What’s Your Relationship with Aging?

Our relationship with the aging process not only tells us important things about how we see ourselves but also about our willingness to see others of all ages as equally viable human beings.

by Jeanette Leardi, ChangingAging Contributor

Forgive me for stating the obvious, but it’s worth noting that people have varying degrees of awareness of this fact. Some of us are conscious of the reality of getting older on an almost constant basis. Others of us barely give it a thought. Most of us fall somewhere in the middle.

What’s more important, perhaps, isn’t how often we think about aging but rather, how we feel about it when we do. Are those thoughts positive or negative ones? Do we welcome them or try to keep them from coming to mind at all? Our relationship with the aging process not only tells us important things about how we see ourselves but also about our willingness to see others of all ages as equally viable human beings.

And so, the question arises: What’s your relationship with aging? We ask the question in this way because living with aging is analogous to having a relationship with another person, which can be described in one of four ways.

Aging as an “enemy”: People who experience aging in combative terms are doing so from a place of fear. To them, getting older means becoming more vulnerable to inevitable degeneration and decline. It’s a threat they struggle to defeat despite the reality that aging is a natural process of life. Nevertheless, they do all that they can to hold aging at bay for as long as possible by using such weapons as Botox, hair dye, and suspect nutritional supplements.

Aging as a “stranger”: People who treat aging as a stranger are basically in denial about the fact that they are getting older. Aging takes on the veneer of unfamiliarity, of being foreign to one’s personal experience. “Who me?” they say. “No way! I’m not old.” Of course, this reaction is based on the same kind of fear with which one confronts an enemy, only the tactic is more one of flight rather than fight.

Aging as a “neighbor”: Many people treat aging in the same way that they might tolerate an unpleasant next door neighbor whom they occasionally feel obligated to acknowledge. They deal with their aches and pains as inevitable latter-years symptoms and stoically endure experiences of ageism, all the while failing to perceive any advantages to getting older.

Aging as a “friend”: This kind of relationship is characterized by meaningful engagement. Like any friendship, aging can be sometimes challenging and problematic but also deeply rewarding in the many experiences and insights it brings. People who treat the aging process as a valued friend mindfully seek to nurture it and defend its honor and dignity. They stand up to ageism just as they would to a bully who is pushing their friend around. And they look forward to more years of such a fulfilling relationship.

It’s easy to see that each of us not only falls somewhere along this enemy-stranger-neighbor-friend spectrum, but that during the course of our lives we often journey from one type of relationship with aging to another.

Our relationship with aging can remain as a loving friendship throughout our lives when we understand that it’s a cumulative experience that provides us with an ever-changing variety of psychological and spiritual gifts — if we are open to anticipating and accepting them.

So I ask again: What’s your relationship with aging?

If you’ve had a falling out somewhere along the line, maybe it’s time to reconcile.

In addition to starting April with some cooler temperatures, we experienced tornadoes AND an earthquake all in the same week. You know what they say about Georgia, “If you don’t like the weather, wait ten minutes!” On a serious note, we had the opportunity to practice our tornado drill during a real weather emergency, and were so grateful to our staff and residents for cooperating in an orderly manner, ensuring that everyone was as safe as possible until the danger passed. In the midst of these extremes, we still had lots of fun with special events like container gardening with the Mansfield Garden Club, the storytelling humor of Andy Irwin, and the music of the very talented, Dave Leinweber. What surprises will May bring?
Save the Date

Events of this month:

Thursday, May 4th @ 12 pm
Concert on the Square @ Covington Square
Load the Bus from the Main Entrance at the Living Room

Thursday, May 11th @ 2 pm
Ladies Tea and the Music of Tom La Mattina
Main Dining Room

Tuesday, May 16th @ 2 pm
Take a trip down a musical memory lane with Rick Harrison
Main Dining Room

Wednesday, May 17th @ 6:30 pm
Family Meeting
Physician’s Panel Q & A
Main Dining Room

Friday, May 26th @ 2 pm
Memorial Day Remembrance
Main Dining Room

Wednesday, May 31st @ 1:30 pm
“Lets Get Cooking” with Chef Adam
Cooking Demo for National Senior Health and Fitness Day
Main Dining Room

