

Getting Older: Busting 3 Common Myths Associated with Getting Older

Getting older is a fact of life... each day, no matter who we are, we are getting older and older. At about 40 years or so, we approach middle age. And once we reach our 50s... many believe it is only downhill from here on end! There are many myths associated with getting older and these myths only add to the dread of our advancing age!

When we are young we have all kinds of thoughts and preconceived ideas about getting older. When we are in our teens or early 20s, anyone aged 40 or above is seen as past their prime!

Becoming older is something we can't avoid, we can't put off or delay the ageing process no matter how hard we try! There are many myths associated with growing older... and these myths add to the dread we have of our advancing years.

Myths are not based on facts or truths, and need to be eliminated if we are to approach our ageing in a positive and balanced way.

Myth 1: When you get older, your life changes so much; you are not as useful as you were when you were younger!

Reality: certainly things change as you get older and roles you once had no longer exist e.g. all the roles associated with bringing up a young (and dependent) family. But changing roles has nothing to do with how useful you perceive yourself to be.

Suggestion: get involved in something away from your family. As your roles change, because they will, find something you are interested in... and pursue it. This could include participating in a voluntary activity or becoming involved and learning about something you've always wanted to learn or do, but have not had the time to do it.

Myth 2: Giving up work means I will do nothing with my life

Reality: it's inevitable at some stage you will give up work, but your working life is only one phase of your life. Changing your work commitments now means you have more energy and time to devote to other interests in your life.

Suggestion: if you are retired, or have reduced your working hours or workload, it's imperative that you take up an interest that will be fulfilling for you. One of the biggest mistakes people make when going into retirement, whether by choice or by necessity (e.g. being retrenched), or cutting down working hours, is they don't plan for it. Remember... not working full time means you have extra hours and extra energy on your hands. When thinking about reducing your work commitments... begin planning what you are going to do instead of working, long before it happens.

Myth 3: Getting older only means I will get sicker and experience aches and pain!

Reality: certainly there are bodily changes as you get older, and body parts don't function as they once did, but there doesn't have to be aches and pains and continual sickness.

Suggestion: keep yourself healthy... getting older doesn't give you a ticket to sit back watching TV all day, eat what you like, not exercising. Many people are frightened of the increased potential for getting sick, aches and pains associated with getting older... Do yourself and your body a huge favour and keep active, have a healthy diet, don't become a couch potato...

Getting older isn't the beginning of the end of your life... getting older is a magical opportunity to begin to do the things you want to do, have always wanted to do but never had the chance to...

It's your choice!

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June, 2008

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