Each one of us is on a journey, and we all know the destination, but not the route or length of our journey. We can be fearful, resentful, negative and angry—and we all know people like this. Or, we can consider this the most rewarding trip we’ve ever taken. Our trip might last a few weeks or a few decades. But one thing is true: anytime that God/the Universe is not in charge, then YOU’re in charge. Here’s hoping your trip is great!

Each of us may have chosen to attend this session for a specific reason, and they may all be different. If some young pup at work looked through you instead of at you, that was a new aging challenge. Knee replacement, arthritis, hearing aids, physical ailments, a fall? These may be reasons you hate to get old. Gray hair/no hair? Baggy skin? Slowing down & don’t like it? Gee! We’ve never been old before!
That’s OK, because we are going to approach this subject from several angles as we go through a preview of part of this journey. Let’s look at some of these concerns/fears:

- Physical ailments: that gives us a reason to slow down a bit.
- Gray hair/no hair? Think of the $$ you’ll save on hair products.
- Baggy skin? Try baggy clothes.
- Wrinkles? Not when you’re smiling!
- Tired? So sleep longer!
- Hard of hearing? What?? Hearing aids are almost invisible, and simplify your life!

Here are some good things about aging:

- Suddenly, your kids may like you again.
- Grandchildren think you’re wonderful/beautiful!
- You can sleep later in the morning.
- You have time for things you never had time for before.
- Your figure’s not supposed to be perfect, but you do want to strive for good health.
- The only person you need to please is yourself. (And maybe your spouse.)

Staying Safe: Many of us have had or may have little accidents that may restrict our freedom and make life uncomfortable for days, weeks, or months at a time. Let’s look at some practices that may help keep us safe. Let’s call them investments: “A stitch, in time, saves nine.”

- Avoid ladders and unsafe chairs/stools.
- Remove throw rugs from your home.
- If driving, stay in the slow (right) lane.
- In a parking lot, pull through so you can pull out; avoid backing out if possible.
- Take a driving test, and ask your children or a friend to assess your driving.
- When you should stop driving, find a reliable taxi driver to use for most appointments.
- Stay current on immunizations and medical checkups.
- Learn to laugh at yourself.
- Stay involved in life, whether family, community, neighborhood, church, etc.
- Find a good handyperson and hire them to do things you shouldn’t be doing.
- Install sturdy railings at stairs and bathrooms; hold on when climbing up/down stairs.
- Skid-proof the tub and shower.
- Leave a bathroom light on at night.
- Check expiration dates on food; rotate canned/boxed food regularly.
- Label medicines carefully; discard old medicines.
- Never leave the kitchen when the stove is on.
- Carry a cell phone or medical alert with you at all times.
- Exercise regularly and eat a healthy diet to stay healthy.
New Look at Freedom:

Your older years are your Free-est time of life (sleep later, lunch out, travel, etc). You have the opportunity for a new identity & new job, whether volunteer or for pay; full time or part time.

- One person might want to slow down, especially if life has been too hectic.
- Another person might find a new, fun “job” (website, radio show, volunteer work.)
- You can do it your way, and you can change and try a new path anytime.
- This is a perfect time to travel, when we have few obligations.
- You may have time to put your affairs in order so your offspring don’t fight over things.
- We may have time for reading, hobbies, exercise, visiting friends, walks, etc.
- You have a new opportunity to be generous, whether with your time, money, or with your belongings. You also have the opportunity to be generous with encouragement.
- You have time to spend with grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and children who need you.
- We can work at changing our personality for the better. (Remember, you get more like yourself every day; if you’re not naturally sweet, now’s the time to change.)

Time for Gratitude:

If you woke up this morning and had most of your senses: sight, hearing, the ability to move, taste good food, appreciate your family, and enjoy the dawning of a new day, you can be grateful. If your child, grandchild, friend or neighbor called to say hello or inquired about your health, what a gift! If you had enough $$ to pay the rent, food, and medical bills, you can be grateful. If your body works reasonably well and your good days are more frequent than bad days, you can be grateful. If you have someone to love (spouse, partner, child, grandchild, friend, neighbor, and yourself!) you can be grateful.

It’s Time To:

- Tell your story: write and tell your personal history for those who come after you.
- Make sure your will/living will are up to date.
- Write your instructions to your next of kin for your final journey. If that means writing your obituary, planning your funeral, etc., do it!
- Stay in touch with all of the people who are important to you. At the right time, say goodbye and tell them that you love them.
- Give away all the things you can do without, especially when you know that someone you love wants them.
- When that’s all done, live, live, live! And love, love, love!

Resources:

- “Aging as a Transformational Journey,” 6-week course (1.5 hours/week; 6 different presenters) 6 Mondays, 11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m., beginning September 22, 2014, sponsored by the Earth and Spirit Center www.earlandspiritcenter.org Contact Phyllis Fitzgerald at 502-533-4803; phyllisfitzgerald@yahoo.com.
- www.livingsmartguides.com is a comprehensive and free resource center that provides you with the information and tools needed to deal with the unexpected events in life.