

Intergenerational Storytelling

by Maria Sanchez, Gero 131 Student

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I wanted to give older adult participants and student interns an opportunity to hear about each other's life stories by facilitating intergenerational storytelling. I had a list of questions that served as focus points. Goals were to allow each other to share advice on how to overcome life's struggles, to reflect on our lives and create a community between students and the participants by learning about each other.

By creating a space to share each other life stories I provided a relief from social isolation. With the use of the Generativity theory, older adults were given the opportunity to contribute to societal development by sharing stories about their own personal experiences with the younger generation, and vice versa. This theory describes that when we come to the last stages of life, we seek to leave behind wisdom and advice for those coming after us. This project sought to facilitate this for both student interns and participants.

Project Goals

- Hear about each other's life stories
- Get advice on how to overcome life's struggles
- Reflect on our lives
- Share ideas about the Cardiovascular Wellness Program
- Create a community between students and the participants by learning about each other

Focus Questions

- Tell me about a trip you took and will never forget
- Tell me about a fear you overcame
- Tell me about your most memorable birthday
- A life lesson you have learned
- Your best friend and how you met
- Do you have unique family traditions?
- Your favorite holiday and how you celebrate it
- Favorite hobby
- What was your first job?
- Any advice to your younger self, future self, and younger generations
- Who introduced you to the CWP? What is your favorite part about the program and what would you like to see more of?

Lessons Learned

One-on-one interviews were held either virtually or in person. There were eleven older adult participants and two student interns interviewed, each interview taking an average of 45 minutes. Here are some direct quotes from the stories:

"..try not to deviate from your goals and worry less about little things"

"...never take life for granted, and forgive past hurts"

" ...try not to sweat the small stuff because sometimes we tend to worry too much about things that might not happen at all or that are not as bad as we thought"

"...trust and respect the interpersonal relationships you have throughout your life"" ...slow down and take in every moment."

-In regards to the Generativity theory this is the wisdom and legacy that they would pass on to future generations

Similarities Between the Two Generations

Things both generations mentioned

- Similar advice for future generations such as not over stressing about the small stuff
- Slowing down and try to take advantage of every moment spent with loved ones
- Don't try to grow up too fast, have patience; everything will happen at its own time
- Get educated and try to learn as much as you can
- Walk your path and try not to compare it to others

The Unforgettable Trip



Toni's trip to Malta where she met her grandma, who she was named after.



Lyn's trip in Brazil with her husband.



Dave's trip in Italy where he also went to Rome.



Karen's trip in Costa Rica where she saw a butterfly reserve.



John's family trip where he saw a great movie.



Vern's trip to Alaska where he got to meet many new people and saw great wildlife.



Nina's trip in Paris during Christmas.



Jackie's trip to New York during her 21st Birthday.



Amy's trip to Disney during her Bday.



Mary's trip in the Great Canyon where she a whole day hiking.



Susan's Trip to the Peruvian Andes.



Lupe's trip to Egypt where she saw the pyramids.



Bill's great trip in the Moët Vineyards.

Some Memorable Birthdays



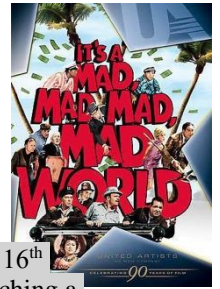
Dave's 16th Bday getting his drivers license.



Nina's 7th Bday blue cake



Mary's 50th surprise Bday



John's 16th Bday watching a great movie movie.



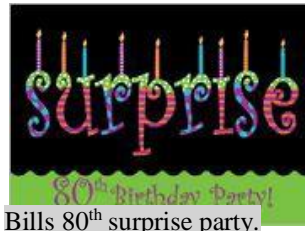
Amy's 16th surprise party.



Lyn's 7th Bday cake.



Susan's 22nd surprise party.



Bills 80th surprise party.



Vern's 70th surprise party.



