

THE THIRD AGE FOUNDATION

“Changing the Myths of Aging”



THIRD AGE FOUNDATION

*Dedicated to changing negative views of aging,
and helping Third Agers become more respected and valued by society while living longer and happier lives.*

Newsletter

Winter 2008

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<p><i>In This Issue . . .</i></p> <p><i>Couples Who Retire Together</i> by Peter Brill, MD</p> <p><i>Karma</i> by David Debin</p> <p><i>Living in the 75th Year</i> by Adele Rosen</p> <p><i>Utterly Humbled by Mystery</i> From a Newspaper Column by Richard Rohr</p> <p><i>Third Age Humor</i> Questions and Answers</p>	<h2>COUPLES WHO RETIRE TOGETHER</h2> <p>By Peter Brill, MD</p> <p>Why would any couple have trouble retiring together? Absent the pressures of work, it would seem that life should be easy and virtually conflict free; but it is frequently unexpectedly difficult. Couples at retirement are faced with unexpected feelings and lots of decision-making they hadn't anticipated. Many couples in long term relationships haven't learned to talk to each other—they were too busy working and tending to children and parents. Besides, why rock the boat?</p>
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Retiring couples have time on their hands and all the buffers in the relationship are gone. They are faced with questions such as where are they going to live, how much time are they going to spend together, will they travel and how much, how to spend their money, frequency of sex, and how involved they are going to be with their children and grandchildren. They have little or no experience with surfacing and resolving issues. Now faced with so many at one time, it can present great difficulties.

In fact surveys document the surprise experienced by couples when they retire. If you survey couples before they retire, they almost universally expect that things will be easy. Similar surveys done after retirement report problems and disappointments. In the last decade the most rapidly growing rate of divorce, higher than the rates of other decades, is the Third Age. Something isn't all that wonderful in Camelot.

Dr. Maryanne Vandervelde was a guest on our radio show recently. She has written an interesting book called ***Retirement for Two*** which she describes as a survival guide for couples in retirement.

One thing that Dr. Vandervelde does in her clinical sessions is to ask couples to rate, on a scale from one to ten, how much togetherness they want. One is a lot and ten is a very little. One of the couple will put down a 3 and the other 8. You can see immediately how much difficulty that will cause if it is not addressed openly and negotiated. The one that wants a great deal of time together will feel neglected while the one that wants little will feel invaded.

According to Dr. Vandervelde, one sad note is that if you ask men who their best friend is they are proud to say their wives. If you ask women who their best friend is, in most cases, they don't name their husbands. The reason is because men don't tend to make friends as easily as the woman do. They had developed facades at work which they have to give up in order to make new close friends. Since that is difficult, they depend on their wives for their social life. So, for a lot of men, it is a shake up time for figuring out what else they are going to have in their lives besides their wives.

One interesting example that Dr. Vandervelde gave was a woman who wanted a lot of

involvement with her children and grandchildren. Her husband wanted to travel. The woman didn't want to spend time traveling because she wanted to spend her time babysitting the grandchildren. When there are fundamental log jams like this, how do you and your spouse resolve them? Avoid talking about it; fight about something else out of frustration; blame each other for the difference; each do your own thing?

So what advice can we offer?

1. Become intentional about life. I can't believe how many people don't live the examined life: who are they as individuals and then as a couple? If you want your ship to come in, you have to build a dock.
2. Develop yourself and your own interests and consciousness. Don't expect your spouse to make your life alive.
3. Learn how to plan and to manage conflict and negotiate with you spouse. Don't be shocked if you don't know how. No one teaches us.
4. Letting go of the hopes and dreams that aren't realistic—the prince or princess won't come. If you want to stay in a partnership, don't think in terms of perfect but rather good enough. Let go of old hopes and dreams and find new ones.
5. Become realistic about yourself. Let go of the façades that we had to put on for work purposes that don't serve us very well. They can be detrimental. It is important to figure out your own sense of self worth and how to relate to others without those façades.
5. Lots of people have gone through life without being able to give and receive emotional nourishment. Being able to receive emotional nourishment is often more difficult at this stage of life than helping others.
7. Being vulnerable is crucial to loving.



