Senior Advice: The write way to cure the wrong attitude

by Doug_Mayberry

Q: As a blessed, widowed, healthy lady you would think I could look forward to each day. However, now at 76, my negative thoughts depress everybody, even me!

How can I keep my spirits up?

A: One inspirational approach is keeping a daily journal. It will help remind you of wonderful times and direct your energy toward each new day. It influences you not to worry about your past or future.

To start your journal, buy a notebook and daily write down what you do, see, feel and think. Relive how you reacted to events, and maybe even secrets you have not divulged. What made you who you are; how do you remember your first kiss; which best fulfilled your need for love and attention; other relationships that make you unique.

Paste into your journal photos, love cards, a play ticket stub and a variety of newspaper clips of your wedding and family activities. Include letters from friends and family, wedding souvenirs, travel itineraries, career or social clippings, and pictures of your pets. Make your pages more interesting by handwriting in details. Tear our illustrations and cartoons from thrift shop books.

Plan and make a list to do something new you have never done each day. Stroll a street you've never walked, try a yoga class, sketch or dry-press a maple tree leaf for your journal to help detail your thoughts for the day. Visit a museum or historical building you've never been in. Date your pages to remind yourself later. Lighten up and become more adventuresome.

Add humor. Last week I laughed at a parking lot sign that read: "Reserved for the dentist. All others will be extracted".

I guarantee keeping a journal will not only steer you to a more positive attitude but will also lighten your spirits. Should you choose to gift your journal to your family members it will be treasured!

Q: I am frustrated, angry and feel guilty about not being able to give my elderly mother more care. She is 78 and lives alone nearly a thousand miles away. She needs someone to monitor her activities. I have a brother and step-sister-in-law who live nearby, but neither offers to help. I call regularly and send what money I can.

How can I offer her more support?

A: Our parents are living longer and do need family and friends' help. Outside support is also available from senior center personnel, pastors, church members, Medicare, Medicaid, good neighbors, Meals on Wheels volunteers and many other senior-affiliated groups. Many communities offer lists of these.

Check out the variety of senior support services in your hometown for consideration in your mother's location. Local senior fairs, assisted living administrators and other adult children who are in your situation have information that can relieve you of some of your worry and fear. Solicit their support.

Remember, all caretakers need to take care of themselves first. List and set up a schedule of what you can do. Send a copy of to your brother, and remind him of the support your parents gave you both. Ask him to take responsibility for contacting the support groups in your mother's town. Hopefully he will get your message that it's payback time for your mother. Underlying all of our thinking is who will take care of us when our time comes. Loving, caring and reciprocating to our parents for what they did for us is the right thing to do!

Doug Mayberry lives in a retirement community in Southern California. Send your questions to him at deardoug@msn.com or write to him at P.O. Box 2649, Carlsbad, CA 92018.

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