Toni's 60th surprise party.

Favorite hobbies



Nina's arts & crafts hobby.



Dave's guitar playing hobby.



Lupe's crocheting hobby.



Mary's children's book writing hobby.



Toni's movie watching hobby.



Karen's gardening hobby.



John's cooking hobby.



Amy's Hiking hobby.



Lyn's family history collecting.

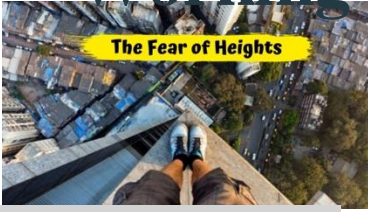


Vern's photography hobby.



Bill's jig saw hobby.

A Fear That They Overcame or are Still Working On



Toni's & Dave's fear of heights.



Being shy Jackie's fear.



Amy's fear of driving on the freeway.



Susan's climate change fear



Nina's fear of traveling out of the U.S alone as a woman.



Lyn's of small, enclosed places.



John's fear of death that he overcame.



Mary's fear of growing up



Susan's fear public speaking that she overcame.

Advice that they would pass on



Lyn's advice to do your best.



Toni's advice to go to college.

TRY
SOMETHING
NEW

Karen's advice to try new things.



Amy's advice to be patient with yourself.

WORK
HARD

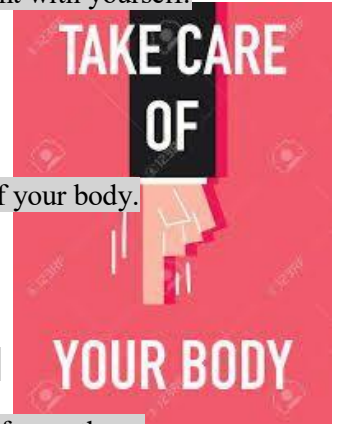
Lupe's advice to be a hard worker.



Dave's advice to stick to the plan.



Jackie's advice to try not to grow up too fast.



Susan's advice to take good of your body.



Mary's advice to try learn as you can.



Vern's advice to balance trying to look for acceptance from others.



Nina's advice to stand up for yourself.

Unique family traditions



Toni's family tradition to make almond cookies.



Nina's family tradition to make Jack o lantern sandwiches

Dave's tradition Hanukkah celebrate with his daughter.

Karen's glorified rice dessert during the holidays.



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Amy's family tradition to have pizza after school every Friday.



Hanukkah



Vern's family traditions to have nicknames for his family.



Bill's family tradition to spend holidays in Bodega Bay.



Jackie's Posada holiday tradition

First Jobs



Karen's first job was babysitting.



Bill's first job was a paper boy.



Nina's first job at Dairy Queen.



John first job at a hospital as an Orderly.



Mary's first job at soda clerk.



Vern's first job as a control engineer.



Dave's first job at a service station.



Toni's first job at a bakery.

Their Favorite Part About the Cardiovascular Wellness Program



Health talks given by Dr. Lopez



Cooking Demos



Exercise classes led by Linda



Socializing with others and building a community

Dave



The trip that Dave will never forget was one he took about five years ago to Italy. He started his trip to Rome where he was able to see the ancient Roman sculptures. Then he went to Florence where he saw Renaissance Art. He also went to Lake Como where the picture beside was taken. The fear that Dave feels he pushed

through but has not yet overcome is the fear of heights. The most memorable birthday he's had was when he turned 16 because that was the day he got his driving license. The life lesson that he has learned is that most of the things you worry too much about don't happen. He met his best friends in college in 1967 he also worked with them. The other two people who he considers his close friends are his brother and Jody his wife. Dave's hobby is playing the guitar, he knows how to play both acoustic and electric guitar but currently, he enjoys playing his electric guitar. His favorite holiday is Thanksgiving. His first job was at a service station where he pumped gas for customers like they still do in states such as Oregon. His advice is if you are doing something to stick with it and try not to deviate from it, and worry less about little things. He joined the Cardiology Wellness Program by recommendation of his cardiologist and when they discovered an aneurysm. Since joining the program and starting a plant-based diet he has lost 25 pounds and his aneurysm has healed. He is really happy with the program and how it is run.