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KARMA

By David Debin

"He who chooses the beginning of a road chooses the place where it leads to. It is the means that determine the end." *Harry Emerson Fosdick*

On the painted canvass of your life, each brushstroke and color is a *choice* you have made. You have determined what the painting of your life looks like, and *you have the power to recreate this painting based on the choices you will make as you go along.*

Every day, hour, and moment of your life you make *choices*. Each choice you make, at every crossroads you come to, determines the *depth and direction of your life.*

Think of the routine choices you made only this morning – when you got up, what you wore, what you ate, what mood you were in, how you drove to work, how you greeted people, how much you accomplished before lunch. Consider also the choices you made as a result of being sensitive to coincidence and synchronicity – perhaps something you read in the morning paper brought you an insight to a problem in a relationship and you chose to act on it. Or, on the way to work you saw the same stranger for the fourth day in a row, and chose today to say good morning.

There are the bigger choices – where you live, who you love or don't love, who you forgive or don't forgive, whether or not you will have children and how you will bring them up. You're faced with a never ending procession of choices, *each one of which has some impact on what you are in the process of becoming.*

For each choice you make there is a *consequence*. The choice is the *cause*, the consequence is the *effect*. Some refer to this dynamic of cause and effect as *karma*. Deepak Chopra says, "*Every action generates a force of energy that returns to us in like kind.*"

Whenever you make a choice, you initiate an effect. *Your karma is the result of the all choices you've made and all the effects they have created.* Lao Tse wrote, "*The natural laws of the universe are inviolable... what you say and do determines what happens in your life... You are the master of your life and death. What you do is what you are.*"

"What you do is what you are." Not what somebody *does to you*. Not what you *say you will do*. Only what you *actually do*, the choices you *actually make*. And with each choice you make comes the *responsibility* of having made that choice. *You are the creator of your karma.*

Most people deny responsibility for the choices they make by feeling they were forced into that choice, or they made that choice because someone else needed them to make it, or there was no alternative but to make that choice. You can rationalize any choice you make and tell yourself you are not responsible for making it. But by *not* taking responsibility you make the statement that *someone or something else is responsible*

for your choice, for the direction of your life, for your karma. And if someone or something else is responsible for your karma, if someone or something determines what you become, that is the same as being a prisoner.

A prisoner is always at the mercy of others. And being a prisoner is *the opposite of being free*. Being free is a big responsibility. It means you take responsibility for the choices you make. The opposite of freedom is *bondage*. By taking responsibility for the choices you make you free yourself from bondage, from what I have called *the prisons of the present*.

It's a fact of life that most choices you make are compromised to some degree. They are circumscribed by all the choices that have been made prior to that moment. This is not a negative view, but a realistic one. For example, you would not choose to jump off a building because nature's laws say you can't fly; you don't fire a gun on a crowded street because man's laws say you should not; you don't call a person Mary when her name is Tanya because she will not respond; you do not abuse a child because it is against God's law to do so. Mahatma Ghandi said, *"Human life is a series of compromises."*

But keep in mind, a compromise *does not absolve you of the responsibility of the choice you make*. It merely reflects some of the alternatives that are not necessarily open to you. Of the alternatives that *are* open to you, you ideally want to choose the one *that most expresses who you believe you truly are*.

And what are the criteria for making the choice that reflects who you truly are? According to Chopra, there are two questions to ask. *"What are the consequences of the choice I am making?"* and *"Will this choice bring fulfillment and happiness to me and also to those who are affected by this choice?"*

Nathan Myhrvold wrote, *"Most decisions are seat-of-the-pants judgments. You can create a rationale for anything. In the end, most decisions are based on intuition and faith."* My belief is that making decisions, or choices, based on intuition and faith is synonymous with *following your heart*. Intuition and faith are born, nurtured and practiced in the heart. They are the twin pillars of your higher Self. When you follow your heart, you invariably make the choice that brings you closest to your higher Self.

