



Senior Perspectives on Well-Being

**Second Edition:
Seasons of Change**

**By The Tea Chatters
at JASA Starrett City OAC**





Embracing Change

As we age, changes in the mind, the body, and life circumstances become inevitable. It can feel difficult to accept such changes, but facing these with a mindset of self-compassion and resilience can ease the transition. Remember, the journey is about learning to cope and preparing for inevitable shifts. Facing these changes with a mindset of growth can help us adapt.

No one told us exactly what to expect as we grow older, but together we can learn to cope with and prepare for change!





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Chapter One: Emotional Health



Understanding Emotions:

- **Emotions aren't facts but indicators.** While emotions are real, they may not always reflect reality. It's essential to distinguish between feelings and facts while learning to trust your gut and inner voice.
- **We can learn from past experiences.** Regret can be a limiting emotion. Instead, reflect on past decisions and learn to move forward with wisdom and grace.

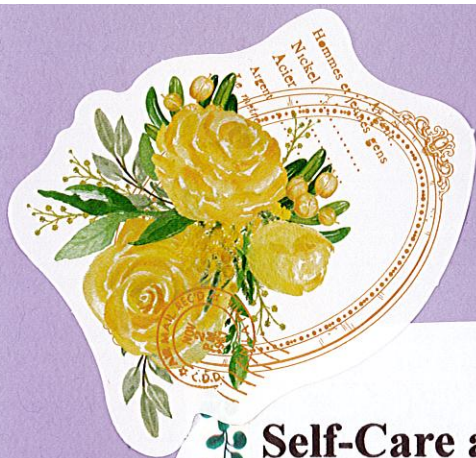




Kindness to Self and Others:

- It's important to stay kind to others while also valuing yourself. We learn to take our own and others' perspectives into consideration, and we learn not to reject others' emotions. Understanding how you make others feel is key to meaningful relationships, but it starts with treating yourself well.





Self-Care and Acceptance:

- **Practice self-care** by pampering and prioritizing yourself. This can mean engaging in activities that soothe you, setting boundaries, and focusing on what makes you feel fulfilled.
- **Self-love** is a process that takes time. It requires nurturing both the body and mind through practices like self-care, reflection, and acceptance. Self-love develops gradually as you learn to accept who you are without the need to conform to others' expectations.
- **Reflection:** Regular introspection through prayer, journaling, meditation, positive self-talk, or even crying can serve as emotional release and provide insight into personal growth. There is a difference between self-reflection and overanalyzing – it's knowing that you can't change the past, but that you can learn from it and move on.





Self-Forgiveness:



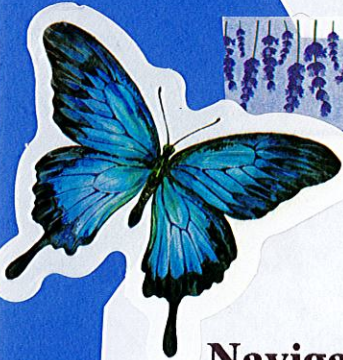
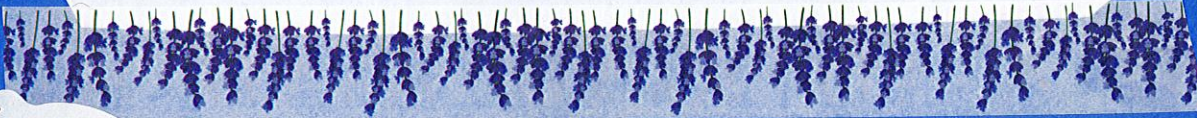
- Practicing self-forgiveness is crucial for emotional resilience. Beating yourself up over past mistakes won't change anything—accepting them will.

Expressing and Managing Feelings:

- Crying, journaling, or talking with others can release emotions and provide clarity. Reflect without overanalyzing, aiming to understand your experiences rather than becoming stuck in them.
- Take time before making decisions, which can help reduce second-guessing and build confidence.



Chapter Two: Adapting Relationships and Building Connection





Navigating Loss and Loneliness:



- Loss is a specific type of change that is difficult. And loss isn't just about death; it also includes changes in mobility, relationships, and routines. Allow yourself to grieve these shifts, as acknowledging them is a step toward healing.
- As we lose loved ones, feelings of loneliness may grow. Reach out to others, participate in group activities, or volunteer to foster new connections and support networks. Recognize the difference between **loneliness** (feeling disconnected) and **aloneness** (being physically alone). Spending time with others can help alleviate feelings of isolation.
- Don't be afraid to say "hello." When you get to our age, you have nothing to lose!
- "I am alone, but coming to the center has made me feel less lonely."



Building Trust:

- Building trust in others may take time, especially after past betrayals. Give yourself time to develop trust slowly, and remember Maya Angelou's wisdom: "When people show you who they are, believe them."

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- **Trustworthiness** involves honesty, empathy, and consistency. Trust is layered, and it's okay to place different levels of trust in different people.

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- Looking for patterns in behavior helps inform whether a relationship is safe and reliable.