Toni

The trip that is most memorable for Toni is the trip she took in 1956. She was 10 years old where her mom took her and her siblings to Europe (Malta). She went via a ship called the U.S.S Constitution from New York to Malta. She described the trip as a long trip but that was really fun. When she arrived to Malta she stayed with her grandparents. She vividly remembers that it was during the fall season and that it snowed while she was there. During the trip, she met her grandma from her Dad's side who she was named after. She comes from a big family with 6 brothers and 7 sisters. The fear that she had and overcame was a fear of cats because as a child she would imagine cats who turned into big lions who attacked her. She has overcome that fear now because she has had cats as pets. She also had a fear for heights that she overcame at several jobs she had as a commercial painter. Her most memorable birthday to this day is her 60th birthday where family and friends surprised her with a big party. The life lesson she has learned over the years is that you should never take life for granted and that you should forgive past hurts. Her best friend is her kindergarten friend named Cheryl who she stayed in contact with till about 5 years ago. She has been trying to locate her because she stopped receiving letters from her. She believes that she is still living in New York. She also has three friends from high school with whom she stays in contact, one who lives in Sacramento and the other two who live in the Bay area. She does have a unique family tradition that she bakes her mom's almond cookies during Christmas and her sisters also do the same. She has taught her kids to bake them as well. She won a contest for baking those cookies. Her favorite holidays are Thanksgiving and Christmas where she tries to get to get her family together to celebrate. Her favorite hobbies are knitting and crocheting, and she likes to watch movies to unwind at night. Her favorite genres are romantic, comedy and documentaries. Her first job was at a bakery when she was in the 9th grade. The advice she would give to her younger self is to go to college or trade school first. Also, she would advise younger generations to take advantage and go to college. She got introduced to the Cardiovascular Wellness Program by Velma who is also a participant. She would like to thank Linda for providing all the exercise classes and the health-related sessions that have helped through the pandemic and to be healthier.



Karen

The trip that is most memorable to Karen is the trip that she took to Costa Rica. She was able to go to a butterfly reserve where butterflies would fly all around you and some would land on you. The fear that she has overcome over time is being very shy to speak in front of a crowd which she feels she overcame when she worked as a teacher and counselor. She mentioned she doesn't have a memorable birthday. She mentioned that she really doesn't do much for them but she tries to make sure and remember her loved ones who she knows enjoy celebrating birthdays. The life lesson that she says is a work in progress is the idea of trying not to sweat the small stuff. Sometimes we tend to worry too much about things that might not happen at all or that are not as bad as we thought. She has a best friend named Cheryl who she met at a program that was called the Learning Exchange. Cheryl asked Karen if she liked to have lunch and now, they are good friends for about 40 years. In general, she doesn't have any unique family traditions. The holiday that she enjoys the most is Christmas because she enjoys the sense of community, and she really likes the winter season. She also really enjoyed growing up with a dessert that was made during the holidays called glorified rice, which is sweetened condensed milk, rice, marshmallows, and pineapple and you hide almonds in it. Whoever would find the almond would get a prize. Her favorite hobby is gardening, and she likes going to nurseries as well. Her very first job was babysitting she really enjoys and gravitates towards kids under 5 and her first real job was as a teacher to first graders. She mentioned that if she could do it again, she would be a social worker. Her advice for the younger generation would be to try to shadow or try things out that you are interested such as when you are interested in a career or job. She got introduced to the Cardiovascular Wellness Program by Elsa who is a current participant. Her favorite part of the program is the presentations given by the cardiologist.



