

# Notes from Presentation at Lyngblomsten

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## A Holistic Approach to Wellness as We Age

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### *What is a “Holistic Approach”?*

*One which gives attention to the well-being of body, mind and spirit, and sees joy, love and relationship as defining characteristics of a healthy life.*

*We are all aging.*

*What does that mean?*

- *A progressive, time-dependant deterioration in an organism’s capacity to respond adaptively to environmental change, resulting in increased vulnerability to death.*
- *Irreversible*
- *Crosses all species barriers*
- *Affects ALL members of a species*
- *Both genetic and random in nature*

## *Human Longevity*

- *Estimated human max. lifespan:122 years*  
*Average life expectancy in*  
*1900            47.5 years*  
*1960            63 years*  
*1997            76.5 years*
- *A woman reaching 65 can expect to live to 84.*
- *A man reaching 65 can expect to live to 81.*

## *Choices!*

*While the maximum lifespan may be limited by genetics, lifestyle choices (e.g. diet, activity, relationship, attitude...) are the major factors determining the functional expression of the genes!*

## Seek Balance in All Things

ACTIVITY

NOURISHMENT

CLEANSING

REST

## Seek Balance in All Things

FLEXIBILITY

CONTRACTION

EXPANSION

RIGIDITY

# ***PHYSICAL***

- ***Diet and Elimination***
- ***Toxic exposures***
- ***Movement/Exercise***
- ***Rest/Sleep***
- ***Sexual/Sensual Activities***

## **Seek Balance in All Things**

### **NOURISHMENT**

#### **CLEANSING**

### **DIET**

- Individuality of metabolic profiles
- Processed food is generally good for no one!
- Minimize animal fats
- Fish has healthy omega fatty acids
- Maximize fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fiber
- Remember to consider both what a food contains and what it doesn't (think about organic)
- Supplement adequate nutrients, but remember nutrients from food is best

### **PREVENTION SUPPLEMENTS**

- Vit. E 600 mg/day
- Vit. C 1-2 g/day
- Zn 15-30 mg/day
- Vit. B Complex 25-100 mg/day
- Vit. B 12 300-5- mg/day
- Vit. D 200-400 iu/day
- Magnesium 400 mg/day
- Calcium Lactate or Citrate 1-1.5 g/day
- Omega-3 fatty acids 9 g/day
- B-Carotene 250,000 iu/day
- Folic Acid 800 mg/day
- Copper 2 mg/day
- Chromium and Selenium 200 mg/day each

## **Eat Consciously**

- Don't do other activities with eating (e.g. TV, reading...)
- Small bites and chew slowly
- Pay attention to all the senses
- Eat more frequent, smaller meals
- Breathing exercises or walking before eating can improve digestion
- Eat when you're hungry

## ***Research Findings***

### Organic foods

- grown without the use of harmful synthetic chemical pesticides, and fertilizers.
- contain more nutritional value than conventionally grown foods.
- had an 87 percent higher content of magnesium, potassium, manganese, iron, and copper. [Researchers at Rutgers University]
- (Organic) tomatoes yield 500% more calcium than conventional tomatoes.

--Journal of Applied Nutrition, 1993--

## **TOXIC EXPOSURES**

- Don't SMOKE!!!
- "Clean" water and food and air
- Minimize prescriptions, OTC medication, and other substances with additives, colorants, preservatives
- Be as conscious of what you put on your body as well as what you put in it!
- Choose what information you take in (Is watching or reading the news serving you?)

## **DRINK WATER**

- Purified or filtered
- ½ to 1 ounce/pound/day
- Most important detoxifier
- Herbal teas or juices in moderation
- Minimal alcohol(1 glass red wine/d)
- Avoid or minimize coffee
- No processed or artificial beverages
- Avoid carbonation

## **ELIMINATION**

- Stimulate regular bowel activity with high fiber, plenty of water, and regular exercise
- Saunas and vigorous exercise help detoxify through sweat
- Certain herbs and acupuncture can support liver and kidney function
- Water or juice fasting done with supervision
- Let go of grudges, old debts

## **Seek Balance in All Things**

**ACTIVITY**

**REST**

## **MOVEMENT**

- **MOVE!** Just do it! Park a little farther away. Take the stairs. Walk regularly.
- If you've been inactive or have serious health problems, first get an exercise prescription from your physician.
- Consider balance of flexibility, balance, strength, cardiovascular endurance
- Exercise with a friend

### ***Research Findings***

#### ***Exercise Slows Aging in Genes***

In a study of 2400 twins published in Archives of Internal Medicine, 1/28/2008, telomere length (a marker for aging) is positively associated with increased physical activity during leisure—so the more sedentary you are the faster you age.

Try holistic movement disciplines: Yoga...

Try holistic movement disciplines: Tai Chi

## ***Research Findings***

### ***Tai Chi reduces falls***

Tai Chi reduces falls in the six months after intervention for patients 70 years or older  
--*Medicine & Science In Sports & Exercise*, 2004--

### ***12-month Tai Chi training in the elderly: its effect on health fitness***

A 12-month Tai Chi program is effective for improving health fitness (strength and flexibility) of the elderly.

