

# **10 Advantages of Aging for Psychological Health**



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# 10 Advantages of Aging

**Advantage: any state, circumstance, opportunity, or means specially favorable to success, interest, or any desired end.**

# **10 Advantages of Aging**

**Daily and weekly strategies**

**Health behaviors, relationships,  
activities, and emotional well-being**

# **10 Advantages of Aging**

**Define the advantage or characteristic**

**Present research findings**

**\*Take home message**

**Person as an example**

# **Top 10 List Advantages of Aging**

# **10. Been there, Done that**

**Retirement: extended vacation vs. opportunity for exploration**

**Social engagement, volunteering, generativity are related to health (Cherry et al., 2010; Wang & Shi 2014) Prune social network (Carstensen, Isaacowitz, & Charles, 1999)**

**\*Volunteering, generativity, leisure are good for psychological health**

# 10. Been there, Done that



# **Grandma Moses 1860-1961 (101)**

**Farmed in VA and NY**

**Began painting at age 78**

**1,500 canvasses (\$3 to \$5 initially,  
then \$8,000 to \$10,000)**

***Fourth of July* - White House (stamp)**

***Sugaring off* - \$1.2 million in 2006**



# **9. Conscientiousness**

**Thorough, careful, vigilant**

**Predicts longevity (Bogg & Roberts, 2013)**

**\*May increase health behaviors**

**\*Avoid being too agreeable (health)**

# 9. Conscientiousness



# **Benjamin Franklin 1706-1790**

## **(84)**

**Newspaperman, first chain of papers**

**Poorly edited and printed papers**

**13 virtues: temperance, frugality, sincerity, justice, humility, etc.**

**Scientist – lightning is electricity, lightning rod, refrigeration, bifocals**

# 8. Self-Acceptance

Unconditional care, acceptance, and kindness toward self in difficulties

Benefits: healthy emotions—> immunity (Allen, Goldwasser, & Leary, 2012)

\*Can learn <http://www.self-compassion.org/>

# 8. Self-Acceptance



# **Helen Keller 1880-1968 (87)**

**At 19 months, meningitis or scarlet fever left her deaf and blind, frustrated**

**Anne Sullivan spelled words in hand**

**Disappointed to not speak normally**

**Advocate for people with disabilities, 12 books, spoke in 40 countries, met every president from Cleveland to Johnson**

