

Tips for Better Living

Early in 2012, the death of an elderly woman who lived in Georgia (USA) and who, at the time of her death, was believed to be 132 years old sparked controversy around the world. Her age was not what caused the controversy – what ignited an ongoing discussion was what she had attributed her longevity to. Back in 2010, she had claimed the title of ‘world’s oldest person’, but, what is fascinating, is that she had attributed her long, healthy life to drinking a bit of brandy daily.

On the other hand, a woman who lived in France, and whom it is believed lived to the age of 122, is known to have credited her long life to chocolate, olive oil and frequent bicycle riding.

Irrespective of what these centenarians attributed their longevity to, the bottom line is that we all aspire to live a long life – especially if that life is anchored on a successful career, a loving family and good health.

The question, however, is: What needs to be done for one to live better? Some people would simply say that ‘an apple a day will keep the doctor away’. However, keeping the doctor away does not necessarily mean that one is walking a path towards better living and enjoying a good life.

Approaching life in a holistic manner may just be the secret to better living; this is according to Penny Holburn of Penny Holburn Coaching, a Sandton-based certified personal coach and a member of COMENSA (Coaches and Mentors of South Africa). She believes that a handful of things would truly be the key to better living. Here are some of the factors which, according to the positive Holburn, may be the key to better living:

Centenarians

In developed countries, the number of centenarians is increasing at approximately 5.5% per year, which means doubling the centenarian population every 13 years, pushing it from some 455 000 in 2009 to 4.1-million in 2050. Japan is the country with the highest ratio of centenarians to population (347 for every 1-million inhabitants in September 2010). http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Life_expectancy

Eating Well

Paying attention to one's health by committing to a balanced diet as well as drinking enough water, sleeping well and exercising regularly will definitely produce excellent results. A basic, healthy balanced diet should include:

- ▶ A variety of fruits and vegetables.
- ▶ Foods high in fibre.
- ▶ Less sugar and salt.

Regular Tests

The Heart and Stroke Foundation South Africa recommends the following basic annual tests:

- ▶ Blood pressure.
- ▶ Cholesterol.
- ▶ Blood glucose.

Stress Management

According to the latest statistics (www.Good-Therapy.org), stress is capable of increasing the risk of premature death by as much as 43%. Stress management is of the utmost importance to maintain health and wellbeing and to restore peace and serenity while maintaining creative productivity.

Self-knowledge

Holburn believes that self-knowledge is a fundamental requirement if one wants to live better. This knowledge should focus on the individual's physical and mental wellbeing. Self-knowledge also allows an individual to create an informed and safe routine which is structured around one's weaknesses and strengths.

It is also important for an individual to make decisions that sit well with their conscience as well as match their preferences. Individuals should be cautious when they choose a career, friends and environments, because one's surrounding immensely affect one's life.

Stocktaking

Holburn also recommends setting time aside regularly to reflect on one's life in order to evaluate goals and achievements in a realistic manner. "Today's environment is a fast-paced one which requires quick reflexes, quick thinking and rapid decision-making, so, if one is not careful and focused, the balance that is required can easily 'slip through your fingers'. A well-balanced life is essential for personal effectiveness, peace of mind and living well. Therefore, as a general rule of thumb, it is important to craft a plan early on in your life if you want to achieve success;



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it is crucial to clearly articulate one's goals and not leave things to chance," concludes Holburn.

Always bear in mind that one man's meat is another man's poison.

Speaking of men, a few studies have been carried out to establish why women generally tend to outlive men. The findings are always varied and interesting: some studies have come to the conclusion that genes are the main differentiator, while other others conclude that this is the case because men tend to live riskier, more stressful lives. However, the most interesting findings put this interesting observation down to women's yo-yo diet, which, it is believed, contributes to women's longevity.

So, whatever one's secret for a better and longer life may be, eventually it may be required for that secret to become public knowledge one day. Be prepared to share it with pride! □