



SENIOR MOMENTS

COMMUNITY

WELLNESS

ENGAGEMENT

A COMMUNITY SENIOR LIVING MAGAZINE PRESENTED BY THE REDMOND SENIOR CENTER

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Printed by

The UPS Store

946 SW Veterans Way #102

Redmond, OR 97756

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SMALL MOMENT, BIG MEANING: FINDING JOY IN EVERYDAY INTERACTIONS

By James Morris

Sometimes, the smallest acts of kindness can ripple outward, creating changes in someone's life that we could never anticipate. We often underestimate how much power lies in a simple gesture, a listening ear, or the willingness to help when it's needed most. But when those moments happen, they remind us of the extraordinary meaning that can be found in our everyday interactions.

I was reminded of this truth when I met someone at a major crossroads in his life. He was starting over, with almost nothing to his name, and the experience of helping him taught me more than I could have imagined—not just about him, but about myself, and about the quiet joy that comes from making a difference in someone else's life.

He came to me during a difficult time in his life, a man trying to rebuild after years of success in a long-time career. His story was one of resilience, but also of heartbreak. After multiple divorces and financial struggles, he was left with little more than a dream: to start his own business. He had no logo, no website, no marketing materials—nothing but an idea and the determination to make it work.

And here's the thing: he had little money to get started.

When he first told me his story, I could see the vulnerability in his eyes. He was trying to be brave, but the fear and uncertainty were written all over his face. He needed help, and for some reason, the universe brought him to me.

I don't know if it was his courage to ask for help or the deep empathy I felt for his situation, but I knew I could not say no. He didn't just need someone with the skills to create the materials for his business—he needed someone who believed in him. And that's where I knew I could step in.

The first thing I did was listen. I asked him about his vision for his business, what he hoped to achieve, and how he wanted people to feel when they interacted with his brand. He spoke with such passion, and while I was there to listen and support, I didn't have to encourage him or remind him of his strengths. He was doing that himself, growing more confident as he saw his dream take shape.

While I wanted to help, this was not a free service. I billed him—at a large, discounted rate—but I used the same tools, apps, and approaches I would for any paying customer. I treated his project with the same care and attention as I would anyone else's, making sure the quality of my work reflected the value of his vision.

He still gets invoiced, but I don't set due dates. He pays what he can, when he can, and that's perfectly fine with me. It's not about the money—it's about helping him create something meaningful, something he can be proud of.

I started by designing a logo that reflected his personality and the heart of his business. It had to be simple but meaningful, something he could be proud of. Next, I tackled the website. Using tools I already knew and trusted, I built a clean, professional-looking site that showcased his services. It's one of the best websites I've ever designed, and I'm proud that it's his. I also created business cards and marketing materials, ensuring that he had everything he needed to launch.

Every design choice, every word written, was meant to reflect not just his business, but his story—a story of resilience, reinvention, and hope.

The transformation I witnessed in him was remarkable. When we first met, he seemed weighed down by the enormity of what he was trying to accomplish. But as his business began to take shape, I saw his confidence grow.

His business wasn't just about making money—it was about reclaiming his sense of purpose. And with every step forward, he stood a little taller, smiled a little brighter, and started to believe in himself again.

But what surprised me most was how much this experience transformed me as well. I've always loved creating and helping others, but this was different. This wasn't just about marketing materials; it was about building someone up, reminding them of their worth, and giving them the tools to succeed.

In helping him find his footing, I rediscovered my own passion—not just for my work, but for the joy that comes from connecting with others in a meaningful way. It reminded me why I do what I do: because behind every project, there's a person, a story, and an opportunity to make a difference.

This experience taught me that the small moments in life often carry the biggest meaning. It wasn't about grand gestures or massive resources. It was about showing up, listening, and offering what I could.

Empathy is a powerful thing. When we take the time to understand someone else's struggles, we create space for connection, growth, and transformation. It doesn't take much—sometimes, just believing in someone is enough to help them believe in themselves.

And the joy that comes from these interactions? It's immeasurable. There's something deeply fulfilling about knowing you've made a difference, even in a small way. It reminds us that we're all connected, and that our actions, no matter how small, can have a profound impact on someone else's life.

As I reflect on this experience, I can't help but wonder: How many opportunities do we miss to make a difference in someone's life? How often do we overlook the small moments where we could lend a helping hand, share a kind word, or offer our time and talents?

I want to encourage you to look for those opportunities in your own lives. Who in your community could use a little extra support? What small act of kindness could you offer today?

You don't need to have all the answers or endless resources to make a difference. Sometimes, just being there—offering your time, your skills, or even just your belief in someone—is enough.

Because in the end, it's the small moments that carry the biggest meaning. And those moments? They're waiting for us every single day.

So go out there, find joy in your interactions, and remember: You have the power to change someone's life, even in the smallest of ways. And in doing so, you just might find that your own life changes too. ●



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COMMUNITY CONNECTION



REBUILDING CONNECTION

HOW TO MAKE NEW FRIENDS AT ANY AGE

By James Morris

Let's face it: making friends as an adult isn't what it used to be. Gone are the days when you could simply walk up to someone holding a shiny toy on the playground and say, "Hi, I like dinosaurs too!" and BAM—instant best friend for life. These days, the process might feel a little more like trying to assemble IKEA furniture without the instructions. But don't worry, just like that Billy bookcase, building connections is entirely possible (and far less painful than stepping on a LEGO).

Whether you're new to the Redmond Senior Center or just looking to expand your social circle, making new friends can feel daunting. But here's the kicker: it doesn't have to be! In fact, it can be fun, adventurous, and dare I say... downright entertaining. Let's explore how to make new friends at any age—and we'll do it with a splash of humor because, hey, life's too short to be serious all the time.

Step 1: Embrace the Awkwardness

Let's get one thing out of the way: making new friends as an adult can feel awkward. But here's the good news—awkwardness is universal! The person you're striking up a conversation with probably feels the same way. So, let's reframe the awkwardness: instead of seeing it as uncomfortable, think of it as endearing.

Imagine this scenario: You approach someone at a Senior Center event and blurt out, "Hi, I couldn't help but notice you also brought a plate of deviled eggs. Are we bonding over snacks right now?" Boom. Instant icebreaker. Sure, it's quirky, but it's also memorable. Own your awkward moments, they make you human, approachable, and maybe even a little charming.



Step 2: Start with Shared Interests

One of the easiest ways to make new friends is to find people who enjoy the same things you do. Love gardening? Join a gardening club. Passionate about playing cards? Pull up a chair at the next bridge game. Can't resist a good line dance? Dust off those boots and hit the dance floor at the next event.

Shared interests are like friendship superglue—they give you something to talk about, laugh about, and bond over. Plus, they eliminate the need for awkward small talk about the weather (unless you *really* want to discuss barometric pressure).

At the Redmond Senior Center, there's no shortage of activities to choose from. From yoga classes to book clubs to bingo nights, there's something for everyone. And if you don't see an activity that tickles your fancy, why not start one? There's no rule that says you can't invent the town's first-ever "Pickleball & Puns" league.

