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## Brooklyn



Botanic garden

### MARCH

#### **Difficulties of aging and refusals to acknowledge growing old\ housing preferences going forward**

Continuing to drive until a bad accident or refusing assistance at home.

No one plans to change her housing arrangements, although one plans to be prepared for assisted living if she feels the time has come.

One member suggested making a list of your doctors and resources to keep somewhere handy, like a bulletin board or refrigerator.

We also discussed Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemptions, which two of our members have. Neither knew in advance about this city program to prevent future rent increases for low-income seniors. It's important for TTN members to know about.

The basic rule is SCRIE freezes the **rent** for head-of-household **seniors** 62 and older who live in **rent**-regulated apartments. In order to satisfy the income eligibility requirement, the **senior's** household income must be \$50,000 or less.

This is the web link:

[www1.nyc.gov/nyc-resources/.../senior-citizen-rent-increase-exemption-scrie](http://www1.nyc.gov/nyc-resources/.../senior-citizen-rent-increase-exemption-scrie)

## Downtown 3



Union Square Green Market

### JANUARY

At our January 16th meeting we began with a particularly spirited discussion of **currently running plays, movies and exhibits we've seen with a view to recommending them (or not) to each other**. One of the happy outcomes of such sharing is that members of the group make plans with each other based on the recommendations. Because there were two new members present, we introduced ourselves, which led to a discussion of how satisfied we were

with our various life's journeys now that most of us were retired. We also shared some of our current activities—mostly as volunteers—and many came away with ideas of new avenues to explore. The general consensus was that the meeting was a success, even though we'd strayed far from the planned topic and most everyone left feeling closer to each other.

## **FEBRUARY**

We welcomed our new member and went around the room making brief introductions. This was followed by our usual segment sharing information about culture and entertainment opportunities available in the city that other group members might enjoy or benefit from.

One member then led a discussion on **Time Management**.

She suggested improving the use of time through setting goals and priorities and identifying challenges. She stressed the importance of developing a balance between being too rigid or too loose. Researchers on retirement have found the most important ingredient in a positive experience is not the amount of free time one has, but how that time is managed. Organization of time should be done with daily or weekly plans, rather than hourly ones.

Schedules should always include activities one likes (interests and passions), not just chores. The best mix would include physical activity, mental stimulation, socialization, and also address personal fulfillment. Some experts recommend minimizing time devoted to TV and the internet.

In the two articles sent to group members before the meeting, several references/links were cited that offer info on ways to spend one's retirement that included ways to make extra money, semi-retirement jobs, and second-act careers. Two books by Alan Lakein: How to Get Control of Your Time and Your Life and Give Me a Moment & I'll Change Your Life - Tools for Moment Management were recommended as good references. Outlook and Google calendars are also useful tools.

We then discussed the topic for our next meeting. One suggestion, "estate planning," was refined into "life review" or "your legacy" and finally: "write your own obituary," noting at least three things about your life that summed up your spirit. Two members agreed to lead this discussion and it would be very much enriched if each member starts to think about what she'd like to see written about her."

## **APRIL**

### **End of life planning**

1) The NUTS AND BOLTS MATTERS such as writing a will and deciding which organizations should be notified of your death. We discussed guidelines that can be found at the following link: [www.livingsmartguides.com/end-of-life-planning-downloads.html](http://www.livingsmartguides.com/end-of-life-planning-downloads.html)

2) Consideration of HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE REMEMBERED (WRITE YOUR OWN OBITUARY!)

- a) What are you proudest of having achieved and why?
- b) Favorite memory of growing up and why and where?
- c) List of your special talents/skills,
- d) What you most want people to know about you and why you want them to know those things

3) YOUR LEGACY - What else will you transmit to others? Suggested reading: "[Want to Leave a Legacy? Be a Mentor](#)" by Jane Brody in NY Times (3/4/19)

It was a lively meeting with lots of questions and comments. We will definitely continue related discussions in future meetings.

