The AGELESS State of Mind
It’s been said, “You never grow old behind the eyes.” We seem to have a natural propensity to continue feeling young and vibrant on the inside, even as our physical bodies age. We harbor the abiding vitality of the Divine within us.

Is there a way to cultivate an ageless state of mind throughout one’s life? The answer from Unity founders Charles and Myrtle Fillmore was a resounding “Yes!” Through their teachings, and the powerful examples of their individual lives, they showed us the way. It was Charles Fillmore who so famously said at age 94: “I fairly sizzle with zeal and enthusiasm and spring forth with a mighty faith to do the things that ought to be done by me.” And it was Myrtle Fillmore who defied medical predictions of her impending death from tuberculosis when she was in her 40s, and went on to live fully and joyfully until age 86. Through her healing discoveries and practices, she paved the way for the launch of the entire Unity movement.

Each of us knows people in our own lives who exemplify this ageless spirit—who radiate a love for life, an enthusiasm for adventure, and a joy for each precious day and each precious moment. They inspire us to live fully and abundantly and to learn to see age as nothing more than a number. They remind us what is truly important—
not the quantity of our years, but the quality of our days. Through their lives and attitudes, they remind us that far more is possible at any age than most of us dare to believe.

You’ll find in these pages stories that motivate and uplift: Everyday examples like the elderly woman who learns to befriend her computer; the 76-year-old man who takes singing lessons, starts a community garden and a wine appreciation group, and 10 years later, launches an innovators’ think tank. You’ll meet one family’s 85-year-old record holder for the Wii downhill slalom run; the breast cancer survivor who at age 70 launched the “Wild Women of Kansas City” jazz quartet; the energizing symbolism of red shoes in one family; and the humorous yet poignant “17th Century Nun’s Prayer,” sure to ring true for anyone in their senior years.

Along the way, you’ll learn the Eight Keys to Happiness from MyBestYears.com, and the age-barrier breakers for everything from scuba diving to climbing Mount Everest. And through it all, you’ll witness not only the life-giving energy of Spirit, but the most life-enhancing aspects of being alive—the relationships, the discoveries, the love.

May these stories remind you of the ageless spirit within you, the possibilities still to be tapped, and the joy of living fully every day of your life.

With zeal and gratitude,

Your friends in Unity

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I am very new to the use of the computer. I have owned one for a couple of years. It is purple and very attractive. When I first got it, my friend Cheri, who is an expert in the field, taught me how to turn it on and how to turn it off. She also gave me a book of instructions entitled The Mac for Dummies, and being a good Truth student, she pasted a strip over the Dummies part and made it Geniuses! That gave me courage. And so I continued to admire my computer because it was purple.

Coming to our new home and having an office has been such a joy for me—all my favorite books and pictures surround me. I will be so very creative! I naturally turned to my typewriter on which I have done all my creative
work. And then a sad thing happened. My typewriter needed a new ribbon! Where can I get a ribbon? I went to the office stores and found that they were very limited in such old-fashioned things. I did get one, however, at Office Depot®. I then discovered that no one seemed sure as to the exact way to put the ribbon in. There were a couple of tries, but after a few lines on my paper, the ribbon jammed … This dilemma went on for several weeks, and then one day in a complete attitude of “I give up,” I turned to my purple computer.

Now I believe in God’s guidance in everything, and I suddenly realized that I was being very clearly told to learn how to use this machine that everyone seemed to understand but me! Today, with utter amazement, I am loving my purple computer. I find myself wanting to sit down at it the first thing in the morning and just write, write, write. Now my typewriter sits in the corner of my office with a black cover on it. Our cat found it a place to sleep in the sunshine.

I am sure you have had experiences in your life where you seemed unable to try something new. You, too, may have reasoned that you like the way you relate to your comfortable and familiar ways. And then one day you changed, and your mind entered into a whole new experience. You felt overjoyed, and you wanted to tell everyone about how wise you are now … Maybe you have a friend like one of mine who just looked bored and said, “Where have you been, Dorothy?”

It is of primary importance that we learn to hold our spiritual principles and yet allow for new insights along the way. Life moves whether we want to move or not. As we build a consciousness of expecting the good, we open new doors to our good. Today we accept the truth as we keep close in prayer! Remember, you are greatly loved. We are one in God forever! Let go and let God!
**Choice**  
*By Dorothy Pierson*

Every day I can make the choice  
To take the happy outlook, the positive view,  
The judgment that is spiritually true.  
I don’t have to look with worry-eyes,  
And voice concern and fear  
Over events as they appear.  
I can consciously choose to see the good,  
To look for God in all I do,  
And know that God’s at work in me,  
In you, and in and through every activity.  
I can make the choice!  
The God of love designed it so,  
And in the freedom I can grow  
To trust Him, to choose His way,  
To work with Him through the day  
And joyously share  
In God’s love and care for all creation.  
Thank you, God, for Your trust in me  
That lets these miracles be—  
I can make the choice!

