

I'm 95 and I Don't Want to Live With Those Old People

I'm not 95, but a few years ago, when I hit 60, I had to take a moment and consider how I got to this big number. It used to sound so old. You may be surprised to hear that all of a sudden, I'm defining "old" differently. I've also realized that we see ourselves younger than our age. No great revelation there.

I can't tell you how many times I've heard an adult child tell me their parent, who happens to be over 90, won't move because they don't want to live with all those old people. When I first started hearing this my first thought was "good for them! They're obviously doing well and don't want to move just because they've reached a certain age".

Aging shouldn't be defined by a number. If you're staying fit, eating healthy, safe living alone, socially engaged and finding joy in your days, a number shouldn't be a determining factor in deciding to move. Having said that, the reality is that the majority of individuals over 90 aren't fitting that profile. Many have had health setbacks, which begins to limit them in numerous ways. They may have given up their car and now depend upon others for transportation, which can also mean losing a chunk of their independence.

The next time you hear someone say they're over 90 and living in their own home, prepare to celebrate with them. But ...before the celebration begins, take a moment to ask a few more questions:

- What did they do for fun today besides watch TV? There's nothing wrong with enjoying television shows, it just shouldn't be your primary mode of entertainment.

- Are they still cooking and what did they have for dinner last night? Was it a healthy and well balanced meal or was it a microwavable dinner?
- When's the last time they had a hug from someone? Studies have shown that those who are touched on a regular basis have lower stress hormone levels, which leads to lowering blood pressure, maintaining good moods and increasing pain tolerance.
- Do they eat alone or are they having a conversation with someone over a meal? I repeatedly hear from my clients that food always tastes better while having a conversation.

A full life is made up of more than functional activities. It includes people to talk with, to share with, to hug and love. Not every other weekend, but daily. It includes joy, laughter, and purpose.

I wish you 90+ years of living each day to its' fullest, wherever that may be!

*This article is a reprint of a blog posted by
Adele Lund, Laureate Group's Director of
Community and Business Relations*