

How to Stay Young

by Lionel Goulet

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- You can't. Learn to accept the fact of life that *everything* and *everybody* ages. There is glory in it. Reject the idea that "old" is "bad." Nothing could be further from the truth.
- Resolve to be happy and work at it. It will enchant your friends, gratify your family, and annoy enough other people to be well worth the effort.
- Keep only cheerful friends. The grouches pull you down. Toss them out, ignore them, don't answer the phone when they call. If they corner you, smile and tell them how sorry you are and mean it, but don't take up their sorrows. Their problems are for them to solve, not you. If you believe in prayer, pray for them.
- Stop worrying. Worrying is an endless loop that accomplishes nothing and causes huge harm over time. Solve the problems you can, don't solve the problems you can't, and leave it at that. You are in charge of you. Stop worrying.
- Keep learning. Learn about your computer. Learn a new craft. Learn gardening. Learn quantum physics, a new language, music, watercolors, *whatever*... Never let your brain sit around idle.
- Enjoy the simple things. There are so many of them.
- Laugh often, long, and *loud*. You don't need to apologize. Laugh until you gasp for breath.
- Tears happen. Endure, grieve (there is no time limit), and move on. The only person who is with us our entire life is ourselves. Be *alive* while you are alive.
- Surround yourself with what you love: family, pets, music, keepsakes, plants, hobbies...and especially toss out the rest. Your home is your refuge. Share it, carefully.
- Cherish your health. If it is good, preserve it. If it is unstable, improve it. If it is beyond what you can do, get help.
- Don't take guilt trips. Take a trip to the mall, a trip to the next county, to another country, but *not* to where the guilt is. Forgive yourself. What's done is done.
- Tell the people you love that you love them; at every opportunity.
- Be in the world. What comes *at* you comes *from* you. Throw out a smile, a nod, a compliment, a kind word, and the world will do the same right back atcha.
- Commit yourself. Be involved in something where, if you don't show up, they wonder where you are. Scouting. Church. School. Shelter. AA. Food Pantry...
- Remember: *there is no safe place*. You can die in the locker room, on the playing field, or anywhere in between. The trick is to not be afraid. So many people have died before you, there *has* to be something good about it.

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