

Personal Philosophy of a Retired Rocket Scientist

By: Jim Thacher

Our society values physical fitness, high tech information processing, and a pluralistic world view. My personal philosophy must meet the challenges of aging in the 21st Century.

Physical Fitness As I grow older my body cannot do what it once did. Sleep apnea, heart problems, and cancer have invaded my once stronger physique. Even so, I can take steps to maximize performance within my present limitations. Medical science has provided oxygen concentrators, a pacemaker defibrillator, and surgery to minimize the effects of debilitation. By carefully monitoring oxygen concentrations, blood pressure and skin condition, I try to stifle incipient problems. Nutritious meals provide fuel to a body that seeks to maintain fitness through three-mile walks, one-half mile swims and nine-mile stationary bike rides. Weight and flexibility programs supplement aerobic exercises.

Mental Stimulation I select from the vast array of high tech information to further personal goals and provide mental stimulation. For example, I try to increase my computer skills by learning PowerPoint. My mind remains alert as I interact with others in professional societies of engineers, a writers group, and the students I tutor in junior high math. I learn new things by traveling and from electronic and print media, supplemented by live performances.

Spiritual Growth My spiritual growth occurs because of a personal relationship with God and others, made possible because God first showed His love to me. Many claim each man's truth is equally valid, but I base my life on a biblical world view. The Bible teaches absolute truth because Jesus claims to be the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6). A systematic Bible study program coupled with prayer to begin and end each day enables me to understand better what God is teaching me.

Social Interactions Great joy comes from sharing what I have learned with others. I conduct Bible studies with men from a local rescue mission. In my community I find many opportunities to grow through volunteering. I prepare Bible quizzes for a local youth club, judge student exhibits at a science fair, and evaluate public speaking. These activities help me deal with the loss of tasks that comes as a person grows older. I find my role shifting from being an implementer to a mentor. I also try to achieve balance by effective time management that focuses on doing the most important thing. Each day is a celebration with my wife of fifty years. Among the inheritance I will leave to my sons are notes based on over forty years of Bible teaching. The legacy to my grandchildren includes a poem uniquely tailored to each one's personality.

Prospect By physical fitness, mental stimulation, and spiritual growth, I focus on aging gracefully in the 21 century. I look forward to God's timing when he calls me home.