Birthdays on May:
- 8th – Bobbie Banks
- 10th – Betty Frederick
- 18th – Hughie Hudson
- 19th – Herman Goddard
- 21st – Bud Northcutt

Anniversaries on May:
- 1st – Ruth Leinweber (2nd)
- 2nd – Colleen Raynor (1st)
- 6th – Jenny Dobbs (3rd)
- 26th – Herman and Grace Goddard (2nd)
- 26th – Annie Ruth Bryars (2nd)
- 27th – Frances Partee (1st)
- 27th – Norma Hickey (1st)
- 28th – Margaret Delameter (2nd)

Congratulations to Amy Stowe and Marti Clotfelter on their promotions to Unit Coordinators! Well done!

Staff Directory of DEPARTMENT HEADS

Executive Director
Gena McLendon
gmclendon@merryvaleal.com

Director of Business Administration
Debbie Adams
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Director of Sales & Marketing
Melissa Chupp
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Programming & Activities Director
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Assisted Living Resident Services Director
Maria Rose
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Food Services Director
Adam Roth
aroth@merryvaleal.com

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Resident of the Month

Myrtle Black
Myrtle was born Myrtle Cordelia Beane, on February 13th, in Caldwell County, NC, one of eight siblings. Myrtle has one son David, who lives in Avon Park, FL, where Myrtle resided before coming to Georgia. Her hobbies were sailing, playing the piano (which she taught herself to play) and creating beautiful art with a process called Paper Tolling. Myrtle came to Georgia, and to Merryvale, in October of 2014, at the request of her niece Ginger Caldwell whose father, Marshall Beane, was one of Merryvale’s first residents.

