

How to stay young as the years go by

Harvey Mackay

Youth, it has been said, is wasted on the young. That would be a travesty if it were true. Fortunately, youth is not only a time of life; it's also a state of mind. I stopped counting after my 39th birthday, but I still consider myself young. And I intend to stay that way!

Having a youthful outlook and attitude is possible at any age, just as being an old fogey can start at a very young age. As I said, I choose youth!

Want to stay young at heart? Here are some ideas to help you:

- **Keep only cheerful, positive friends.** You can pick your friends, and I like to choose those who are positive and people who challenge me. They make me feel good. They don't drag me down or make me angry at the world. Negative people see the difficulty in every opportunity, while positive people see the opportunity in every difficulty.
- **Keep learning.** I think Henry Ford put it best when he said, "Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at 20 or 80. Anyone who keeps learning stays young. The greatest thing in life is to keep your mind young." I've always said that you should be in school all your life—never stop learning.
- **Enjoy the simple things.** Don't forget to take time to enjoy the things that you like to do—go for a walk or to the movies, read a good book, watch a favorite TV show, spend time with your family. You have to have a good balance in life.
- **Laugh often.** Starting your day with a good laugh, or at least a big smile, is as beneficial to your health as it is to your mood. Scientific studies at Northwestern University and Fordham University concluded that laughter benefits the heart, lungs, stomach and other organs. It relaxes tensions, changes attitude, and increases the body's natural painkillers. And it has no harmful side effects.
- **Stay in shape.** Exercise is good for your mind as well as your body. Studies show that healthy employees have decreased absenteeism, better performance and improved morale. I've always felt that a healthy workforce is a productive workforce. The human body is the only machine that wears out faster if it is not used.
- **Cherish your health.** There is nothing more important than your health. Stay in shape so you can improve your chance for good health. If you're healthy, do what you can to preserve it. If your health is unstable, improve it. If it is beyond what you can improve, get help.
- **Be happy.** You are responsible for your own happiness. We sometimes convince ourselves that life will be better after we get a better job, make more money, get married, have a baby, buy a bigger house and so on. Yet the accomplishment of any of those events may not make any difference at all. There is no magic secret to happiness. Happiness starts in your head.
- **Don't stress out.** You can't escape stress, but you can avoid creating unnecessary stress. You just need to find a stress reliever. Mine is sports—going to a sporting event, playing golf, swimming or jogging. If the stress just won't go away, then you have to make some changes in your life that might be more stressful in the short-term but healthier in the long run.
- **Don't take guilt trips.** Rather, take a trip to some location or maybe it's just the mall, but escape occasionally. I remember a story about the worry tree. At night an accountant would go home from work and place all his worries on a tree in his front yard. The next morning he would pick up those worries on his way to work, but surprisingly, they weren't as heavy the next day.
- **Visualize yourself as youthful and with endless energy.** I learned years ago that visualization is the most powerful means of attaining personal goals. Visionary people can achieve whatever they want by determining a plan to attain it and expecting positive results. It doesn't do the planning and it doesn't anticipate the obstacles. It gives you a real idea of what is possible, if only you want it bad enough. Vision is not so much what you think as *how* you think. If you can visualize it, you can make it happen.

Mackay's Moral: If you want to stay youthful, stay useful.

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