## Lincoln Square



Lincoln Center

## MARCH

### Spring Health Resolutions

Our starting point was the Kaiser Health News Article **Boot Camp after 60: 10 Steps to Turn Around Unhealthy Habits** <https://khn.org/news/boot-camp-after-60-10-steps-to-turn-around-unhealthy-habits/>

We found many similar experiences and views during our discussion of the article. Members noted that these steps mentioned in the article seemed to be written with them in mind:

### Buy Great Sneakers

Harry's and TipTop shoes are the best places to try out new models of walking shoes.

### Practice Your Balance

B. noted that Celeste Carlucci, who presented mini versions of her *FallStop MoveStrong* program for TTN, teaches very good, but pricey, balance and exercise classes at the JCC.

[https://www.jccmanhattan.org/programs/?area=HW\\_FC\\_SNR](https://www.jccmanhattan.org/programs/?area=HW_FC_SNR)

The YMCA on 63<sup>rd</sup> Street is much less expensive. Their spring class series for older adults will begin in April. <https://ymcanyc.org/locations/west-side-ymca/programs-and-classes/health-fitness/senior-fitness>

### Practice Resistance Training & Hit the Floor

L. reported that sessions with a trainer to help her prepare for a long trip with scuba diving were much more useful than any exercise classes, and she decided to continue them after her trip. She recommends trying a trainer. Several members indicated they would add getting up from the floor without holding on to equipment, or people, to their exercise routine.

## De-Stress Wisely

One member said she had never been successful at meditation and was looking for other methods for stress relief. Suggestions: listen to classical music; use a friend as a sounding board to talk through a problem; put your thoughts on pause, then move them to an imaginary box. Alcohol or cannabis was also suggested, with the caveat that they have greater impact on health status as we get older. For example, sleep can be disrupted by alcohol near bedtime.

## Recommendations from fellow group members to maintain/improve our health and wellness this spring:

### Don't sit too long

S. noted that *sitting is the new smoking*. Remember to get up from your chair at least every half hour, no matter how engrossing that book or web browsing may be. Walk around for a few minutes to get the blood circulating again. If the weather is bad, walk up and down the hall in your building.

### Challenge yourself to walk up stairs

Even city women who walk several miles a day may get out of breath going up more than a few flights of stairs. Try walking up one or two floors before taking the elevator to your apartment. Slowly increase the number flights you can climb.

### Make sure your vaccinations are up to date

- If you haven't received the new **SHINGRIX** vaccine for shingles yet, due to short supplies, try again in April when new shipments will be released. A group member noted that she had never been immunized, and suffered a painful case of shingles last year.
- Ask your doctor if you need a tetanus shot before you go barefoot outside. It is part of the immunization checklist for travelers to exotic destinations, but all adults need a **Tdap** booster shot every 10 years.

### Find a type of exercise that you'll really enjoy doing often, like dancing.

- **ZClubNY** Zumba classes recommended by J. <http://www.zclubny.com/>
- **Dances for a Variable Population**, suggested by B. The organization's founder Naomi Goldberg Haas' personally gives three fee-based classes per week. Several TTN members attend the 11am Sunday classes at STEPS studio, 2121 Broadway, and Thursday mid-day classes at the 92<sup>nd</sup> Street Y.

Other dance performers/teachers with Naomi's non-profit organization give free weekly dance/exercise sessions at Senior Centers. This spring they are at both Goddard-Riverside and the Lincoln Center Neighborhood Center at 250 West 65<sup>th</sup>. The Dance for A Variable Population website has full details about the various programs and staff <https://www.dvpnyc.org/class-descriptions/>

The students and teachers also do free performances several times a year.

## APRIL

### Two things that you are looking forward to this spring

We all agreed that we are looking forward to warm weather, longer days of sunlight, and flowering trees and plants. We exchanged information on some of the prettiest walks (including flowering walkways at Lincoln Towers and the public garden on W 83<sup>rd</sup> St.), and the best places to eat in Central Park (including the well-camouflaged take-out seating at Tavern on the Green). We are all also looking forward to outdoor activities in the neighborhood such as concerts and the Met opera on HD.

