

# Aging ... a discussion of facts, fears, and how to add rewarding years





# The Aging Process

The aging process is a natural, progressive deterioration of physiological functions, leading to increased vulnerability to disease and death, encompassing physical, mental, and social changes that occur over time, resulting in a gradual decline in physical and mental capacity.

UGH



**Muscle mass drops**, fat distribution shifts — even if you *don't* eat more cake.

**Skin gets thinner, drier, and less elastic** - wrinkles and sagging

**Bones weaken** — osteoporosis

**Metabolism slows** — tire faster

**Senses dull** — hearing, vision, and taste take a hit.

**Wisdom increases** (usually) — life experience counts for something.

**Memory slips** — names, keys, why you walked into a room.

**Slower processing** — like your brain is loading on dial-up instead of high speed.

Killing time  
Before we die

R. I. P.

Born 1950

Died 2025

THE  
Space IN  
Between

Buried 2035

**In The End,  
We Only Regret  
The Chances  
We Didn't Take**

We don't beat the  
Reaper by living longer.  
We beat the Reaper by  
living well and living fully.



20 30 40 50 60 70 85 = 65 years

15 years

*23% of your life remains*

**Fear of dying can contribute to a fear of aging**, sometimes called *gerascophobia* (fear of growing old).

The connection can work like this:

**Fear of death → awareness of aging → fear of getting older → anxiety about physical decline and lost time.**

A person may not actually fear *being older* itself. They may be afraid of what aging represents:

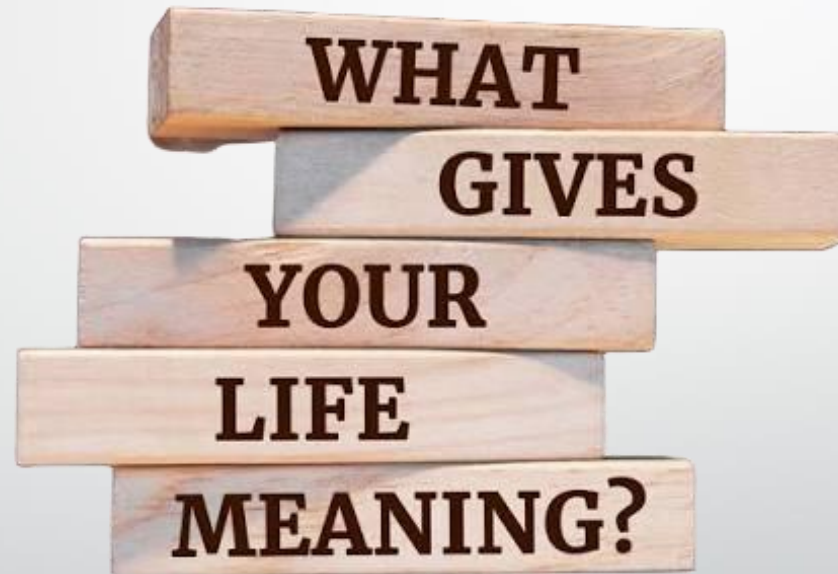
- Getting closer to death
- Losing independence
- Declining health or physical abilities
- Becoming dependent on others
- Losing loved ones
- Regretting things they haven't done
- Feeling that time is running out

Interestingly, **thinking constantly about aging can strengthen the fear**, because every birthday, gray hair, physical limitation, or reminder of mortality can become evidence that "I'm getting closer."

But there is another side: **accepting that aging and death are unavoidable can sometimes reduce the fear of both.** Instead of trying to eliminate thoughts about death, a person can gradually change their relationship with those thoughts.

