




CARING TIMES

Neighborhood Groups

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Brooklyn



Botanic garden

SEPTEMBER

How do we keep learning and keep our brains sharp?

Some responses included:

- Uses Prevgagen for mindfulness and says it does help. And as a lawyer, still does some work in her field of immigration law.
- Decided to learn a foreign language, takes Bridge lessons and walks a lot.
- Plays brain games online, which she enjoys, but decided that investing is just as challenging and can make money.
- Still cleans her own apartment, and still does some legal work, also bakes delicious treats.
- Joined Quest Lifelong Learning and takes wide variety of interesting courses. Also takes a metalsmithing class at JCC for her jewelry-making business.
- Volunteers with My Own Book and the City Dept. for the Aging assisting one very old woman get her bills paid and keep to a budget. Also works as an arbitrator in the financial securities industry.

OCTOBER

The new voting law and early voting, and of all the proposed changes to the City Charter

The League of Women Voters recommends voting yes on all Charter items.

We discussed the Aid in Dying legislation now before the State Legislature, and all eight of us supported it.

Pain and its treatment.

One member has very severe back problems for which she has not yet found adequate help. Another who finally did get help for her similar problem was able to provide a lot of information.

Lack of diversity in TTN and its unavailing efforts to improve that situation for the long term.

Downtown 3



Union Square Green Market

OCTOBER

Neighborhood group logistics

1. How to handle minute-taking. It was agreed that at each meeting it would be decided who would take minutes the next time.

2. What to do about people who are members but do not attend. This is a problem, because if they stay on the list, there is no room for new members. The leader of the group will either write an email or call those people who have not attended and ask about the situation; and then we'll see further.

3. How to get to know each member of the group more closely was a topic of discussion at the Caring Collaborative Leaders/Liaisons meeting held this month. Our group decided that everyone could do that on their own, and no general suggestion should be made.

How older age informs how we think about ourselves and our lives.

The idea came from reading a New Yorker article "Why We Can't Tell the Truth about Aging (11/4/19)." Unfortunately, practically no one had had a chance to read the article before the meeting; but some copies on which she highlighted some salient points, i.e. that old age is the stage of life that helps us grasp who we are and what our life has meant; it also drives and reflects emotional and ethical attitudes were shared with group members.

Members agreed that our past makes us who we are; that even if we might not feel great about ourselves now, we can look back and see positive changes we've made, be proud of the values we've lived by, etc. Someone said that aging can be positive until something bad happens such as illness or infirmity, but that it's helpful to maintain an upbeat attitude; being miserable and depressed serves no purpose.

Also, different people are impressed by different aspects of our lives i.e. you might think that someone else led such a wonderful successful life compared to you; but that person might look at your life the same way. Worries about dementia came up as well as the fear of being dependent, of Alzheimer's and of dying alone

Perhaps the takeaways from the discussion were: DON'T SWEAT THE SMALL STUFF. TRY TO JUDGE YOURSELF AND OTHERS LESS. STAY UPBEAT

Lincoln Square



Lincoln Center

SEPTEMBER

Thoughts and memories related to the 9/11 attacks.

Several attendees were at or near Lower Manhattan during the attacks. They talked about how recent the experience felt despite the passing years. We all felt that we have lost the sense of security we previously had. When we were young, we practiced "duck and cover" to prepare for atomic bombs, but we agreed that we still felt secure because we had the sense that the US was so dominant that we would never experience the real thing.

Some were shaken by the sense of randomness of who died and who lived, based on whether or not they had gone to work early or late that day. There was concern for the long-term effects of the highly polluted air in and around the site, especially since the authorities initially stated that it was safe.

We spoke about how much has changed since 2001, including who our perceived enemies are and how we try to keep ourselves safe, especially with air travel. Young people who don't remember how it was before 9/11 have different fears, e.g. mass shootings.

We considered whether it was perhaps self-indulgent to focus so much on 9/11 as we do in New York City. People outside the City are not inclined to talk about it. Twice as many members of the military have been killed in Iraq and Afghanistan as at the World Trade Center. Europeans seemed to move on after the devastation of WWII more rapidly, but perhaps that is because violence permeated their lives for so many decades.

One positive outcome for some was rethinking priorities, spending more time with family and in travel and other leisure activities.

SEPTEMBER

How to look better

A member demonstrated her regimen for proper structural alignment. Another member spoke about her exercises at home. Some members said they learned good exercises from their physical therapists.