Setting Boundaries:

- Learning to say "no" is part of protecting your energy and well-being as it helps to prevent resentment and exhaustion.
- Setting boundaries allows you to prioritize what feels good for you while preserving healthy relationships.
- One good way to maintain boundaries is to set a structured schedule in order to prioritize my time.
- "When I was younger, it used to matter more what people said, instead of what I felt. So I use to follow others' opinions and what they wanted instead of what I wanted. "



Chapter Three: Changes in Health and Wellbeing

Coping with Health Changes:

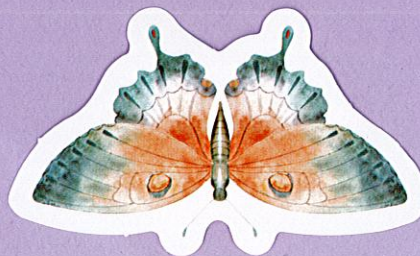
- Embrace physical changes, whether it's gray hair or changes in body shape, with self-compassion. Practical solutions—such as hair dye, vitamin D supplements, and regular doctor visits—can address specific needs.
- Managing physical changes, from crepe skin to body odor and even involuntary gas, can be part of normal aging. Adjust habits gradually and adapt to new routines, like using assistive devices, to remain independent and comfortable.
- It can be hard to ask for help sometimes. “We can educate ourselves ahead of time so that we know what to expect. Coming to the center is a place to feel valued and to receive validation.”





Memory:

- Many of us may feel sad when it comes to noticing these changes, including our loved ones. However, changes in memory are common and there are ways to manage: using phone reminders, keeping a calendar, creating checklists, or enlisting the help of a friend.
- Keeping your mind active through socializing, staying organized, and accepting help can make a difference.





Physical Self-Care:

- Pain, arthritis, sleep disruptions, and other age-related ailments can make everyday activities difficult. Engaging in regular doctor visits, physical therapy, and adopting adaptive tools can help manage these challenges.
- Tools like reminders for medication and automatic appliances can simplify daily routines.
- Many experience changes like incontinence, but practical solutions such as Kegel exercises and leak pads can help. Acceptance and open communication with healthcare providers are essential.

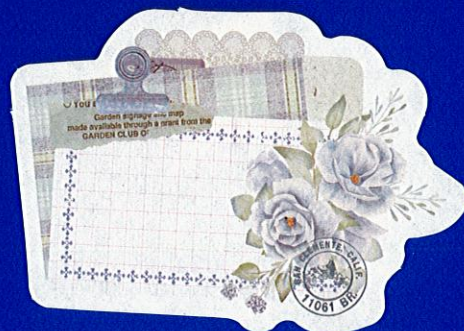


Chapter Four: Managing Your Environment and Letting Go of Clutter




Planning for the Future:

- Embrace practical changes, like installing grab bars or moving essentials to accessible spaces, to adapt the home environment. Being proactive with these changes can support comfort and independence.







Organizing Your Space:



It can be hard to come to terms with letting go of items, especially if they hold memories. For example, many of us still have work clothes that we do not wear anymore, but they remind us of time we spent working. Letting go of these items can “feel like an erasure of myself.”

- Over time, it can be liberating to let go of items that don't serve a purpose anymore. Downsizing brings clarity and frees up space, both physically and mentally.
- Keep items with sentimental value, but feel empowered to declutter to make space for the present.
- Organize the home to make movement safe and easy. Simplify areas that become challenging as physical mobility changes.
- “I've decided that if I want to get a new item, I have to get rid of an old one.”





Chapter Five: Staying Socially Connected



Engaging with Community:

- Connection is vital for wellbeing. Find connection by participating in activities that interest you, joining social groups, or volunteering.
- Use empathy to understand others' experiences, which can deepen connections and build a sense of belonging.



Using Technology for Connection:

- Platforms like messaging apps, online groups, and virtual communities can help maintain and even strengthen relationships from a distance. Use technology as a tool to stay close to loved ones.



Finding Peaceful Places:

- Create a routine of visiting places that offer peace, such as parks, piers, or community centers. Being around nature can ground you and provide calm and clarity.

Chapter Six: Enhancing Mental Wellbeing and Mindfulness

- Reach out for support and remember to initiate connections, as a warm “hello” can make a big difference.

Keeping a Wellbeing Toolbox:

- Regularly build your “**toolbox**” of resources, whether it’s self-care practices, hobbies, or relaxation techniques.

Your mental health “toolbox” can include tools like deep breathing, yoga, being in nature, and listening to audiobooks. Explore new activities or goals to keep the mind engaged and motivated.

Practicing Self-Reflection and Mindfulness:

- Engage in practices like **meditation, gratitude, reading, and prayer**. Being mindful can help foster inner peace and provide a renewed perspective on life.



This guide highlights key strategies for supporting wellbeing in older age, focusing on mental and physical health, relationships, and acceptance of change. Remember, each person's journey with change is unique; take things at your own pace and prioritize what feels best for you.

For more information about services, you can visit the JASA Starrett City OAC office. To receive updates, information about events, and to build connections, you can join the Tea Chatter's WhatsApp group chat. Please see Tea Chat members for more information.