**A healthier approach isn't necessarily to convince yourself that death isn't frightening. It's to gradually separate aging from dying**

# A story about Carol



# What thoughts come to mind when you think about aging?

weakness

limits

fear

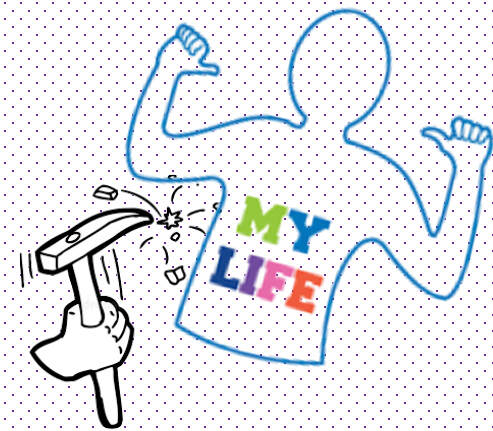
change

opportunity

declining

fragility





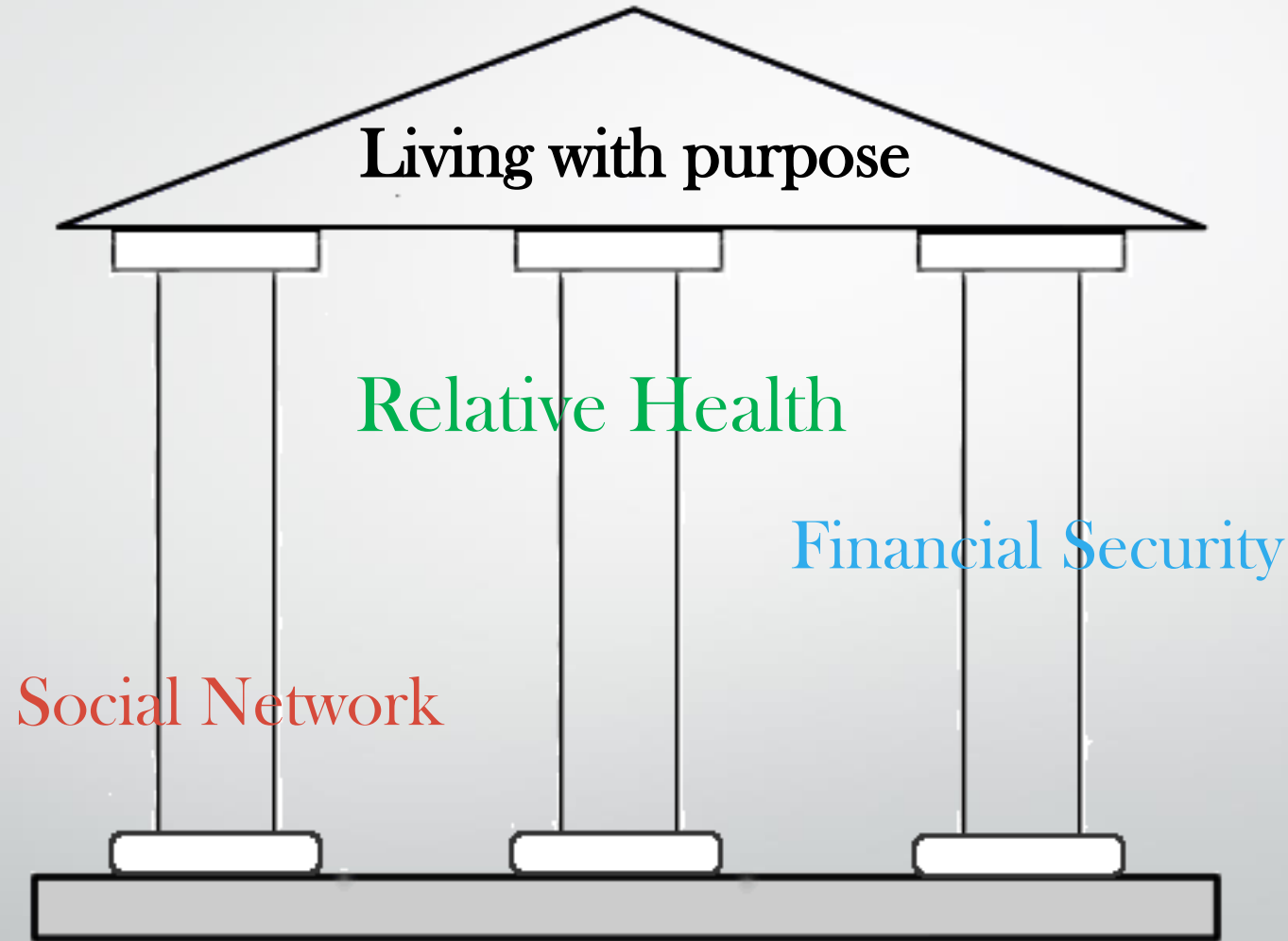


*Aging can be a  
struggle*

The key to aging  
successfully is to pay  
as little attention to it  
as possible.

- Our body
- Our mind
- Our mortality
- Our finances
- Our relationships

# Three Pillars of Successful Aging



# Viktor Frankl: The meaning of life is to have purpose

*Man's Search for Meaning*

One's purpose is self-determined and changes over time

Loss of spouse/partner

Retirement

Being or stopping being a caregiver

Health issues

Change in finances

Our lives are a series of experiences



# Our lives are a series of experiences

Aging affords us the opportunity not only to redefine ourselves but  
also to experience different experiences of joy

## Killing time before we die . . .

Can be a profound way to think about aging and mortality.

It can mean feeling as though life is simply a countdown—**filling the time between birth and death** with work, entertainment, routines, and distractions. That perspective can grow stronger as we think more about aging and how much time remains.

But there is another way to frame it:

**We aren't merely killing time until we die; we are using the limited time we have to experience life.**

The distinction is subtle but important:

- **Killing time:** “How do I make the time pass?”
- **Living time:** “What do I want to experience, appreciate, learn, or share while I have it?”

Sometimes ordinary things—talking with someone you care about, watching a sunset, laughing at something silly, helping another person, pursuing an interest—don't *fill* time so much as **give the time meaning**.

A useful question might be:

*If you knew that you had a limited amount of time left, what would you stop doing just to make time pass, and what would you start doing to spend doing the things you loved to do?*

