

Old dogs and new tricks

How to stay young despite your age

They say you can't teach an old dog new tricks. But what do *you* think about that? Is improving and growing a trick? No! And people aren't dogs!

People can continue to learn and improve regardless of the dates on their birth certificates, because age is determined by how they think, not by how long they've been alive.

You might be old chronologically, yet youthful and full of vigor. That's because youth is a state of mind, not a time of life. Nobody grows old by living a certain number of years. They only grow old when they lose their enthusiasm. Years might wrinkle your skin but it's only the loss of your enthusiasm that can wrinkle your soul.

Jim Cain of Maryland Heights, Missouri was asked how *he* felt about his age.

To celebrate his 100th birthday, Jim joined a health club and began working out! During his initial endurance test, the best he could do was walk one-fourth the way around the running track. Soon he could do twenty laps *and* ride the stationary exercise bike non-stop for seventeen minutes — and he did it every day!

"I feel like a new man!" Jim exclaimed.

Ruth Rothfarb of Cambridge, Massachusetts celebrated her finish in the Bonne Bell 10K race by dancing all night at the race party that evening. She finished the race in 1 hour 4 minutes — not a distinguishing time, except for the fact that Ruth is 82.



She began running when she was 72, and competed in three marathons after she turned 80, running six to ten miles a day!

Old dogs? New tricks? No! These are just people who understand the timeless truth that you *can* stay young despite your age!

Here's what you can do:

1. *Stop celebrating your birthday. Counting the years probably causes you to dwell on your chronological age rather than your mental age. When someone asks how old you are, just smile and say, "I stopped counting. I'm young at heart and old enough to vote and drive. That's all that matters."*
2. *Exercise regularly like Jim Cain, eat healthy foods, and abstain from tobacco and alcohol.*
3. *Plan an improvement program today and begin immediately. Don't wait. Do it NOW!*



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Pistons of power

Anything is possible, if you never look back

What limitation, right now, seems to be keeping you from doing something you want to do?

Regardless of your answer, there's a person who would vehemently disagree with you. She proved that whatever it is you think you can't do, you actually can! She arrived at this conclusion many years ago when *she* was faced with a limitation so severe that just living a normal life seemed an impossibility. Her story has been told on TV, in books and movies. It's one you might be familiar with... but think of your situation as you read.

Wilma was born the twentieth child in an African American family of twenty-two in Clarksville, Tennessee in 1940. A weak and sickly infant, born prematurely, she was continually afflicted with childhood diseases. At age four she contracted polio, and the doctor said she would never walk again. Until age nine she was unable to walk without wearing a steel leg brace and it was necessary for her to continue wearing a special supportive shoe until age eleven.

During the late 1940's it was difficult enough just being black and poor, but add to that the stigma of being what many people called "a cripple" and this child seemed destined to an unenviable existence.

Both Wilma and her mother, however, refused to believe the doctor's prognosis. They did not accept the view that fate is something you must resign yourself to. They believed, rather, that people have unlimited potential.

Together they began an improvement program for those skinny, wobbly legs. Her mother rode the bus with her 50 miles each way, twice a week, to the nearest hospital that would treat black patients. Soon Wilma was walking on her own. With renewed determination, she began strengthening her legs even further, and before long she could outrun every kid on the block... and soon, every kid in the city, in the state, and even in the nation! Her strength and determination helped her to lead her high school basketball team to the state championships.

At age 16 Wilma qualified for the U.S. Olympic team and competed in the 1956 Games at Melbourne, Australia where she won a bronze



medal in the 100-meter dash.

No longer were her legs the frail, polio-stricken limbs she grew up on. Wilma had transformed them into *pistons of power!*

Four years later she again made the Olympic team and in the 1960 Olympic Games at Rome she won three gold medals ... for the 100 and 200-meter events, as well as the 400-meter relay! In all three races Wilma Rudolph set new Olympic and world records—the first woman to win three gold medals in one Olympics, thereby establishing herself as **THE FASTEST WOMAN ON EARTH**. More than that, she set an astonishing example of how limitations can be conquered.

When asked how she did it, Wilma answered, "No one has a life where everything that happens is good. I think the thing that made my life good for me is that I never looked back. I've always been positive no matter what happened!"

Wilma passed away in 1994. Ten years later a postage stamp was created in her honor. Her story is proof that determination can overcome almost any disadvantage.

Here's what you can do:

1. *Convert your weaknesses into strengths, turn your limitations into assets, let your stumbling blocks become stepping stones. It might take lots of hard work. It might also require you to think, think, think, and then ACT more positively than ever before. But it IS possible. You CAN do it!*

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2. *Don't accept the limitations others may try to force upon you. While the scoffers and sneerers are saying, "You can't," "It won't work," and "That's impossible," the Wilma's of the world will be doing it!*

3. *When you think "pistons of power" in your own life, you'll tap some of that amazing potential that's just begging to be released!*

The little things really are the big things

Especially in your close relationships

When asked to name the three most important things in their lives, most people include the word "family." In fact, a good many of those put the word "family" at the very top of their list.