**Harv Morrow:**  
Renaissance Man  
*By E.J. Niles*

Harv’s continuing desire to see each new day as an opportunity to be creative inspired me to follow his example. He left me a wonderful legacy.  

I first met Harv Morrow* in late 1994. I was minister at Unity of Fairfax at the time, and he called to see if I was available to officiate at his son’s wedding. I had no idea at the time that I was to meet one of the most multidimensional, young-thinking people I could have imagined. He was 70 years of age at the time. When we married in 2000, he was 76.

*See Harv’s photo, page 48.*
He loved beauty and he loved people. Thus it was little surprise when he began growing “Old Roses” and contributing to the upkeep of a community rose garden. Each year he would invite residents of the local retirement homes to a special event he hosted in his rose-adorned yard. People came in busloads to view and comment on the roses, to enjoy hot dogs and hamburgers, and most of all, to experience Harv’s infectious spirit. He hosted an Oktoberfest in his garden every year as a fundraiser for Unity of Fairfax—and of course, he dressed in costume!

Harv was bursting with life and creativity. Life to him was a grand adventure, and he didn’t want to miss any part of it. His attitude was, “I have so many things to learn and do that I have to stay young!” When he awoke in the morning, he would say, “I have a new idea I want to share with you,” and often when I came home from work, he would say, “I have something I want to share, but it will take awhile. Can we talk after dinner?” That something could be anything from how he had decided to start a new exercise routine to a breakthrough insight from whatever research or class material he was perusing. His days were filled with reading, researching and creating new ways to present the insights he had received. He was never bored!

I was blessed to be part of many wonderful events and activities after I became part of Harv’s family of children and grandchildren. His children included his daughter, an internationally renowned astronomy and climate science educator who combines science and spirituality in her teachings, and his son, a deeply intuitive individual who

Harv had retired after working for 37 years as a computer engineer at IBM®. Throughout his career he was an innovator, a catalyst for change and a man of great creative ability. He set himself free from the restrictions of corporate rules and expectations in order to allow time to create.

He was always happiest (and least restless) when he was creating something. That “something” could be a new addition to the house; a well-developed, well-researched PowerPoint presentation; or any of the more than 200 poems he wrote after retiring from IBM.

Harv didn’t let age hold him back. In his 70s he was taking art classes and creating beautiful watercolors. He continued to take poetry classes and to write poetry. He even took voice lessons at the age of 76 and began singing in the choir! When people marveled at his many interests, he would say, “It keeps me young!” or sometimes “Youth doesn’t have to be wasted on the young.”

Harv also assembled a group of people who wanted to make wine. They met every week to experiment with new versions of wine. He became an honorary male member of a group of women called “Wild Women of Wine” who loved wine tasting and wine lore. Some of those same women were members of the garden club where Harv was president. He was the creator and editor of their newsletter when I met him.

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works with spiritual energy and who has served as a “big picture man” for major corporations and now works for the federal government.

Many people called Harv a “Renaissance Man” because of his love of the arts and his insatiable intellectual curiosity—a curiosity that prompted his spiritual as well as intellectual search. He began attending the 11 a.m. service in the Silent Unity Chapel at Unity Village every Monday through Thursday, and his love of spiritual truths deepened.

In my 12 years with him, he researched a vast array of philosophies and disciplines to discover who he was and what he was here to do. His bookshelves overflowed with material about history, science, mythology, theology, psychology and philosophy. He delved deeply into Spiral Dynamics and extensively researched the levels and evolution of consciousness. He also zeroed in on particular times in history that contributed to his understanding of that psychological/spiritual model.

At age 76 he began to teach classes and workshops, presenting to more than 50 churches or other organizations. He believed that sharing his ideas and his understanding with others was contributing to the evolution of consciousness, and he articulated this in all of his classes.

One of the outcomes from his classes was a group he founded at age 86, which he called the “Scenius,” based on an idea that began in the late 18th century. The concept is that individuals can be more productive and do their best work when buoyed by like-minded peers. People who want to discover and affirm their own “genius” can do so more effectively by meeting with others for mutual support. The group Harv founded met weekly, and it still meets, even though Harv is no longer physically with us.

Harv continued to create, to present, and to inspire people through his last days. Even from his hospital bed in intensive care, he requested his computer and projector so he could share with us what he had learned from insights he had received while being in the hospital. His youthful energy was an inspiration to the nursing staff, who smiled at the notion that he could do such a thing in ICU.

Harv was not only a lifelong learner—his consciousness was ageless. He never gave in to “old age.” He was forever young at 87. George Bernard Shaw is quoted as saying, “Youth is wasted on the young,” the implication being that when you age, you lose your youthful spirit. Harv proved that adage wrong. He embodied youthful energy till the end of his earthly life, and made the most of every minute of it.