Step 3: Be the Friend You Want to Have

Here's a little secret: making friends isn't just about finding the right people, it's also about being the right person. Think about the kind of friend you'd like to have and then embody those qualities. Do you want someone who's kind, funny, and supportive? Great! Start by being kind, funny, and supportive yourself.

For example, if you see someone sitting alone at an event, invite them to join your table. If you notice someone rocking an awesome outfit, compliment them! (Who doesn't love a good ego boost?) Small gestures of kindness go a long way in building connections.

And remember, being a good friend isn't about perfection—it's about showing up, being genuine, and occasionally sharing your snacks. (Trust me, friendships have been built on less.)

Step 4: Say Yes to New Experiences

When it comes to making friends, you have to put yourself out there—and that means saying yes to new experiences. Sure, trying something new can feel a little intimidating at first, but it's also where the magic happens.

Picture this: You decide to sign up for a painting class, even though the last time you held a paintbrush was in third grade. You show up, nervously pick a seat, and end up next to someone who's equally confused about how to mix colors. A few laughs, a couple of paint splatters, and voilà—a new friendship is born.

The point is, you never know where a "yes" will take you. Whether it's attending a potluck, joining a walking group, or volunteering for a community project, every new experience is an opportunity to meet people and create connections.

Step 5: Laugh It Off

Let's be real: not every attempt at making a new friend will go smoothly. There will be moments when you say the wrong thing, trip over your words, or accidentally spill coffee on someone's shoes (hopefully not all in the same day). But here's the thing: it's okay!

Laughter is one of the best tools for building connections. If something awkward happens, laugh it off and move on. Chances are, the other person will appreciate your ability to roll with the punches. After all, friendship isn't about being perfect, it's about being real.

Step 6: Follow Up

Once you've made a connection with someone, don't let it fizzle out. Follow up with a text, phone call, or even an invitation to meet up again. (Bonus points if you use a funny or clever message to break the ice.)

For example, you could say, "Hey, I had so much fun chatting with you at bingo night! Want to team up for next week? I promise not to call out the wrong numbers this time... probably." A little humor goes a long way in keeping the conversation alive.

Step 7: Don't Take Rejection Personally

Not every interaction will lead to a lifelong friendship, and that's okay. Sometimes, people are at different stages in their lives, and they might not be looking for new connections right now. It's not a reflection of your worth, it's just part of the process.

If someone doesn't reciprocate your efforts to connect, don't be discouraged. There are plenty of wonderful people out there who are just as eager to make new friends as you are. Keep putting yourself out there, and you'll find your tribe.

Step 8: Celebrate the Wins

Finally, don't forget to celebrate the small victories along the way. Whether it's striking up a conversation with someone new, attending your first event solo, or exchanging phone numbers with a potential new friend, every step counts.

Making friends as an adult isn't about rushing to the finish line, it's about enjoying the journey, one connection at a time. So, give yourself a pat on the back for every effort you make. You're doing great!

Final Thoughts

At the end of the day, making new friends is about being open, curious, and willing to take a few risks (socially, not physically—this isn't skydiving, after all). It's also about having fun along the way.

So, the next time you're at the Redmond Senior Center, take a deep breath, smile, and say hello to someone new. Who knows? That simple "hello" could be the start of a beautiful friendship—or at the very least, a great story for the next issue of *Senior Moments*.

Happy connecting! ●





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WELL-BEING SERIES



The Science of Social Health: Why Connection Is Medicine

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Gentle Routines That Restore Mind, Body, and Spirit

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Welcome to the Wellbeing section of *Senior Moments*! Here, we celebrate the art of flourishing at every age, offering insights and practical tips to enhance your mind, body, and spirit. In this issue, we're spotlighting two inspiring reads that can help you take small, meaningful steps toward a healthier and happier you.

First, explore the profound impact of human connection in *The Science of Social Health: Why Connection Is Medicine*. This article dives into the fascinating research behind social health and why forming meaningful relationships is not just good for the soul but essential for your overall well-being. From boosting longevity to sharpening the mind, discover why connection truly is medicine.

Next, find inspiration for daily self-care in *Gentle Routines That Restore Mind, Body, and Spirit*. Whether it's a morning stretch, a gratitude practice, or a creative hobby, this piece offers simple, sustainable habits to refresh your outlook and nurture your inner light. A little self-care can go a long way in transforming your day—and your life.

Let these articles encourage you to prioritize your well-being and remind you that it's never too late to invest in a healthier, more connected, and joyful version of yourself!

By James Morris

In a world that often feels busier and more digitally focused than ever, the importance of genuine human connection is becoming increasingly clear. For seniors, the value of social health—our ability to form and maintain meaningful relationships—cannot be overstated. In fact, science now tells us that connection is more than just a "nice-to-have." It's medicine, and it plays a vital role in our physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

This article explores the fascinating science of social health, why it matters at any age (but especially in our later years), and how fostering connection can transform lives.

What Is Social Health?

Social health refers to our ability to interact, form relationships, and maintain healthy connections with others. While physical and mental health often take center stage, social health is just as important. It encompasses the quality of our relationships, the strength of our support networks, and our sense of belonging in a community.

The concept of social health is not new. Philosophers, psychologists, and sociologists have long recognized the central role of relationships in human well-being. However, only in recent decades has science truly begun to quantify and study its impact on health. The findings are profound: **strong social ties can improve longevity, boost immunity, and even protect against chronic diseases.**

The Science Behind Connection as Medicine

The connection between social relationships and health is not just anecdotal; it's rooted in biology. When we experience meaningful social interactions, our bodies release a cascade of beneficial chemicals, including oxytocin (the "bonding hormone") and endorphins (our body's natural painkillers). Here's how social health influences your overall well-being:

1. Longevity and Life Expectancy

Studies have consistently shown that people with strong social networks live longer. A groundbreaking meta-analysis published in *PLOS Medicine* in 2010 found that people with solid social support had a **50% greater likelihood of survival** over



time, regardless of age. This effect was comparable to quitting smoking or maintaining a healthy weight.

Why? Social connections reduce stress, encourage healthier behaviors, and provide emotional support during difficult times, all of which contribute to a longer, healthier life.

2. Mental Health Benefits

Isolation and loneliness are not just unpleasant; they are dangerous. Research links chronic loneliness to higher rates of depression, anxiety, and even cognitive decline. On the other hand, positive social interactions stimulate the brain, promote feelings of happiness, and keep our minds sharp.

For seniors, staying socially engaged has been shown to lower the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. Conversations, shared laughter, and even small acts of kindness can help keep the mind active and resilient.

3. Physical Health Improvements

Did you know that being socially connected can lower your risk of heart disease? Studies have found that loneliness and social isolation are as harmful to heart health as high blood pressure or obesity. Being part of a supportive community can reduce inflammation, improve cardiovascular health, and even bolster the immune system.

