



AGELESS BEING

Staying Vibrant in Mind, Body and Spirit

by Kathleen Barnes

Agelessness: Engaging in and experiencing life without fear of falling, failing or falling apart.

In a nutshell, that's the philosophy of visionary women's health expert Dr. Christiane Northrup, of Yarmouth, Maine, as explored in her latest book, *Goddesses Never Age*.

"We're long overdue for a paradigm shift about how we feel about growing older," says Northrup. "You can change your future by adopting a new, ageless attitude that will help you flourish physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually. We don't have to buy into modern medicine's promotion of the idea of the pathology of aging."

One of Northrup's primary admonitions: "Don't tell anyone how old you are. Another birthday means nothing."

Maintain a Sound Mind

Our Western society fosters a belief system that we will become decrepit, frail and mentally feeble at a certain age. "When my mother turned 50, her mail-

box suddenly filled with ads for adult diapers, walkers and long-term care insurance," Northrup quips. The point is well taken. Think vibrant, healthy, gorgeous and yes, sexy Sandra Bullock, Johnny Depp, Chris Rock and Brooke Shields—all 50 or older—as the targets of ads for Depend.

We're living and working longer, and many of us are feeling, looking and staying young longer. So is 60 the new 40? Yes, say State University of New York at Stony Brook researchers, and further note that we're generally leading longer and healthier lives.

Centenarians are the fastest-growing segment of the U.S. population. In the 2010 census, 53,364 people had surpassed their 100th year, an increase of 40 percent over the 1980 census, and more than 80 percent of them are women. The National Institute on Aging projects that this number could increase tenfold or more by 2050.

What we think of as "old" has changed. Many baby boomers refuse to buy into the mythology of aging, bristle at being called senior citizens and especially dislike being called elderly. Their position is backed by science. Stem cell biologist Bruce Lipton, Ph.D., author of *Biology of Belief* and currently a visiting professor at the New Zealand College of Chiropractic, in Auckland, is best known for promoting the concept that DNA can be changed by belief, for good or ill.

Lipton explains that we all have billions of stem cells designed to repair or replace damaged—and aging—tissues and organs. "[These cells] are profoundly influenced by our thoughts and perceptions about the environment," Lipton explains. "Hence our beliefs about aging can either interfere with or enhance stem cell function, causing our physiological regeneration or decline."

"Yes, we are destined to grow older, but decrepitude and what we call aging is an optional state," Northrup adds. "Our genes, nutrition and environment are under our control far more than we may have thought." More, she says, "Words are powerful. Don't talk yourself into believing your brain is turning to mush just because you are over 40."

Take Control of the Body

"Manage the four horsemen of the aging apocalypse," encourages nutrition and longevity expert Jonny Bowden, Ph.D., a Los Angeles board-certified nutritionist and author of *The Most Effective Ways to Live Longer*. He says the aging process, including disease, loss of physical or mental function and the general breakdown of systems, is caused by one or more of four factors: oxidative damage (literally rusty cells); inflammation; glycation (excess sugar, metabolic syndrome); and stress.

"Collectively, they damage cells and DNA, wear down organs and systems, deeply damage the vascular pathways that deliver blood and oxygen to the entire body, and even shrink brain size," explains Bowden.

While it may seem like a tall order to make lifestyle changes that vanquish these four horsemen, Bowden says they can be broken into manageable elements by employing an arsenal

Presented to you from the September 2015 edition of **natural** awakenings®

of healthful weapons: whole foods, nutrients, stress-reduction techniques, exercise, detoxification and relationship improvement. "All of these actually do double duty, battling more than one of the four processes that can effectively shorten your life," he reports, based on his 25 years of study.

Oxidative Damage

Consider what rust does to metal. That's what free radical oxygen molecules do to cells. Over time, they damage them and cause aging from within. "Oxidative damage plays a major role in virtually every degenerative disease of aging, from Alzheimer's to cancer to heart disease and diabetes, even immune dysfunction," says Bowden.

His recommended key to destroying free radicals is a diet rich in antioxidants, including lots of fresh fruits and vegetables and healthy fats, nuts, grass-fed meats and organic dairy products. Avoid environmental free radicals that show up in toxic chemicals by eating as much organic food as possible and avidly avoiding residues of the poisonous pesticides and herbicides sprayed on crops eaten by people and livestock.

Inflammation

Long-term inflammation is a silent killer because it operates beneath the radar, often unnoticed, damaging blood vessel walls. Like oxidative damage, inflammation is a factor in all the degenerative diseases associated with aging, says Bowden.

His suggestion: First, get a C-reactive protein (CRP) test to determine the levels of inflammation in our body. A CRP level over 3 milligrams/liter indicates a high risk of a heart attack. Anti-inflammatory foods like onions, garlic, leafy greens, tomatoes, beans, nuts and seeds have all been widely scientifically proven to reduce chronic inflammation. For more information see page 37, *Inflammation Hurts*, an interview with J.P. Saleeby, MD.