On the theme of looking better, samples of different moisturizers were passed around (bag balm, hyaluronic acid, etc.) The benefits of Vaseline were noted. The importance of drinking water was stressed.

Someone mentioned Yoga with Adriene on YouTube.

Small museums

where a few of us could make an excursion.

It was noted that the Rubin is free on the first Monday of the month for seniors and always free Fridays after 6pm.

A few of us might want to visit the Bard. On the 18th TTN is going there as a group, and that tour will have a private docent.

MurrayHill/KipsBay



Kips Bay towers

SEPTEMBER

Downsizing and decluttering

Most members have gone through or are currently going through the process of decluttering. For a few, this was in conjunction with downsizing from a house or a larger apartment. For others, it is just a need to streamline their lives after years of accumulating. For nearly all, the process is triggered by and/or accompanies a change in life stage such as retirement, the death of a spouse, or a move to new living quarters.

Most experience decluttering as a very difficult and emotional process – letting go of a previous life, parting with memories, making decisions about what is/isn't important, “finding a good home” for some items of personal importance. Much of the process centers around discarding paper files and clothes – although some mention artwork, photographs, household goods, and electronic equipment.

Paper is a major culprit. Many members had work files that accumulated over the years and throwing and shredding these is one of the first (and seemingly easier – although very time-consuming) tasks after retirement. However, personal papers seem to be harder to streamline – with some members confessing confusion and/or reluctance about how long to keep bank records, medical records, etc. While scanning offers a way to circumvent this accumulation, a number are finding it hard to break the paper habit. Using a home shredder is usually cumbersome and time-consuming, but some larger buildings are now offering shredding services. Outside services such as Shredfests are available, and UPS stores offer shredding and charge by the pound.

Clothing is another major area. For some, getting rid of their “professional” clothes after retirement presented some challenges – in part because of the expense that they represent. A number of charitable organizations were mentioned as worthy recipients in this regard: Dress for Success, Bottomless Closet, Opera Thrift Shop, and Housing Works. Some members admitted to having too many clothes but are holding on to them (“everything old is new again”).

Some decluttering strategies that were discussed include: breaking the process into stages (e.g., work files first and then clothes, doing the easy stuff first to get started, etc.), setting deadlines for different tasks/stages so you get a feeling of accomplishment, dedicating a certain amount of time each day or week, having friends over to help with shredding, and taking pictures of things you think you might miss. One member mentioned the Decluttering Support Group at the Lenox Hill Senior Center as very helpful in accomplishing a major decluttering.

For several us, the subsequent goal is now not to clutter in the first place. Several strategies were mentioned: buying more selectively, switching to online bank and brokerage statements, contacting charities to be removed from mailing lists, discarding junk mail immediately in the mail room, and discarding an old item of clothing whenever buying a new one.

Queens



The Unisphere

SEPTEMBER

Keeping positive in a negative world

Our facilitator first dealt with negative thinking that can lead to depression. To combat negative thinking, it is important to understand it. There are many distortions that can cause negative thinking. Some of them are:

- Polarized thinking
- Overgeneralization
- Jumping to conclusions
- Personalization
- Blaming

Some of the symptoms of depression are:

- Lack of Motivation
- Low Self-Esteem
- Guilt
- Irritability
- Difficulty Making Decisions

The mainstay of treatment is usually medication, talk therapy or a combination of the two. Taking the first step is often very difficult. We seem to have no problem accepting treatment for high blood pressure and cholesterol, pain from arthritis, gastrointestinal issues, but when it comes to mental health treatment, we find it harder to face.

Some of the ways to stay positive in a negative world:

- Surround yourself with loving people who bring out the best in you
- Give thanks for the blessings you have
- Limit negative media and entertainment
- Replace negative habits with more positive one
- Try to disconnect and embrace solitude
- Laugh more often; give more hugs

The road not taken

The Road not Taken, began with the reading of Robert Frost's "The Road Less Traveled".

The person who takes the road less traveled is acting independently, freeing themselves from conformity, generally making their own choices and perhaps leading a trail that will become the road more often traveled.

No way is correct; one must assess the possible advantages, disadvantages and risks of taking either road. While most people search for the easier paths through life, they are often less eventful.

