

News Column – Donna Krug, District Director and Family & Consumer Science Agent, Cottonwood Extension District

Happy Older American's month

I just noticed that May was designated as Older American's Month, so I'll take advantage of the last day of the month to share some information from Erin Yelland, our Adult Development and Aging specialist at KSU. We are hearing a lot these days about how our seniors may be experiencing loneliness or social isolation. Let's take a closer look and share some ways to combat this.

Loneliness is a feeling or experience that some people might have. It can occur when you do not have as much social interaction as you would like or even after a major life transition – such as divorce, death, a move, or even quarantine due to COVID19. Social isolation is when someone has little contact with other people on a regular basis.

So, what are some ways to combat loneliness and social isolation?

- 1) Focus on your sense of purpose
- 2) Maintain your sense of belonging
- 3) Connect with community groups, family members and friends.

Connecting can be difficult during COVID19 but here are some easy ideas. Pick up the phone and call your friends, step outside and chat with neighbors, mail a letter, connect via video calls, send silly pictures, and try to have fun from afar.

Now for something fun, I'd like to share comedian George Carlin's views on aging.

Do you realize that the only time in our lives when we like to get old is when we're kids? If you're less than 10 years old, you're so excited about aging that you think in fractions.

How old are you? "I'm four and a half!" You're never thirty-six and a half. You're four and a half, going on five! That's the key.

You get into your teens, now they can't hold you back. You jump to the next number, or even a few ahead. How old are you? "I'm gonna be 16!" You could be 13, but hey, you're gonna be 16! And then the greatest day of your life! You become 21. Even the words sound like a ceremony. You become 21. YES!

But then you turn 30. Oh, what happened there? Makes you sound like bad milk! He turned; we had to throw him out. There's no fun now, you're just a sour-dumpling. What's wrong? What's changed?

You become 21, you turn 30, then you're pushing 40. Whoa! Put on the brakes, it's all slipping away. Before you know it, you reach 50.

But wait! You make it to 60. You didn't think you would! So you become 21, turn 30, push 40, reach 50 and make it to 60. You've built up so much speed that you hit 70! After that it's a day-by-day thing; you hit Wednesday!

You get into your 80's and every day is a complete cycle; you hit lunchtime; you turn 4:30; you reach bedtime. And it doesn't end there. Into the 90's you start going backwards; "I was just 92."

Then a strange thing happens. If you make it over 100, you become a little kid again. I'm 100 and a half!
May you all make it to a healthy 100 and a half!

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