

Good afternoon everyone and I do hope you are all looking forward to enjoying a delicious High Tea and good company

As I mentioned at the beginning of the program, I'm Sue Loncaric from Sizzling Towards 60 & Beyond and today I want to talk about Aging and Health.

To start off, I would like to ask you a question: What is your attitude to aging?

Oh I see a few grimaces, some smiles.... but generally it isn't a topic we like to discuss, is it?.

Age can be such a defining and limiting word don't you agree?

So today I want to put the spotlight on Aging and the way we, as a society views the aging process. I hope that by the end you will realise that it is the way you feel about aging that really determines the way you will age and that embracing life and making the most of every day will keep you healthy and living a life of purpose.

As I just said, the word age can be defining and limiting. The moment we focus on the number is the moment we start to grow old.

How did you feel when you turned 50?, 60?,70? I can say that I enjoy every birthday and celebrated my 60th birthday last year with family and friends.

Some of us though find it difficult to accept aging and avoid birthdays after a certain age, mainly because we don't want to face reality.

It's no good sticking our head in the sand. Aging is a normal process of life there is no stopping it or changing that fact. But what we can change it is our ATTITUDE. It is our attitude to living, not the number of years we have been on this planet, that should determine the quality of our life.

We can live life obsessing about the number or we can get out there and start living.

I was recently discussing the topic of Positive Aging and General Health & Wellness for Over 50s with Rita and Martina from the Co.As.It Team. I realised that the term Positive Aging has become almost a cliché and overused.

We try to justify aging and how good it is, perhaps to convince others, or more to the point, convince ourselves. We become obsessed with the word and then we start to place limitations on ourselves.

I decided that I would explore the notion of having an Ageless Attitude.

Why do we need to be defined by age and not our ability?

The simple answer is – because we allow it to be that way.

Yes, we can blame society for stereotyping and ageism which we know exists. But it only exists because our own attitude to aging allows it to.

How do you feel when someone says 'Oh you look good for your age'?

Or

Do you really think you should be doing that at your age?

These remarks we can do without they are limiting and insulting.

Age has nothing to do with our achievements!

We have control of how we are perceived and how we want to be defined. So, it is our choice – it is in our power to have a positive attitude or feel sorry for ourselves and waste precious moments.

Often we see on social media, many stories of older people who are achieving extraordinary things, later in life.

Recently in the trials for the Commonwealth Games, held here on the Gold Coast, a [99 year old man](#) broke the 50 metre freestyle world record. Admittedly, he swam alone, but breaking a world record is no mean feat and he didn't start swimming until he was 80!

So today I would like to share with you some suggestions on how you can live with an Ageless Attitude. This applies to anyone at any age and I can see we have a variety of age groups here today. Hopefully, I will give you all something to ponder when you leave.

I believe there are 5 main points that help us live with an Ageless Attitude.

First up, we need to stop putting limitations on ourselves.

'I couldn't do that – I'm too old'!

How often have you said this to yourself or others? Unless you have an illness, you really can do anything if you want it badly enough.

Just before I turned 50, I worked with some girls who were almost young enough to be my daughters. The wonderful thing was they never thought of me as an older person but as Sue, the individual. They encouraged me to start running and booked me into bootcamp.

When I reminded them that I was old enough to be their mother, they wouldn't accept it! At 55, I ran a full marathon- that is 42.2kms by the way, and I have these beautiful girls to thank for having the confidence in my ability and not accepting excuses such as 'I'm too old'.

We need to find our purpose in life

Do you know what it is? Do you know what it means?

We all have something to offer – even if we don't realise it. Some people find purpose in helping others, some find it the work that they do, others find their purpose helping their families or friends.

Your purpose is what gets you out of bed each day. Now if you are retired or live alone this is critical as it is easy to fall into a pattern where life loses it's meaning.

Studies have shown that having a purpose, even if that is just to get up and go for a walk each morning, increases our life expectancy and general well-being.

I've experienced first hand what it is like to lose your purpose as I'm sure many of you have.

I retired early to spend more time with my husband who had already retired. I had worked full-time for most of my life so the idea of leaving the 9 to 5 world was appealing. It wasn't until a few months into my new life that I wondered if I had made a mistake. I had always been busy with working and family and was defined by this. A few months into retirement I felt I had lost my identity as an individual.

I didn't know how to fill my days and although I loved being with my husband and we enjoyed travelling that wasn't a sustainable lifestyle. I had lost my purpose.

So how did I rediscover my purpose?

I knew I was passionate about living a healthy and active lifestyle so with that idea I started my blog Sizzling Towards 60 & Beyond. I wanted to encourage and inspire other women to embrace this next phase through living a healthier and happier lifestyle.