Additionally, social connections can help us adopt and stick to healthier habits. Whether it's walking with a friend, attending a fitness class, or sharing healthy meals, having a partner in wellness makes all the difference.

The Risks of Social Isolation

While the benefits of connection are clear, the risks of isolation are equally stark. Social isolation affects millions of seniors worldwide, and its impact on health is severe. The U.S. Surgeon General has even declared loneliness a public health epidemic.

1. Health Risks of Loneliness

Chronic loneliness has been linked to a host of health issues, including:

- **Increased risk of early death:** Loneliness has been shown to increase mortality risk by 26%.
- **Higher rates of chronic disease:** Socially isolated individuals are more likely to develop conditions like diabetes, heart disease, and arthritis.



- **Weakened immune system:** The stress of loneliness can suppress immune function, making us more vulnerable to illness.

2. Mental Health Challenges

Loneliness is a major contributor to depression and anxiety. It also creates a vicious cycle where isolated individuals withdraw further, making it harder to reconnect with others. For seniors, this can be exacerbated by life changes like retirement, the loss of a spouse, or physical limitations.

3. The Cognitive Toll

Social isolation can accelerate cognitive decline. Without regular interaction, the brain receives less stimulation, and memory, problem-solving, and reasoning skills can deteriorate more quickly.

Building Social Health: Practical Tips for Seniors

The good news is that it's never too late to improve your social health. Whether you're naturally outgoing or a bit shy, there are countless ways to foster meaningful connections. Here are some practical tips to get started:

1. Join a Group or Club

Find a group that aligns with your interests—whether it's a book club, gardening group, or local walking club. Shared hobbies provide a natural way to bond with others.

2. Volunteer Your Time

Volunteering not only gives back to your community but also creates opportunities to meet like-minded individuals. Whether you're helping at a food bank, tutoring children, or working with animals, volunteering can be deeply fulfilling.

3. Stay in Touch

Make an effort to stay connected with friends and family, even if they live far away. Phone calls, video chats, and letters can all help bridge the gap.

4. Attend Social Events

Look for community events, senior center activities, or religious gatherings in your area. These are excellent opportunities to meet new people and build friendships.

5. Adopt Technology

While technology can't replace face-to-face interactions, it can help you stay connected when in-person meetings aren't possible. Platforms like Zoom, FaceTime, and Facebook can keep you in touch with loved ones and expand your social circle.

6. Consider a Pet

For some seniors, a pet can provide companionship and a sense of purpose. Walking a dog, for example, is also a great way to meet neighbors and other pet owners.

The Role of Communities in Social Health

While individual efforts are crucial, communities also play a vital role in fostering social connection. Community centers, libraries, and religious organizations can provide seniors with opportunities to meet others, learn new skills, and stay active.

Governments and healthcare systems are also beginning to recognize the importance of social health. In the UK, for example, doctors have started "social prescribing," where patients are encouraged to join social groups or engage in community activities to improve their overall well-being.

Connection Transforms Lives

The science of social health is clear: connection is medicine. It heals, strengthens, and sustains us in ways that go far beyond what we might expect. For seniors, maintaining strong social ties can mean the difference between thriving and merely surviving.

The key takeaway? **It's never too late to invest in your social health.** Whether it's rekindling old friendships, joining a new club, or simply saying hello to a neighbor, small steps can lead to big changes. In the words of poet John Donne, "No man is an island." We are meant to connect, to share, and to support one another.

So, as you go about your day, consider how you can nurture your social health. After all, it's not just good for the soul—it's good for the body and mind, too. Together, we can build a world where connection is celebrated, and everyone has the opportunity to flourish. ●

The Science of Social Health: Connection Is Medicine
 Why relationships are essential for physical, mental, and emotional well-being

1 What Is Social Health?
 Social health is our ability to build relationships, stay connected, and feel a sense of belonging. Strong social ties boost longevity, immunity, and overall health.

2 Why Connection Is Medicine

- LONGEVITY:** People with strong social networks have a 50% higher survival rate.
- MENTAL HEALTH:** Connection reduces depression, anxiety, and cognitive decline.
- PHYSICAL HEALTH:** Social connection supports heart health, immunity, and healthy habits.

3 The Hidden Danger of Loneliness

- Loneliness increases risk of early death by 26%
- Linked to chronic disease and weakened immunity
- Accelerates cognitive decline

4 How to Build Social Health

- Join Clubs
- Volunteer
- Stay in Touch
- Attend Events
- Use Technology
- Consider a Pet

Small steps lead to meaningful connections.

5 Community Matters
 Communities, healthcare, and social programs help people connect and thrive.

Connection isn't optional — it's essential for a healthier, longer life.
 It's never too late to strengthen your social health.

GENTLE ROUTINES THAT RESTORE MIND, BODY, AND SPIRIT

By James Morris



In today's world, self-care is the buzzword on everyone's lips, and for good reason. Taking time to nourish our mind, body, and spirit is essential for living a fulfilling and joyful life—regardless of age. But let's be honest: self-care is not about bubble baths and expensive face creams (though we're not knocking those). It's about creating small, gentle routines that fit into your life, leaving you feeling refreshed instead of frazzled.

If you've been putting your well-being on the back burner, this is your friendly reminder to scoot it back to the front of the stove. So, grab your cup of tea (or coffee, no judgment here!), settle into your favorite chair, and let's explore some easy, practical ways to bring a little more care into your daily life.

Why Self-Care Matters at Every Age

Before we dive into the "how," let's talk about the "why." Self-care is often misunderstood as being selfish or indulgent. But in reality, maintaining your well-being allows you to show up as your best self—for your family, your friends, your community, and, most importantly, yourself.

For seniors, self-care is especially important because it can improve both mental and physical health. Studies show that regular self-care practices reduce stress, improve heart health, and even boost brain function. (And who doesn't want a sharper memory for bingo night?)

The key to effective self-care is to focus on small, sustainable routines that address all aspects of your well-being: mind, body, and spirit. Let's break it down.

Gentle Routines for the Mind: Keeping Sharp and Calm

The mind is like a garden; it needs tending to grow and flourish. Here are some easy ways to keep your mental landscape blooming:

1. Start Your Day With Gratitude

Before you reach for your phone or dive into your to-do list, take a moment to think of three things you're grateful for. (Pro tip: Coffee always counts as one.) Gratitude has been shown to reduce stress and increase happiness, setting a positive tone for your day.

2. Try a “Brain Workout”

Keep your mind sharp by engaging in activities that challenge your brain. Crossword puzzles, Sudoku, and jigsaw puzzles are fun ways to exercise your mental muscles. If you prefer something more social, try joining a book club or trivia group at the Senior Center—learning is always more fun with friends.

3. Practice Mindfulness

Mindfulness doesn't require sitting cross-legged on a mountaintop (though if that's your thing, go for it). It's simply about being present in the moment. Try this: Take a few deep breaths and focus on the sights, sounds, and smells around you. Even a brief pause like this can reduce anxiety and improve focus.