Now when I think about age, I remind myself that age is just a state of mind. We can all cultivate and maintain an “ageless state of mind” by consciously seeking new things to learn. We can all cultivate and maintain an “ageless state of mind” by consciously seeking new things to learn. The state of our bodies needn’t dictate the state of our minds.

Harv has now moved on to another sphere of learning and growing. I suspect that in this new dimension he is asking questions, seeking more understanding, and sharing that understanding with all whom he comes in contact. Others are being blessed as we have been.
My Ageless and Aging Mother*

By Paula Coppel

My mother has always been my role model, my inspiration and my best friend. She taught me the power of positive thinking and gave me the great lifelong gift of unconditional love.

Over the past several years, my mother, now 85, has survived kidney and bladder cancer, a broken pelvis, a hysterectomy and an inner ear infection that has permanently impaired her balance. But none of those have held her back. Most days she still goes for a three-mile walk on her treadmill. She eats healthfully and maintains a surprisingly competitive spirit, especially when it comes to Nintendo Wii sports.

If we start the Wii at around 9 p.m., it is a given that we will be up past midnight. Mom becomes energized and doesn’t

*See Betty’s photo, page 48.

The Hilltop Heart

By James Dillet Freeman

If only you have a hilltop heart,
Life’s compass points lie far apart;
What heights and depths life has, how far
The hilltop heart’s horizons are!
Hills have a way of stretching minds;
Lured-on imagination winds
Up over crests and down through hollows.
Hills tug at the heart, and the heart follows,
Dares the undared, tries the untried.
Hills always have another side;
If you make the climb up and descent,
You may find the valley of content.
Though a hilltop heart may never stand still,
Yet the heart was meant for the top of a hill.

My mom has always been the great inspiration of my life. She is a survivor, to be sure—but, even more, she is a thriver, no matter what life hands her.
Life has dealt her some extreme hardships—from growing up in a poverty-stricken southern Georgia home to being left by my dad after 38 years of marriage. Through it all her credo has been, “I will not let this defeat me.”

She is strong and she is a fighter, but now she is clearly up against her most unrelenting challenge: aging. Some things—like her balance, her hearing—have worsened and are not likely to improve. Getting around is harder; falling is a constant threat. She is helped by hearing aids and canes—nevertheless, on a deeper level, she must surely grieve every physical loss.

In our younger years, we take it for granted that if we get sick, we will fully recover and go on. But one day, that changes. We are faced with the realization that our days of being able to do some things are over, for good. That’s hard and should not be glossed over. We needn’t wallow in the limitations of aging, but neither should we mask them with false cheer. Some days will be dark and dreary. At such times, we who are not in that state of being can be the patient, compassionate listener. And we can remind our loved one of all that still is possible—all the blessings yet to be enjoyed.

Mom is not an exercise fanatic—she just loves to be active, and she loves a challenge. Though her health setbacks have slowed her down at times, they have not defeated her—she will not let them. My mom’s indomitable spirit and positive attitude have always inspired me—in fact, they probably propelled me into Unity. It is Mom who taught me the power of positive thinking from the time I was old enough to understand what it meant. It was she who introduced me in my teen years to Maxwell Maltz’s *Psycho-Cybernetics* and the concept that “You are what you think you are.”

“I want to stop! Her persistence has paid off in that she now holds the record in our family for perfectly completing the Wii downhill slalom ski run. It is beyond endearing to see her standing on the Wii Balance Board™ in front of the TV, with her walker in front of her for support, zooming perfectly right and left through each set of gates—raising her arms in victory at the end.

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No Other Way

By Martha Smock

Could we but see the pattern of our days,
We should discern how devious were the ways
By which we came to this,
The present time,
This place in life
And we should see the climb our soul has made
Up through the years …

Unity co-founder Charles Fillmore epitomized an ageless state of mind when he said at the age of 94, “I fairly sizzle with zeal and enthusiasm and spring forth with a mighty faith to do the things that ought to be done by me.” But when Charles faced his own death, even he felt like he had failed—he had not expected that death would ever come.

I suppose as we confront our own mortality we come to the realization that we are not our bodies—we are Spirit temporarily housed in this physical frame. And we eventually reach a point where we are willing to surrender the encasement to move on to the next plane.

In the meantime, just as we keep our cars tuned up, we are best served by keeping the old ticker in good shape. I am thankful to have a mother who “gets that” and has passed it on to me to live up to. Any time I need to motivate myself to go to the gym, I remember my mom on the treadmill, sweat pouring off of her, beaming with pride, and I know that now it is my turn.

We can remind our loved one of all that still is possible—all the blessings yet to be enjoyed.

We can remind our loved one of all that still is possible—all the blessings yet to be enjoyed.
1. Develop a Great Attitude

The golden years can truly be better. Or maybe it is perception because people who have gone through the challenges of 50 or more years have a wider viewpoint. Surveys such as a new Pew Research Center study show that Americans grow happier as they age. Even with the economy unsettled, seasoned seniors are generally happier than younger generations. There are many complex reasons, of course, but attitude seems to be the most important thing. Winston Churchill once said, “A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.” It’s pretty much up to you whether the glass is half full or half empty.

