



## VAN FORUM NOTES

### **Attitude Aging & Fearlessness**

July 11, 2006

Fairview Community Center, Roseville

“The golden age is before us, not behind us.”

-St. Simon

Sharon Notch from the VAN Leadership Group introduced the forum and the speaker, Marnie Hensel, Vital Aging Network Leadership Group & Coach (Marn@AttitudeAging.com).

Marnie showed the group a \$20 bill – “How many of you in the room would like me to give you this 20 dollar bill?”

Marnie then crumpled the bill and stepped on it.

“How many people would still like this \$20 bill? The bill has exactly the same value whether it is pristine or whether it is crumpled and stepped on. The issue is Value.”

Everyone has value – you have a great deal MORE value since graduating college, because of the job and life experiences you’ve had in the interim.

This presentation is about fear, attitude and your health – body, mind, spirit. Hopefully at the end of the talk you’ll understand how they all fit together.

What are you afraid of?

Health

Financial

Relationships

What is fear?

False

Expectations

Appearing

Real

Fear doesn’t necessarily diminish with age. You have to face fear. The fear doesn’t go away. The trick is how to overcome the fear.

We’re going to talk this morning about body, mind and spirit.

What impacts your health?

Attitude

Lifestyle choices

Social conditions

Physical environment

Nutrition

Exercise

Some of us pay attention to some of those above. And some you pay attention to some of the time.

Exercise and Fitness Guidelines

30 minutes of moderate exercise most, if not all, days of the week

To obtain even greater health benefits, engage in more vigorous physical activity or for a longer duration.

Exercise and Fitness

Find something you enjoy and are committed to doing on a regular basis.

Exercise with a friend.

Instead of meeting a friend for lunch... take a walk together.

Vary your routine to avoid boredom.

Try something new that you have done before.

Marnie asked the attendees if anyone has started a new exercise or sport in the last few years:

A few people raised their hands:

One person started Tai Chi.

One person started Aerial Classes.

One person started Tango lessons.

Marnie is going to skydive next summer.

How to Reach Your Goals

Specific

Measurable

Achievable

Realistic

Timely

(SMART)

Discipline is one part of your attitude:

Motivation

Visualization

Organization

Training

Talking to Coach

“Courage is resistance to fear, master of fear – not absence of fear.” Mary Twain.

Husband died on Christmas Day 2.5 years ago. She was to take a grandchild to Peru on a trip the following summer. One week after her husband died she had her knee replaced so she could take her grandchild to Peru. No one told her this was not the best time to do it. Her immune system was down; she had been caring for her husband for 5 years. She had to take the whole winter off the slopes after the surgery to recover. Last winter was her first time back on the hill after her surgery. Her coach took her slowly back to recovery, with discipline and by helping her overcome her fear. She started slowly building back to where she had left off before the surgery, skiing down the hill and going through one slalom gate at the bottom. Each week she would do one more gate.

Overcome your fear and hurdles. We all have hurdles we need to overcome and we can do this through motivation and discipline.

Diet and Nutrition – “What”

Decrease saturated and trans fats

Reduce sugar

Increase vegetables – move to more of a plant-based diet

Increase fiber

8-10 glasses of water or other beverages a day.

Marnie asked: “How many of you feel you don’t eat enough vegetables?”  
(Most people raised their hands).

Marnie stated she drinks a shake every morning. Her shake ingredients include:  
Liquid is green tea, protein is cottage cheese, vegetable is raw broccoli, yogurt,  
and half a banana.

Stress Mastery

Stress and Health

- stress can impact every system of the body and cause disease.

Mind/Body Connection

Use your mind to heal your body.

Hope is essential in healing process.

Healing is about the will to live.

Tips

Increase awareness of stress in your life.

Sources of stress.

Find out where you hold your stress.

Learn ways to manage stress.

Listen to your body.

Get enough sleep – hours before midnight are worth double.

Live in the moment – the present is the only moment here.  
Take time out.  
Take time to be silent, quiet, have the internal dialogue.  
Relinquish your need for approval – there is great freedom in that choice.  
Try a physical activity.  
Loosen up the body – and the mind.  
Shed the burden of judgment – you will feel much lighter.  
Give in sometimes – no one is always right, you may find that others begin to give in to you.  
Help someone else – takes your mind off your own worries and makes you feel glad about what you're doing.  
Get a massage.  
Write in a journal.  
Laugh a little: "Laugh is a smile that bursts."  
Laughter: "Jogging for the soul."  
Enjoy your hot shower, rather than worrying about upcoming projects.  
Taste your food.  
Feel your muscles stretch and work when you exercise.  
Enjoy fresh air when you take your noon-time walk.  
Make the most of every moment – "that's what life is, moments strung together like pearls on a necklace."  
Hurrying to get through the task is like hurrying through life.

#### Mind-Body Interventions

Relaxation, breathing, exercises.

Look up Jon Kabat-Zinn – he has done a lot of work on mind-body relaxation.

Marnie walked the attendees through a breathing exercise: inhale for 4 seconds through the nose, hold for 7 seconds, exhale for 8 seconds out the mouth.