Vern



The trip that Vern remembers vividly is the one he took with two of his friends to Alaska when he was about 20 years old. They took a car from 1940 and they used up all of 6 spare tires trying to get to there on unpaved roads. While in Alaska he mined for gold, and worked on a railroad gang. He also really enjoyed that trip because he saw a lot of wildlife and he got to work and meet many new people. The fear that he overcame was the fear of his Dad's disapproval when he married a Nice Causian Girl instead of a Nice Chinese Girl. However, this disapproval vanished once his father met his wife and three children. His most memorable birthday was his 70 birthday when he was invited to a country club which was a surprise with guests flying in from Florida and other States. The life lesson that he believes is one of the most important is having trust and respect for the interpersonal relationships you have throughout your life. His best friend is a doctor who he meet in the 1960s because they both had children going to the same pre-school. What really bonded them was that they could trust each other and that he was not a judging person. They visited Churchill, Canada together where they wereable to see polar bears. One of his unique family traditions is that his father used to give them Chinese names. He has continued that with his children and he also gave his wife one that means Beautiful Pearl. His favorite holiday is Thanksgiving. One of his favorite hobbies is photography; he enjoys taking pictures of people. He picked up this hobby when he graduated from college in 1953. His first job was delivering newspapers in Hawaii where he delivered to 73 houses in his bike route. His first real job was as a control engineer where he designed and developed controls for turbojet engines. The advice that he would pass on that made him successful would be to try to find balance in the approval you look for from others and yourself. He was introduced to the Cardiovascular Wellness Program by his cardiologist, who then introduced to him, Linda. His favorite part is that it's a diverse program where you can socialize with people of similar interests, and you have many things to choose from.

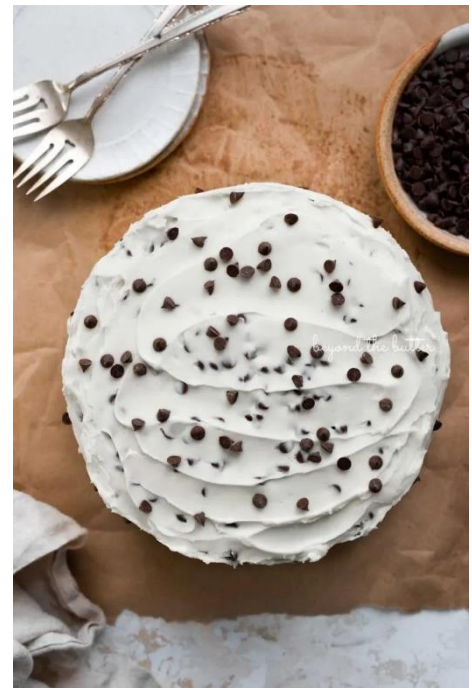
Nina

The trip that Nina will never forget is the one that she and her husband went to Paris and spent Christmas day there. They visited many churches and museums such as one in the picture. She stayed a couple of blocks from the Eiffel Tower and she also really enjoyed the food there. A fear that she has overcome was traveling outside the U.S as a woman alone to places like Dubai and China. Her most memorable birthday was when she was turning around 7 or 8 where she got the blue cake that she really wanted and that she got to celebrate with her friends. The life lesson that she has learned is that we need to slow down and take in every moment. Especially now that we are returning to our routine after the pandemic. Her best friends she met in high school during sophomore and junior year who she went to college and lived with. One of her best family traditions is to try to get all her family together during the holidays because they live all throughout the U.S. Her favorite holidays are Halloween and Christmas. For Halloween, her family would make jack o'lantern sandwiches (grilled cheese sandwich with jack o'lantern face cut out), paired with a drink cooled with dry ice called Dracula blood. One of her hobbies is doing all kinds of arts and crafts such as painting, embroidering, and sketching. Her very first job was working at Dairy Queen and she can still make the ice cream cones. Her job growing up was as a location strategist which allowed her to travel all over the world. Her advice that she would pass down is to try not to get bullied. Stand up for yourself and keep your integrity and try always to do the right thing. She got introduced to Cardiovascular Wellness Program because she was in the Renaissance Society Program. She has really enjoyed being part of the program because it has helped to be stronger have better balance and to stay active. She also really enjoys that she gets to talk to students as well.