Upper West Side 1



Fairway Market

SEPTEMBER

Health buddy system

The question arose as to *when* there is a need for someone to be accompanied to the ER (ED). Some discussion followed about how and whom we should contact. While we each have our "health buddies," those who live nearby, should we all have one another's phone numbers and addresses. Some members are concerned about privacy issues

One member described and gave a full demonstration of her Apple Watch (\$500+) - it has all your medical ID info that you've put in your iPhone. It is an alternative to Lifeline (which might cost \$40/month). Two members both use the Lifeline medical alert system, which involves wearing a lariat necklace.

Why and How our Education has Mattered to Us.

One article on the subject set out the domains of an education. Its concerns are: Values, Setting goals, Critical thinking, Interpersonal skills, Character building, Fulfillment of basic needs, Gains in knowledge, Leading a stable life, Self-awareness, Self-esteem and perhaps others.

One member described how she developed into a math teacher. Work she has loved.

Another thrived and succeeded as a medical doctor in spite of a teacher who was discouraging at a vulnerable point in her life.

The drummer in our group had musician parents, a strong academic family. It was a scholarly/disciplinary base that led to her education at Vassar College, following a year in a Swiss boarding school.

One of us described how she strove valiantly despite marital oppression and four young children to become a science teacher. She is still actively teaching.

One member told us how she cleaned houses in order to pay her own way through college and not do what father wanted her to do, which was to become a medical doctor. She also raised her children while she attended Barnard and ultimately became a sociologist.

Another shared how she was instilled with the love of learning through literature and the arts and ultimately became a psychotherapist.

Our singing member is selling discounted tickets to Cecilia Chorus of New York's Carnegie Hall performance on December 14th. She is singing in the chorus.

OCTOBER

Tech problems and cyber-spying

(A member's son said this has "the Orwellian term ad personalization." Turn it off as follows: <https://www.quora.com/How-do-I-stop-seeing-ads-on-Google>) It was discussed with some telling of experiences and knowledge.

Sharing our hobbies

A distinction between a hobby and an interest — A hobby is defined as something you are going to pursue. We don't like the word hobby. Suggestions: serious interests.

Some are aspiring to the following, some are accomplished: Spanish. Travel and exploration. Painting. Photography. Knitting. Watercolors.

The National Council of Jewish Women - on 72nd Street was mentioned for art classes. Volunteering (Improving the lives of others. Is this a hobby? A different kind of hobby?).

Political Action group with TTN was mentioned. People talked about their various volunteer experiences - from the Auschwitz exhibit at the Museum of Jewish Heritage, to the foster care system, to My Own Book fund, to art museum work.

We were happy to welcome back our member following her recent hospitalization. She talked about her recovery, embracing a new life that involves slowing down. She's working on learning how to accept what you can't change and feels more than ever that having cultivated a sense of humor is the only way to be. She is also "learning life with home health aides." She spoke again of her work as Docent at the Holocaust Memorial and Tolerance Center of Nassau County where she has given talks about the holocaust by one who was there.

Singing has been transformative for our member, who is now singing in the Cecilia Chorus (168 people, who perform at CARNEGIE HALL - CONCERT DECEMBER 14TH.).

Her evolution began with re-finding music with concerts at the Lutheran Church - Central Park West at 65th Street - Bach vespers - raises the question When does a “hobby” become an avocation?

Another member does a doo-wop singing class at the 14th Street Y. She is there for pure enjoyment.

The question was raised — for a creative endeavor - what kind of concentration is needed to become good enough at it to enjoy it?

Upper West Side 2



116th St. Subway Station

SEPTEMBER

Getting positive – how do we prevent, avoid or neutralize negativity in our lives?

Here is a Web Dictionary definition of negativity: “**Negativity** is a tendency to be downbeat, disagreeable, and skeptical. It's a pessimistic attitude that always expects the worst...”

Sometimes we generate our own negativity, we respond negatively to news and circumstances, or it is imposed upon us by other people's attitudes. It usually doesn't make anyone feel very good.

Ways to lessen negativity's impact on our well-being:

- Avoid people who are consistently negative and not open to changing their situation or viewpoint. avoid situations that may feed into your own negativity
- Limit exposure to news on TV, radio or online. e.g., read the headlines, not the full articles
- Read entertaining fiction, visit on-line museum collections; watch a bird-cam
- Embrace opportunities that help you change your outlook on life
- Seek people who make you laugh, feel good about life, and more optimistic about the future
- Vent when you really need to, there is often good reason for pessimism and verbalizing things may make you feel better
- Have a pet; a dog is especially nice because it will get you out of the house more often

- Concentrate on gratitude, give yourself pep talks, avoid seeking perfection
- Look at problems from different angles to change your perspective

OCTOBER

Forgiveness

Definition of forgiveness was discussed. Wikipedia says: “Forgiveness is the choice that a person makes to forgive another person for an offense or something that is illegal or immoral. Forgiveness is intentional and voluntary.”