Inhale quietly through your nose, exhale loudly through your mouth.  
Exhalation takes twice as long as inhalation – the actual amount of time you spend on each one is not important, but the ratio is.

Marnie suggested taking big breaths and using the breathing relaxation exercises during bad traffic.

#### Emotions & Attitudes

Impact on Health

Anger and Cynicism

Hopelessness and Mortality

Positive psychological states

Negative attitudes and immune system

Forgiveness

Stay active and involved.

Marnie stated she feels she is “preaching to the choir because all of you are here and active and involved – give yourself a mental pat on the back for doing that.”

#### Emotions & Attitudes

Can you recognize when an emotion is not helpful and shift it?

Do you believe that you can change your attitude?

Are attitudes and beliefs limiting your life?

Marnie asked the group to think about: “Who are the people who are older than you whom you admire?”

Speaker feels that the people she admires are those who have a good attitude.

Quote from Charles Swindoll:

“Attitude impacts your life – it is more important than actions, than money, then failures, then the past, then successes, then what other people say or do, more important than appearance, giftedness, or skill. It will make or break a company, church or home. We have a choice today of the attitude we embrace for that day. We cannot change our past, cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way, cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have – our attitude. Life is 10% what happens and 90% how I react to it. So it is with you – we are all in charge of our own attitudes.”

#### Healthcare and Self –care Tips

Regular check ups

Self-exams

Average 8 hours of sleep

Avoid tobacco and drug use

Drink alcohol in moderation

Safety measures – seat belts, helmets, etc.

Focus on the big questions:

Why am I here?

Who am I?

Where is there hope?

Search for Meaning

Find a connection outside of ourselves:

Growing body of scientific evidence suggest that people who attend a religious/spiritual service weekly can help reduce mortality risk, lower risk for depression, etc.

Think about your purpose at this stage of your life – maybe you want to change what you’re doing. Maybe you’re happy with what you’re doing. It never hurts to think about it.

If you could live your life over again, what would you do differently?

Be more reflective.

Be more courageous.

Be clear and purposeful.

“Our purpose evolves, like the nautilus that adds new chambers throughout its life.”

Support Systems

Form stable long term relationships.

Maintain ideal body weight.

Eat a plant-based diet and make sensible food choices.

Don't smoke.

Find meaning and purpose in life.

Foster sense of spirituality.

Support systems: Family, church, friends, financial – on whom can you count?

Health risks of being alone and isolated are comparable in magnitude to the risks associated with cigarette smoking, blood pressure and obesity.

Cannot stress how important relationships are:

Do you make time for the important people in your life?

Do your personal relationships feel balanced in terms of giving and receiving?

Do you listen attentively to others without judging?

Do you have a social support network?

Do you have a pet?

Have a social support group that embraces you, supports you, through good times and bad.

“Every life is a saga, a mortality play to be written. Every life has a story that could hold captive an audience for several hours – after all, it has held you captive all your life.”

“Of all the institutions, family matters the most.”

Life Happens.

A few of the lessons Marnie has learned throughout life:

Distance separates.

Children and grandchildren grow up.

Men don't call when they say they will.

Love waxes and wanes.

Hearts break.

Careers end.

Jobs come and go.  
Parents die.  
Time passes.

Most important thing speaker has learned:  
Can't do anything more significant than giving children and grandchildren self-esteem.

Marnie introduced brochures and information about a website,  
[www.thenewmedicine.org](http://www.thenewmedicine.org).

This is a website designed to help you "Take Charge of Your Health: My Health Planner. A personal guide to improving your health and wellbeing."

Website states:

"We tend to think of ourselves as healthy when we're not physically sick. But true health is about fostering total wellbeing by nurturing your mind, body and spirit. With our free online guide, My Health Planner, we've made it easier for you to make meaningful changes that may improve your overall health and wellbeing."

Marnie has applied at the UMN for a Master's of Liberal Studies (MLS).  
She'll be taking classes at UMN Center for Spirituality and Healing to become a Health Coach.

There is also a certificate program to become a Health Coach.

Have to have a healthcare background to get the certificate. Another option is to add this as a minor to the Master of Liberal Studies.

She will take some classes in gerontology.

Attendee Jan Hively explained a little more about the MLS program:

Masters of Liberal Studies program (MLS program) – you can take classes throughout the departments of UMN. You get an advisor and a committee and work with them about what you want to do and get out of the program – and they will work with you and the UMN.

Contact at Center for Continuing Education:

Jo Ellen Lundblad  
lundb002@umn.edu  
612-625-3898

Another attendee suggested people check out Hamline University as well for the Master of Liberal Studies program there.

One attendee asked if VAN could mail the newsletter to someone who doesn't have email.

Jan Hively responded that everything is email or web-based. If someone has a friend who would like one, print one off for them, or encourage them to go to a library and get assistance going to the VAN website.

Attendee asked for copies of the PowerPoint presentation used at the forum.

Marnie said it was okay to attach her Power Point presentation to the VAN notes.

Sharon Notch closed the forum by thanking everyone for coming, mentioned the donation opportunity and reminded people to fill out the evaluations.

**Participants were invited to the next forum with Dr. Dale Anderson on aging and humor at Boutwell's Landing in Stillwater on August 8<sup>th</sup>.**