Lyn

The most unforgettable trip Lyn has taken was a trip she took to Brazil when her husband got the opportunity to go work there out of the Brazilian Ministry of Education and Culture. The fear she has but not overcome is the fear of being confined in small spaces. One of her birthdays she talked about that she really enjoyed was the one when she turned 7 or 8 and got a cake with white frosting and chocolate chips all over it. The life she has learned over the years is to be as organized as much as you can and stay on top of it all. One family tradition she has is that she has inherited a bolt that came from her grandmother and uncle. That she plans to pass it on with a story to accompany it to her future generations. Her favorite holiday is Thanksgiving. When she was young they would celebrate it at her grandmother's house and the kids would be the entertainers, so they would prepare something such as a piano piece or a poem. One of her hobbies is collecting family history as she is interested in genealogy. Her advice for future generations is to do the best you can and stay focused. She got introduced to the Cardiovascular Wellness program since her husband was a heart patient and he was part of Sac State and he was able to join. Her favorite part about it is all the great friends and community she has met through it.



Mary

Mary's most memorable trip was one that she took from Pittsburg, PA with her roommate and traveled to Los Angeles, CA. Two parts of that trip that she will never forget is that she walked the Grand Canyon in one day. The second part of that trip is that she couldn't believe that she experienced her first earthquake when she got to California. The fear that she has overcome is the fear of growing up and the fear of earthquakes now that she has moved to California. The most memorable birthday was when she was still working at UC Davis when she turned 50 and she got surprised by her daughter and friends who chipped in and got her a mountain bike. She also has a trip planned to go to San Diego for her upcoming birthday. The life lesson she has learned is to learn different things about life that she was so naive growing up. Her best friends are the ones she has met through the CWP such as Linda and Cari. She has known them for the past 30 years. Her favorite holiday is Christmas because she enjoys gathering and celebrating with her family. Her favorite hobby is to write children's books about stories about her life that she started when her granddaughter turned 5. The first job she had getting paid was as a soda clerk at a hotel in her hometown Pittsburgh. Her advice for all the future generations is to learn as much as you can and do not be afraid. She got introduced to the Cardiovascular Wellness Program because she used to work at the hospital with Linda. She enjoys coming and spending time with everyone who is part of the program because she considers them her second family.



Susan

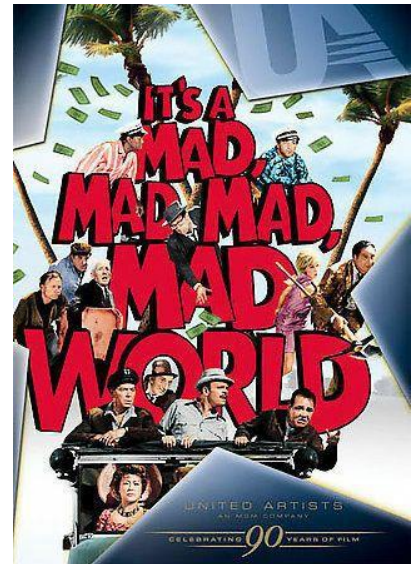
Susan's most memorable trip was a trip she took in 1984 to Peru through UC Davis extension class called Geology and Archaeology of the Peruvian Andes. She got to see many Incan archaeology sites. One part of that trip that she explained was really memorable was the night that they camped out in the Andes in a rancher's field. They had a big feast, and she got to share her cassette player with the rancher and his grandson who got excited to hear the music playing. A fear that she has overcome is to be less anxious about things like climate change and to be thankful for the good things in her life. The most memorable birthday was when she was turning 22. Her roommates planned a surprise birthday party for her and they made sangria. The life lesson she continues to work on is learning to apologize to others when she feels that she has offended them. Her best friend is Kate who she met through her son. She and Kate both studied psychology and they still stay connected and go on walks together to catch up on each other's life. The unique family tradition that she continues to have with her friends is to have them come over to play music over the holidays. She is also part of a group that plays recorders together every other Monday