# **7. Gratitude**

**Thankful to receive something valuable from others**

**Positive emotions, cope with stress, less depression (Emmons & Mishra, 2011; Hill, Allemand, & Roberts, 2013)**

**\*Say “Thank You” often**

**\*Start the day with thoughts of gratitude**

# 7. Gratitude





**Jimmy Stewart 1908-1997 (89)**

***It's a Wonderful Life* – favorite movie**

***The Philadelphia Story* – best actor, 1941**

**Rejected by Army on weight (138, 5 less)**

**Enlisted in Air Corps, flew 20 missions**

**Raised money for St. John's Health  
Center, Scouting, and civic education**

# **6. Experience with Success**

**Accomplishments in personal and professional life**

**Better at problem solving, resolving conflicts (Trötschel, Hüffmeier, Loschelder, Schwartz, & Gollwitzer, 2011)**

**\*Use perspective taking in negotiations.**

**\*Use experience to solve problems.**

## 6. Experience with Success



# **Eleanor Roosevelt 1884-1962**

**(78)**

**Persuaded Franklin to pursue political office after polio in 1921**

**First to have press conferences, write newspaper column, visit troops, miners, government workers**

**Delegate to UN, Oversaw Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

**Top 10 Admired Person 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

# **5. Experience with Failure**

**Wisdom from reflecting on difficult experiences (Laidlaw, 2013)**

**\*Identify good from difficulties**

**\*Equip for current difficulties**

**\*Empathy**

# 5. Experience with Failure



# **Eleanor Roosevelt 1884-1962 (78)**

**Both parents and a brother died in childhood, raised by grandmother**

**Learned of FDR's affair in 1918 after 13 years of marriage, 6 children**

**Mother-in-law told grandchildren that she was their real mother**

**Failed Community in Arthurdale, WV**

# **4. Compassion**

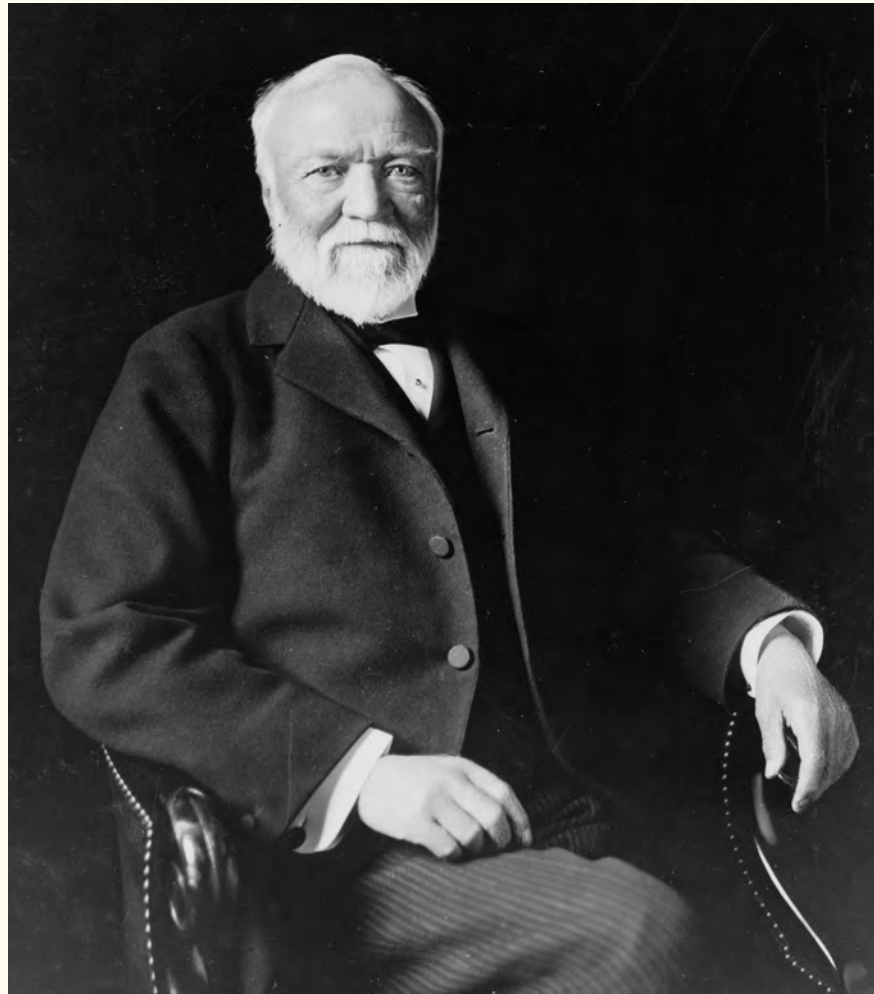
**Awareness of and desire to lessen another's suffering**

