



Caring, Loving Relationships

Friends are good medicine. So are supportive family members and co-workers. To age well, we need to be connected with people so that we can freely give and receive love. As human beings we thrive on caring for one another. When we have positive relationships, we stay healthier, live longer, and are more successful. Even loving relationships with pets and plants nourish our well-being.

Contrary to stereotypes, the majority of elderly persons are not socially isolated. They are usually in contact with family members, although they are unlikely to live with them. Most family members care for older loved ones as long as they are able to do so.

If you are an older person, stay in contact with friends and family. If you are young, make it a point to enjoy the companionship of older persons.

Lack of social support is as dangerous to your health as smoking, obesity and not exercising. Helping others is good for your body and soul. It reduces excessive focus on oneself, builds strong communities, and improves mood and well-being.

A society's quality and durability can best be measured by the respect and care given to its elderly citizens. —Arnold Toynbee

There are millions of ways older persons can reach out and serve others: Take a frail friend to the grocery or a social gathering; Teach a child to cook or read; If you are spiritually inclined, pray for those who come into your heart and mind.



**INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF
♦ OLDER PERSONS ♦**

We are never too old to make new friends. With a trustworthy friend, there's no need to hide any part of who you are. You can share dreams and happy times as well as sadness and confusion.

Friendship is always an adventure. Even in the closest of relationships, it is best to respect the mystery and maintain a degree of reverence. Give your friends space to breathe, change and make mistakes.

Never underestimate the influence of your touch, your thoughtfulness, your smiles, your generosity, and your words of encouragement—such gestures of kindness ripple out, blessing all those around you.

How can our society do a better job of involving older people in school, work and social activities? What would be the advantages of doing so?



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