2. Keep Your Perspective

There are several studies from a number of different countries around the world, including ones released this year, that show that almost everyone goes through a challenging period of midlife crisis when confronted with empty nests, career choices, sexual challenges, sickness and the realization (sometimes triggered by the death of family members and friends) of the brevity of life. The worst seems to hit women around age 40, and for men that...
is important, there are simply too many illustrations throughout history of people who came from horrible family situations who decided to begin a new heritage. **Be aware of your genetic weaknesses and strengths. You can't choose your genes, of course, but you can be alert to tendencies that run in your family and seek to overcome those traits.**

4. **Work Out Regularly**
Resolve to get more fit and healthier than ever before. Regardless of where you are right now—good, bad or in between—you can get better. **Study after study of people from all age groups, even those in their 90s, show that those who follow a program of health and fitness tend to live longer and with a better quality of life.** Exercise also helps you battle the depression, loneliness and vulnerability that can accompany aging by burning off cortisol (produced naturally by the adrenal glands when angry or scared, often increasing blood pressure and blood sugar while weakening the immune response) and releasing endorphins (the body's natural pain relievers) into the bloodstream. As you challenge your body to stay fit and balanced, your overall sense of well-being and happiness naturally rises.

5. **Eat to Be Happy**
Now, this isn't an endorsement of bad eating habits. Instead, it is an encouragement to help you realize that you...
really are what you eat, especially as you develop better habits. Dr. Michael Roizen, in his powerful book, *The RealAge Diet*, says that something as simple as eating fish two times a week can actually make you look and feel younger. The same can happen with a diet filled with fresh fruits and vegetables, whole-grain breads, beans and brown rice. He and co-author Dr. John La Puma show how they have helped many reverse aging by changing lifestyle choices. They point toward 51 food choices and strategies that are age busters. Learn them. Live them. Love them. Happiness and contentment are wonderful by-products.

6. Plan for the Future
Avoiding tomorrow tends to cause a buildup of dissatisfaction and unhappiness. Update your will. Make financial plans. Seek the advice of competent legal and financial professionals, but ultimately make sure that you are making decisions that will be best for you and your loved ones. Be sure to inform your loved ones of your decisions. Better yet, include them in your choices and seek their input on your plans. Denying reality never seems to help. Facing the future does.

7. Grow Your Faith
Study after study show that people who believe in God and actively practice their faith are generally much happier and able to handle life’s challenges. Even medical studies (including several from the prestigious Duke University) show that prayer plays a large role in overcoming illness and injuries. The best part is that it is never too late to begin your walk with God. Nor is it ever too late to grow your faith.

8. Be a Giver
We have already quoted Winston Churchill about the importance of a good attitude. He also said something as relevant about giving: “You make a living by what you get, you make a life by what you give.” Sharing yourself and what you have is one of the key components of happiness. Giving brings purpose. What do you have to give? Time? Talents? Concern? Money? Help? Attention? There are people of all ages around you whose lives could be changed forever through you. You have a life of
seasoning and experience. Whom can you help? What can you give? Where can you volunteer? You may be surprised at how your selfless acts can begin to help you more than you can imagine!

The Keys

We have mentioned eight keys to happiness. There are many more. What is important to notice is that keys are only effective when you actually use them to unlock the doors in front of you. Opening those locks requires effort. Sometimes it requires patience and expertise. Your efforts, however, can open new vistas to all that you desire.

Do you want to be happy? There are lots of keys. The choices are up to you!

Age-Barrier Breakers

From http://www.squidoo.com/theoldestpeoplewho#module148369323.

Oldest College Graduate
Nola Ochs, graduated college at age 95; started at age 65

Oldest Blogger
Ruth Hamilton at 109

Oldest Absentee Voter
Sister Cecilia Gaudette at 106

Oldest Biker Chick
Bess Tancrelle at 102

Oldest Skydiver
A couple of unnamed 101-year-olds. Herb Tanner, 93, is the oldest named.

Oldest Person to Climb Mount Everest
Yuichiro Miura at 70

Oldest Scuba Diver
Bert Kilbride at 93

One-Question Quiz:
What Does Age Mean?

A. You are limited by your chronological age.
B. There is no limitation to what you can do at any age.
C. There are fewer limitations than many people think.


The Gift of Youthing
By Toni Stephens Coleman

My mom taught me that aging is as natural and normal as every other part of life. She demonstrated how to live as fully and completely as possible and be wholly present to the opportunities and experiences in every stage of life. She showed me that life should be fun, expansive and, well, lively!

My mother, Hypatia Hasbrouck*, developed a unique relationship with aging during her 80 years.

