KNOW IS THAT PERSONALITY, IN GENERAL, SEEMS TO BE RATHER STABLE OVER THE LIFE COURSE.

THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT PARTICULAR CHARACTERISTICS MAY NOT BE AMENABLE TO TREATMENT.

THAT'S THE WHOLE NOTION OF PSYCHOTHERAPY.

WE CAN MODIFY CERTAIN BEHAVIORS.

WHAT I THINK MAY BECOME OF GREAT INTEREST TO SEE IS WHETHER ERE ARE SOME BEHAVIORS WHICH SHOULD BE ADDRESSED, PARTICULARLY IN MIDLIFE, BECAUSE THEIR MAINTENANCE MIGHT INTERFERE WITH SUCCESSFUL AGING.

WE HAVE TO EXPAND OURSELVES TO OTHERS, TO OTHER GROUPS, TO OTHER PEOPLE, AND KEEP ON LEARNING.

THERE'S SO MUCH IN THIS WORLD TO LEARN.

IF YOU LIVED A MILLION YEARS, YOU COULDN'T
LEARN EVERYTHING.

465 01:55:47:02 BUT IF YOUR MIND IS OPEN AND WILLING TO ACCEPT THE KNOWLEDGE THERE IS AND TO EXPAND ON THAT KNOWLEDGE, I THINK WE CAN ALL HAVE BEAUTIFUL AGING.

466 01:56:00:03 IT'S UP TO US.

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