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A Home Care Assistance Company



Newsletter

September

THIS MONTH

Spirituality: An Important Aspect of Aging Well and Living Longer

Being spiritual is not synonymous with being religious. Being spiritual can be a unique relationship with God. However, spirituality broadly covers what gives life meaning and purpose to an individual, even those who might be agnostic.

It has been my experience over these past 35 years that those who manage the challenges of aging, caregiving and even death and dying, are those that have had a spiritual resource. Spirituality can serve as a strength that supports and gives hope. It is also a way to reframe obstacles and challenges as opportunities.

Research has shown that those who have a regular spiritual practice live seven years longer than those who don't. Also, those who are connected spiritually and attend church are half as likely to have suppressed immune systems. Prayer has also been found to be the most common form of non-pharmaceutical pain management. Helen Lavresky, from the University of California, Los Angeles says, "There is overwhelming evidence of positive health outcomes linked to spirituality and religious participation. Integrating an individual's spiritual practice into healthcare can shape personalized medical care for older adults and improve health outcomes."

Victor Frankl, an Austrian Jewish, psychiatrist who survived three years in Nazi concentration camps when he was in his late 30s, stressed the importance of having a purpose in life for survival. He wrote: "Man is not destroyed by suffering; he is destroyed by suffering without meaning."

How does one find a place to grow spiritually? I personally think that to grow spiritually takes intention, dedication and time. It is a process of self-growth and is individualized even for those who have similar religious or spiritual practices. It takes cultivation and curiosity to find what fits with your values and what gives your life meaning and purpose. I don't think it is ever too late to find that inner place that can bring you peace and help you deal with the challenges and joys in this life.

About our Founder



Linda Fodrini-Johnson, MA, MFT, CMC is a Licensed Family Therapist and Certified Care Manager. She has been practicing professional care management since 1984. Linda founded Eldercare Services,

a fullservice care management and home care company in 1989. Eldercare Services has been providing Bay Area families with care management, home care services (caregiving), advocacy, counseling, support groups and education for 30 years. Linda is excited to be part of the Home Care Assistance family in order to expand the reach of Professional Geriatric Care Management with excellence in home care delivery.

MONTHLY AFFIRMATION

"I live every day feeling connected to what gives my life meaning and purpose."

CONTINUED ➔

Here are a few practices or exercises that I found in my research that might help you in this journey or enhance your current practices:

Gratitude

Repeat "thank you" silently to yourself many times and see how many images of gratitude come to mind.

Generosity

Science has proven that giving back and helping others makes us feel happier and more content. Research has also found that those who volunteer feel less pain during their time of giving.

Rachel Naomi Remen, MD, has developed retreats for people with cancer. She describes her philosophy in this way:

"Helping, fixing and serving represent three different ways of seeing life. When you help, you see life as weak. When you fix, you see life as broken. When you serve, you see life as a whole. Fixing and helping may be the work of the ego and service the work of the soul."

Meditation/Prayer



You can find many apps for your phones that will guide you and help you get to a place of "here and now." Some focus on God and others on nature or just the present moment. Praying can be very simple and does not need to be elaborate. You can ask or seek direction from religious leaders.

If you struggle with the "God" issue, there is a very interesting book called, *"Why God Won't Go Away"* by Dr. Andrew Newberg, Cr. Eugene D'Aquili and Vince Rause that talks about science and the field of neurotheology. It is a book where science meets religion and is intriguing for skeptics and believers alike. I heard Dr. Newberg speak about "mindfulness" and healing at a conference on Integrative Medicine, which sparked my interest in his book.

There are lots of avenues to healthy aging and spirituality is just one of them. If you are struggling with any feelings that can contribute to depression or you just feel stuck - remember we have three professional Aging Life Care Managers who are also therapists and they do make house calls! **Don't hesitate to give us a call at 925-937-2018.**

Upcoming Events

Elder Orphans Dementia - Reducing Your Stress

 September 20th  2:00-3:30pm

Are you an Elder Orphan? Over 65 without adult children or a partner?

- Do you have anxiety over what will happen to you if you can't care for yourself?
- Do you worry about this aspect of on your aging journey as you see your cohorts needing help?
- Learn what you can do & what you need to do reduce this anxiety.
- You will learn what documents you need and what professionals you need to be your navigator being an "elder orphan".

It's all about having your life your way, without constant worry.

Join Linda Fodrini-Johnson, MA, MFT, CMC, who has been counseling and assisting older adults without families in finding a path knowing they have a team to advocate for them during their entire journey of life.

No fee. Advanced registration required.

<http://eldercareanswers.com/registration-8/>

Caregiver Survival 101: Caring for Someone with Dementia - Reducing Your Stress

 October 2nd  5:30pm - 7:00pm

Riding the roller coaster of dementia care? If the emotional ups, downs and loop-di-loops are making your head spin, this class is for you! Topics include:

- The major challenges of dementia care
- Responses and reactions to reduce your stress
- Self-care activities and mini-support group
- Resources for coaching and support

No fee. Advanced registration required.

<http://eldercareanswers.com/registration-5/>

*This class is intended for family caregivers or those dealing with the challenges of aging.

Call us at **925-937-2018** to learn more.

Eldercare Services is now a division of Home Care Assistance, giving you the combination of great expansive caregiving and professional guidance.

Eldercare Services, 1808 Tice Valley Blvd.,
Walnut Creek, CA 94595