She was the daughter of a housemaid who served the Wrigley family (of chewing gum fame) on Catalina Island, California. Notable physicians also had homes on the island, and Hypatia maintained a lifelong friendship with the daughter of one of them, Dorothy Franciscus. Dorothy’s family took Hypatia in when she was in her midteens, frail and sickly, and helped her regain her health. The love and generosity Hypatia received in those early years began a tradition of gratitude and giving back that nourished and motivated her throughout her lifetime. She was a proponent of “make new friends but keep the old, one is silver and the other gold.” She liked to have friends in all age groups. She would tell you that loving friendships helped keep her young.

During her lifetime, the science of medicine changed drastically. Hypatia studied to keep up with the latest treatments and therapies for maintaining a healthy

*See Hypatia’s photo, page 49.
body. She was a big proponent of vitamin and mineral supplements. As an intelligent and educated person, she firmly believed she could find the solution to every health challenge.

This she combined with another learning experience from her earliest days. Her grandma Emma had given her Wee Wisdom® (Unity’s former magazine for children) and taught her early New Thought principles. Hypatia considered it her responsibility to stay well. The idea of “thoughts held in mind create after their kind” was a powerful potion to her. Hypatia used her mind to maintain good health throughout her lifetime. Sometimes she outpictured the healing of herself; sometimes she was led to those who could heal her. She put no limits on the source of her wellness. She trusted that there was always a way to heal every condition. Daily she affirmed her perfect health.

At the age of 45, Hypatia completed her licensed Unity teacher training and retired from her career as a high school English and drama teacher. She entered Unity School of Christianity to become a Unity minister. At the time she said she had given 25 years to public education; now she figured she had 25 to give to the ministry.

She determined with zeal at the age of 70 that she might minister for another 20 years. She said she’d “rather wear out than rust out.” She was passionate about the ministry where she could do all the things she loved: teach, write and perform on stage.

With both seriousness and tongue in cheek, Hypatia adopted the “17th Century Nun’s Prayer” as her credo and hung it next to her bed:

"Thoughts held in mind create after their kind"

**17th Century Nun’s Prayer**

“Lord, Thou knowest better than I know myself that I am growing older and will someday be old. Keep me from the habit of thinking I must say something on every subject and on every occasion. Release me from craving to straighten out everybody’s affairs. Make me thoughtful but not moody; helpful but not bossy. With my vast store of wisdom, it seems a pity not to use it all, but Thou knowest Lord that I want a few friends at the end.

“Keep my mind free from the recital of endless details; give me wings to get to the point. Seal my lips on my aches and pains. They are increasing, and love of rehearsing them is becoming sweeter as the years go by. I dare not ask for grace enough to enjoy the tales of others’ pains, but help me to endure them with patience.

“I dare not ask for improved memory, but for growing humility and a lessening cocksureness when my memory seems to clash with the memories of others. Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally I may be mistaken.

“Keep me reasonably sweet; I do not want to be a Saint—some of them are so hard to live with—but a sour old person is one of the crowning works of the devil. Give me the ability to see good things in unexpected places, and talents in unexpected people. And, give me, O Lord, the grace to tell them so. AMEN.”
In addition to a dedicated prayer practice, around age 60, Hypatia got the idea of “youthing.” Periodically she would submerge herself in a process of mental and physical activity focused on claiming and renewing health and vitality. She considered it a gift to herself and to her family to be the best she could be. “I’m youthing!” she would proclaim gleefully. This process included therapies from all the healing arts, hypnotism, meditative retreats, diet, dance lessons, new friendships, romance, travel and fun adventures—whatever she felt Spirit was leading her to for her perfect health. It delighted her when she fit perfectly into a group of 50-year-olds!

Some people are surprised to learn that Hypatia was a championship Scrabble® player. It was a part of her “youthing” strategy. After retiring from Unity of Palo Alto at the age of 70, she moved to Portland, Oregon, and joined a Scrabble club. Within two years, she was competing in tournaments all over the world and winning! It surprised the heck out of her, but she worked hard and felt she was keeping her mind young.

When Hypatia passed in 2001, she had elected to go in for hip replacement. She had a major teaching and ministry trip planned to Ohio and the Great Lakes region, and she wanted to be able to walk with ease. The surgery did not go as expected. Perhaps she remembered what she had said so often about wearing out. In her sleep, still young, she slipped from this physical plane.
Much of this planning is built around the mental picture of physical depletion, financial need and extreme age. It is wise to move with the flow of life into a creative experience beyond a career of work, but the important thing is, don’t think of retirement with its connotation of giving up or going backward. Think advancement, the joyous step forward to a new and equally creative period of life. Beginning with a positive advancement plan, one may engage in a continuing preparation for an eventual transition into new activity of creative and useful experience.

Make a career of youthfulness through a persistent curiosity into the why of things and a relentless quest for knowledge of yourself and the world in which you live. Don’t accept the belief that education is for young people. Your mind-potential will continue to expand if you provide a constant flow of challenges. When you stop learning, you begin to grow old. When you stop using your mind and body fully, conserving your strength, and “acting your age,” you begin to grow old. Research has proven that persons up to 70 can learn Russian and shorthand just as easily as youths. The problem is not that you are too old to learn, but that you think you are.