Gentle Routines for the Body: Moving and Nourishing With Love

When it comes to taking care of your body, the key is to aim for consistency, not perfection. You don't need to climb Mount Everest, just take small, steady steps toward better health.

1. Stretch It Out

Gentle stretching can work wonders for your flexibility and mobility. Start your morning with a few simple stretches—reach for the sky, roll your shoulders, and do a few neck circles. Therapeutic Mobility and Qi Gong classes at the Senior Center are also fantastic options for low-impact movement that strengthens both body and mind.

2. Take a “Walk and Wonder” Stroll

Walking is one of the best exercises for all ages—it's free, easy, and incredibly effective. Add a little magic to your walks by practicing “wonder.” What's blooming in your neighborhood? Is the sky doing something interesting? Taking time to notice the beauty around you makes the exercise feel less like a chore and more like an adventure.

3. Fuel Your Body With Care

Eating well doesn't have to be complicated. Focus on whole, nutrient-rich foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins. And don't forget to stay hydrated! Pro tip: If plain water feels boring, infuse it with slices of lemon, cucumber, or mint for a refreshing twist.

Gentle Routines for the Spirit: Nurturing Your Inner Light

Your spirit is what makes you *you*, and it deserves just as much care as your mind and body. Here's how to keep your inner light shining bright:

1. Connect With Loved Ones

Few things are as nourishing to the spirit as meaningful connections. Whether it's a phone call, a coffee date, or a shared laugh over a game of cards, spending time with loved ones reminds us that we're never alone on this journey.

2. Tap Into Your Creativity

Creativity isn't just for artists, it's for everyone! Whether you enjoy painting, writing, knitting, or gardening, creative activities are a fantastic way to express yourself and find joy. Not sure where to start? Attend one of the crafting classes at the Senior Center and discover a new hobby!

3. Find Moments of Joy

Sometimes, life's biggest joys are found in its smallest moments. Watch the sunrise, listen to your favorite song, or savor a piece of chocolate like it's the last one on Earth. These tiny indulgences can uplift your spirit in the most delightful ways.

Putting It All Together: Your Personalized Self-Care Plan

The beauty of self-care is that it's not one-size-fits-all—it's as unique as you are. To create your own self-care plan, start

small. Choose one practice from each category (mind, body, spirit) and weave it into your daily routine.

For example, your plan might look something like this:

- **Mind:** Spend 10 minutes working on a crossword puzzle.
- **Body:** Take a 15-minute walk after lunch.
- **Spirit:** Call a friend just to say hello.

As these practices become habits, you can add more—or simply enjoy the ones you’ve already established.

A Little Humor Goes a Long Way

Of course, no wellness article would be complete without a dose of humor. After all, laughter is one of the best forms of self-care! So, here’s a quick joke to brighten your day:

*Why did the scarecrow win an award?
Because he was outstanding in his field!*

(You’re welcome.)

Final Thoughts: You’re Worth It

Remember, self-care isn’t about being perfect, it’s about being kind to yourself. By incorporating these gentle routines into your life, you’ll not only feel better but also inspire those around you to do the same.

So, what are you waiting for? Go ahead and schedule that walk, call that friend, or take a few deep breaths right now. You deserve it!

And if you need a little extra motivation, the Redmond Oregon Senior Center is here to help. From mindful exercise classes to social clubs, we’ve got plenty of resources to support your self-care journey.

Here’s to a healthier, happier you—mind, body, and spirit!

Until next time, keep smiling, keep moving, and keep shining! ●

Gentle Routines That Restore Mind, Body & Spirit
Small sustainable habits for a healthier, happier you

| MIND | BODY | SPIRIT |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start With Gratitude — Think of 3 things you are thankful for each morning Brain Workout — Puzzles, Sudoku, crosswords, book clubs Practice Mindfulness — Deep breathing, being present in the moment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stretch It Out — Morning stretches for flexibility and mobility Walk & Wonder — A daily stroll noticing nature’s beauty Fuel With Care — Whole foods, fruits, veggies, stay hydrated | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect With Loved Ones — Phone calls, coffee dates, shared laughter Tap Your Creativity — Painting, writing, knitting, gardening Find Moments of Joy — Sunrise, favorite music, small indulgences |
| YOUR PERSONALIZED PLAN | | |
| Mind: 10-min crossword puzzle | Body: 15-min walk after lunch | Spirit: Call a friend just to say hello |
| Redmond Senior Center • <i>Mind. Body. Spirit.</i> | | |

FEATURE ARTICLE

THE LONELINESS EPIDEMIC

—A GROWING CRISIS FOR SENIORS

By James Morris



Loneliness is a serious health concern for seniors, with impacts that go beyond emotional pain to affect physical and mental health. While the challenges are significant, understanding the causes and solutions can help older adults find connection and purpose in their later years.

Introduction: Living Longer, But Feeling Lonelier

Imagine this: You've worked hard your whole life, raised a family, and now you finally have the time to enjoy yourself. But instead of feeling fulfilled, you're confronted with something unexpected—loneliness. For millions of seniors worldwide, this is a painful reality.

Loneliness doesn't just feel bad; it's bad for your health. According to research, loneliness and social isolation increase the risk of early death by 26%, on par with smoking 15 cigarettes a day. And the problem is growing. In the United States, nearly half of adults over 55 report feeling lonely regularly, while one in three adults over 65 live alone. The issue isn't just personal—it's a public health crisis.

But how did we get here, and what can be done? Let's explore why seniors are particularly vulnerable to loneliness and how we can all take steps to combat it.

The Loneliness Epidemic Among Seniors: Why Are Older Adults Most at Risk?

As humans, we are social creatures. We thrive on connection, conversation, and community. For seniors, these connections often fade due to life changes that are unique to aging. Here are some of the most common reasons loneliness disproportionately affects older adults:

1. Retirement: Losing Social Networks

Retirement is often seen as a reward for decades of hard work, but it can also lead to a loss of daily structure and social interaction. The workplace serves as a major source of connection, and when that disappears, many seniors struggle to replace it.

- **Key Statistic:** Over 40% of retirees report missing the social aspects of work.
- **Impact:** Without the daily interactions and sense of purpose that work provides, many seniors feel isolated.

2. Living Alone: The Silent Risk

While living independently is a source of pride for many seniors, it can also lead to isolation. According to the U.S.

Census Bureau, 28% of adults over 65 live alone—a number that rises to 50% for those over 85.

- **Widowhood:** The loss of a spouse is one of the most significant contributors to loneliness among seniors. Women, who tend to live longer, are particularly impacted.
- **Physical Barriers:** Mobility challenges or lack of transportation can make it harder to visit family or friends.

3. Health Challenges: The Isolation of Illness

Chronic illnesses, hearing loss, or mobility issues often prevent seniors from participating in the social activities they once enjoyed. Additionally, mental health conditions like depression and anxiety exacerbate feelings of loneliness.