One member is looking forward to completing her first piece of stained glass and enjoying seeing it on her windowsill. She is taking a stained-glass course at the National Council for Jewish Women facility on W. 72<sup>nd</sup> St. The NCJW offers free or very inexpensive lifetime learning classes, exercise programs, support groups and other activities at this location; membership is only \$72 per year.

It was noted that the West Side YMCA offers many ongoing classes for Active Older Adults and membership there, normally about \$85 per month, is half-price for those who carry AARP Medicare Supplemental insurance.

## Murray Hill/Kips Bay



Kips Bay towers

## **FEBRUARY**

### **A review of this CC NG's six-month history.**

Suggestions included: finding a few more members for the group, if feasible; the appropriate procedure when a member simply does not respond to reminders; and members meeting more regularly and informally for coffee or other events available in the neighborhood in order to build community.

The members then focused on additional topics for discussion going forward. They included: attitudes about money, identifying with mothers as we age, ageism, holidays, health challenges and how we're dealing with them, loneliness and isolation, changes in friendships and relationships as we age, and dealing constructively with negative emotions during times of prolonged difficulty.

## **APRIL**

### **Dealing constructively with negative emotions during personally difficult times**

Some serious situations where negative emotions arise are the death of someone close, serious illness or surgery, and large unexpected expenses. However, other less severe but more frequent problems include dealing with difficult people: family members, professionals such as doctors and lawyers, and clerks or service reps. Non-stop talkers, manipulators, condescending people, and liars were mentioned as particularly likely to push our buttons. Other hassles include

technology-related problems and apartment repairs or renovations: situations where members often feel lack of control.

Several members commented that they sometimes allow a stressful situation to become worse by responding before thinking or allowing themselves to be manipulated and then experiencing resentment, guilt, or self-blame. It was mentioned that ruminating about the situation and feeling sorry for oneself also increase negative emotions. Moreover, inadequate or poor sleep can worsen a negative mood.

Many useful responses were discussed, although members agreed that remaining constructive in the heat of the moment is often difficult. Effective techniques include slowing down reaction time and thinking before responding, keeping the situation in perspective, and focusing on constructive approaches to the problem. Several members reported that they found it useful to practice breathing exercises or meditation. Insight Timer, <https://insighttimer.com/>, and YouTube were offered as good sources of guided meditations. We agreed that violent or depressing movies or TV shows, including news programs, can worsen negative emotions. Some members commented that they watch comedies or other upbeat programs to get temporary relief from stressful situations and negative moods.

## Queens



The Unisphere

## MARCH

### Procrastination – Good and Bad

One of our members got an idea for a presentation after reading an article in the NY Times entitled “Why I Taught Myself to Procrastinate.” She’d always thought procrastination was a bad thing but learned it could be positive as well.

She reported that a “pre-crastinator” is a person who does everything as early as possible. One who wants to start a task immediately and finish as soon as possible. Some traits are:

- Paying bills long before they are due
- Packing days or even weeks ahead for a trip
- Buying winter holiday presents in the summer
- Arriving almost everywhere early

Not many of us in the group could fit in to the above category! So, what are the benefits of procrastination? It gives us a chance to consider alternate or novel approaches. Our first ideas are often our most conventional. When you procrastinate, you’re more likely to let your mind wander. That gives you a better chance of stumbling onto the unusual and spotting unexpected patterns.

This all describes how procrastination can be an aid to creativity, but what about the down side, or negative effects of procrastination. What if you are putting things off indefinitely? Why do we procrastinate?

