

Successful Aging

Relationships

As we grow older, we also have the opportunity to grow as individuals and to develop relationships that are more “grown-up.” In *Creative Aging*, author Nancy Bost Millner wrote, “**The task of consciously aging people is to stop projecting**—to stop demanding that the weather, the children, and the universe do what they want them to do.” She also noted that the self-aware individual will come to realize that expecting another person to complete them, take care of them, and make them happy is not only unrealistic, but also unfair.

In addition, Doctors Rowe and Kahn, authors of *Successful Aging*, remind us that human beings are not meant to live solitary lives. In their research, “successful agers” reported that they thrived because of important social bonds with both family and friends. Rowe and Kahn wrote, “**Talking, touching and relating to others is essential to our well-being.**” These facts are not unique to children or to older men and women; they apply to all of us, from birth to death.”

Similarly, Jimmy Carter wrote in *The Virtues of Aging* that **successful aging depends, in part, on continuing engagement in living.** This task involves keeping up relationships with others and engaging in productive activities. These experiences, he maintains, “allow us to develop more self-respect and mastery over our own lives—crucial elements of the good life.”

Retirement Well-Being

Feeling Connected

Social scientists refer to our connections with others as “social integration,” a powerful factor in determining our well-being. They also tell us that we derive our sense of connection through our varied roles and associations.

In this regard, retirement is a major life transition that can profoundly affect our sense of who we are and our place in society. In *Social Integration in the Second Half of Life*, Cornell researchers wrote:

“Since jobs provide routines, rituals, and role identity, retirement from one’s career job restructures not only life patterns but also self-conceptions and meaning... The meaning of work for most individuals is the opportunity it provides to participate fully in society. Retirement from paid work can cut individuals off from that participation, as well as the identity and sense of community it provides.”

Nevertheless, retirees can use retirement as an opportunity to develop new identities and engage in meaningful activities. Based on the results of the *Cornell Retirement and Well-Being Study*, the Cornell researchers found that retirees who were actively integrated into their communities through paid work, clubs and organizations, and/or formal volunteer work experienced a higher quality of life than those less socially integrated. Here are examples of their findings:

- Retirees who were re-employed reported higher levels of health and energy.
- Retirees active in clubs or organizations reported fewer depressive symptoms, higher mastery and self-esteem, more energy, higher life satisfaction, and greater satisfaction with retirement.
- Retirees who volunteer reported higher self-esteem, greater life satisfaction, and more energy.

The researchers concluded, “we must look beyond simply whether retirement is associated with less social integration to the more complex question of mapping the pathways to social integration among the retired.” In addition, it is important that current norms, policies, and structures be examined and revamped in order to provide “the opportunities, roles, and challenges that can fully exploit the possibilities of life—and health—after retirement.”

Source: “A Life-Course Approach to Retirement and Social Integration” by Phyllis Moen, Vivian Fields, Heather E. Quick, & Heather Hofmeister in *Social Integration in the Second Half of Life* edited by Karl Pillemer, Phyllis Moen, Elaine Wethington, & Nina Glasgow (2000, John Hopkins University Press).

IN THIS ISSUE

Fiscal Fitness.....	2	Time Management.....	3
Recommended Resources.....	2	Eldercare.....	4
Money and Meaning.....	3	Health Care News.....	4

Money Matters

Fiscal Fitness

According to the latest Quicken Fiscal Literacy Survey, **Americans still have a lot to learn about mastering their personal finances.** For example, 80 percent of the respondents reported that they carry some credit card debt every month and 40 percent have never checked their credit history. In addition, only 61 percent keep track of where their retirement funds are invested and 35 percent don't know how much money they'll need to retire comfortably.

Nevertheless, **Americans are showing interest in improving their financial status** and are looking to their employers to provide some help. For example, another survey identified employees' benefit priorities for the year 2001. The top three choices of the respondents all related to increasing their financial acumen: 1) evaluating current investment options, 2) evaluating the adequacy of current levels of retirement savings, and 3) identifying additional ways to save for retirement.

Employers can meet these expectations by offering comprehensive financial education in the workplace. Research conducted by Virginia Tech revealed that **employees who attended financial workshops reported increased 401(k) participation and more confidence about a secure retirement.** In addition, the employees reported improvement in their financial situation, personal savings satisfaction, and retirement savings satisfaction

Sources: "Why You Can't Afford to Ignore Financial Education," *Ioma's Report on Managing 401(k) Plans* (November 2000); *Top Five Benefit Priorities for 2001*, Survey Report, www.ifebp.org; *Quicken.com Fiscal Survey Findings*, www.quicken.com/fiscalsurvey/.

FYI

Recommended Resources

Financial Literacy Education in the U.S.

The following is the provocative introductory paragraph to *Personal Finance and the Rush to Competence: Financial Literacy Education in the U.S.*, a report that summarizes a study commissioned by the Fannie Mae Foundation and conducted by the Institute for Socio-Financial Studies (ISFS).

