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“Purposeful Aging”—Having a Life Worth Living Means Living Longer

Los Angeles, Calif. (February 10, 2017)—According to the [World Health Organization](#), nearly a billion people around the world are age 60 or older. Having a purpose has a direct impact on their quality of life and longevity, says Dr. Noelle Nelson, author of [Happy Healthy...Dead: Why What You Think You Know About Aging Is Wrong and How To Get It Right](#) (MindLab Publishing).

A [2013 AARP study](#) asked those 40 and older how they feel about aging. Of those surveyed, 83 percent agreed with the statement “that having a purpose in life keeps me young.” A 14-year-[study](#) by the Association for Psychological Science indicates, “Having a purpose in life appears to widely buffer against mortality risk across the adult years.”

According to Dr. Nelson, the critical question as we grow older becomes; “How do you find your purpose?”

Work “If work is your purpose, focus on your talents, skills and behaviors that you are proud of,” says Nelson. “Be grateful for those skills and talents. Take the time to buff them up so your employer continues to see you as a valued employee and a leader in your areas of expertise.”

Volunteering “Volunteering has wonderful benefits,” says Nelson. “It gives you a sense of purpose and accomplishment. Volunteering is good for your health—even lowering blood pressure according to a Carnegie Mellon University [study](#). And, when you volunteer with your spouse, friends or family you share that sense of purpose and accomplishment together. It brings you closer.”

Family “An older family member may need your companionship. Your adult kids may now need you to help out with their own kids,” says Nelson. “Everything you do to connect with family will pay off for generations to come. That even means making the effort to mend fences with estranged family members. You are now the (older) adult in the room so it’s time to make the first move.”

Nelson says that older people generally feel instinctively inclined to give back. “A life full of meaning and purpose is what leads to life-satisfaction, which in turn contributes significantly to happy, healthy longevity.”

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