- Perfectionism - Perhaps you are worried you might make a mistake and expose a weakness.
- Fear of the Unknown – Sometimes people are afraid of taking action because it may reveal a truth that they do not want to hear.
- I'll Do It Later - This common excuse is a reminder that you can work on the pending task later on. You imagine that in just a few hours or a couple of days you will have the perfect opportunity to accomplish your goal.
- Working on Small Tasks Because They're Easier - Often we will choose to work on “filler” tasks because they are quick and easy to accomplish. This may include checking you email, talking on the phone, or doing some light paperwork. While these tasks may make you look and feel busy, and make you think you are getting a lot done, it is really just a creative form of procrastination.
- You Experience a Lack of Motivation - This can come from several causes, including: lack of energy, stress, other priorities, trouble finding new ideas.
- You Are Unclear About How to Get Started – If the project is too complex, unique or difficult, it may be unclear where to begin. The best way to overcome this is to break it down into a series of smaller tasks.
- You Often Get Distracted - Email, text messages social messages, Skype, and the list goes on. If you can always find a distraction when you are trying to focus, it is important to remove the temptations:
- You Know the Task Will Require Effort and Hard Work – Working on a long project takes a lot of effort and may lead to losing motivation. We can look and feel busy while artfully avoiding the items that really matter.

How can you beat procrastination?

- Visualize how great it will be to get it done.
- Pre-commit publicly. Telling people, you're going to get something done can powerfully amplify the appeal of actually taking action.
- Confront the Downside of Inaction – While we might weigh the pros and cons of doing something new, we far less often consider the pros and cons of not doing that thing.
- Make the Costs of Action Feel Smaller –Identify the first step. We might want to “learn French” but the trick is to break down the steps to learning how to do it. Achieve a small goal and you'll be more motivated to take the next step.
- Tie the first step to a Reward. Link it to something you actually look forward to doing.
- Remove the Hidden Blockage. Ask yourself what is making it so unappealing to do it. Why does it seem so hard to do this? What is stopping you?

The conclusion was not that procrastination could be cured but that it was both good and bad. Our discussion made many of us think about the things we put off and challenged a few to try harder with the important things.

## Upper West Side 1



Fairway Market

### **MARCH**

#### **Our Health: Nutrition.**

Do we subscribe to the daily multiple vitamin pill recommendation? Recent research has suggested that it doesn't get absorbed so as to become helpful; but some believe "it can't hurt" to address possible deficiencies.

Should we target specific maladies with specific nutrients? One member suffered from migraines, but since taking vitamin B2 (magnesium oxide), she hasn't had one.

Having an internist with knowledge of nutrition would be very useful because we are all different; but of course, they are as rare as hen's teeth.

Someone cited the benefits of the Mediterranean diet with whole grains, vegetables, fruits and olive oil. Agreeing, another emphasized the importance of "just plain food" to meet our nutritional needs. But for her, the rules of thumb were "colorful" (design a colorful meal) as well as sensual enjoyment -- because diet should be "a way of life," and not some temporary regimen. For her, the issue is mindfulness: what you want.

For example, sugar: If you are going to eat something sweet, don't waste the calories on something inferior like a Hersey's chocolate bar; eat expensive chocolate with tons of cacao (Maison du Chocolat). You only live once. Enjoy!

Instead of ice cream, one member makes a ricotta, honey and organic yogurt concoction. She will send us the recipe. Lactose is usually broken down by the bacteria of yogurt. Fat content in milk: whole cream, 27-30%. Whole milk, 4%, skimmed, 0%.

Eggs: One member's kids only eat the whites, but she hates the waste and tries to use them. Another was adamant that eggs are the perfect food; her grandfather lived to be 87 and said his secret was a diet heavy on eggs and sour cream.

Pesticides: Marion Nestle says the science isn't there because it's too difficult to investigate, but she nonetheless cites the Dirty Dozen (strawberries, spinach, kale, nectarines, apples, grapes, peaches, cherries, pears, tomatoes, celery, white potatoes) and Fifteen Clean (avocado, corn, pineapples, frozen sweet peas, onions, papaya, eggplant, asparagus, kiwi, cabbage, cauliflower, cantaloupe, broccoli, mushrooms, honeydew) lists compiled by the Environmental Working Group (EWG), saying it's better to be safe than sorry (and they have good citations). You have less reason to buy the Fifteen Clean as organic produce; but the Dirty Dozen might be worth your while (pocketbook). Avocados were recently recalled in 6 states due to possible listeria contamination.