And yet in many cases there is a significant gap between their *desire* for a rich, rewarding family life and the *reality* of their every day experience.

Is there a "secret" to happy, fulfilling family relationships? No doubt there are many factors that come into play, but if there is one common denominator, it might be this: *that the "little things" we remember to do in our family relationships really are the "big" things that make those relationships so rich and rewarding.*

Likewise, those "little things" *left undone* are often the very things that cause relationships irreparable harm.

In his thought-provoking book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Families*, well-known author Stephen Covey reveals several of his "secrets" for a happy family.

"What we all need is a pause button," says Covey, "to help us stop and choose a response based on our deepest values, rather than react to the emotion or circumstance of the moment."

For example, what if we could push that pause button every day, just as we arrive home from work? It would mean that we might sit for just a moment in our car and say to ourselves before going inside, "My family is the most important part of my life. When I go inside I'm going to communicate my love for them."

As we walk through the door we'll then be ready to interact in a positive way with our loved ones, whether it's a "group hug" or rolling around on the floor with the kids.

This approach helps us to rise above the day-to-day stress, the fatigue, and the tendency to be impatient with our loved ones.

Covey goes on to present the concept of the "emotional bank account," and explains the difference between behaviors that result in "withdrawals" from that emotional bank account, contrasting them with behaviors that result in "deposits" into that account.

Those "deposits," says Covey, go a long way toward building trust and unconditional love, two of the most important ingredients of a strong, healthy relationship.

These can be as simple as using words of courtesy such as "please" and "thank you" and "I'm sorry" when we know we've been wrong. Just being able to offer a sincere apology says in effect to your loved one, "Our relationship is supremely important to me."

Making and keeping our promises is another way to build up our emotional bank account, just as *not* keeping a promise creates a serious drain on it. Covey reminds us of the excitement, anticipation and hope created by a promise, even one as seemingly trivial as being home in time for a birthday dinner, or to help with homework, or to tuck little ones in bed. Keeping our word is one of the most important ways we build trust.

It may take weeks, months, or even years to see the positive results of Covey's recommendations, but results will come, and you may be astonished at how wonderful your relationships can be!

Here's what you can do: *Take a moment to pause. Consider how much your loved ones mean to you. Build trust by treating them with courtesy and respect. Keep your promises.*

Forget luck

“Good luck,” said the manager to the salesperson leaving for an important sales call. “Wish me luck,” said the student to his mother as he left for school to take an important test. “Boy, were we lucky,” said the lawyer to his partners after winning the case.

You’ve probably heard it said that “Luck is when opportunity and preparation meet,” and “The harder I work, the luckier I get.” These are really truisms.

Take fishing for example. The people who consistently catch fish have a knowledge of the species — the feeding habits of fish, their preferred water temperature and clarity. They invest the time to study and then apply what they learn by keeping records of productive fishing spots, weather conditions, type of bait or lure used, and the speed of retrieval used.

And isn’t that exactly what the “professional” does in any chosen field — eliminating the possibilities of failure and using the experience of others to ensure the positive results they are after? Hoping for good results isn’t enough — it requires action: careful thought, planning, anticipation and alertness.

Now this article isn’t really about fishing. It’s about you and your important activities that shouldn’t be based on “luck.”

How much is LUCK a part of your life? Do you call yourself “lucky” or “unlucky”? Hopefully, by the time you finish this article you’ll decide to drop “luck” from your vocabulary.

Ask any fishery biologist or tournament fisherman. These experts are in agreement: over 80% of the fish are caught by fewer than 10% of the fishermen!

When asked about luck, Fred Ward, champion angler, said: “Luck plays a very small role in fishing. In fact, luck has practically nothing to do with it!” The same could be said about selling, managing people, raising children, having fun on vacation, making good investments, advancing in your career, and being happy.

No, it isn’t luck!



In the spring of 1980 an African American woman stood in an auditorium so packed with people that many lined the walls. The woman approached the podium, paused, and said:

“My mother is a deaf mute. I have never known my father. My first job was as a cotton picker. Yet I stand before you this day the Treasurer of the United States of America! My name is Azie Taylor Morton. No one has to stay the way they are if they don’t want to... and it isn’t LUCK. The next time you have a tendency to say it’s luck, take out a dollar bill, look at my signature, and say, *If she can do it, so can I.*”

Here’s what you can do:

1. *Forget luck — be more prepared and then stay alert for opportunities that surround you.*
2. *Accept the responsibility for your own success and avoid references to some elusive “lucky” charm, streak or break.*
3. *Instead of saying “Good luck” to someone, change it to: “Go get ’em.” “MAKE it happen.” “You can do it!”*



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