

# AGING GRACEFULLY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

By: Mary Jane Knights

I believe that the secret to aging gracefully is to SERVE others. My plan of action is:

S is for starting each day reading my scriptures. I want to continue to serve others and what better way to know how to serve, than to follow the pattern of my Savior. He is the example of “Love one another” and “Do unto others.” As I think of His example, I am often prompted to go and to do, and I love to serve others. It takes me out of myself and helps me to grow. I love interacting with others, forgetting myself and seeing to others’ needs. Sometimes it can be as simple as a smile, a greeting, a visit, a flower or a treat.

E is for exercise. If I don’t use it, I lose it, or...gain it! The wonderful exercise classes at the Senior Center are motivating and helpful, and I love my walks through the neighborhood with dear friends. I find it important to do breathing exercises and to use my brain in working puzzles and stimulating it to growth and enhancement. At age 83, I have been blessed with good health. I feel I can retain this good health as I use it to serve others.

R is for reading. I love to read biographies and learn from others’ lives and the difference they have made in the world. Many are great examples to me. I love to read the histories of my own ancestors, to learn, and be inspired by their steadfastness and sacrifice. Yes, they had their challenges. We all do, and we can learn from them. I also love to write, and I have spent a great deal of time writing family histories, hopefully to benefit my posterity.

V is for value. I value my family and the choice times we have together, at family dinners, playing games, family trips, and family reunions with extended family. I treasure the years I tended grandchildren, and now it is so much fun to interact with my great grandchildren. I had wonderful, loving, caring parents who trained me in the way I should go, by their love and their examples of service. I hope my great grandchildren will remember me for something worthwhile. This keeps me going and doing, to leave a legacy of service for them.

E is for Each day. What a treasure is found in each day, each moment. I am not on the countdown, but I am counting each day as a blessing and an opportunity to go forward. I remember my great grandmother, who walked across the plains at age 8 and then flew in *an* airplane at age 88. She kept on living. I like to think positive, to look ahead, to challenge myself to be better, to do better, to make each day worthwhile, and to make each day a giving, growing experience.

Yes, serving others is the key to aging gracefully.