

GETTY IMAGES



For those who
**think
young**

Our thoughts
affect our
body's aging
processes

By Kenya McCullum

Imagine you have a time machine that will take you back 20 years so you can experience all the things you did in 1993. Not only that, your body thinks it's younger, and you actually start to feel the way you did 20 years ago.

This is pretty much what acclaimed psychologist Ellen Langer did in her seminal 1979 experiment called Counterclockwise. During the study, she took a group of men in their seventies and

eighties to a monastery in New Hampshire and told them to live as though it were 1959. But she didn't mean just play acting: The monastery was filled with mementos from the 1950s and every-

thing they did was a throw-back of that time — from the radio they listened to and the movies they watched. They were even told to only talk to each other about topics they would have discussed during that year.

Langer found that, as the men lived in 1959, their bodies were also taken back in time. Study participants began moving around faster and doing more things without any help — they even played a game of football together. In addition, Langer observed significant improvements in

the subjects' health. Their blood pressure dropped, their arthritis became less severe and their eyesight, hearing and memory all improved.

"It was startling because when these guys put themselves in 1959 and acted as if it were 1959, all across the board, everything she measured improved," said Lyssa Menard, a health psychologist who offers wellness coaching at Strategies for Change. "It gives you an idea of how powerful the mind is in all of this. What you believe is what you get in life and that's true

*What you believe
is what you get in life
and that's true about
almost everything.*

about almost everything.”

How to think younger

Chances are you're not going to recreate the conditions you lived in 20 years ago, but that's okay because you already have a time machine of sorts nestled between your ears. Just as the men in Counterclockwise were able to use their minds to become younger, the way you think can also affect the way you age. These tips can help you change the way you think about aging, and allow you to age gracefully, without falling victim to the common pitfalls associated with adding candles to your birthday cake.

Clean up your mental environment. When you're surrounded by negativity, it can deplete your energy and make you feel older. By limiting your exposure to the people, places and things

that weigh you down mentally and emotionally, you can become lighter and brighter, which goes a long way toward feeling younger.

Adapt and adjust to change. Your body may not be able to do all the things it used to, but that doesn't mean you have to give up entirely on the physical activities you love. One key to slowing down the aging process is adapting to the changes in your body and thinking about them in a different way, says Joyce Mikal-Flynn, a 58-year-old family nurse practitioner and associate professor at California State University, Sacramento.

“I'm a runner. I accept that I'm not going to be able to run a seven-minute mile any more,” she said. “So, I've adapted. I still run, but I run ten minutes a mile. The important thing is I'm still doing it.”

Speak positive affirmations. Stress doesn't just drain you mentally; it can also weaken the immune system and make you susceptible to all kinds of illnesses. In order to alleviate some of your stress — which can lead to more positive health outcomes that make you feel younger — you should watch your self-talk and replace the negative words you say about yourself with positive ones.

“If we go into an illness or a situation already having a negative outlook on it, our bodies are only going to be too happy to oblige and give us a negative result,” said Kathy Gruver, author of “Body/Mind Therapies for the Bodyworker” and “The Alternative Medicine Cabinet.” “Saying affirmations is one of the most powerful things because it's not trying to stop the thoughts, it's just replacing them.”

FEELING YOUNGER THROUGH SELF-CARE

Although self-care is important when it comes to maintaining the positive mindset that will keep us young, it's often hard for us to do, said clinical psychologist Carla Marie Greco.

“It's so hard for women because we're so good at performing and taking care of other people, but when it comes to taking care of ourselves, we forget,” she said.

Some of Greco's tips for self-care include:

- » Take a yoga class. “Going to a yoga class allows you to realize how much your body still can do,” she said.
- » Listen to your body. If your body needs to slow down, slow down. If you need a bubble bath, take one. And even if once in a while your body is screaming for some Ben & Jerry's, grab your favorite flavor and savor every bite.
- » Pamper yourself. “We can look and see the beauty we can now give to ourselves in a way we never did before,” said Greco.

It was great to hear how easy it was for her.

OB GYN

Gynecology & Obstetrics
Associates, PA

We're here for you
850-877-3549

obgynTallahassee.com



Why Minimally Invasive Surgery?

Faster recovery Less scarring
Less risk of infection Less Pain
Shorter hospital stay



A wide variety of conditions affect the uterus, or womb. Traditionally, many conditions affecting the uterus are treated with hysterectomy — the surgical removal of the uterus. U.S. doctors perform about 600,000 hysterectomies every year, making it the second most common surgical procedure.