Are all calories equal? Depends on your metabolism, says our resident physician. To lose that extra 4 lbs., one member swears by the “Whole 30” diet. You eat no sugar, no alcohol, no bread and no milk products for a month. But of course, another notes, amount plays a role, too – the 4 oz of cottage cheese diet. And there was that grapefruit diet. . .

Gluten: Could it be something like pesticides in wheat that is causing the issues for so many or avoiding gluten helped with arthritic-like pain.

Inflammation: One member’s friend’s gastric issue was very much helped by following the Sjogren’s anti-inflammatory diet. Another has a DVD series about inflammation that she would like to watch. We are invited to join her.

The amount of dairy and grain in your diet might correlate with your ethnic group. The Chinese have more diabetes, but less cancer [and are known for consuming fewer grains and less dairy]. Having just returned from Morocco, one member reports that ethnic group has a lovely food culture, high in vegetables. Who wouldn’t want to eat like this?

Older people often lose their appetite.

One member divulged that she has a boyfriend who is a foodie, and he brings her jars of veggies and chicken. She therefore has no trouble eating three meals a day.

Eating slowly and savoring your food is another member’s recommendation: “chew and savor!” ... and, of course, with wine.

Microbiome: Recent research emphasizes newly discovered roles for the bowel bacteria that seems to speak to the brain and affect mood. Fecal transplants are being used to treat ulcerative colitis, inflammatory bowel, and Crohn’s disease.

## **APRIL**

### **Health redux + Things we are grateful for**

We had a brief discussion about the question, “Can what we eat affect how we feel?” One member said – “You are what you eat.” Others were more cautious.

Portion size: A member corrected the record on her nutritionist’s recommendation regarding portion size in the morning. It’s ¼ cup of cottage cheese (2 oz), a quarter bagel, with less than 100 calories, and a large poached egg. She attributes her weight loss and maintenance to becoming more mindful about the quantity she eats. In addition, eating slowly and thus chewing more, seems to help.

Another had a free session with a nutritionist through NY Presbyterian (Weill/Cornell); she was particularly concerned about digestive issues and was told to eat fermented foods: sauerkraut, Kombucha tea, Kefir, and Fage yogurt. Otherwise she was to avoid dairy. She takes turmeric made by Gaia, a probiotic from Klaire Labs called Lactoprime Plus, and Fish Oil from Nordic Naturals. Delicious gluten free bread is available from Le Pain Quotidien.

In her case, she varies the amounts she eats. Sometimes it’s a larger portion and sometimes smaller. “Breaking bread” is such a social ritual, but perhaps we can structure our socializing differently.

Someone else said she mixes it up by eating whatever she feels like eating at any time of day; why restrict yourself to breakfast foods in the morning when you can have a salad or delicious leftovers from the night before?

### **Gratitude/Joy**

A member reviewed ideas from David Brooks' new book, Second Mountain: The quest for a moral life, which, she noted, is centrally concerned with, "what it takes to lead a meaningful life in a self-centered world." For him, our society is in crisis due to a particularly strong conflict between our focus on individualistic goals such as career and success, the "first mountain" in the life cycle, and our need to engage with goals larger than ourselves in family and community, that "second mountain" so necessary for a sense of purpose.

Group members split in their view of Brooks as a pundit with some acknowledging their fan status and others complaining that he seemed pompous and self-righteous to them. Be that as it may, (and "vive la difference,") Brooks analyzes issues closely connected to research we have been reading about in the Times and other publications concerning what seems to make people prosper or decline in older age.

Someone noted that in our "achievement society," certain emotional states seem to be obligatory, and their absence a sign of some kind of failure in life. In her Psychology practice, she hears people worry that they are not passionate enough or that they don't feel "joy." She regrets that Americans have come to feel inadequate if they do not experience such states regularly. They've become a kind of requirement for the successful person.

