

# INFLUENCE YOUR STATE OF MIND

## *Happiness Comes From Positive Reactions To Life*

The stereotypical vision of retirement includes happy years of leisure. For many seniors, this is true. Of course, everyone feels upset from time to time. Life typically includes some loss, disappointment and misfortune. These negatives bring on the reactions of sadness and grief. Fortunately, in time, people usually bounce back.

Some studies have concluded that happiness and emotional well-being actually improve with age. The wisdom that comes from many years of experience can help a person to avoid (or limit) stress. In addition, seniors are less affected by criticism and negative opinions.

The odds of being happy can also be increased by creating a positive "senior" environment. This means establishing a physical and mental setting that includes companionship, provides a support system, fosters independence, builds self-confidence and maintains self-esteem.



*Caring for an "appropriate" pet can enrich the lives of seniors in a variety of ways, including giving them many more reasons to smile.*

## PLANTING "HAPPY" SEEDS

Here are some suggestions for creating an environment that can help seniors be happier.

- ◆ Focus on and enjoy family and friends.
  - ➔ Show your interest in the lives and activities of family members.
  - ➔ Do not take time and energy for granted. Extend invitations, be grateful, and be easy to deal with.
  - ➔ Happiness is contagious. Smile and choose to associate with happy people.
- ◆ Live a lifestyle that provides nourishment, adds to your energy level, and lessens the occurrences and effects of chronic illnesses.
  - ➔ Exercise your body for better health, maximum function, and for fun.
  - ➔ Exercise your mind and keep it as sharp as possible.
  - ➔ Maintain a healthy and tasty diet.

- ◆ Have a sense of purpose. Also, find joy and fulfillment in the things you do every day.
  - ➔ Avoid waiting for happiness. Instead, take the action that will lead to it.
  - ➔ Participate in activities you like to do.
  - ➔ Do the project or activity you wished you had done when you didn't seem to have the time.
  - ➔ Learn a new skill that challenges your abilities and sparks your creativity.
  - ➔ Take care of a pet.
- ◆ Get out and about. If you cannot do this on your own, look for services that are available or ask for help.

Volunteering is a great way to combine many of these suggestions. Helping a cause you believe in gets you out of the house, builds a social network, adds activity and challenge, and provides purpose.

(Sources: American Academy of Family Physicians, HelpGuide.org, Bio-Medicine.org)

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19191 HARVARD AVENUE, IRVINE, CA 92612

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