- **Hearing Loss:** Studies show that seniors with hearing loss are more likely to feel isolated, as they struggle to participate in conversations.
- **Cognitive Decline:** Dementia and Alzheimer's can create barriers to meaningful relationships, both for the affected individual and their caregivers.

4. Family and Social Changes: Fewer Connections Over Time

As people age, their social circles naturally shrink due to the loss of friends, family, or even neighbors. Adult children often live far away, leaving seniors with fewer opportunities for regular interaction.

- **Geographic Mobility:** Many younger generations move away for work, leading to a physical distance between seniors and their families.
- **Generational Gaps:** Seniors may also feel disconnected from younger generations due to differences in communication styles or interests.

5. The Digital Divide: Technology as a Barrier

While technology has revolutionized how people connect, it can feel like a foreign language to many seniors. Social media, texting, and video calls can feel intimidating or impersonal, leaving older adults feeling excluded from a digitally connected world.

- **Key Statistic:** Only 55% of seniors over 65 use social media—a stark contrast to younger generations.
- **Impact:** Without access to digital tools, many older adults miss out on opportunities to connect with family and friends.

The Health Impacts of Loneliness in Seniors

Loneliness isn't just an emotional issue; it has profound physical and mental health consequences. For seniors, the stakes are especially high.

1. Increased Risk of Chronic Illness

Loneliness has been linked to higher rates of heart disease, high blood pressure, and stroke. A lack of social connection is associated with inflammation and weakened immune function, making seniors more vulnerable to illness.

2. Mental Health Decline

Loneliness increases the risk of depression, anxiety, and even suicide among older adults. In fact, seniors aged 85 and older have the highest suicide rate of any age group.

3. Cognitive Decline

Social isolation has been linked to a 50% increased risk of developing dementia. Regular social interaction helps keep the brain sharp, while isolation accelerates cognitive decline.

4. Shortened Life Span

According to researchers, loneliness and social isolation are as harmful to health as obesity, smoking, or physical inactivity. Seniors who feel lonely are at a significantly higher risk of early death.

Stories of Hope: Combating Loneliness in Later Life

While the statistics are alarming, the good news is that loneliness is solvable. Across the world, communities and individuals are finding creative ways to connect with seniors and rebuild social networks.

1. United Kingdom: Social Prescribing for Seniors

In the UK, doctors are prescribing more than just pills; they're prescribing social activities. Through "social

prescribing," seniors are connected to walking clubs, gardening groups, and other community activities designed to foster connection.

- **Impact:** Over 100,000 people have benefited from social prescribing, with many reporting reduced loneliness and improved health.

2. Japan: Robot Companions for Older Adults

Japan, with one of the oldest populations in the world, has embraced technology to combat loneliness. Social robots like "Paro" (a robotic seal) and "Pepper" (a humanoid robot) provide companionship to seniors, especially those who live alone or in care facilities.

- **Impact:** While not a replacement for human connection, these robots have been shown to reduce stress and provide comfort.

3. The United States: Senior Centers and "Village" Networks

In the U.S., senior centers have long been a hub for older adults to connect. Additionally, the "Village Movement" has gained momentum, with local communities providing support networks for seniors who want to age in place.

- **Example:** The Beacon Hill Village in Boston allows seniors to pool resources for shared transportation, social events, and home care services.

4. The Netherlands: Intergenerational Housing

In the Netherlands, nursing homes are experimenting with intergenerational living by offering free housing to college students in exchange for spending time with seniors. This innovative program bridges the generational gap and provides companionship for older adults.

What Can Seniors Do to Combat Loneliness?

While systemic changes are important, there are also steps seniors can take to stay connected and combat loneliness:

1. **Join Local Groups:** Many communities offer senior centers, book clubs, or hobby groups where older adults can meet new people.

2. **Volunteer:** Helping others is a great way to find purpose and connect with your community.
3. **Stay Physically Active:** Exercise classes, walking groups, or yoga not only improve health but also provide opportunities for social interaction.
4. **Learn Technology:** Taking a class on how to use smartphones or video call apps can open doors to staying in touch with distant family and friends.
5. **Adopt a Pet:** Pets provide companionship and can help reduce feelings of isolation.
6. **Reach Out:** Don't be afraid to ask for help or tell someone you're feeling lonely. Often, people don't realize the extent of someone's isolation until it's shared.

What Families and Communities Can Do

If you have a senior loved one in your life, there are ways to support them:

- **Check In Regularly:** Even a short phone call can brighten someone's day.
- **Invite Them to Events:** Include older family members in gatherings, even if it's just a casual dinner.
- **Teach Technology:** Help seniors learn how to use digital tools like video calls or social media.
- **Encourage Hobbies:** Support their interests, whether it's knitting, gardening, or joining a local club.

Conclusion: Growing Older Doesn't Have to Mean Growing Lonely

Loneliness is a serious issue, but it's not inevitable. Seniors have so much to offer the world, from their wisdom and experience to their enduring capacity for connection and love. By addressing the unique challenges older adults face, we can create a world where aging is not a lonely journey but a fulfilling chapter of life.

Whether it's joining a group, learning something new, or simply reaching out, the path to connection is always open. With the right support from families, communities, and society as a whole, we can ensure that no senior feels left behind. Remember: It's never too late to make a new friend or reconnect with an old one.

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THE LONELINESS EPIDEMIC
Understanding & Combating Social Isolation in Seniors

28% of seniors over 65 live alone — contributing to feelings of loneliness.

+50% increased risk of dementia

+26% increased risk of early death

What Helps?

- Social Prescribing
- Senior Centers
- Intergenerational Housing
- Technology Training

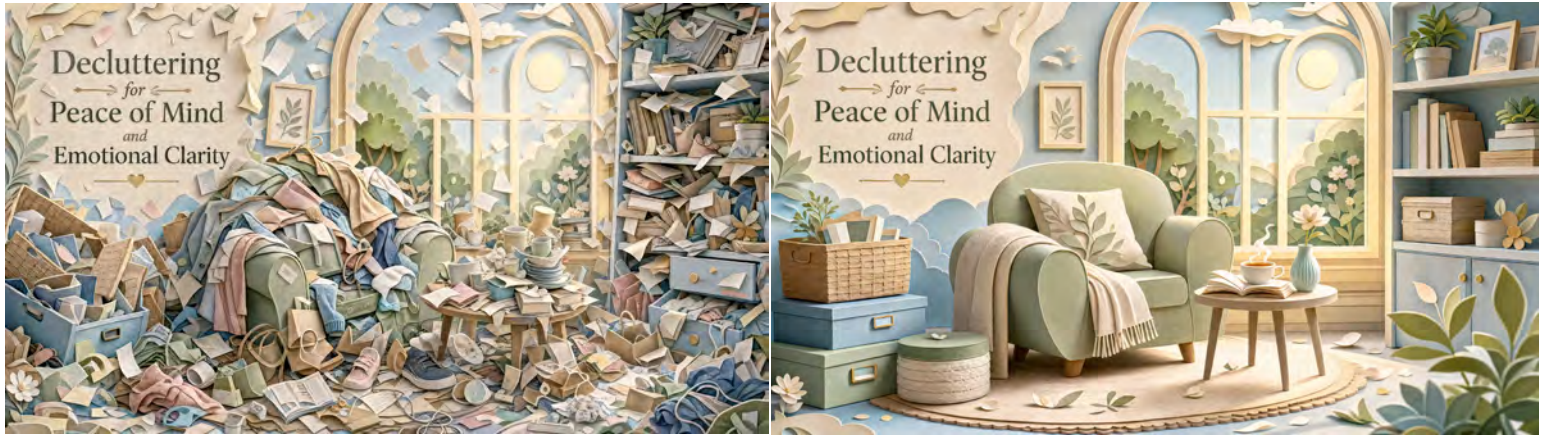
Small actions make a **BIG** difference —
A phone call.
A shared meal.
Connection matters.

