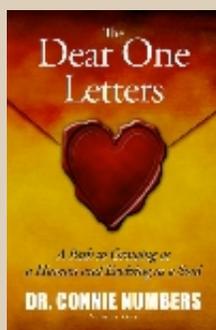




*Dr. Connie Numbers*, Psy.D, LCSW  
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Monthly Inspirations Newsletter

May 2015



*"... a powerful and empowering set of spiritual letters focusing on the Divine Spirit in all of us."*

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**Hello Dear Ones,**

**"Aging gracefully."** Hmm ...I've been thinking about that lately and wondering what it looks like. Oh yes, I've seen the Katherine Hepburns, the Betty Whites, and the Jane Fondas of this world, but I've never had to really think about it in terms of myself because I just wasn't old enough to care about it. Until now.

As I was pedaling on a stationery bike for 6 minutes on level 3 in the physical therapy room of the Myrtle Beach Physical Therapy Center, I certainly didn't see what I thought would be "aging gracefully" from the participants in this setting. Moans and groans came wafting through the air from various parts of the room mixed with snippets of war stories thrown in for good measure.

Yes, war stories. Not war stories of having babies, or raising children or literally going off to war. No. These were present day war stories about **which parts of their bodies no longer work the way they're supposed to**. Each person, including myself, had a litany of things to talk about which included: botched surgeries, replaced body parts, limited functioning, and how in the hell did they ever get to this place in their life.

"Hey, what happened to you?" "Well, I don't know what happened. I just fell down and my shoulder cracked." "Hey, how did your hip replacement go?" "Still have that torn meniscus in your knee?" "Ouch." (You hear that one a lot.) And of course, most everyone says, "You know, gettin' old ain't for sissies." (Thanks, Bette Davis.)

As I looked around the room with one minute to go, I paid close attention to the man a few bikes over to my right. He was wheeled over by his physical therapist in his own wheel chair. I'd say he was about 85 years of age. He got out of his wheelchair very gingerly, turned, and with a grunt landed on the bike. I looked at him and smiled. He smiled back. We seemed to stare at each other a lot throughout those 6 minutes. **I would catch him looking at me and he would catch me looking at him**. And each time we sort of grinned at the other. I'm thinking, "Boy, he's pretty old and still going. Bless his heart." And he's probably looking at me thinking, "What's she so happy about?"

So, as I listen to his PT talk to him, I hear him say he's looking forward to a visit with his daughter this weekend and that seems to put a spring in his step. Otherwise he didn't say much unless talked to. But there was something about him I liked. And I realized it was this: **he was the only person in the room not complaining**. I knew he was stiff and sore, and hurting, but he seemed to take it in stride. He just accepted

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the situation as it was and did what he had to do. He was doing the best he could.

I've always thought that people who aged gracefully were those who still looked good as they got older, or carried themselves well, or ate all the right foods and still exercised. Isn't that aging gracefully? Yes. In one way it is. But **I've expanded my definition of aging gracefully** and have stopped limiting it to what one looks like.

As I watch and feel myself aging, I've decided to keep these 8 things in mind when it comes to aging with grace:

- 1) Accept the process of your life.** Do what you can to change what's in your control and accept what you cannot change and be happy anyway.
- 2) Have something to look forward to.** It keeps you excited about life.
- 3) Continue to find life awesome,** whether it's watching a butterfly land on a flower, or looking up at the sky and watching the clouds. There is always something inspiring about life. Find it.
- 4) Be grateful for what is going right** in every situation of your life. And as far as your body goes: Be grateful for the body parts that are working beautifully, and bless the ones that aren't.
- 5) Stay present.** There are so many wonderful things happening in the present moment, including the fact that you're breathing, so don't miss a thing by wandering into the past.
- 6) Keep a sense of humor.** Find something to laugh about every day, including laughing at yourself. This helps you to not take life so seriously, even amidst serious situations.
- 7) Always keep your eye out for love.** Find as much love for yourself, for others, and for life as you can. Love is our spiritual food. It's what sustains us. Eat healthy doses of love every day.
- 8) Always remember that you are in this world, but not of it.** Your human life is a gift, but the greatest gift is eternal life. And so, as you age gracefully, know that there's more life to come. Your life will never be over and in knowing that, it always keeps you feeling peaceful, joyous, loving, and forever alive.

**Blessings to all of you,  
Connie**

## Watch This Inspirational Video

Shawn Achor researches and teaches positive psychology. He's also funny, and he's got a big idea about productivity. Here, Shawn breaks down the way we educate, work, and parent to show that happiness has to come before success. He clearly and humorously describes how to increase happiness and meaning and create positive transformations that ripple into more successful and happier outcomes. [Watch his TED talk now.](#)

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