You cannot escape making choices, for, according to William James, *"When you have to make a choice and don't make it, that in itself is a choice."* If you have a loved one on life support and you are responsible for deciding if and when to "pull the plug," there is a choice you must make. If you do not make it, your loved one will remain on life support. You are responsible for the choices you make as well as the ones you avoid.

The Zen mystic, Alan Watts, said, *"Man's karma travels with him, like his shadow, for it has been said, 'Man stands in his own shadow and wonders why it is dark.'"* If things in your life are going badly, take responsibility for the choices you made which got you here. By taking responsibility, you will free yourself to make new choices to turn the situation around. If you don't take responsibility, you will keep feeling forced to make choices that leave you unhappy.

Never forget the saying, "What you sow, so shall you reap." When you sow love and happiness in the lives of others, the fruit of your karma will be love and happiness in your own life. Or, as one of my all-time favorite Beatles lines go, *"In the end the love you take is equal to the love you make."*



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LIVING IN THE 75TH YEAR

By Adele Rosen, a Third Age Group Member

What did the Third Age Group meetings do for ME?

When I arrived to the first group meeting several months ago, I didn't know what to expect.

Having just met David, I felt the group would be safe, and a sounding board for my thoughts, my fears, my joys and my sorrows. David made me feel welcomed, as did the members of the group.

Each group member came with his or her fears, needs, hopes and joys.

I listened and shared and examined myself with much depth. I needed not to fear my words because I knew I would not be judged. I learned from the group that my fear of turning 75 was not the number of years passed, but the not knowing the number of years in the future. How many years do I have to do the things I need to do? How many years will I have in the future to give to others and who will be there for ME? Who Will Cry When I Die?

The group taught me to examine:

To live wide open with landscapes of the mind.

To not live in fear of falling.

To not live in fear of an unlived life.

To choose to inhabit my days and to allow me to be less afraid and to have the courage to stretch to one more place on the ladder.

To loosen my heart until it becomes a wing, a torch, and a promise to myself and to those who are here to love ME.

I will live with the seeds that were given to me and to blossom into the fruit which I was meant to be.

I will live in the MOMENT with total past in the PAST.

I will not back down.

Third Age means music, art, melodies of friendships, listening, giving, receiving, and extending to others that wisdom which is so precious and appreciated.

I believe in the sun to brighten my attitude.

I believe in the rain, which brings the sun and flowers.

I believe in enough loss to appreciate what I possess.

I believe that Third Age will lead to enough hellos to get to the final good-bye.

Thank you group mates, Thank you David for the Private Time together.



THIRD AGE FOUNDATION

UTTERLY HUMBLED BY MYSTERY

From a Newspaper Column by Richard Rohr

Richard Rohr is founder of the Center for Action and Contemplation in Albuquerque, N.M. He took his Franciscan vow in 1961, and was ordained as a priest in 1970. Rohr is a frequent speaker and writer on issues of community building, peace and justice.]

I believe in mystery and multiplicity. To Religious believers this may sound almost pagan. But I don't think so. My very belief and experience of a loving and endlessly creative God has led me to trust in both. I've had the good fortune of teaching and preaching across much of the globe, while also struggling to make sense of my experience in my own tiny world. This life journey has led me to love mystery and not feel the need to change it or make it un-mysterious. This has put me at odds with many other believers I know who seem to need explanations for everything.

Religious belief has made me comfortable with ambiguity. "Hints and guesses," as T.S. Eliot would say. I often spend the season of Lent in a hermitage, where I live alone for the whole 40 days. The more I am alone with the Alone, the more I surrender to ambivalence, to happy contradictions and seeming inconsistencies in myself and almost everything else, including God. Paradoxes don't scare me anymore.