If you or a loved one is struggling with loneliness, reach out to local senior centers, community groups, or trusted friends.
Connection is closer than you think.

HOME & EVERYDAY LIVING

Decluttering for Peace of Mind and Emotional Clarity

By James Morris



Have you ever looked around your home and felt overwhelmed by the sheer amount of “stuff” filling your living space? Maybe it’s the stack of magazines on the coffee table, the overflowing closet that hasn’t been opened in years, or the kitchen drawer that mysteriously collects everything you don’t know where else to put. Clutter has a sneaky way of taking over our homes—and, more importantly, our minds.

For many of us in our later years, our homes become a time capsule of memories. We hold onto items that remind us of loved ones, experiences, and cherished moments. While these sentimental attachments are valuable, holding onto unnecessary clutter can weigh us down emotionally, disrupt our daily routines, and even affect our health. Decluttering isn’t about throwing away everything, it’s about creating a space that supports your well-being, gives you room to breathe, and allows you to focus on what truly matters.

In this article, we’ll explore how decluttering can bring peace of mind, emotional clarity, and even a renewed sense of purpose. You’ll also find practical tips to help you get started without feeling overwhelmed. So, grab a cup of tea, take a deep breath, and let’s embark on this journey to a lighter, more joyful home.

The Emotional Weight of Clutter

Clutter is more than just physical belongings taking up space; it can take a toll on your mental and emotional health. Studies have shown that living in a cluttered environment can increase feelings of stress, anxiety, and even depression. Why does this happen?

- **Visual Overload:** When your home is filled with too many items, your brain has to process all the visual stimuli, which can leave you feeling mentally fatigued.
- **Guilt and Shame:** Seeing piles of unfinished projects, unread books, or unused gifts can make you feel guilty about not being productive or not honoring someone’s generosity.
- **Difficulty Letting Go:** Many of us attach emotional value to our belongings, making it challenging to part with items even if they no longer serve a purpose.

What’s more, clutter can create practical challenges. It can make it harder to find things when you need them, lead to accidents (like tripping over that box in the hallway), and even pose health risks by collecting dust and allergens.

By clearing out unnecessary clutter, you're not just tidying up your home—you're also decluttering your mind and emotions, allowing yourself to feel lighter and freer.

The Benefits of Decluttering

Decluttering isn't just about aesthetics; it's a life-changing practice that offers a host of benefits:

1. **Improved Mental Clarity:** A tidy, organized space helps reduce mental "noise," allowing you to think more clearly and focus on what truly matters.
2. **Enhanced Relaxation:** When your home feels calm and orderly, it becomes a sanctuary where you can unwind and recharge.
3. **Increased Productivity:** Knowing where everything is saves time and energy, making daily tasks more efficient and enjoyable.
4. **Emotional Freedom:** Letting go of items that no longer serve you can help you release the past and embrace the present.
5. **Better Health:** Reducing clutter means fewer dust-collecting surfaces, which can improve air quality and reduce allergies.

Perhaps most importantly, decluttering brings a sense of accomplishment and control. In a world where so much feels out of our hands, taking charge of your home can be incredibly empowering.

Common Decluttering Roadblocks

If decluttering feels daunting, you're not alone. Many people face common emotional and practical challenges when trying to tidy up their homes. Here are a few roadblocks—and how to overcome them:

- **"What if I need it someday?":** If you haven't used an item in the past year, chances are you won't miss it. Trust that you'll be able to find or replace what you truly need when the time comes.
- **Sentimental Attachments:** It's okay to keep items that hold deep meaning but try to limit yourself to a few key pieces. Instead of keeping every holiday card you've ever received, for example, choose one or two that bring you the most joy.

- **Feeling Overwhelmed:** Decluttering your entire home can seem like an impossible task. The key is to start small and tackle one area at a time.

Remember, decluttering is a process, not a race. Be kind to yourself and celebrate small victories along the way.

Practical Tips to Declutter Your Space

Ready to take the first step toward a clutter-free life? Here are some practical, actionable tips to help you get started:

1. **Start Small:** Begin with a single drawer, shelf, or corner. Once you see progress in one area, you'll feel motivated to keep going.
2. **Use the Four-Box Method:** Label four boxes as "Keep," "Donate," "Recycle," and "Trash." As you sort through your belongings, place each item into one of these categories.
3. **Set a Timer:** Decluttering doesn't have to take all day. Set a timer for 15 or 30 minutes and focus on tidying up during that time.
4. **Follow the One-Year Rule:** If you haven't used or worn something in the past year, it's probably time to let it go.
5. **Digitize Paper Clutter:** Scan important documents, photos, and letters to create digital backups. This way, you can preserve sentimental items without taking up physical space.
6. **Ask for Help:** If you're struggling to part with certain items, invite a trusted friend or family member to help you make decisions.
7. **Create a Maintenance Routine:** Once you've decluttered your home, make a habit of tidying up regularly to prevent clutter from creeping back in.

Decluttering Sentimental Items

For many of us, the hardest part of decluttering is letting go of sentimental items. These objects often represent cherished memories, making it feel like we're losing a part of ourselves by parting with them. However, keeping every sentimental item can lead to a home that feels more like a storage unit than a living space.

Here's how to approach sentimental items with care:

HOW TO STAY SOCIAL

When Mobility Is Limited

By James Morris · Senior Moments

Here are 7 fun, practical ways to keep your social life thriving — no matter how far your feet can take you.

1 EMBRACE TECHNOLOGY

- Video Calls — Zoom, Skype, FaceTime from your recliner
- Social Media — share stories and connect
- Virtual Groups — online book clubs and exercise classes

Ask a grandkid for tech help!



2 HOST EVENTS AT HOME

- Game Night — board games and trivia
- Potluck Dinners — everyone brings a dish
- Themed Parties — Hawaiian luau, 1950s sock hop



3 MAKE THE PHONE YOUR BEST FRIEND

- Call a friend you haven't talked to in a while
- Schedule regular family chats
- Start a phone tree with friends

Keep conversation starters handy!



4 GET CREATIVE WITH PEN & PAPER

- Write letters to friends and pen pals
- Send postcards from your town
- Start a journal and share entries

Include a joke — laughter is the best medicine!