One member who is a widow remembered the tactless remark of a friend on the occasion of her husband's death, "Can you ever feel joy again?" It seems a widow will forever be banned from the realm of the happy.

One of us commented, joy can come from something very small, just a moment, a noticing of beauty. CS Lewis came to mind, "surprised by joy," and Maslow's idea about "peak experiences" that arise after all the business of survival has been taken care of (see pyramid).

Like aiming for "happiness," and smiling, it seemed to some that prescribing "joy," is a typically American cultural artifact. Unlike the more pessimistic European tradition, we view not being joyful as a problem. Another recalled that her parents had had a much more grim life, and one of us concurred that we have been so lucky in the United States with no major war in our territory....

Recalling moments from what was an unhappy marriage, a member was unrepentant about finally being able to find joy in what she thinks of as a kind of "new life" since her husband's death. In her old life, her husband hounded her incessantly, but now she is grateful for so many unexpected joys: good friends, a beautiful apartment with gorgeous sunsets, the beauty of Central Park in the spring, going to the gym, reading good books and the NY Times and the New Yorker. . . even her therapist. Something she misses is her bike; it was always a part of her, her vehicle for getting to work every day. But since breaking her wrist, it seems like the price she must pay. . .

In contrast to ideas about the straitjacket of American happiness culture, there is research that found an emotional bias against expressing gratitude or joy in social interactions, as if others would not want to hear about it. In addition, there is evidence that emotional change can start

with a change in behavior, no matter how “empty” initially (“Fake it ‘til you make it.”). In that vein, we might keep a gratitude journal to note things that we appreciated that day.

Melanie Klein wrote about envy and gratitude. In the latter spirit one member cultivates “being tickled by” others and is grateful for having all the necessities of life: a roof over her head, heat in the winter, etc. Yes, we don’t have to go to the stream for water; a member who has lived in the developing world, thinks about this marvel when she turns on the faucet.

While many indicated that they rarely feel envy, someone remembered her “real estate envy” when visiting a posh neighborhood in the city. Floor to ceiling windows with river view really appeal to her, but such an apartment is totally out of reach.

Couple envy: A member’s friend feels terrible at dinner parties where everyone is part of a couple, though at least one of us doesn’t understand why. This led to a discussion of that other straitjacket in American life, the obligatory marriage, the valorization of “the couple.” A member who chose not to marry resents those expectations greatly and notes that the bias permeates so many social institutions and rituals that single people can be made to feel out of place. While a number of women in the group have chosen the “no partner, no kids” route in life, for others, such a path continues to be, in some sense, unthinkable (As she responded inwardly when her daughter remarked that she actually didn’t **have to** get married. What?!?). As we discussed in another context, there seems to be a generational divide on these issues, a shift that occurred around 1970. Some expressed interest in learning more from single group members about what went in to that decision.

Returning to the gratitude theme, one of us outlined how grateful she feels to have had parents who gave her a firm grounding in life. In addition, she acquired an apartment in the right place at the right time; has recently discovered a whole new world on Instagram in which she can share her creative life as photographer (theme: urban exploration); has been fortunate in her health: with a new hip paid for by insurance, and a lifetime supply of an expensive medicine because she took part in a study at Mt Sinai; has a niece she loves; a city she adores for all that it offers; two old friends with whom she has stayed in contact over all the years.

And finally, she noted how privileged we are to have our Caring Collaborative group. Despite being very different women, we find ways to communicate and maintain our solidarity. The psychologists of our group noted that it is rare in group therapy to find such cohesion, and there was general consensus that we have been particularly blessed to find each other. This consensus about how fortunate we have been in the development of our group continued to be expressed on email by various group members.

On another note, a member noted that even though you may think that you have heard so much about it that you don’t need to read it, Michelle Obama’s Becoming is well worth it.