Charles Fillmore, when well past 90, said: “I fairly sizzle with zeal and enthusiasm and spring forth with a mighty faith to do the things that ought to be done by me.” Can you honestly say this about your life? Living longer, of itself, is not the answer. As Tagore once remarked when told of scientific efforts to increase the life span: What for? What are you living for? More important than living long is living deeply. An old Scotsman prayed: 0 Lord, keep me alive as long as I live!

All-important is what you do with each day. Act as if today is the most important day of your life, as if you are going to live forever. This day you are young or old according to your thought, not according to what or how much has gone before. This day is your opportunity to experience the dynamic life of God. When someone asks your age, or when you are tempted to “act your age,” remember, “My age is none of my business. My business is to keep in the flow of dynamic and creative life, and to celebrate myself!”
I grew up in the seventies, when the Equal Rights Amendment was in the news and women were streaming into the workforce in unprecedented numbers. Mary Richards of the *Mary Tyler Moore Show* was the iconic woman of the decade, living life her way and on her own.

My mom was June Cleaver, not Mary Richards. She got up each morning before my dad so she could have breakfast on the table for him as soon as he was up. She wore an apron in the kitchen and had dinner on the table right when Dad got home from work. Before he came in the door, she freshened her lipstick. Having never learned to drive, she relied on Dad and bus transportation.

Did Mom feel she was missing out on something? Not at all. She embraced her life. She lived exactly how she wanted to live, and she made sure I knew I could do the same, whether I chose to live life in a kitchen, in a law office, or dealing blackjack in Las Vegas.

I appreciate her support all the more now that I am a mother myself. When I was a child, she was just “Mom.” Washer of clothes. Preparer of meals. Fashion victim. But then I grew up. I raised two daughters, and I saw my mom in a different light. My mom became Betty.

Betty got her driver’s license in her fifties. Not a confident driver, she rarely drove. So when my dad passed away, I fretted that my mom would become reclusive. Those fears were unfounded. Betty made sure she went out every day, whether to the store, to church or just around the neighborhood. She stepped out of her comfort zone.

When Dad made his transition at 64, he hadn’t even retired yet. A massive heart attack took him from us suddenly,
leaving us reeling. What would my mother do? How could she manage without Dad?

Betty exhibited strength and courage I never knew she had. I thought the family would need to look after her, but she looked after us. She knew maintaining a house on her own would be difficult with her closest children 45 minutes away. She sold the house she and my dad had designed together and built a new one close to my sister’s family, knowing she would need their support and not wanting to burden them with a long drive.

Betty never wallowed in whys and what-ifs. She of course grieved her losses. But she also embraced life and knew without a doubt that divine order was at work, always. The move to a new neighborhood gave her the chance to reconnect with an old friend and meet new neighbors. Soon my former kitchen-bound mother had a posse of friends and was going to exercise class and McDonald’s and on weekend drives to the country. She took train trips to visit me and my family. She played Scrabble and Yahtzee™ with the grandkids and when losing would exclaim, “Children, leave the room so I can cuss!” Betty discovered the music of the Rolling Stones and bought a CD player.

My mother always believed in the good. She lived in expectation of good, her heart open and ready to receive.

When challenges arose, she turned them over to God. And she looked to Scripture for comfort. Betty would often jot down Bible verses and leave them on the kitchen counter or on her nightstand for easy reading. Psalm 23 was a favorite.

As she got older, the “new” house became harder for her to keep up. The local grandkids were grown and had their own families, and my sister was busy with work. A retirement community close to my home looked inviting, but we kids didn’t want our mom to think we were trying to put her in a home. We thought about visiting the place ourselves first, but my sister caved and told Mom about our upcoming appointment at John Knox Village. Betty said, “Take me with you!” And the next adventure began.

She once again embraced change and opened her heart to whatever was coming next, knowing God only had good in store. That was always her outlook—that good is ours for the taking. As a young person, I could not understand why my mom didn’t stress out over much. Oh, she got angry. (Believe me, I was no angel.) And she loved and respected Dad but did not always agree with him. But Betty was not a hand wringer. Anger dissipated as quickly as it came. And she wasn’t one to fret. As a person given to obsessing, pacing and sleepless nights, I just didn’t get it. How could my un-cool mother be so … chill?

I didn’t get it till I started working at Unity. Reading the Unity Principles and the teachings of Charles and Myrtle Fillmore and Eric Butterworth, I had a lightbulb moment: How I respond to any given circumstance is all up to me. Anger, fear, frustration, serenity, calmness, happiness? Each one is a choice. And the power to choose is all in me.
That is what Betty had been living all along. She chose happiness. She rode out times of sorrow and disappointment, fear and displeasure. But overall, she was joyous.