"In *The Tipping Point*, Malcolm Gladwell examines why and how major changes occur in society—often, within a short time. Gladwell argues that ideas, behaviors and messages can become contagious, sweeping through society as "social epidemics." The tipping point occurs when social forces reach a critical mass and an idea or message takes off. The rush to competence in personal financial literacy education has become, in our opinion, just such a phenomenon."

The Executive Summary is available on the ISFS web site, www.isfs.org, as well as a link to the Fannie Mae Foundation to order the full 210 page report.

Free Online Computer Training

Be sure to check out www.livineasy.com, a web site dedicated to helping boomers and seniors become more comfortable with computers and the Internet. This free training site offers down-to-earth instruction in a conversational manner. Gain a better understanding of computer technology and terminology and pick up the skills you need to navigate your way around the Internet. In addition, lessons are available for such popular software programs as Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint.

Jobs Most Affected by Baby Boomer Retirements

The baby boom generation has largely determined the size and age composition of the labor force for the past 30 years. Now, as members of this cohort begin retiring, the effects on the overall economy and on certain occupations and industries will be substantial. "Gauging the Labor Force Effects of Retiring Baby Boomers," an article published in the July 2000 issue of the *Monthly Labor Review*, will give you the facts and provide projections as to the jobs that will be most affected. As a preview, the top five that fit in this category are 1) airline pilots and navigators, 2) management analysts, 3) special education teachers, 4) photographers, and 5) teachers aides. Full text of the article is available online on the Bureau of Labor Statistics web site at www.bls.gov (click on "Publications" at the home page and then "Monthly Labor Review" and "Archives").

Publisher
Joyce Cohen
Unconventional Wisdom
10 Spruce Hill Road
Huntington, CT 06484

Editor
Carol Anderson
Money Quotient™ Inc.
17667 Noll Rd. NE
Poulsbo, WA 98370

Printing & Graphic Design
Blue Sky Printing
19036 Front Street NE
Poulsbo, WA 98370

Mission:

- To support the shifting paradigm in our society from stereotypes of aging to increased life satisfaction through conscious future planning.
- To provide you with practical tips, insights on future trends, and creative ideas for planning your middle and later years with confidence and a sense of adventure.
- To help you explore new options in career and leisure, maximize your resources, balance work with the rest of your life, and gain personal fulfillment.

Subscription Information:

Unconventional Wisdom® is published four times a year. Subscription rate is \$12/year. Mail subscription requests to the editor at the address above or sign-up on our web site: www.u-wisdom.com. For more information, phone 360-697-4561, fax 360-697-7442 or email info@u-wisdom.com.

Your Financial Life

Money and Meaning

What is absolutely necessary for you to consider your life a success? That was the question posed to Americans in a recent national survey conducted by AARP. Surprisingly, “earning a lot of money” was selected by only 27 percent of the respondents. In contrast, most placed a higher value on intangibles such as “having a good relationship with children” (94%), “having good friends” (87%), “helping other people who are in need” (87%), and having a good marriage (81%).

Similar priorities extended to the workplace as well. In the same AARP survey, 79 percent of the respondents reported that “having an interesting job” was more important to them than the size of their paycheck. Likewise, Martin Rutte, management consultant and author of *Chicken Soup for the Soul at Work*, made these observations in a recent interview:

“What people want is to have their basic survival needs met. But they want more than simply this. They want a place where their spirit soars, where their soul is nourished. And they want a place where they can contribute to the aliveness of their colleagues, customers, and clients.”

The connection between money and meaning is gaining the attention of financial professionals as well. Richard B. Wagner, Certified Financial Planner, recently wrote about the growing number of opportunities to learn more about the relationships between money and psychology, spirituality, and social structures. “We are increasingly exposed to values-based financial planning.” He also observed, “Consumers are beginning to prize wisdom and perspective as part of their financial advisory relationships.”

Barry LaValley trains financial advisors and is doing his best to prepare them for this “**paradigm shift**” in client/advisor relationships. His advice—jump on the bandwagon or get left behind. In the March issue of *Assante*, LaValley wrote:

“After all, relevance is critical to your continued ability to attract new clients and new assets. It is clear that today’s client is looking for something more than investment or pure financial planning advice from their advisors. They want the advice tied closely to who they are as a person and where they are going with their lives.”

“Money is here to serve life, not vice versa,” wrote Wagner, and Americans are demonstrating that they agree with him. They are increasingly viewing money in the context of their personal priorities and as a tool to reach their life goals. Commenting on the results of the AARP survey, Hugh Delehanty, editor-in chief for *Modern Maturity*, observed that the respondents didn’t see money as the end all. “**Money is an enabler, not a prize to be valued for its own sake.**”

Sources: “The Allure of Money,” AARP News Release (May 16, 2000); “Where does ‘Life Planning’ Fit in Your Approach to Financial Planning” by Barry LaValley, *Assante* (March 2001); “Is There Room for the Soul at Work?” by Bob Rosner, *Workforce* (February 2001); “Searching for an Identity” by Richard B. Wagner, *Financial Advisor* (February 2001).

Life Planning

Time Management

Bringing balance to a busy personal and professional life is challenging. In order to accomplish all that we feel is necessary, many of us resolve to work harder and faster. No doubt, **time is the most precious limited resource we have.** In fact, the majority of people responding to a Wall St. Journal/Gallup poll indicated that if they had a choice, they would pick having more time over having more money.