Her favorite holiday is Thanksgiving she enjoys getting together with friends and family and having the feast and then going out for a walk. She used to spend Thanksgiving in Iowa at her grandparents' farm. Her favorite hobby is gardening; she enjoys tending plants and being out in nature. Her first job was babysitting and helping take care of a neighbor when her husband traveled by helping put her insulin since he had a hard time seeing. Her advice that she would have liked to give her younger self is to take better care of her body. Her advice to her future self is to stay active. She got introduced to the Cardiovascular Wellness Program by one of her friends with whom she used to play the recorder with named Elsa who is also a participant. What she enjoys most and would like to see more of are the health talks that Doctor Lopez gives to the group.

John

A trip that is memorable to John is one where he got to spend a birthday away from home traveling in a Volkswagen van with his family of 6 siblings and parents. They went to the coast, saw the ocean, and stopped in Sacramento on the way home to escape the August heat of Central California. During the time they spent in Sacramento they got to see the movie "It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World". That came out in 1963 in a dome theater. Other trips that he enjoyed were trips he took to Berkeley to Black Oak bookstore where he found many great books on



the translation of Chinese poems. That book store was across from a Pizzeria where he used to get vegetarian Pizza he mentions was to die for. One of the fears that he was worried about the most as a kid was the fear of death but he learned to live with it when he worked in an Emergency Room, where he experienced his first death of someone. It was a shock to him and still remembers that she kept saying “can't you give me something for the pain”. After experiencing that he now tells that the line between life and death is blurry and that the event of dying is an event similar to going to sleep. He now lives with less fear of death. The life lesson he has learned and advice he passes on is to “pay attention” and to learn your own lessons in life and to not compare yourself to others even though it's hard. The person he considers a close friend he met in Denver where he worked as an orderly. Another close friend is one he met in library school with whom he is still close. They are both into Chinese poetry. His unique family tradition and favorite holiday are Christmas because he would take his daughter to Colorado to go visit his mom. It became the event of the year where they would put the tree up along with Scandinavian decorations and they would make many dishes. His hobby is cooking. His first job was working at a hospital in the Emergency Room. His cardiologist introduced him to the program and his favorite part is the sense of community and the people met through it.

Lupe

The trip that Lupe will never forget is a trip she took to Cairo Egypt because she really enjoyed going and seeing the pyramids and the Nile, the longest river in Africa. The fear that she overcame and learned to live within sense was having to live through the war of El Salvador and Honduras in 1969. The most memorable birthday she had was when she was turning 35- 38 because she had to spend it with her mother and family back in El Salvador. The life lesson she has learned over the years is learning to live in the U.S compared to when she lived in El Salvador. She had to learn a new language and a new culture. She met her best friends back in El Salvador with who she was neighbors with. She still visits them and talks to them when she goes to El Salvador. She doesn't have a unique family tradition but she really does enjoy celebrating Christmas. Her favorite hobbies are knitting, crocheting, and gardening. She really enjoys planting and taking care of squash plants she plants them every year. Her first job was in a court in El Salvador where she was the Secretary's assistant. Her advice for future generations is to get educated and to work hard for the things you want in life. She was introduced to Cardiovascular Wellness Program by her friend Gloria who told her about the program and who is also a participant. Her favorite classes from the program are the sitting Tai Chi and the stretching exercise Linda leads.