When I was young, I couldn't tolerate such ambiguity. My education had trained me to have a lust for answers and explanations. Now, at age 63, it's all quite different. I no longer believe this is a *quid pro quo* universe – I've counseled too many prisoners, worked with too many failed marriages, faced my own dilemmas too many times and been loved gratuitously after too many failures.

Whenever I think there's a perfect pattern, further reading and study reveal an exception. Whenever I want to say "only" or "always," someone or something proves me wrong. My scientist friends have come up with things like "principles of uncertainty" and dark holes. They're willing to live inside imagined hypotheses and theories. But many religious folks insist on *answers* that are always *true*. We love closure, resolution and clarity, while thinking that we are people of "faith"! How strange that the very word "faith" has come to mean its exact opposite.

People who have really met the Holy are always humble. It's the people who don't know who usually pretend that they do. People who've had any genuine spiritual experience always know they *don't know*. They are utterly humbled before mystery. They are in awe before the abyss of it all, in wonder at eternity and depth, and a Love, which is incomprehensible to the mind. It is a litmus test for authentic God experience, and is – quite sadly – absent from much of our religious conversation today. My belief and comfort is in the depths of Mystery, which should be the very task of religion.



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THIRD AGE HUMOR: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question: My wife is going through menopause. What can I do?

Answer: Keep busy. If you're handy with tools, you can finish the basement. When you are done you will have a place to live.

* * * * *

Question: How can you increase the heart rate of your 60+-year-old husband?

Answer: Tell him you're pregnant.

* * * * *

Question: Where can men or women over the age of 60 find young, sexy members of the opposite sex who are sexually interested in them?

Answer: Try a bookstore under *fiction*.

* * * * *

Question: How can you avoid spotting a wrinkle every time you walk by a mirror?

Answer: The next time you're in front of a mirror, take off your glasses.

* * * * *

Question: Why should 60+-year-old people use valet parking?

Answer: Valets don't forget where they park your car.

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Question: Is it common for 60+-year-olds to have problems with short-term memory storage?

Answer: Storing memory is not a problem – retrieving it is.

* * * * *

Question: As people age, do they sleep more soundly?

Answer: Yes, but usually in the afternoon.

* * * * *

Question: Where do 60+-year-olds look for fashionable glasses?

Answer: On their foreheads.

* * * * *

Question: What is the most common remark made by 60+-year-olds when they enter antique stores?

Answer: "I remember these."



THIRD AGE FOUNDATION

Third Age Workshops

Join **Peter Brill**, MD and **David Debin** as they guide you through the 7 Steps to Passion, Purpose and Joy in the Third Age. Upcoming Workshops are . . .

What Should You Do With The Rest Of Your Life?: 7 Steps to Joy at 50+ is available through Santa Barbara City College—Adult Education and is free of charge.

Make aging a celebration and renewal. Peter Brill, MD and David Debin show people in the Third Age how to discover the meaning of joy that comes from living a purposeful life.

This workshop will be held on Saturday, March 22, 2008 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Schott Center, 310 W. Padre Street, Santa Barbara, CA. Call 805-683-8236 for more information.



THIRD AGE FOUNDATION

"The Third Age" Radio Show

Listen to **Peter Brill**, MD and **David Debin** on KZSB Santa Barbara 1290 AM, Tuesdays from 11 a.m. to noon and 9 p.m. to 10 p.m., and Saturdays from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.—also on KVTA Ventura-Thousand Oaks-Vestlake 1520 AM, Sundays from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m.

To hear podcasts of selected shows, go to www.personallifemedia.com and click on "Aging Gratefully." Or, you can go to iTunes, click on PODCASTS, and find "Aging Gratefully".

Upcoming radio shows are . . .