**Perspective taking (resilience, stressful life events, women) (Moore et al., 2014)**

**\*Be compassionate to maintain relationships, provide voluntary help**



# 4. Compassion



**Andrew Carnegie 1835-1919 (83)**

**Family borrowed money to emigrate**

**Learned business from Penn Railroad**

**Invests in iron industry before Civil War,  
supplies steel, pays workers little**

**Gave away 90% of fortune to fund 3,000  
libraries in 47 states, pensions,  
Tuskegee Institute, schools, charities**

# **3. Emotional Health**

**More positive (happy, content, accomplished) emotions**

**Less negative (sad, angry, anxious) emotions**

**More stable, more complex (Carstensen et al., 2010)**

**\*Notice and use patterns to regulate emotions**

# 3. Emotional Health



**Louis Zamperini 1917-2014 (97)**

**Ran 5000 meters in 1936 Berlin Olympics**

**Plane crash WWII, 47 days adrift at sea**

**POW for 2 years, declared killed in action**

**Drank heavily, PTSD, forgave captors**

**Became Christian inspirational speaker**

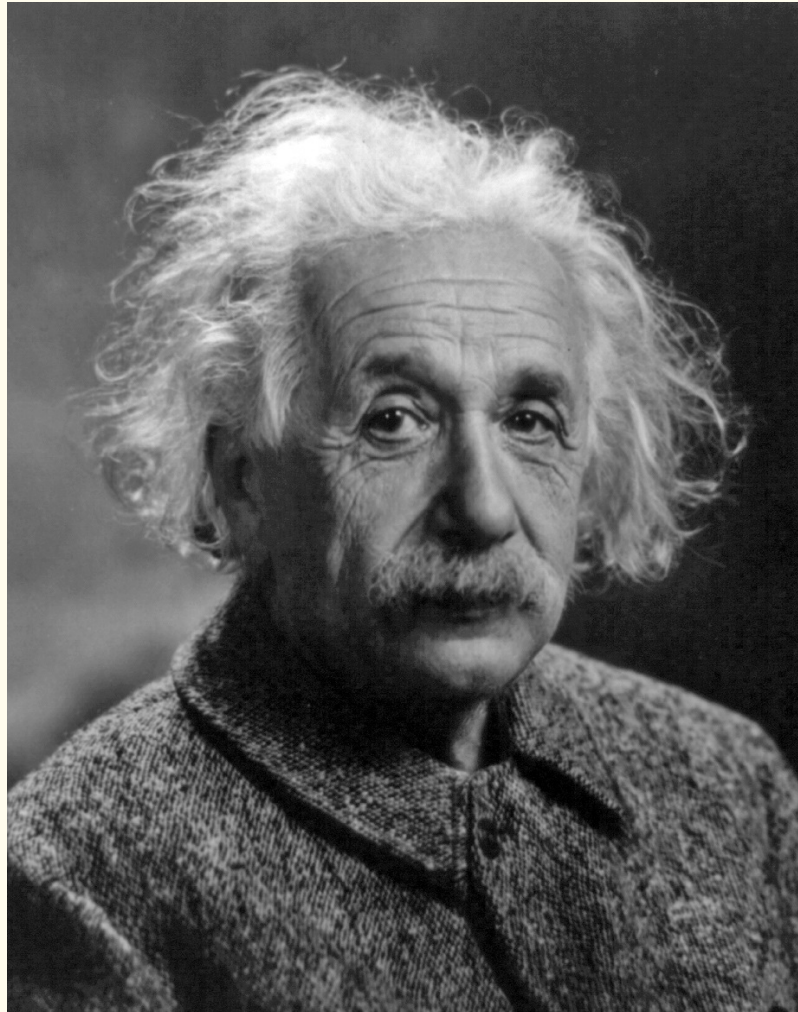
## **2. Brain Plasticity**

**Changes in brain functioning and structure due to behaviors, environment, thinking, emotion**

**Cognitive and aerobic exercises benefit cognitive health (Brehmer, Kalpouzos, Wenger, & Lövdén, 2014)**

**\*Seek an enriched lifestyle for brain health**

## 2. Brain Plasticity



**Albert Einstein 1879-1955 (76)**

**Theory of Relativity, Nobel Prize for law of photoelectric effect, the foundation of quantum theory**

**Pacifist who recommended development of atomic bombs**

**Thomas Harvey (lived to 94) removed Einstein's brain (Driving Mr. Albert), thick corpus callosum, many glial cells**



# 1. Meaning in Life

**“...Order, coherence, and purpose in one’s existence, the pursuit and attainment of worthwhile goals, and an accompanying sense of fulfillment” (Reker & Wong).**

**Related to satisfaction with health (Sherman, Michel, Rybak, Randall, & Davidson, 2011), well-being, stress (Krause, 2007; Zika & Chamberlain, 1992)**

**\*Relationships, volunteering may enhance meaning in life**

# 1. Meaning in Life



**Viktor Frankl 1905-1997 (92)**

**Austrian neurologist and psychiatrist**

**1942 deported to Theresienstadt Ghetto,  
then Auschwitz, psychiatric care to help  
overcome shock, grief, and suicidality**

***Wrote Man's Search for Meaning***

**Developed logotherapy, existential  
analysis of freedom, responsibility, death**

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