Bill

A trip that stands out the most for Bill is a trip he took to France with his ex-wife and son. His son was in the wine business and he set some tours up in a winery of Moet. He set up tastings of champagne and wine and in the tour they showed the process of how champagne is made. What impressed him the most was the person hosting them at the Vineyard recognizing that the day was the first anniversary of 9/11. They saw churches and got tours and the history of them and how the French monk Dom Perignon discovered the champagne process. The fear that he forced himself to get over is the fear of heights, which he did by going on the Eye in London which is a very large ferris wheel. His most memorable birthday is the one he had this past year for his 80th birthday. His youngest son took over the planning and most of his family was there which is pictured here. A life lesson he has learned is to be more kind even though it was hard to learn to that sometimes. His best friend is his lady friend who he met at coffee at

Campus Commons. Also a good friend is a friend who he lost just last year in November who he had met him through a fraternity. A unique family tradition that he did for 26 years was to spend Easter weekend with his family in Bodega Bay. Another was to invite friends and coworkers from the FBI to his Christmas celebration with his family. His favorite hobby is to watch football and to do jigsaw puzzles and he



also really enjoys crossword puzzles. His first job was as a paperboy and his first real job was to work for the street department. Then he worked as a policeman for five years and then went into the FBI. His advice for his younger self was to try to get into the wine industry as he really enjoys that. His advice for younger generations is to try things out as much as you can before you choose a career path. He got introduced to the CWP by some friends he has at Campus Commons who told him about it.

Jackie

Jackie is a gerontology intern with the program. The most memorable trip she had is a trip she took earlier this year for her birthday where she went with her twin sister and bothers to New York. There she visited the Rockefeller Center, the Brooklyn Bridge, and the World Trade Center. A fear she has overcome is that she is less shy and it's easier to put herself out there more. Her most



