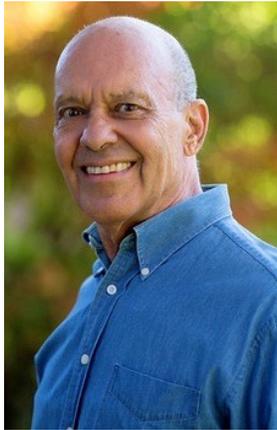


Ageing With Grace and Style: Acceptance and Adaptation to Change



My father lived to be 100 years old. He might still be alive if he hadn't fallen and broken his hip while playing kick ball with 10-year-olds when he was 99. To his final days he lived his life with joy and flirty smiles and winks to younger women. His main struggle in his later years was adapting to and accepting the changes that were occurring in his mind and body.

For some reason, our society is very obsessed with pointing out negative aspects of aging. The cult of youth is worshipped and glorified. Try to tell a 20-year-old that they are eventually going to grow old and leave their body behind. Their response may well be a vacant smile and an intellectual understanding, but almost no emotional response or connection to the inevitable. Young people, teeming with hormones, compliant bodies and boundless energy, are so in the moment, clueless of what lies before them. To some, it seems like ageing is an aberration that has no relation to their current state of being. And you know, they are right! Being totally present and in the moment is actually a spiritual principle. But there are two other principles that require conscious and continual practice and which must be begun in early adulthood to ensure a smooth ride in to senior citizenship.

Adaptation to and acceptance of change

"You never step twice into the same river." – Heraclitus, pre-Socratic Greek philosopher

Every single material thing is in a constant state of flux. Every single energetic pattern – including the human mind – is moving, evolving, waxing and waning.

Rigid thinking can lead to feelings of being overwhelmed and an inability to adapt to changes in a conscious, intelligent manner. This can lead to depression, social withdrawal, loneliness, resentment, bitterness and more.

Anticipation of changes affords the opportunity to develop a positive, proactive and constructive attitude. People who develop their adaptation skills tend to have a more positive and healthier mindset, experience fewer signs of depression, and embrace every year of their lives.

Accepting change is different than adapting to change. Becoming comfortable with the unknown can be extremely challenging. The key concept to start on the path of acceptance is to learn that it is necessary for old things to go and new things to come. The entire history of the world and the history of humanity can be defined by continual change, evolution and development. Change is part of life and existence, and change often brings new opportunities--sometimes good ones! Try to view change as a challenge and a chance to grow. Remind yourself that you

are a strong and dynamic person and that you will be stronger as a result of this change. Also, keep in mind that change can be a powerful motivator to help you achieve your goals