One of the ways Betty expressed her joy was with her red shoes. She found some Easy Spirit shoes she loved and she bought them in several colors: blue, black, white, even gold. But the red ones became her signature look. Wherever we went, at least one person would enthusiastically comment on those red shoes. Restaurants, doctor’s office, the mall … my former white socks-and-loafers mother was a fashion icon of the retirement set.

She sported the appropriate attitude to go with the sassy shoes. Apparently in the elder years, one has a tendency to speak one’s mind. God bless the waiter if our food wasn’t served fast enough. “Aren’t you going to bring our hamburgers?!?” After having a stroke, Betty found that speech could sometimes be difficult, but she perfected an eye-roll to convey disgust that would make any teenager proud. My daughters, Mallory and Jessie, and I dissolved into giggles frequently after receiving Betty’s “Are ya kiddin’ me?” look. She was also a bit of a rascal, conning visitors to her hospital room to take her out for ice cream, in spite of her restricted diet. As Mallory’s friend said, “That Betty … she’s a firecracker!”

Betty made her transition recently, on her terms, telling us from her hospital bed to let her go. I still see her in my daughters’ faces. I hear her in my niece’s laugh.

And I feel joy whenever I wear red shoes.

Life is a constant flow.
Drawing on the joy of Spirit within
We can sail along on the river of life
With a sense of peace.

—Dorothy Pierson
God Had an Answer

By Geneva Price*

I was dressed and walking out of the doctor’s office when I casually said, “Oh, I have this sore spot…” Before I finished my sentence, he instructed me to return to the examining room and get undressed again. He found a tumor.

I was immediately admitted to the hospital for surgery, staying in an eight-bed ward where two women died during my stay. After the procedure, I was told to come back for a follow-up in two weeks. A few days later, I was called back in and told the difficult news—I had breast cancer.

The next day, at age 30 with two young children at home, I underwent a mastectomy. It was a difficult experience compounded by the fact that in 1960, unlike today, breast cancer was not a widespread health issue.

Multiple treatment and recovery options, support groups and national awareness campaigns didn’t yet exist. In fact, chances for survival were slim; particularly for a black woman living in segregated Kansas City, Missouri.

Yet despite the social climate and limited medical technology of the day, I was lucky. According to my doctor, had the tumor been detected and removed earlier than it was, they might not have discovered the cancer.

Now a breast cancer survivor, I was expected to simply move on. But how?

God had an answer.

*A See photos of Geneva on page 49.

A New View of Life

A few months later, in an effort to keep me busy, my family decided to open a summer camp on my aunt and uncle’s “little piece of land with a little pond” in Sturgis, Michigan, where I had spent my childhood summers.

Designed for children ages 3 to 7, the camp had a barn that was converted into a loft with surplus army beds, and numerous outdoor adventures, including fishing and swimming at the lake, picking and eating wild berries, hiking down the road, and singing ... always singing.

The campers and staff were from urban and rural, multicultural and various religious environments: Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Greek, Japanese, Argentinean, Micronesian, Amish and Mennonite, just to name a few.

During that first summer, developing the program, training staff and administrative responsibilities seemed easy, as my focus was on the sheer beauty of the simple things in life. I became more and more aware of the sunrise, early morning fog, constantly changing clouds, the lake, woods, wildflowers, birds, even creepy crawly things.

At 30 I was seeing the world, not through rose-colored glasses but through the eyes of my own children and our young campers. I slept in the renovated barn with them, and they blessed me with
their love, enthusiasm and joy for living. Thoughts about future “what ifs” were lost in each moment of each day. Through their eyes I saw life.

**God had an answer.**

**How I Found Unity**

As children, my sister and I received Unity’s *Wee Wisdom* magazine as an annual Christmas gift. I still have a copy from 1934.

I remember the “Prayer of Faith” that was included in each copy and my parents talking about the Unity Prayer Tower (now called Silent Unity). Frequently, in-laws from California came to Kansas City to attend retreats at Unity Farm (now called Unity Village).

In 1978 a friend asked if I would sing two songs at her church, a hobby I’d had since childhood. With no formal training, and in front of a crowd, I sang. They loved it.

That was my formal introduction to Unity. And with the exception of vacations and my recent illness, I have sung in a Unity church every Sunday.

**I’ve Got the Music in Me**

For me, music says what words sometimes can’t. It has a way of expressing any emotion we experience as individuals.

It’s impossible for me to share how many gifts I have received through music. Now I sing all the time, and each song is two prayers: one for the gift of my voice, and one for the opportunity to use my gift.

As the years went by, I began singing with local theater groups and other engagements, recorded what became a top gospel hit in several cities across the country, and when I was 70 I founded a jazz quartet—The Wild Women of Kansas City. We have been singing together for the past 12 years, and I have no plans to stop.

**God had an answer.**

**Life Is What You Make of It**

I’m 82 years old now, and my life journey since the breast cancer diagnosis has been truly remarkable. Life is really what you make of it, and how you choose to see it.