--*Medicine & Science in Sports & Medicine*, 1998--

## ***Research Findings***

### ***6 month Trial of Yoga in Healthy Seniors: Effects on Quality of Life***

Found improvements in physical measures and quality-of-life measures (sense of well-being, energy, fatigue) compared to controls.

--*Altern*

*Ther Health Med*, 2006 --

### ***Yoga May Help Correct Abnormal Spinal Curvature in Elderly***

Elderly women with an excessive curvature of the upper part of the spine may benefit from practicing yoga. Specific yoga poses that target the upper back appear to help straighten the spine and restore physical function.

--*American Journal of Public Health*, 2002--

## **Move Joyfully—Dance, Play**

### ***Research Findings***

#### ***Growing old gracefully: social dance in the third age***

The social dance experience is not only or simply a beneficial physical experience for older people, it also bestows other significant benefits:

- continuity within change.
- opportunity to be sociable and have fun.
- promotes a welcome sense of a community spirit.
- a way of becoming visible and aesthetically pleasing, bestowing a sense of worth and achievement in skills learnt through dancing.
- Dancers can experience the joy of a fit and able body in both real and mythic senses.

--*Aging and Society*, 2002--

***“Walk every day. Count calories. Develop an independence from medicine, if possible. You never know when the medication you’re taking could become a liability...”***  
***--Benjamin Lewis, MD, NY cardiologist—***

## **SLEEP**

- Set a routine for sleep, and be aware of your body’s changing needs.
- Minimize stimulating activities before sleep (computer, TV, exercise...)
- Create a healing environment for sleep.
- Keep your bed for sleeping and sensual activities, and do other things elsewhere.
- When possible, synch with the rhythm of the seasons and days.

## **REST**

- Value the importance of all rest—physical, mental and emotional.
- Create quiet reflective time in your life.
- Turn off the TV!
- Be compassionate with yourself and realistic with your self-expectations.
- Take a “Sabbath” day or day of rest every week.

## **Sexual/Sensual Activity is a marker for and promoter of overall health and vitality.**

Half of all Americans over 60 are sexually active.

74% of men and 70% of women said they were as satisfied or more satisfied with their sex lives compared to when they were in their 40’s.

*“Myths and Realities of Aging 2000”*  
**--National Council on Aging—**

## ***MENTAL***

- *Expectations*
- *Attitudes*
- *Intellectual Exercise*
- *Creativity*

### ***EXPECTATIONS: The power of belief***

- *Beneficial results from placebos in 60-90% of diseases (Benson and Friedman, 1996)*
- *Biofeedback and guided imagery*

## ***ATTITUDES***

***Stress Hardiness*** -- one can strengthen the immune system and decrease acute and chronic disease:

- By believing in control over one's quality of life and health
- By being strongly committed to one's work, creativity, or relationships
- By perceiving stress as a challenge other than a threat (Suzanne Ouellette, PhD)

## ***HEALING ATTITUDES***

***Practice Daily:***

FORGIVENESS

GRATITUDE

CELEBRATION

## ***INTELLECTUAL EXERCISE***

- Brain stimulating activities are critical to health
- Ratio of synapses to neurons increases for those who continuously learn, and decreases for those who don't
- Choose to spend time with children and young adults; youth is contagious!

*“Advances of biomedical science that reveal underlying mechanisms of aging and the proliferation of new treatments to slow or reverse age-related conditions are essential...Most remarkable, however is the recurrent theme...showing the importance of behavioral factors in improving quality of life as people age.”*

## ***HUMOR HEALS***

Humor is a useful coping strategy, enhances mood, improves immune function, and decreases pain.

“Happiness and Laughter are learned skills that INhance WELLbeing and longevity.”

--Dale Anderson, MD—

--NEVER ACT YOUR AGE--

## ***CREATIVITY***

- Music stimulates creativity, memory, cognitive function and forges new neural pathways
- Creative expression can increase awareness of feelings, be a route of healing, and a path of spiritual exploration

## ***SPIRITUALITY—WHAT IS IT?***

There is no one *right* answer.

Elizabeth Lesser, in The New American Spirituality: surveyed 200 spiritual leaders and received 200 different answers, but agreed:

It's a path, a journey

It differs from religion but may be expressed via religious practices

A definition must be inclusive and forgiving enough to hold the full human condition

### ***SPIRITUALITY***

- Simple faith benefits health by leading to thoughts of hope, optimism, and positive expectation.
- Participation in worship and prayer benefits health through the physiological effects of positive emotions, and community offers support that buffers the effects of stress and isolation.

### ***SPIRITUALITY***

- Mystical experiences may benefit health by activating a healing bio-energy or life force or altered state of consciousness.
- Absent prayer for others appears capable of healing by paranormal means or by divine intervention. (affects the one who prays as well as the one who is prayed for)

#### **UMN Center for Spirituality and Healing:**

##### **Community outreach and resources**

- Lectures, Workshops & Seminars for Health Professionals and general public
- Taking Charge of Your Health Website

#### **Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction program (MBSR)**

##### **Working on Purpose**

Addressing the challenge of mid-life, we explore new ways to live and work on purpose

##### **Workshops**

Through facilitated workshops we will explore three topics that are essential to aging:

- Meaning, or purpose
- Health
- Money