Glycation

This is the result of excessive sugar that glues itself to protein or fat molecules, leaving a sticky mess that creates advanced glycation end (AGE) products that damage all body systems and are

COMPUTE YOUR REAL AGE

Lifestyle choices can make our bodies older, or younger, than our number of orbits around the sun, according to Michael Roizen, a doctor of internal medicine and author of *This is Your Do-Over: The 7 Secrets of Losing Weight, Living Longer, and Getting a Second Chance at the Life You Want*. "Seventy percent of aging is in the simple things you do or don't do," he maintains. Here are a few sobering examples:

- An unresolved major life stressor, such as a divorce, being sued, the death of a close relative or other traumatic events, can add up to 32 years to chronological age. Managing the stress adds a relatively insignificant two years.
- Swap out saturated fats (cheese and meat) for monounsaturated fats (olive oil, nuts and avocados). Subtract 2.5 years from chronological age.
- Get up out of the chair every 15 minutes and also take a 10-minute walk every two hours. Subtract 2.1 years from chronological age.
- Have close friends. Subtract 2.1 years from chronological age.

Take the Real Age test at ShareCare.com/RealAge.

acknowledged culprits in the dreaded diseases associated with aging.

Bowden's basic answer is to minimize intake of sugar and simple carbs; anything made with white flour or white rice. Also avoid fried dishes and any foods cooked at high temperatures that actually skip the glycation production in the body and deliver harmful AGEs directly from the food. He advises taking 1,000 mg of carnosine (available in health food stores) daily to prevent glycation.

Stress

The long-term effects of physical, mental or emotional stress are tremendously damaging to the human physiology. Sustained exposure to the stress hormone cortisol can shrink parts of the brain, damage blood vessels, increase blood sugar levels, heart rate and blood pressure and contribute to chronic inflammation, according to well-established science recorded in the U.S. National Library of Medicine.

Bowden warns, "Stress management is not a luxury." In its many forms, including prayer, meditation and breathing exercises, it should be part of any agelessness program. Deep, restful sleep is as vital a component as ending toxic relationships, having a nurturing circle of friends and doing familiar, gentle exercise such as yoga or tai chi.

Overall, Bowden adds, "Rather than thinking of such endeavors as anti-aging, I strive to embody the concept of age independence. I admire former

Supreme Court Associate Justice John Paul Stevens, who resigned from the court when he reached age 90 because he wanted to play more tennis."

Bowden recommends embracing the concept of "squaring the curve", meaning that instead of anticipating and experiencing a long downhill slope of poor health leading to death, "I look at a long plateau of health, with a steep drop-off at the end."

Wellness guru Dr. Michael Roizen, chair of the Cleveland Clinic's Wellness Institute, contends that although our chronological age can't be changed, "Your 'real age' [calculated from data he collected from 60 million people] is the result of a wide variety of factors that are within your control. Dietary choices alone can make you 13 years younger or older than your actual age."

Roizen adds uncontrolled portion sizes, tobacco use and physical inactivity to the list of life-shortening lifestyle options.

Align with Spirit

"If you don't have some kind of spiritual foundation, literally, God help you," says Northrup. "God isn't confined to a book or a church, mosque or synagogue. Divinity is the creative loving, vital flow of life force that we're all part of and connected to. Our bodies are exquisite expressions meant to embody, not deny our spirits."

Touch, pleasure and sex can be part of it, too. Individuals that have the most fulfilling sex lives live the longest, according to researchers conducting

the University of California, Riverside's Longevity Project. "Pleasure comes in infinite forms," says Northrup. "It can mean the exquisite taste of a pear or the sound of an angelic symphony, the kiss of sun on skin, the laughter of a child, spending time with friends or creating a pastel landscape. When you experience pleasure, God comes through and you become aware of your divine nature. You'll find that joy comes in ways that are unique to you."

Connection with the natural world is an essential element of agelessness, says Northrup. "The human body evolved to walk on the Earth, drinking its water, breathing its air and basking in its sunlight." The bottom line is, "Agelessness is all about vitality. Taking all the right supplements and pills, or getting the right procedure isn't the prescription for anti-aging," says this renowned physician. "It's ageless living that brings back a sense of vibrancy

and youthfulness."

We could live to be well over 100 years old and, as Northrup likes to paraphrase Abraham Hicks, of *The Law of Attraction* fame, "Wouldn't you rather have your life end something like this: 'Happy-healthy, happy-healthy, happy-

healthy, dead.' Isn't that a lot better than suffering sickness, decrepitude and frailty for years?"

Kathleen Barnes is the author of numerous books on natural health, her latest being Food Is Medicine: 101 Prescriptions from the Garden. Connect at KathleenBarnes.com.

AGE-DEFYING EXERCISE

by Kathleen Barnes

Specially designed movements performed to music can dramatically improve memory, as well as slow the process of physical aging, according to Denise Medved, of Hendersonville, NC, the founder of Ageless Grace. Medved's foundational physical and mental exercise classes involve 21 exercises that promote brain plasticity by activating all five functions of the brain: analytic, strategic, kinesthetic learning, memory/recall and creativity and imagination. Find videos of Ageless Grace exercises by searching YouTube, including this one:

WHILE SITTING IN A CHAIR (all exercises are taught in this position to develop core strength), make a circle with the right lower arm. Add a triangular motion with the left foot. Next, add a horizontal movement with the left hand. Finally, do the entire series in reverse.

Classes are available in all 50 states and in 12 countries. To find a teacher nearby, visit AgelessGrace.com.