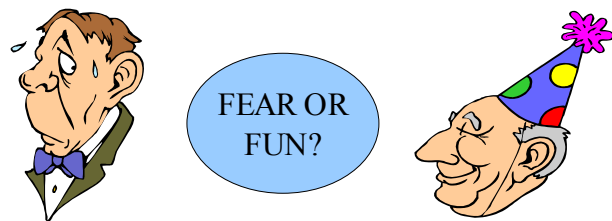


Things in Motion

ALL THINGS ARE IN MOTION AND NOTHING IS AT REST ... YOU CANNOT GO
INTO THE SAME (RIVER) TWICE. --HERACLITUS (540?-480?)B.C.



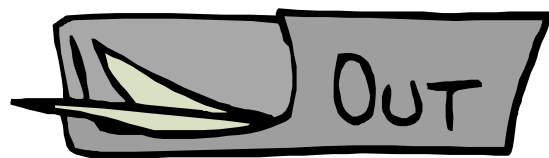
IN LATER YEARS, after retirement but prior to senility, (should one live so long) we face the possibility of living alone—or in a facility designed to provide care for older people—the dreaded “nursing home.” How we accommodate ourselves toward either that solitary existence or one in company with other ancients will determine whether our last days are spent pleasantly or in misery; the choice is often ours to make and merits careful consideration with a realistic appreciation for lifestyle changes that either choice will bring.

Living alone allows us the freedoms which we have previously enjoyed, but deprives us of companionship. We may involve ourselves in a number of groups which will provide social activity, but is not likely to fill the vacant hours that come in the middle of the night, or share a moment of joy or sorrow in everyday living.

Nursing homes often mean giving up your choice of food, sleeping habits, and general day-to-day routines; almost all personal choices will be made for you and much of your privacy is stripped away. The plus side is that your medical needs will be met and you will receive good basic health care. In addition, you may enjoy the company of others whose lives have brought them into your own new environment where friendships flourish and a new sense of camaraderie adds quality to your daily life. How you view your circumstances will determine whether you live pleurably or in misery.

My preference is to live independently, which means living alone. I would definitely arrange to have someone call me every day, however, since it might not be possible to use the telephone if an emergency occurs, and my failure to answer the phone would signal a problem. A number of simple precautions would provide the safety net and timely help when needed. Neighbors in a retirement community tend to automatically note anything unusual and to check on each other as a matter of routine—one of the most common benefits of such a community. Old age is a time of slowing down; of examining life as one lived it in youth; and often a time to remember and to repair breeches in the dike of human affairs. No thinking person wants to chance the possibility of appearing before his maker with bags of un-atoned sins against his fellowman in tow, no matter how atheistic his philosophy has been.

Knowledge is necessary for wise decisions and recognizing what decisions may await us is key to preparing for the final act in our life's play. If we plan ahead, consider our options, and choose wisely, our “time of waiting” will be joyful right up to the moment when we take our leave of this life and step into our future—whatever it is.



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