

AGING *GRACIOUSLY*

Newsletter for UUCGV Seniors and Near-Seniors

Honoring Duane Carr who exemplified living graciously and started an Aging Graciously group.

Gracious: Amiable, compassionate. Congenial, considerate. Courteous, good-natured, loving, benevolent, big hearted, charitable, merciful, obliging

Gracious Happiness

There are two routes to happiness, and they date all the way back to the Greeks. On the one hand, we can follow the pleasure principle. It is fairly simple: just do those things that give immediate gratification. In Greek, this is *hedonism*. “Wine, sex, and song” to paraphrase an old saying. Pleasure-happiness is easy but has a major drawback: after each pleasurable experience, we are back where we started from. Delights do not last.

The second version of happiness has been termed “wellbeing.” It is about seeking long term satisfaction or fulfillment. The Greeks named this *eudaimonia*. There is a literature related to wellbeing, and there are numerous definitions of the term. No agreement. However, there is general agreement that wellbeing is different from pleasure-seeking.

Some psychologists and spiritual leaders have proposed wellbeing arises from two virtues: empathy and altruism. Wellbeing requires feelings of compassion for other humans and preferably for all beings. In this way, we become associates or friends with much of the world. Altruism involves selflessness. It implies consideration of and for other people or beings. The altruist is willing to give of self – time, effort, feelings – to others.

The beauty and virtue of wellbeing, as just described, is that it is ongoing. Having “felt for” and “given to” others results in a long-term sense of satisfaction. That sense continues as we have further thoughts and take actions. Ultimate graciousness.

Quote

“I am an ordinary man who worked hard to develop the talent I was given. I believed in myself, and I believe in the goodness of others... It's the repetition of affirmations that leads to belief. And once that belief becomes a deep conviction, things begin to happen... I've made my share of mistakes along the way, but if I have changed even one life for the better, I haven't lived in vain... Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth.” Muhammad Ali



Life as a Festival

It may be useful to think of life as a festival. You are a participant and attendee. When you are involved in a festival, you cannot win or lose. Festivals consist of events and experiences. Thus, you cannot win or lose at life.

No matter...

how successful you have been, it is temporary.

how much you accomplished. it doesn't matter on your deathbed.

how many possessions you have acquired, they are meaningless.

Enjoy the festival! Accumulate worthwhile experiences. The memories do not go away. The effect they had on you does not go away. They are the basis of who you were and who you have become.

In the meantime, the festival goes on!

A Ponder

What constitutes successful aging? Length of life? Quality? Accomplishments? Influence?

Note from the Editor:

I am Ernie Stech, member of the UUCGV for four years. My interest in aging comes from being 88 years old!

You can contact me at ernie1933@gmail.com. I'll be glad to get comments and responses. Also, I will be able to send you future issues of the newsletter by email.