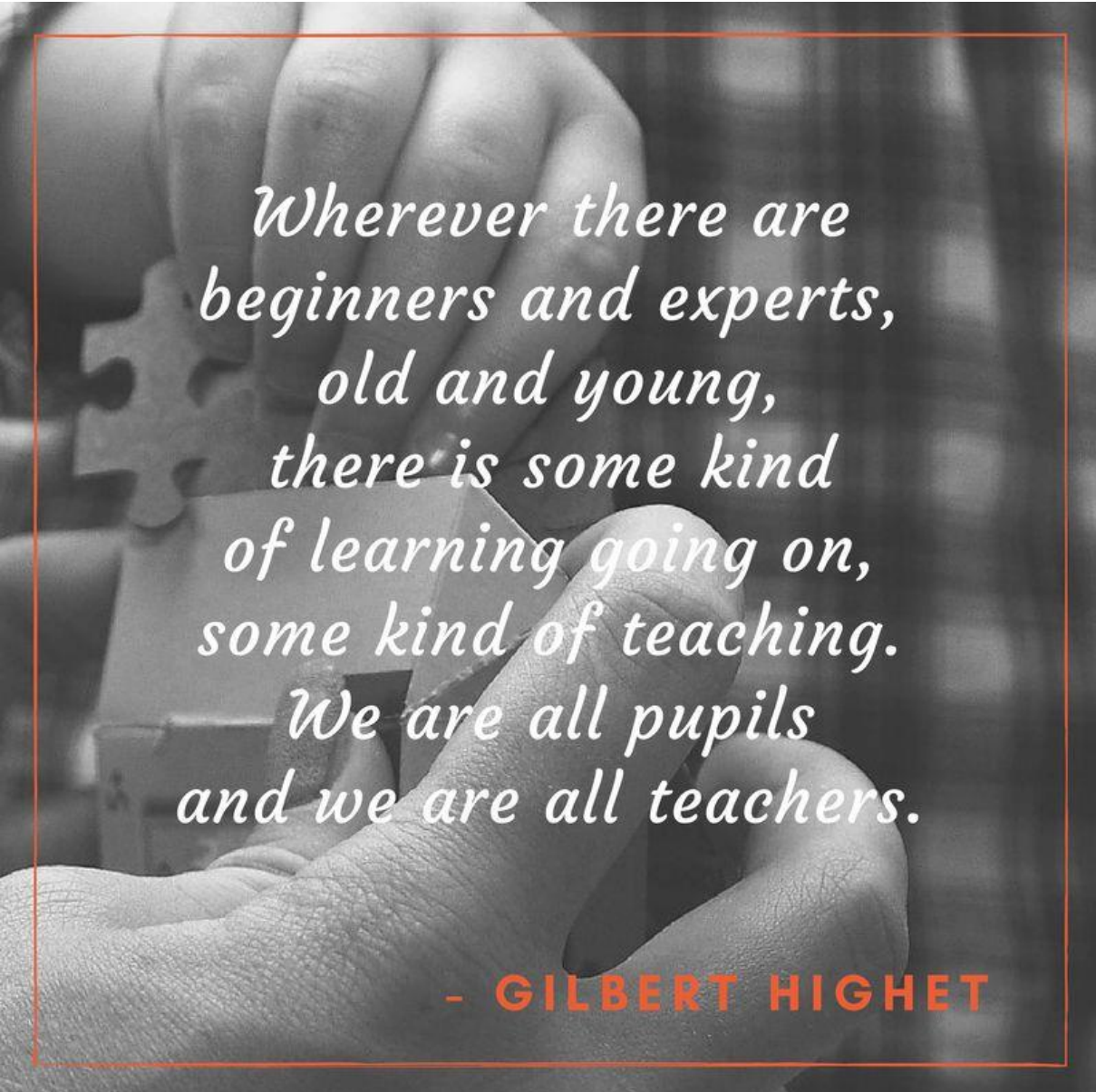
memorable birthdays are the ones that she had when she was younger where she got spend time with her twin sister and her family. A life lessonshe has learned is to try not to rush things and just let things happen at their own pace. Her best is a male friend whom she met through her boyfriend. The unique family tradition that she has is that she and her family get together and celebrate Thanksgiving around a bonfire. They say the things that they are thankful for that year. Her favorite holiday is Christmas because she enjoys celebrating with a tradition called Levantamientos where they sing and they give out candies. Her favorite dishto have during holidays is tamales. Her favorite hobby is listening to music or watching movies about mysteries, drama, or documentaries. Her first job was at a restaurant in customer service.

Her advice that she would give to her younger self is to let things happen at their own pace and try not to grow up so fast. She got introduced to the Cardiovascular Wellness Program byone of her friends who was previously a volunteer. Her favorite part is talking to the participants.

Amy

Amy is a gerontology intern with the program. One her most memorable trips was the first trip she took with her boyfriend and now husband to Disneyland and Universal Studios. One of her biggest fears is getting on the freeway so she tries to take the roads as much as she can. Her most memorable trip is her 16th birthday because her boyfriend surprised her with a party. Her best friend was a friend she met in middle school but got distant in high school for personal reasons. Like they say, “friends come and go”. The life lesson she learned is to keep your friends close but enemies closer because you never know who to really trust. She did have a favorite family tradition when she younger-- her dad would pick her up and her 2 brothers and 1 sister to get pizza every Friday. Her favorite holiday is Christmas because her family would combine Christmas and Thanksgiving together and have a big feast. The order of those opening their presents are grandparents, kids and the adults last. Her hobby is to do a little of everything such as hiking and crocheting. Her advice for her future self is to not overwork yourself, and for the younger generation is to take your time and be patient with the things you in your life. The person who introduced her to the CWP was Dr. dJensen and her favorite part is that she enjoys how older adults come to the program and are active and striving to stay healthy.





*Wherever there are
beginners and experts,
old and young,
there is some kind
of learning going on,
some kind of teaching.
We are all pupils
and we are all teachers.*

- GILBERT HIGHET