I love the connections that I've made and the positive feedback from readers who have been inspired to make positive changes in their lives. My life now has purpose: I also regularly take my grandson to kindy and volunteer at my MIL's aged care home and spend time with my husband travelling and keeping fit. Life is full and rewarding.

My 92 yo MIL or Nonna as we all call her, is another great example of rediscovering her purpose in life. She came to Australia from Italy in 1952 with her husband, a 4 year old and a baby and couldn't speak English. That part of her story is for another day but it is certainly an inspirational one. Today, I want to talk about more recent times.

Almost two years ago we celebrated her 90th birthday plus her 70th wedding anniversary on the same day. We had a lovely afternoon tea celebration and both she and my father-in-law enjoyed themselves.

Two weeks later, Nonna had developed shingles which are very painful, my FIL had passed away and she was so distressed and depressed that after a fall, fracturing two ribs, she was hospitalised two months later. She had given up on life and needed professional care so on the doctor's recommendation she move to an aged care home, Marycrest in Brisbane. This was something neither of my parents-in-law wanted.

We all thought we would be planning another funeral sooner rather than later.

Two years later Nonna has had a 360 degree turn around. She participates in all the outings and activities, doing things like armchair yoga and going to the onsite gym, which she had never done before. She also spends time each day crocheting blankets as gifts, has her nails painted and a regular cut and colour.

She now has structure and purpose in her day and is a living example of why having a purpose is vital to good health and well-being at any age.

Point 3 Stay socially connected and have a variety of quality friendships

Notice I said quality friendships, because it isn't the number of friends that we have but the quality of the friendship.

When we are younger, we feel our popularity is judged by the number of friends or Facebook followers we have.

As we mature we realise that we only need friends who will be supportive and caring.

I like this quote and I'm not sure who said it but it goes like this: *Sometimes your circle decreases in size, but increases in value.*

I feel it is important to also develop friendships with people regardless of what stage of life they are in. We can learn from those who are younger or older than us and in turn, we can also contribute and share our life experiences to enrich their lives.

Most of us would scoff at the idea of being an inspiration to others but we all have the ability to inspire through the way we live and being a role model to family and friends. I like to think that I show my children and grandchildren the importance of keeping healthy and embracing life by living it, rather than just talking about it.

Co.As.It is a wonderful organization for keeping people connected. They have regular social events for those who want to connect with others but aren't sure where to start.

Point 4 Be Open to the challenge of trying new things

An ageless attitude will help break down your fears and inhibitions.

Lifelong learning and creativity is proven to increase our quality of life and longevity. Being open to new experiences enriches our lives.

Again, I would like to give another example of Nonna. who has added art classes to her long list of activities. She has never done anything like this before and we have discovered a hidden talent.

She has stepped out of her comfort zone, firstly by moving to a place where she didn't really want to be and secondly she has embraced new opportunities and new learnings.

My final point is to Live a healthy lifestyle both mentally and physically

Making lifestyle changes to eat well, include some daily movement and take time for reflection and meditation will keep our bodies and minds strong and energised.

Did you notice I said 'daily movement'?

When we say 'exercise' it can have a negative affect and we look at it as a chore and lose interest after our initial burst.

I love to run and in fact, I'm running in tomorrow's Mother's Day Classic. I run this every year with my daughter in memory of my Mum who died from breast cancer 32 years ago.

Sometimes it is hard to get started with an activity and stick to it. That is where joining a group or having a friend comes in handy.

I run a couple of times a week with two friends I met them through my daughter about 8 years ago

We call ourselves the Saturday Sisters, and the running not only keeps us fit and healthy but we have developed a wonderful strong friendship.

Now of course, running isn't for everyone. The list of activities to try is endless. But the key is that if you find something you enjoy, you are more likely to stick to it.

We all sit for too long and this has been proven to be dangerous to our health. So we need to move for at least 30 minutes daily or at least 4-5 times per week.

BUT, only after you've had the okay from your GP.

Keeping active is also good for our mental because it reduces stress and anxiety. If I have a problem or I'm stressed, my husband usually says 'why don't you go for a run'? After that I feel much better, my mind is clearer, my endorphins have given me a high and I feel great. So next time you feel stressed try going for a walk or moving about or even just stretching. I guarantee you will feel better.

Taking time each day to contemplate what you are grateful for is also important to a healthy lifestyle.

Being grateful for what we have in our lives rather than what we don't have makes us feel more positive and happier.

If you can look at life with an Ageless Attitude based on these 5 points, your self-confidence will increase and life will be more fulfilling and enjoyable.

Remember,

“Age is merely the number of years the world has been enjoying you.”

I would like to leave you with one question to seriously consider and think about after you leave this afternoon.

What are some ways you can incorporate an Ageless Attitude into your life today?

If you aren't sure and would like some help in rediscovering who you are or a new direction you would like to follow, I would be happy to provide my contact details for a future chat with you.