

My Definition of Aging Gracefully

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By Desiree Rumbaugh

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“Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever.” – Mahatma Gandhi

As I embark on my 60th year of life, I find that one of my favorite sentiments from the masterful Gandhi are words to live by. As the natural process of aging keeps me on my toes, I find that growing older gracefully is a practice that takes presence and an open, positive mindset.

Here are principles I apply in my own life:

Redefine your thoughts on exercise. Let go of comparing your present body to your former one. Be open to new possibilities. Be okay with the inevitable changes by learning to live in the

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ABOUT DESIREE

Desiree travels the world full time sharing her compassion and her joy with others interested in the transformational power of yoga. Together with Michelle Marchildon, she has written “Fearless After Fifty: How To Thrive with Grace, Grit and Yoga.” She has produced a DVD series entitled “Yoga to the Rescue” and is a regular contributor to Yoga Journal, having also appeared on its cover.

present moment. You may stop running in your early thirties and take it up again in your fifties. You may begin weight training or cycling in your sixties and you may fall in love for the first time with Pilates in your seventies. There are endless possibilities in life if we remain open. Having a regular and very intelligent yoga practice that is steady and strong will make all of your physical activities more sustainable. It is never too late to stimulate our muscle growth, which helps to stabilize our joints and yoga keeps those muscles fluid and healthy.

Have friends of all ages. In addition to enjoying time with your peers, having friends on either side of the age spectrum adds perspective in both directions. Learn from the experiences of others and share your own wisdom with those who ask. Keep up with our fast-paced ever-changing world and you will never be bored. It's fine to appreciate the "good old days", but avoid getting lost in the fear of change by over-reminiscing or romanticizing the past.

Keep a beginner's mind. Learning something brand new is going to take some effort and you will have to be okay with the beginner's learning curve, but in the end, the growth you experience each step of the way will make it all worthwhile. Most people spend a large portion of their adult years perfecting one particular skill set through their work. While this leads to mastery and is typically the basis for a satisfying career or hobby, it also takes up a lot of our time, preventing us from learning anything new. Keep your eyes open for a brand new opportunity that may present itself at any moment and be ready to shift

gears.

Continue to create your life. The moment we stop creating our life is when life begins to happen To us instead of Through us. Of course, there will be times when there are changes that are out of our control. We may even become dependent on others as we age or we may lose our ability to set our mind on a new track. If we are still able to direct our own mind then there are possibilities of creatively working with our circumstances to live the best life possible.

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