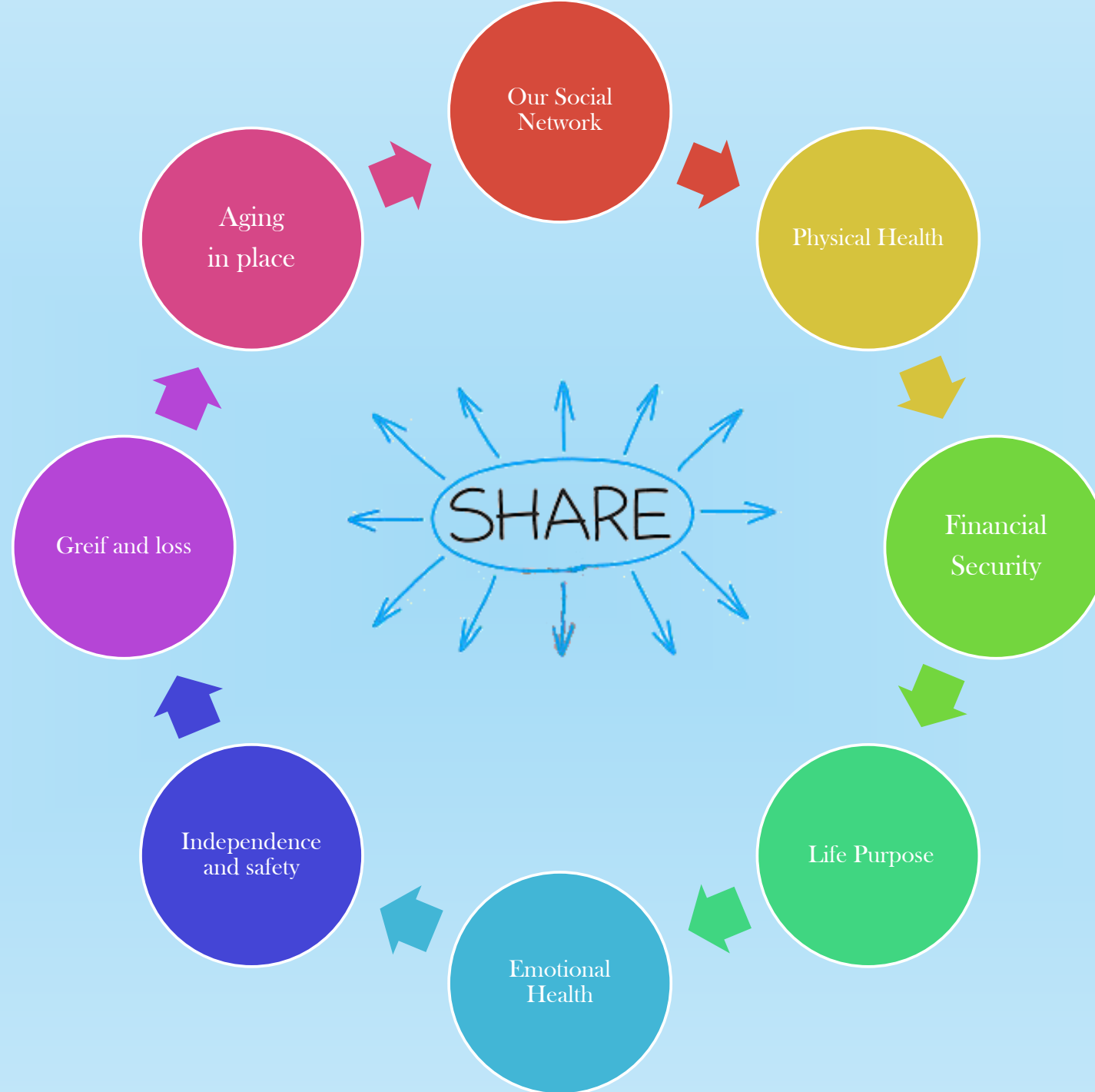
# Aging can remove our identity

What you do and who you are aren't the same thing. You aren't your job or your roles. But over time, they can start to feel like one.

## Consider your dying regrets

- Spent more time with my loved ones
- Not spending so much time working
- Not speaking their truth
- Not enjoying the present
- Holding onto anger and resentment
- Not expressing love

## Tell your life story to yourself



# Filling our lives with joy as we age



FROM NOW ON, WE  
WILL REFER TO ALL  
OF OUR PROBLEMS  
AS OPPORTUNITIES.



WHEN ONE DOOR CLOSES,  
ANOTHER DOOR OPENS



Enthusiasm

Impulsive



self-serving

unrealistic

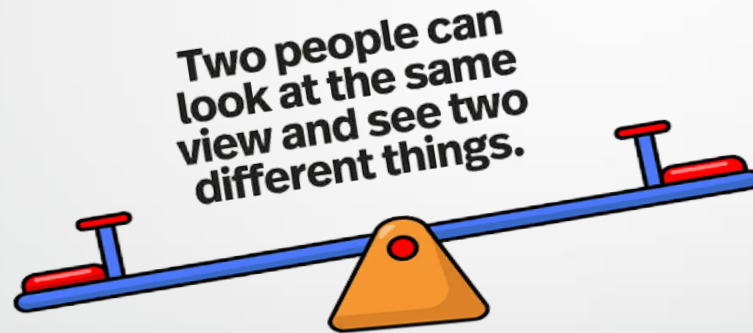
Experience

Practical



Thoughtful

considerate



*Successful aging is not  
trying to stay young*

*Resist*



Make peace with  
aging



*Surrender*