5 ADOPT A PET OR VOLUNTEER

Pets listen without judging and always think you're the most interesting person. Volunteer from home — make blankets for shelter animals and make new friends.



6 JOIN LOCAL OR ONLINE GROUPS

- Senior center — crafting, yoga, Bunco, transportation available
- One-on-one meetups — coffee, lunch, a stroll in the park



7 STAY POSITIVE & LAUGH OFTEN

Staying social is good for your heart, mind, and soul. Share jokes and funny stories — your humor and charm know no bounds.



"You're never too old to make new friends — or to be the life of the party."

- **Keep the Best, Let Go of the Rest:** Choose a few items that hold the most meaning and display them proudly. For example, instead of keeping every piece of your child's artwork, frame one or two favorites.
- **Take Photos:** If you're not ready to part with an item, take a photo of it to preserve the memory without the physical clutter.
- **Reframe Your Mindset:** Remember that memories live in your heart and mind, not in objects. Letting go of an item doesn't mean letting go of the experience or person it represents.

Decluttering as Self-Care

Decluttering isn't just a chore; it's an act of self-care. When you create a home that feels peaceful and organized, you're nurturing your own well-being. You're giving yourself the gift of space—space to relax, space to think, and space to simply be.

Think of decluttering as a way to honor yourself and your journey. As you sort through your belongings, reflect on the life you've built and the person you've become. Let go of what no longer serves you, and make room for the experiences and possibilities that lie ahead.

A Fresh Start Awaits

Decluttering may seem like a daunting task, but remember: every small step brings you closer to a home that feels calm, welcoming, and truly yours. Start with one drawer, one shelf, or one corner, and watch as your space—and your mindset—transform over time.

As you embrace the process of decluttering, you'll find that it's not just about tidying up your home; it's about creating a life filled with peace, clarity, and joy. So, roll up your sleeves, put on your favorite music, and start letting go. A fresh start is just a few boxes away.

With a little patience and determination, you'll discover the incredible freedom that comes with simplifying your space. And who knows? You might just inspire your friends and family to do the same! Cheers to a clutter-free, peaceful home—and a clutter-free, peaceful mind. ●



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LEARNING, GROWTH & TECHNOLOGY

LEARNING SOMETHING NEW TO STAY CONNECTED AND ENGAGED

By James Morris

The world is an ever-changing place, full of new apps, gadgets, trends, and even slang that can leave many of us scratching our heads. But don't fret! Staying connected and engaged doesn't mean you have to be a technology wizard or memorize every new TikTok dance (though, if you do, we're impressed!). It's about learning new skills, embracing challenges, and keeping your mind sharp while having a little fun along the way.

In this article, we'll explore why learning something new—whether it's picking up a hobby, mastering a new device, or decoding the mystery of emojis—is one of the best ways to stay connected, engaged, and, dare we say, hip. So grab your coffee, tea, or favorite snack, and let's dive into the joy of lifelong learning.

The Science of Staying Sharp

Before we get into the fun stuff, let's start with the "why." Why is learning something new so important as we grow older?

It turns out that our brains are a lot like muscles. When we challenge them with new activities, they stay strong. Studies show that learning new skills can actually improve brain health, enhance memory, and even reduce the risk of cognitive decline. Think of it as a workout for your mind—just without the sweaty gym clothes.



When you learn something new, you create fresh neural pathways. These are like tiny, invisible highways in your brain. The more highways you build, the easier it becomes to adapt to changes and keep up with the times. Plus, the sense of accomplishment you feel when you master something new? That's a great mood booster.

Staying Connected: The Digital Frontier

Let's face it—technology is here to stay. While it might seem overwhelming at first, embracing a bit of tech can lead to amazing opportunities to stay connected with family, friends, and even the wider world.

Take video calls, for example. Platforms like Zoom, FaceTime, and Google Meet have transformed the way we communicate. If you've ever waved hello to a grandchild through a computer screen or attended a virtual book club with friends, you're already on the cutting edge!

But why stop there? Here are a few easy and fun ways to explore technology:

- **Text Like a Pro:** Do you know the difference between “LOL” (laugh out loud) and “BRB” (be right back)? If not, it's worth learning the lingo. Ask a younger family member to teach you some texting shorthand, or look up a guide online. Who knows—you might surprise someone with a perfectly placed “OMG!”
- **Try a Smartphone App:** There's an app for everything these days, from learning new languages (Duolingo) to solving puzzles (Wordle). Apps can make learning fun and interactive, and many are designed to be user-friendly.
- **Join Social Media:** Platforms like Facebook and Instagram are great for staying connected with loved ones. You can share photos, comment on posts, and even join groups for hobbies you enjoy, like gardening or knitting. Don't worry—there's no pressure to post selfies unless you want to!

Hobbies That Keep You Engaged

Learning something new doesn't have to involve screens or gadgets. Sometimes, the best way to stay engaged is by diving into a hobby that sparks your interest.

Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- **Learn to Cook (or Bake) Something New:** Ever tried to make homemade pasta? How about baking a French baguette? Cooking is a creative and rewarding activity, and there's always something new to learn in the kitchen.
- **Pick Up a Musical Instrument:** Dust off that old guitar in the closet or try your hand at the piano. Many instruments have free tutorials online, and playing music is a great way to relax and express yourself.
- **Explore Creative Writing:** Whether it's writing a short story, poetry, or even a witty letter to the editor, creative writing can be a wonderful outlet. Plus, it's a great way to share your thoughts and humor with others (hint, hint: Senior Moments is always open to submissions!).
- **Gardening:** There's something magical about planting a seed and watching it grow. Gardening is not only a relaxing pastime, but it also gets you outdoors and provides fresh air. Bonus points if you grow your own veggies!

The Joy of Group Learning

One of the best ways to stay connected is by learning with others. The camaraderie of a group setting adds an extra layer of fun and motivation.

- **Community Classes:** Check out local offerings, such as art workshops, fitness classes, or book clubs. Many senior centers (including ours here in Redmond!) offer affordable or free options that cater to a variety of interests.
- **Online Courses:** Websites like Coursera or Udemy offer courses on everything from photography to history. You can even take a class on astrophysics if you've ever wondered about the mysteries of the universe.
- **Clubs and Meetups:** Whether it's a knitting circle, a hiking group, or a movie discussion club, joining a group is a fantastic way to meet people and stay active.

Hybrid Social-Organization Apps

Stay Connected & Coordinated

Apps that blend social connection with powerful organizational tools—perfect for families, friends, and groups.

Top Apps

- 1 HOWBOUT**
See when friends are free, organize group plans & chat about events—all in one shared calendar.
- 2 COZI**
Color-coded calendar, to-do lists & meal plans with real-time sharing for seamless household coordination.
- 3 FAMILYWALL**
Shared calendar, collaborative lists, secure messaging & private family feed.
- 4 ALL IN**
Company-wide announcements, goal tracking & employee engagement on one easy platform.
- 5 PARTIFUL**
Stylish invitations, RSVP management, emoji reactions & shared photo albums—no app download for guests!
- 6 MAPLE**
Shared calendar, task lists & AI assistant to help busy parents coordinate schedules & daily tasks.
- 7 EVENTBRITE**
Plan, promote & sell tickets for any event while guests discover, book & share experiences.