## Upper West Side 2



116<sup>th</sup> St. Subway Station

### **FEBRUARY**

**What helpful key word or phrase might we adopt to guide us in this new year.?**

Here are some of the ones chosen by our members:

“Heart” “Resilience” “Small Pleasures” “Letting Go” “Courage”

“Staying in Touch” “Keep Going” “Just Do It” “Rushing is Optional”

**II The benefits of meditation, deep breathing, and yoga.**

**III Links to additional information we shared:**

**Superior Car Service**

<https://www.manta.com/c/mm71wss/superior-car-service>

**Live bird cams!**

<http://cams.allaboutbirds.org>

**Book: Heart, a History**

<http://sandeepjauhar.com/heart-a-history/>

### **MARCH**

**Regrets: do we have them? How do we manage or dismiss them so we can move on?**

Regret having had an abortion. Even though it was the right decision at the time. But now dealing with feelings of sadness

Regret not letting her father give her away as a bride at her wedding, because at the time, it felt anti-feminist to be ‘given away.’

Regret being too strict with children while they were growing up.

Regret not going to another out of town college after returning home, when first college experience wasn’t satisfactory.

Regret not finishing dissertation and getting a PHD. May have had a different life. Subsequent jobs did not reach level of intellectual fulfillment or fun.

Regret giving up music and performance.

Regret having left NY, but appreciate all that was gained by doing so.

Regret comes with guilt about the things one does or doesn't do.

Even if you keep pushing your regrets away, they will not just go away. Let them be.

## APRIL

### **Risks we have taken and their outcomes.**

Most speakers felt the risks they took had positive outcomes though some were unexpected. It often increased confidence, felt liberating and led to major changes in their lives.

Several involved experiences living in foreign countries. Often it was a jump into the unknown requiring a certain faith to overcome fear. As one member put it, "Jump and the net will appear." Another felt that the greatest risk of all is not taking a risk.

Leaving a husband was a huge risk for one person with dependent children and fear of inability to earn a living. But she did and this change altered her life for the better with rewarding work and a happy second marriage.

It was pointed out that sometime there can be a high emotional price to pay if the risk fails, and you are rejected.

Several spoke of the empowering exhilaration when you are challenged by heights and succeed in overcoming fear to go on the zip line or repel down a wall.

One member lived all her life in NY City and wanted a home in the country. They found their ideal house, but were heart-broken when losing a bid. She took a chance and wrote a letter to the owners about how sad they were to lose out and how much the house appealed to them. To her surprise, it resulted in getting the house which became a wonderful home and a magnet for all family members.

Often risks were taken many years ago when young: following a partner to Nigeria, joining the Peace Corps in Iran. These involved learning on many levels, including about oneself and achieving new perspectives on one's own country. They were described as peak experiences.

One person was highly motivated to leave Indiana. She had rejected teaching in favor of journalism. This was unusual and risky for a woman in those days. But it paid off and led to a satisfying career with the Associated Press, and coverage of three Olympics abroad; plus, she certainly got out of Indiana.

Another member at age 17 joined the Congress of Racial Equality and went south to teach black students whose school were closed. This totally new environment loosened her for new experiences and led to a happy career as a librarian.

One member grew tired of her demanding work life in the city. She shed everything and moved to Key West for two years. Another woman left India when 23 for a year's education in the US. It was her first time away from her family. Had she known all the complications she might have stayed home. But here she is 50 years later and glad she stayed.

Another brave person decided to change her career at 35. She studied hard 6 months for the GRE then took 8 1/2 years to finish the program. This was a huge commitment, but it led to work as a psychologist that she loves.

## Upper West Side 3



West End Avenue

### **FEBRUARY**

#### **Thoughts about your Sleep**

Do you feel good, bad or indifferent about your sleep habits?

Has your sleep changed since you were younger?

Before the meeting everyone read the brief NY Times piece:

[\*Six to 8 Hours a Night May Be the Sweet Spot for Sleep\*](#) by Nicholas Bakalar 12/5/201

Most members agreed that their ability to sleep for 6 to 8 hours every night has varied according to their age and life situation.

