

It's never too late

Embracing the aging process



Matt Del Vecchio
Seniors and Aging

As our population ages, life expectancy increases. There are some seniors that look at the aging process in a negative light as they fear what lies ahead. Getting old means physical and cognitive decline. This thought process can usually increase the risk of depression and generally make life miserable for the individual as well as their friends and loved ones.

There are fortunately many other seniors that have chosen the optimistic route by displaying a positive attitude and embracing the aging process. There are many stories about seniors making a difference in their own lives or the lives of others. There are inspirational stories of individuals such as the four Australian swimmers in their 80s and 90s setting a world record in the 200-metre freestyle. You have probably heard of the amazing Hazel McCallion who retired from politics at the age of 93 after 12 consecutive terms as mayor of Mississauga. Oh, by the way, she is 96 and still going strong as the Chief Elder Officer for Revera, a leading operator in the senior living sector.

There is one common theme behind all

these "Super Seniors" – ATTITUDE!!

They have chosen to make a difference on their own terms. You could do the same. It doesn't have to be the grandiose, social media activity that goes viral. It could be very simple. It all starts with small steps that can be achievable. Make it something that you are passionate about. Most of all, make it happen!

Start by putting it in writing. If you want something to happen, put pen to paper the good old-fashioned way. Then tell people about it. Let your friends know. Let your loved ones know. They will help you along the way.

Why not begin with your bucket list? This could be traveling to a destination that you have always wanted to visit. Why wait? Book that trip! In my line of work, I have far too many seniors tell me that they wished they would have travelled earlier on but they are now limited due to mobility issues.

Pursue your passion. You have worked hard your entire life. Kids and family were probably always your priority. It's time to put yourself first. It could be as simple as becoming a member of an organization; joining that book club; a dance class; an art lesson; yoga; bridge club; cooking class; gardening club; theater group; cycling; swimming; learning to play a musical instrument; getting to know computers or becoming a mentor.



PHOTO: AGESSES GRACE

Try stepping it up a bit. Why not pursue more adventurous activities? It's not unheard of for seniors to try things for the first time, like parachuting.

Many people sing the praises of volunteering. Fulfilling, gratifying, enjoyable and pleasing are just a few of the adjectives I have heard used by seniors that have chosen to make a difference in the lives of others.

Try stepping it up a bit. Why not pursue more adventurous activities? It's not unheard of for seniors to try things for the first time including parachuting; fantasy sports camps or becoming a freelance writer. Why not get that tattoo that you were always embarrassed to get? The grandkids will love you.

The side benefit to many of these activities is that it will promote physical and mental

stimulation — two important ingredients to prolonged and sustained health. Don't put it off any longer. There's no better time than now.

Matt Del Vecchio is a Certified Professional Consultant on Aging (CPCA). He is the founder and president of Lianas, a company specializing in retirement residence search and senior transition support, and co-host of the Life Unrehearsed radio show on CJAD 800 every Sunday at 4 p.m. Matt also writes a regular blog at TheSuburban.com and can be reached at mdevvecchio@lianasservices.com

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