From family logistics to unforgettable parties—stay social & organized, no matter your group or goal!

Overcoming the Fear of the New

Let's be honest: trying something new can be a little intimidating. What if you mess up? What if you're no good at it? What if you look silly?

Here's the truth: nobody becomes an expert overnight. The joy of learning isn't about being perfect; it's about the experience. Mistakes are part of the process, and sometimes they even lead to the best laughs.

Remember the first time you tried to ride a bike? It probably didn't go smoothly, but you kept at it, and eventually, you succeeded. The same principle applies to learning at any age. Be patient with yourself, and don't be afraid to ask for help.

If you need extra motivation, think of the stories you'll have to share. Imagine telling your grandkids how you tried yoga for the first time or how you mastered the art of making sourdough bread. Who knows? You might even inspire them to try something new, too.

A Final Word: It's Never Too Late

One of the most beautiful things about lifelong learning is that it truly is lifelong. It doesn't matter if you're 55, 75, or 95—there's always something new to discover.

So, what will you try next? Maybe it's learning how to use a new app, or perhaps you'll finally sign up for that watercolor painting class you've been eyeing. Whatever it is, approach it with curiosity, enthusiasm, and a sense of humor.

And remember, in the words of the famous inventor Thomas Edison: "I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work."

Here's to trying, learning, and growing—one new adventure at a time. ●

FUN & LIGHTHEARTED



LAUGHTER REALLY IS MEDICINE

WHY HUMOR HEALS

By James Morris

If laughter is the best medicine, then someone forgot to tell my doctor because he keeps prescribing me pills that cost more than my first car. But let's not dwell on that. Instead, let's talk about why humor really does heal—without the risk of side effects like nausea, dizziness, or the existential dread that comes with reading the fine print on your prescriptions.

First of all, laughter is free (a rare thing these days, unless you count unsolicited advice from your neighbor). It's also surprisingly effective. Science says it lowers stress, boosts immunity, and even reduces pain. That's right—cackling at a silly joke might not fix your arthritis, but it'll make you forget about it for a few glorious seconds. And honestly, when was the last time your kale smoothie did that?

The Science of Giggles

Let's get serious for a moment—well, as serious as we can get while talking about snorts and belly laughs. When you laugh, your brain releases endorphins, those magical little chemicals that make you feel as happy as a retiree booking a cruise during off-season. Laughter also lowers cortisol, the stress hormone responsible for making you feel like you're stuck in line at the DMV... forever.

Even your heart gets in on the action. Laughing increases blood flow, which is great for your ticker. It's like cardio, but without the sweating or the Lycra. So technically, telling jokes should count as exercise. Go ahead—cancel that gym membership and subscribe to Netflix comedy specials instead. You're welcome.

Why Seniors Are the Funniest People Alive

Let's face it: seniors are some of the funniest folks around. Why? Because by the time you've lived through decades of bad decisions, questionable fashion trends, and the horror that was 1970s wallpaper, you've earned the right to laugh at absolutely everything.

Remember that time you put your phone in the fridge and your sandwich in the microwave? Hilarious. How about when you called your grandkid by the dog's name for the third time this week? Comedy gold. Aging is basically one long sitcom, and you're the star. Bask in the glory, my friend.

And don't forget about the art of sarcasm—the native language of anyone over 60. Need an example? The next time someone asks, “What are you doing today?” reply with, “Oh, just skydiving and bungee jumping. You know, the usual.” It's dry, it's sassy, and it'll leave them wondering if you're serious. Spoiler: you're not.

Bad Jokes, Good Vibes

Let's talk about the fine art of the bad joke. Yes, I'm looking at you, Uncle Bob, with your endless supply of dad jokes that make everyone roll their eyes. But here's the thing: bad jokes are actually good for you. They're like vitamins for the soul, except they don't taste like chalk.

For example:

Why don't skeletons fight each other?

Because they don't have the guts!

See? That groan you just let out? That's the sound of your stress levels dropping. You're welcome. Now, go share that joke with someone else, and watch them try not to laugh. It's contagious, like yawning, but way more fun.

The Healing Power of Laughing at Yourself

One of life's greatest joys is the ability to laugh at yourself. (And if you can't, don't worry—your family is more than happy to do it for you.) Tripped over your own shoelaces? That's slapstick comedy in real life. Accidentally sent a text to your boss that was meant for your spouse? Congratulations, you're living in a sitcom.

The beauty of laughing at yourself is that it takes the sting out of life's little embarrassments. Plus, it gives you great stories

to tell. “Remember that time I wore two different shoes to church?” is way more entertaining than, “Let me show you my vacation photos.”

Humor: The Glue of Social Connection

They say laughter brings people together, and they're not wrong. (Who are “they,” anyway? Probably a bunch of scientists in lab coats with clipboards, but I digress.) Sharing a laugh with a friend strengthens your bond, whether you're reminiscing about the good old days or giggling over something absurd, like the fact that avocado toast is now considered a luxury item.

Even strangers can connect through laughter. Ever exchanged a knowing look with someone after a waiter dropped a tray of dishes? That moment of shared humor is like a little hug for your soul. And let's be honest—laughing at life's mishaps is way more fun than crying over them.

Laughter Yoga: Yes, It's a Thing

If you're ready to take your laughter game to the next level, consider laughter yoga. It's exactly what it sounds like—stretching, breathing exercises, and a whole lot of forced giggling. Sure, you might feel ridiculous at first, but that's kind of the point. Fake laughter often turns into real laughter, and before you know it, you're cackling like a hyena at... well, nothing. It's weird. It's wonderful. It's worth a try.

Closing Thoughts (and a Final Terrible Joke)

So, there you have it. Laughter really is medicine, and the best part is you don't need a prescription. Whether you're cracking up at a goofy joke, reminiscing about past shenanigans, or just enjoying the absurdity of life, laughter has the power to heal, connect, and brighten even the gloomiest days.

Now, before I go, I'll leave you with one last joke

Why can't you give Elsa a balloon?

Because she'll let it go.

Go ahead, groan—it's good for your health. And remember: life is too short to be serious all the time. Laugh often, laugh loudly, and laugh at yourself. After all, if you don't, someone else will. ●

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I'm Back!



Just when you thought it was safe to turn the page... the Find Randy game returns! Somewhere in this issue of Senior Moments, a cartoon Randy is lurking in plain sight—hidden among the stories, photos, and surprises. He could be anywhere. Watching. Waiting. Blending in until only the sharpest eyes can uncover his secret location.

Can you spot him before it's too late? Search carefully, find Randy, and email your answer to James@RedmondSeniors.org for your chance to win a prize. The mystery has returned... and this time, Randy is counting on you to find him.



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