March 11: Former United States Senator from Pennsylvania, Harris Wofford, Spokesman for Experience Now, and George Rusznak, SCORE, Santa Barbara

March 18: Jan Cullinane, Author, "The New Retirement: The Ultimate Guide to the Rest of Your Life"

March 25: Alex Avery, Director of Research and Education at the Center for Global Food Issues (Hudson Institute) and Ronnie Cummins, Director of the Organic Consumers Association

April 1: Barbara Friesner, Generational Coach, CEO AgewiseLiving Company

April 8: Howie Giles, Ph.D., Professor UCSB, Intergenerational Communication and Lifespan Aging from a Cross-Cultural Perspective

April 15: Special Tax Show

April 22: Mike Robbins, Author "Focus on the Good Stuff: the Power of Appreciation"

April 29: Jane Isay, Author "Walking on Eggshells: Navigating the Delicate Relationship between Adult Children and Parents"

Recommended Books

The Tipping Point by Malcolm Gladwell.

(Back Bay Books)

The "tipping point" is that magic moment when an idea, trend or social behavior crosses a threshold, tips, and spreads like wildfire. Malcolm Gladwell's New York Times bestseller explores and brilliantly illuminates the "tipping point" phenomenon.

The Power of Coincidence: How Life Shows Us What We Need to Know by David Richo.

(Shambhala)

This book will help you to: interpret a series of similar happenings, open yourself to assisting forces around you, understand how your dreams can guide you through life events, use your creative imagination in life choices – and live in accord with your deepest needs and wishes, as revealed to you by meaningful coincidences.

God's Equation: Einstein, Relativity, and the Expanding Universe by Amir D. Aczel.

(Four Walls Eight Windows)

Our understanding of the most fundamental truths governing our universe is shifting. Soon, writes Amir Aczel, "...we may begin to understand the ultimate laws of nature and to formulate our human estimation of God's Equation. When the final equation is constructed, we should be able to use it to solve the wonderful riddle of creation. And perhaps that's why God sent us here in the first place."

The Beatles Lyrics

(Time-Warner)

Lyrics of almost 200 songs have been collected here to form one volume of poetry. From the ambiguity of "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" to the surrealism of "Eleanor Rigby," these are lyrics with astonishing breadth of vision and depth of meaning.



Third Age Discussion Support Groups

Support groups of six to eight members meet weekly under the guidance of a certified facilitator trained by the Third Age Foundation. They offer confidentiality, support and input by peers.

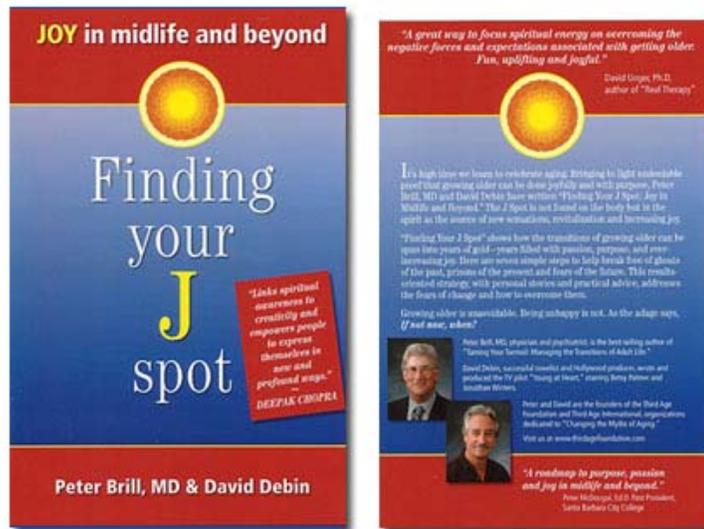
If you would like to join a group, please call 805-969-9794 or visit . . . www.thirdagefoundation.com.

Coming Soon! Webinars

A *webinar* is a live web conference, conducted within a starting and ending time. The presenters speak over a standard telephone line, pointing out information being presented on screen, and the audience can respond over their own telephones.

We have had many requests by Third Ages to hold *webinars* discussing issues, programs and concerns relating to the Third Age. **Dr. Peter Brill** and **David Debin** will be holding free, 1-hour *webinars* to discuss these topics. Join us. Come ask, listen and converse on the topics that matter to you.

The Book



To order, [Click Here](#) or visit www.amazon.com

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