- When young, it was easy to fall asleep, and sleep through the night.
- Sleeping became difficult when they began having children, and/or their work responsibilities required travel, longer work-days, and stressful meetings.
- Later, caring for spouses who were ill caused sleep disruption for some members.
- Waking up in the middle of the night for a bathroom trip due to bladder issues is a new and unwelcome situation for a few members.
- Today, inability to sleep on long plane flights is the most prevalent sleep issue. Suggested remedies included taking an Ambien and napping as soon as possible after landing.

Members shared details about their sleep habits:

- Several were always good sleepers.
- Some formerly poor sleepers are now better:
- One member now has difficulty falling asleep only on the days when she does not get enough exercise.
- Another reported she was finally able to sleep for 7 hours a night when she stopped working full-time, after being sleep deprived for most her career. Limiting alcohol to one occasional glass of wine - with food, has also improved her sleep.

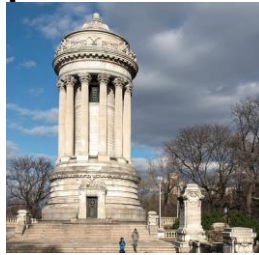
Other habits included:

- Two members who currently go to sleep early and awaken very early, while it is still dark, but find that the quiet time in the morning can be very productive.

- Two other members who take a 20-30-minute nap nearly every afternoon, and still are able to fall asleep easily at night.
- One who noted that a small shot of Bailey's over ice helps her get back to sleep if she awakens during the night.
- Several also recommended a glass of wine before dinner to help them relax and sleep better.

After every member reported, the group leader circulated "[Twenty Tips for a Good Night's Sleep](#)" prepared by the Weill Cornell Center for Sleep Medicine. She noted that several women who reported they are "good" sleepers were not following the tips of Sleep Medicine Specialists.

## Upper West Side 4



Soldiers and Sailors Monument

## MARCH

### **Do you feel invisible and, if so, how do you handle/cope with it.?**

This discussion took many turns, from having this feeling growing up as a girl in the 50s, at work in the 70s/80s when few women were in the workforce to feeling this way as an older woman who is dismissed or not seen. However, there was a wide range of opinions, feelings and experiences with some saying they never felt this way to others who experienced it for decades. Many felt that now it's a relief not to have to worry about being accepted because of our looks. But some felt the loss of being viewed as attractive as well as being dismissed in conversations.

We took a step back from ad hoc topics to discuss **what we hope to get out of being in a CC group.**

Again, there was a wide range of expectations, but there was consensus around the following:

1. Getting help with medical issues: pickups and drop offs for doctor visits, having an advocate, getting assistance with shopping/errands after a procedure, and having home visits for company.
2. Serving as a resource for medical and home health care issues.
3. Serving as a resource for what's available and going on in the neighborhood.
4. Getting to know each other so there's a comfort level in asking for help. One woman commented that, even though she's married, she would rather have a woman assist her than her much older husband.
5. Making new friends.
6. Providing structure after retirement's open-ended free time schedule.

After coming to the decision that the group should be a resource for the members, the next topic was **how to recognize and deal with phone, financial and other scams aimed at seniors.**

There was a wide-ranging discussion about the many and varied types of scams, from ones that could lead to total financial devastation to the cosmetic and advertising fields targeting seniors

that make them feel bad about their looks and don't deliver on their promises for remedying those issues. Mostly, the concerns were for identify theft and loss of savings that occur via phone, computer, door-to-door, advertising, and financial advisers. The discussion provided some resources for how to deal with these and other scams.

## **APRIL**

### **What did you gain/lose from your education?**

There were a variety of responses, including: An appreciation for diversity and the arts, as well as an understanding of how the government works, as well as international governmental operations. It gave one member an inspiration to help humanity while it also put a distance between her and her family. Another member learned from becoming independent, made her unafraid and gained social skills. For another, it opened up a life with unlimited possibilities and enabled a career that included world travel.