Justine Sutphen
Ms. Justine was born in Lake Charles, LA. She has three daughters, Diane, LC and Sussan, and two great grandchildren. Justine has a Master’s Degree in Education, and made her home in South Dakota for many years before retiring from teaching after 48 years. Her interests are traveling, reading, shopping and church. Upon retirement Justine moved to Merryvale to be near family in December of 2011.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Tue</th>
<th>Wed</th>
<th>Thu</th>
<th>Fri</th>
<th>Sat</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td>BINGO</td>
<td>9:00 Walking Club –A</td>
<td>9:30 Devotions—D</td>
<td>10:15 Exercise—A</td>
<td>2:00 Bingo—D</td>
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<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td>CAPTAIN DS/BELK</td>
<td>9:00 Walking Club –A</td>
<td>9:30 Devotions—D</td>
<td>10:15 Exercise—A</td>
<td>10:45 Load up Belk —A</td>
<td>2:00 Movie—M</td>
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<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td>Bingo</td>
<td>9:00 Walking Club –A</td>
<td>9:30 Devotions—D</td>
<td>10:15 Exercise—A</td>
<td>2:00 Bingo—D</td>
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<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td>Concert on the Square</td>
<td>9:00 Walking Club –A</td>
<td>9:30 Devotions—D</td>
<td>10:15 Exercise—A</td>
<td>10:45 Load up for COS</td>
<td>11:00 Heritage Ed—A</td>
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<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td>Cinco de Mayo/ Mansfield</td>
<td>9:00 Walking Club –A</td>
<td>9:30 Devotions—D</td>
<td>10:15 Exercise—A</td>
<td>2:00 Mansfield Pick—D</td>
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<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td>BINGO</td>
<td>9:00 Walking Club –A</td>
<td>9:30 Devotions—D</td>
<td>10:15 Exercise—A</td>
<td>11:00 Staff Choice—A</td>
<td>2:00 Bingo—D</td>
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<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td>Worship Service</td>
<td>9:00 Walking Club—A</td>
<td>(walk on own)</td>
<td>10:00 Worship Service—D</td>
<td>2:00 Coffee in the Bistro</td>
<td>3:00 Music Student Rehearsal—D</td>
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<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td>V.E. DAY</td>
<td>9:00 Walking Club –A</td>
<td>9:30 Devotions—D</td>
<td>10:15 Tai Chi—D</td>
<td>2:00 Bingo—D</td>
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<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td>CFA BINGO</td>
<td>9:00 Walking Club –A</td>
<td>9:30 Devotions—D</td>
<td>10:15 Exercise—A</td>
<td>1:15 Load up CFA Bingo—A</td>
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<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td>OVER 50 &amp; RCC</td>
<td>9:00 Walking Club –A</td>
<td>9:30 Devotions—D</td>
<td>10:15 Exercise—A</td>
<td>10:45 Load up “O” 50—A</td>
<td>7:00 Childrens Choir—D</td>
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<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td>Ladies Tea/Tom LA MATTINA</td>
<td>9:00 Walking Club –A</td>
<td>9:30 Devotions—D</td>
<td>10:15 Exercise—A</td>
<td>2:00 Ladies Tea—D</td>
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<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td>BINGO</td>
<td>9:00 Walking Club –A</td>
<td>9:30 Devotions—D</td>
<td>10:15 Exercise—A</td>
<td>2:00 Bingo—D</td>
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<td><strong>13</strong></td>
<td>BINGO</td>
<td>9:00 Walking Club –A</td>
<td>9:30 Devotions—D</td>
<td>10:15 Exercise—A</td>
<td>2:00 Bingo—D</td>
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<td><strong>14</strong></td>
<td>Worship Service</td>
<td>9:00 Walking Club—A</td>
<td>(walk on own)</td>
<td>10:00 Worship Service—D</td>
<td>2:00 Coffee in the Bistro</td>
<td>5:00 Bible Study—M</td>
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<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td>Bingo/Man Cave</td>
<td>9:00 Walking Club –A</td>
<td>9:30 Devotions—D</td>
<td>10:15 Exercise—A</td>
<td>11:00 Man Cave—M</td>
<td>2:00 Bingo—D</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td>Rick Harrison</td>
<td>9:00 Walking Club –A</td>
<td>9:30 Devotions—D</td>
<td>10:15 Exercise—A</td>
<td>2:00 Rick Harrison—D</td>
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<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td>Mary Cone/Family Meeting</td>
<td>9:00 Walking Club –A</td>
<td>9:30 Devotions—D</td>
<td>10:15 Exercise—A</td>
<td>11:00 Mary Cone—D</td>
<td>2:00 Bingo</td>
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<td><strong>18</strong></td>
<td>Choir</td>
<td>9:00 Walking Club –A</td>
<td>9:30 Devotions—D</td>
<td>10:15 Exercise—A</td>
<td>10:00 Mary Cone—D</td>
<td>2:00 Bingo</td>
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<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td>11:00 Staff Choice—A</td>
<td>9:30 Devotions—D</td>
<td>10:15 Exercise—A</td>
<td>1:15 Load up YAH—A</td>
<td>2:00 Bingo—D</td>
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<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td>2:00 Coffee in the Bistro</td>
<td>9:00 Walking Club –A</td>
<td>9:30 Devotions—D</td>
<td>10:15 Exercise—A</td>
<td>11:00 Staff Choice—A</td>
<td>2:00 Bingo—D</td>
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<td><strong>21</strong></td>
<td>Worship Service</td>
<td>9:00 Walking Club—A</td>
<td>(walk on own)</td>
<td>10:00 Worship Service—D</td>
<td>2:00 Coffee in the Bistro</td>
<td>5:00 Bible Study—M</td>
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<td><strong>22</strong></td>
<td>Bingo</td>
<td>9:00 Walking Club –A</td>
<td>9:30 Devotions—D</td>
<td>10:15 Exercise—A</td>
<td>2:00 Bingo—D</td>
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<td><strong>23</strong></td>
<td>Video Conference</td>
<td>9:00 Walking Club –A</td>
<td>9:30 Devotions—D</td>
<td>10:15 Exercise—A</td>
<td>1:30 Video Conf—M</td>
<td>3:00 Bingo—D</td>
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<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td>Choir</td>
<td>9:00 Walking Club –A</td>
<td>9:30 Devotions—D</td>
<td>10:15 Exercise—A</td>
<td>2:00 Singing Saints—D</td>
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<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td>Walmart</td>
<td>9:00 Walking Club –A</td>
<td>9:30 Devotions—D</td>
<td>10:15 Exercise—A</td>
<td>1:15 Load up Wal—A</td>
<td>2:00 Movie—M</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>26</strong></td>
<td>Memorial Day Remembrance</td>
<td>9:00 Walking Club –A</td>
<td>9:30 Devotions—D</td>
<td>10:15 Exercise—A</td>
<td>2:00 Memorial Day—D</td>
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<td><strong>27</strong></td>
<td>Bingo/Movie</td>
<td>9:00 Walking Club –A</td>
<td>9:30 Devotions—D</td>
<td>10:15 Exercise—A</td>
<td>2:00 Movie: Taking Chance (Media Room)</td>
<td>2:00 Bingo—D</td>
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**LOYALTY ACTIVITIES IN RED**