I’ve been involved with the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure in Kansas City for many years. In 2010 I was selected to serve as the organization’s National Honorary Team New Balance member, and at my home church—Unity Temple on the Plaza—there was “Team Unity 50 for 50,” named in honor of my 50 years as a breast cancer survivor.

Despite my successes, I have had setbacks as well. In 2011 I had knee surgery, a stroke and a pressure ulcer which reduced blood flow in an area of the body that can cause skin to die.

When all of this happened, I didn’t have to ask, “What am I supposed to do?” because I knew: God has an answer.

Beyond my next song, cancer walk or anything else in my life, I am moving into a fresh new realm; a comfortable course of daily living where I am grateful to God for my gift of life.

*The more you live, the better it gets.*
You Can Bloom at Any Age

By Noelle Sterne

It is never too late to be what you might have been.
—George Eliot

Can you believe you’re already (gulp) ___ years old?
Do you feel it’s too late to do that secret something you’ve always dreamed of? Keep repeating you’re too old-tired-sick-weak-set-in-your-ways-disorganized-undisciplined-busy-uneducated-rusty-fearful-fat-thin-poor-far behind ...?

Or maybe you’ve bought into the subtle beliefs that so many people catch like the flu: They all start with “You get to be a certain age and ...
• You’re supposed to think only of retirement.
• You’re supposed to get all kinds of ailments.
• You’re not supposed to even think about doing many things, much less break new ground.
• You’re supposed to live quietly, meekly, resignedly.
• You’re supposed to wail, “It’s too late!”

Well, you do not have to accept such contagions, especially today. The number of older adults in the United States is “unprecedented” in our history, and they’re more healthy, educated and active than ever before. In fact, the number of older adults is predicted to double from 2000 to 2030; centenarians have increased by 53 percent since 1990!

Barrier Breakers

The barriers and stereotypes are breaking up and making news. At this writing, Tao Porchon-Lynch, 94, teaches yoga in New York City and gives ballroom dancing exhibitions. In the fall of 2012, a major publisher will bring out the new blockbuster, The Lawgiver, by award-winning novelist Herman Wouk. He had his 97th birthday in May 2012. Last year, writer and teacher Bel Kaufman taught a course in Jewish humor at Hunter College. Her age? 100.

When we remind ourselves of such “late” accomplishments, we may find it easier to plunge into a third business at 48, crack the books in a university degree program at 52, or lace up our running shoes at 64. But most of all, the examples above may help us change our mindset.

Ageless Principles

How? To accept and visualize what we desire. Jesus put it this way:

“For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him” (Mt. 25:29).

Even though these words are often quoted in relation to coveted material wealth (with frustration over the seeming unfairness), they really refer to consciousness. When we believe we already have what we want, we will have it. When we believe we don’t have it, we not only won’t get it but our focus on the lack will take away what little we have.

So if you have faith and feel that you already have what you desire—energy, health, verve, enthusiasm for your dream, the means, the mental acuity, the persistence—you’ll be
shown the steps to take. Soon you’ll experience what you’ve dreamed of.

Deepak Chopra writes, in a book whose title is a mantra for us all:

“You are much more than your limited body, ego, and personality ... In reality, the field of human life is open and unbounded.”—The Essential Ageless Body, Timeless Mind, Harmony, 2007

Remember the child you were? The one who felt, and knew, that life is unbounded, endless, exciting, and filled with all possibilities? Whatever you see and judge in the mirror, that child is still yearning to express.

**Dreams at Which I Cannot Fail**

So make a little list of your dreams now. No one else has to see it. As you write it, picture and feel yourself confident, alive, eager.

1. I would like to begin ____________________________
2. I would like to resume/continue _____________________
3. I would like to complete ___________________________
4. I’ve always wanted to _____________________________

As you muster the courage to unleash and articulate your dreams, everything in life will support and sustain you. In the inspiring words of James Dillet Freeman, “Dare to be what you are meant to be and do what you are meant to do, and life will provide you the means to do it and be it.”

You and your dreams are already provided for. If you’re blooming late, so what? It’s never too late to rephrase your thoughts, refine and correct your words, take the first steps, and reactivate your dreams for your life. Age has nothing at all to do with it. Late bloomers flower bigger!

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Through prayer, publishing and spiritual education, Unity is always here to support you in expressing your divine potential for a healthy, prosperous and meaningful life:

**Prayer Support**

Call Silent Unity® at 1-800-NOW-PRAY (669-7729) for personal prayer anytime, day or night, or visit www.silentunity.org to submit your prayer request online.

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Our friends who have shown us how to achieve

The **AGELESS** State of Mind

Dorothy and Phil Pierson, page 3

Harv Morrow and E.J. Niles, page 7

Betty McDonold with granddaughter Jess and daughter Lila, page 34

Hypatia Hasbrouck, page 27

Geneva Price, page 40

Geneva, second from left, with the Wild Women of Kansas City

Paula’s mom Betty Scott playing Wii, page 13