Increasingly, Americans are experiencing a time crunch. The result is mounting stress and compromised health and vitality. And yet, despite their best efforts, many individuals express frustration about not being able to bring tasks to completion or having enough time to focus on what or who is most important to them.

One of the biggest factors in increasing your life satisfaction is to gain (or regain) a sense of control over how you spend your time. Odette Pollar, author of *Take Back Your Life: Smart Ways to Simplify Your Daily Living*, recommends that **the best way to do more is to do less.** Don’t keep trying to jam more and more into your over-crowded schedule—determine to drop several items instead. The first step is to analyze your priorities. Once you are clear on what is most important to you, then drop additional demands that don’t fit the criteria. Saying “no” more often will allow you to say “yes” to your priorities.

Another good strategy is to **focus first on areas that are causing you the greatest stress** and begin to make changes. Use your creative problem solving skills to eliminate or streamline tasks, delegate responsibilities to others, and control distractions and time wasters. Remember time management is a skill that takes practice. Proven techniques such as setting goals and writing prioritized “to do” lists will provide the focus and structure you will need to establish new time management habits. In addition, an extensive list of time management resources is available on the Mind Tools web site at www.mindtools.com/page5.html.

Work/Life Issue

Eldercare

As the baby boomer workforce ages, **work/life needs are rapidly shifting from childcare to eldercare.** For example, DuPont recently sent a needs assessment survey to a random sample of employees. The results indicated that 88 percent of the respondents identified themselves as baby boomers, and 50 percent expected to have eldercare responsibilities within the next three to four years—up from 40 percent when a similar survey was conducted in 1995.

Fannie Mae is another corporation that is **heeding the warning of demographic trends.** Of the 3,900 employees that work for this home mortgage financing company, 70 percent say they expect to take on eldercare responsibilities within the next several years. To accommodate that need, Fannie Mae hired a licensed clinical social worker who acts as an on-site care manager. She helps employees assess their caregiving situations and coordinate services and options.

Of those employees who have used this work/life benefit, 75 percent said that the service saved them considerable time away from work. What's more, 28 percent reported that **their caregiving situations were serious enough that they would have quit their jobs if they had not gotten help** through their company. In addition, caregiving can force employees to take time off or pass up promotions and special assignments.

Despite the fact that eldercare is a growing issue, **few companies have taken the step to implement formal elder care programs.** According to a study conducted in 2000 by the Society for Human Resource Management, just 15 percent of companies surveyed offered an eldercare referral service and only one percent offered a company-supported eldercare center or subsidized the costs of eldercare.

Sources: "Dupont Employee survey finds eldercare emerging as Key Work/Life Issue," PR Newswire (January 2, 2001); "The Elder Care Gap" by Susan J. Wells, *HR Magazine* (May 2000).

Trend Watcher

Health Care News

Paid Home Care—

In the 1990s, private spending for home health care grew at the rate of 9 percent per year. However, public expenditures grew at an even higher rate, 20 percent per year. A study conducted at the University of Michigan revealed that the bulk of this increase in paid home care did not go to older Americans with lower levels of social support. By 1995, unmarried elders living with their children received more paid home care than unmarried elders who lived alone. According to Kenneth M. Langa, assistant professor of internal medicine and principal investigator, "Having an adult child on hand to 'navigate' the Medicare system seems to have a major impact on the amount of home care the elderly receive."

Source: Medscape Wire, February 9, 2001.

Lifestyle Redesign—

Researchers at the University of Southern California have found that "lifestyle redesign" has lasting effects on both the physical and psychological health of older adults. Results of their study were published in the January issue of the *Journal of Gerontology*. The project focused on men and women who were 60 years and older and living independently. Results demonstrated that occupational therapy, usually reserved for treating disease and injury, is a way to slow the effects of aging. For a period of nine months, the study participants had weekly sessions with a therapist who helped them make positive changes in their daily routines. Six months later, follow-up interviews revealed greater gains in quality of life and overall health as compared to members of a control group who received no therapy. Because Americans are living longer, the researchers believe it is important to identify ways to help them live better as well.

Source: Reuters Health, February 6, 2001.

Young Adults Without Health Insurance—

"Casting a shadow on the popular image of young adults in their twenties enjoying unlimited opportunity in a booming economy, a new survey reveals that 12 million of them are vulnerable to the catastrophic expense of serious illness or injury because they do not have health insurance." According to a report by the Commonwealth Fund, young adults in the U.S. are twice as likely to be uninsured as children or older adults. Over the past decade, the proportion of those 19 to 29 years old who do not have health coverage has risen from 22 to 30 percent, and accounts for more than a quarter of America's uninsured. Results of the research showed that young adults without coverage were twice as likely not to have seen a doctor in the year prior to the survey. In addition, three-quarters of young uninsured workers did not have job-based coverage because they were not eligible or because their employer did not offer a health plan.

Source: Briefing Note: "On Their Own: Young Adults Living Without Health Insurance," www.commonwealthfund.org. To order the full report, call 888-777-2744.