**BRING YOUR FREQUENT FLYER CARD!**
Caring for an aging loved one can be one of the most stressful family milestones. The sheer difficulty of the task, its high cost, as well as underlying family issues can collide to create a perfect storm of discontent.

But when families put aside their differences and work together as a team for the best interest of their elderly loved one, they are often able to overcome this challenge and assure that their parent’s last years aren’t marred by bickering and strife.

Here are 10 reasons families fight about senior care, and advice about how to prevent these types of conflict from derailing you...

7. Balancing Caregiving with Raising a Family

60% to 75% of family caregivers are women. Very often, the same woman is raising children of her own and balancing the demands of a career to boot. It’s understandable that someone juggling these demanding roles, each of which could be considered a “full time job,” might get burned out.

Possible Solution: Understand that your caregiving loved ones have limits and are not superheroes. Do what you can to ease the burden. Offer to help care for Mom or Dad, or your loved ones children, so she can have some time for herself. On the other hand, if you feel like you’re hanging on by a thread, don’t be afraid to ask for help. Consider arranging a family meeting to reorganize care for your older loved one in such a way that the burden is shared more equitably.

8. Caring for Both Parents at Once

While it’s great that your parents have been able to grow old together, caring for two parents simultaneously is doubly challenging. When both parents need advanced care, the physical and financial strain is immense. But it’s also challenging when the level of care needed is imbalanced, or the two parents need different kinds of care— for example, one parent might need Alzheimer’s care while another needs skilled nursing. The heart wrenching prospect of having to separate your parents can cause tempers to flare, and the physical, financial, and logistical complexities of arranging care for two loved ones at once can raise stress levels to an all-time high.

Possible Solution: Speak with a Senior Living Advisor or another local expert to learn about care options for your parents that you might not have been aware of. Many communities offer multiple levels of care, or even different kinds of care, which allows married couples to remain together when they wouldn’t ordinarily have been able to do so. Hold family meetings to ensure that everyone understands each other’s concerns, and work to define a mutually agreed upon strategy for caregiving.

9. End of Life Care

Loved ones often battle fiercely about end of life care. One child may want to arrange hospice care for a terminally ill parent, while another may advocate that every day lived is a victory. In both cases family members want what is best for their older loved one, but disagree about what that means. This type of conflict can be avoided when seniors, well before a medical crisis, write a living-will that specifies end of life wishes, and appoint a health care proxy to help implement the specified plans.

Possible Solution: Make sure that your parent has drafted a living-will and has designated a healthcare proxy.

10. Estates and Inheritances

It’s incredibly sad to see families fight over an inheritance, but it happens all too often. Whether the dispute is over a treasured family heirloom or a large sum of cash, it gets ugly fast. These ugly battles frequently occur when a will hasn’t been written or has become out of date, but they can even occur in cases when reasonable estate-planning measures have been taken.

Possible Solution: Disputes about inheritances can be ideal cases for family mediators. A family mediator’s job is able to analyze these situations fairly and objectively, and help families find areas of common ground. While a perfect compromise may not be found through mediation, it’s almost always preferable to suing a close family member over an inheritance.