When someone forgives someone else, they let go of negative emotions, for example, anger, resentment, vengefulness.

Psychologists generally define forgiveness as a conscious, deliberate decision to release feelings of resentment or vengeance toward a person or group who has harmed you, regardless of whether they actually deserve your forgiveness. Experts say that when you forgive, you do not gloss over or deny the seriousness of an offense against you. It does not mean forgetting nor condoning or excusing the offense. One can even forgive the dead.

Though forgiveness can help repair a damaged relationship, it doesn’t obligate you to reconcile with the person who harmed you or release them from legal accountability. Instead, forgiveness brings the forgiver peace of mind and frees her from corrosive anger.

We handle forgiveness differently at different stages of life. Some felt that as one ages you become more tolerant and more forgiving. Earlier in life we are often more judgmental. In later years we might see things a little differently and have more empathy and understanding. The decision to forgive an unrepentant wrongdoer can express a commitment to see a wrongdoer in a new more favorable light, as one who is not completely rotten or morally dead.

It became clear in the discussion that some of us carry a much heavier burden of being hurt than others. For years they have tried to repress their resentments and anger, compartmentalizing them in boxes not to be opened. But victimhood can plague you with anxiety and depression. We need to forgive ourselves as well as others.

All the major religions promote forgiveness. Rosh Hashana is a special time of the year when you ask for forgiveness where you have offended and attempt to start the new year with a clean slate. The Lord’s prayer says, “forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.” M L King believed that humans should always maintain the capacity to forgive. In the end everyone needs forgiveness, as we all sin.

Upper West Side 3



West End Avenue

JUNE

Can Aging Be Postponed?

Attendees read these articles before the meeting:

Younger Longer: Can the Infirmities of Aging Be Postponed? By Adam Gopnik
The New Yorker, May 20, 2019, & ***Ageism in Medicine*** by Judith Graham Kaiser
Health News, May 30, 2019 -found here: <https://khn.org/news/navigating-aging-a-doctor-speaks-out-about-ageism-in-medicine/>

Several of us found the research reported in the New Yorker article more discouraging than useful. The **AgeLab** at Massachusetts Institute of Technology is funded to encourage and incubate products and services “for an ever-larger market of aging people.” What MIT generally finds, however, is that old people will not buy anything that reminds them of being old.

Group members would like to postpone aging, in the sense that we’d be happy to postpone feeling the negative health effects of our chronological age. Most are otherwise OK with the other aspects of their current age.

We agreed that ageism in medicine is real, and nearly everyone has experienced it. Medical school and residency training do focus more on teaching young doctors to cure illnesses and concentrate on one body part or system at a time. This outlook fosters ageism. Nearly all older patients will have multiple diagnoses, some chronic, as well as multiple medications. Current US health insurance payment policies-both government (Medicare & Medicaid) and for-profit, reward doctors who see more patients and do more invasive procedures. Spending time to listen to patients and coordinate their care is not as lucrative.

What can we do to limit the impact of ageism on our health?

- Find a doctor (or health center team) who is willing to spend the time to get to know you, and is willing to take charge of your care. This could be a primary care MD or a health system Center that specializes in Geriatrics or whatever serious

chronic illness, e.g. Cardiac or Pulmonary disease is the focus of your care. Group members reported that they were happy with the Martha Stewart Center at Mt. Sinai, and Weill-Cornell. Others simply have a good rapport with a PCP who recommends specialists within their health system network.

- Stay within a single health system for all care whenever possible. Your coordinating MD and specialists are more likely to know each other. All providers have access to the same electronic record. Good doctors will scan your record before every visit and review your full health history if seeing you for the first time.
- Bring a friend/relative with you to important health appointments. They can support and advocate for you if the care team members do not listen to or respect your views due to ageism.
- Complain, and/or change providers, if you feel that healthcare professionals or facilities are not providing the best care due to ageism. New York City has plenty of alternatives -who will accept Medicare.

We closed the meeting with these recommendations for Upper West Side area exercise classes that are good for women our age:

- At the JCC Manhattan <https://www.jccmanhattan.org/health-wellness/fitness-wellness/drop-in/> The 9 & 10 am classes Monday, Wednesday & Friday; the NIA dance class, and many other options
- Silver Sneakers classes at NY Sports Clubs- locations at 94th & Broadway, West 80th St., West 73rd St. and West 62nd St. (many Medicare Advantage plans include free enrollment in Silver Sneakers <https://www.silversneakers.com/> which includes health club membership & exercise classes)

SEPTEMBER

Should we consider getting together for “non-meeting” dinners or activities that will let us get to know each other better and encourage friendships?

Staying connected between meetings will make the “caring” part of our “collaborative” group that much stronger. Plus, it’s nice to have a group of friends in the neighborhood who will find it easy to go out for dinner, to a museum, a music event, etc. The new social activities will not replace our monthly meetings. It will make them more meaningful, since we will be getting to know each other better.

Ideas for getting together in the neighborhood: a place where you can play board games, film at Lincoln Center or the JCC, the cafe at Fairway, the Manhattan School of Music.... The ball will get rolling with a visit to The Bard Graduate Center at 18 West 86th Street to see the show on “French Fashion, Women and the First World War,” followed by dinner at a local restaurant.

What does it mean to reach out to each other for help, and “to have each other’s back?” The Caring Collaborative has the larger database for purposes of being picked up from medical appointments and doctor recommendations, for example. As a neighborhood

group we can help each other with grocery shopping, visit with a homebound member, make a “how are you doing” phone call. The bottom line is for us to feel comfortable reaching out to each other.

What I did this summer:

- Went on a personal quest with grandson to Germany, Poland and Croatia to trace the story of our family, and to try to comprehend the murder of a grandfather and uncle during the Holocaust
- Overcame back surgery, learned to navigate the health care system
- Enjoyed the Toronto Film Festival
- Took a first-time cruise (Barcelona to Lisbon), lots of food and too little time in port
- Went camping in the Catskills
- Discovered Brooklyn
- Learned to trust my car’s GPS

Upper West Side 4



Soldiers and Sailors Monument

SEPTEMBER

What was your favorite movie of all time?

In no particular order they were Gran Camino, Chinatown, Lady and the Tramp, Love Me Tender, The Last Tango, and a movie about aliens.

What has changed about you in recent years that surprised you.

One person said that after years of care giving for her father with many traumatic events and emergencies, she cannot watch any movie that involves suspense. Also, she finds that she used to do 4-5 things a day, and now she is perfectly happy with only accomplishing one thing.

Another found that after she lost her husband and wrote a book about it, making many sales and many appearances, that she no longer is interested in making that a focus of her life. She has moved on and is dating now.

Another talked about taking her family on a trip to Africa. Life is short and you should do what you want.

Another said that while she enjoyed international travel during her years working at her job, she thought she would continue that when she retired. Actually, she is not interested anymore and enjoys her "smaller" realm.

The last one said that after being a salesperson for so many years and having to cater to people, she is divesting herself of friendships that no longer work for her.

West Side Afternoon



Museum of Natural History

SEPTEMBER

The first meeting of our new group

We noted that it was very auspicious that the first meeting of our new group was taking place in the same apartment complex where Charlotte Frank, TTN and Caring Collaborative's founder, had lived for many years. Charlotte's neighbors were the first participants in what evolved into the Caring Collaborative model.

Members then introduced themselves. A few women joined TTN more than 10 years ago and have been active in various types of TTN groups. A majority are relatively new to TTN, or to the Caring Collaborative.

Several members are still working part-time. Other members are using their post retirement free time to take classes or create art. The inexpensive programs at the Council of Jewish Women on West 72nd Street and QUEST downtown were recommended.

Just about everyone is involved in volunteer activity. Some of the many causes and organizations where they volunteer are:

Literacy:

Young Children/Reading Partners

Teaching ESL to Adult Learners and Immigrants/The International Center

Human Services



Engage at the JCC

Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention Program at Mount Sinai (SAVI)

[Advocacy for patients with Fibromyalgia](#)

Civic Action:

Voter Registration and Poll Watching

Visiting Immigrants at Federal Detention Centers

The Arts:

NY City Ballet

The Morgan Library

The Transition Network

Leading Special Interest Groups; supporting Transition Peer Groups and CC
Neighborhood Groups; leading Committees