

MENTORING MINUTES

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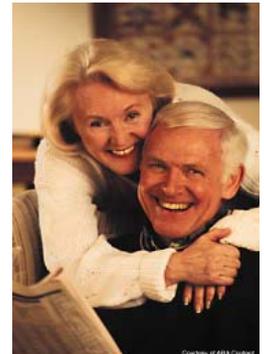
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THINK LONGEVITY

In a recent study of resilience in older age, the sense of control and optimism (the later measured by the participant's perceived likelihood of living for another ten years) was found to be strong negative predictor of mortality for both gender in the longitudinal study.

People who thought they would live longer actually did live longer. Professor Luszcz said this is likely to be indicative of a person still looking forward and planning ahead, so in this study that appeared as recently as last month, we find the optimism and a sense of planning were critical in the notion of resilience.



ACCEPTANCE

Acceptance is another key variable to aging well, and developing better resilience. Acceptance involves acknowledging you are an older person with limitations, for getting on with things rather than dwelling on regrets or superior functioning. Time and time again I find resilience is

undermined by a sense of loss of what we are once able to do. For instance, a person who excelled in athletics who becomes injured or retires due to age may find a concomitant drop in self esteem, and thus a drop in resilience.



IMPORTANCE OF SUPPORT

This article went on to say the social networks were likewise important, and that while family and friends were important, it was found that participant's who maintained a number of non family supports were likely to live longer. Again, Professor Luszcz said this was associated with remaining active and exerting a certain amount of control over your interactions.

will for a moment, you felt alienated in your workplace, and it was an intolerable environment to work in, this would undoubtedly have the counter effect on resilience. Moreover, those people who suffer from conditions such as depression and Post Traumatic Stress

Disorder (PTSD), by the nature of their condition, may well avoid and withdraw socially. It is important to understand that in doing so they lower their levels of resilience and make themselves even more vulnerable.

The most important thing that came out of the above research was the importance of finding supporting networks outside of the family. For people who work of course, these are often work places, but just imagine if you



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COGNITIVE FUNCTIONING

Finally, Professor Luszcz found no evidence that older folk's cognitive functioning necessarily deteriorates. Quite to the contrary, they found that some were better at computing skills than others, while others excelled in reasoning tasks. The main implication of this finding is that resilience is increased by

people continuing to maintain distinct cognitive functions. You will be more resilient because you still have the capacity to resolve problems, to evoke coping strategies and to see the value of social interaction.

The question of reasoning has also been raised by Creamer (2005) suggesting

that perhaps cognitive ability may be a predictor of PTSD. For instance, he and others have suggested that PTSD is more likely to occur in less intelligent individuals than more intelligent individuals. Obviously, issues of income and quality of life more generally may be confounding variables in all of this, but it



seems to me the ability to reason and think out solutions to problems, plan ahead and above all remain optimistic are the basis of sound cognitive ability.

OM FOR LIFE

Transcendental meditation may help us to live longer, a pooled study of two long-term, randomized trials has found.

Studies have already shown that the meditation technique helps reduce risk factors for heart disease such as high blood pressure, smoking, stress, levels of harmful low-density lipoprotein cholesterol and stress hormones.

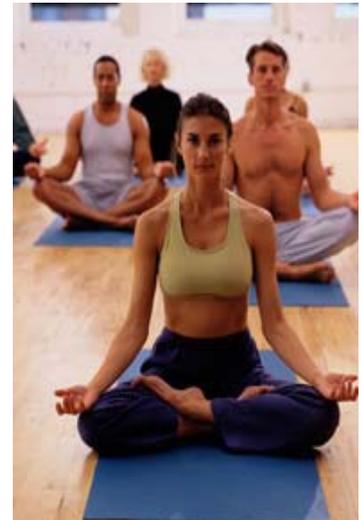
The data came from two previously published, controlled studies of 202 people with an average age of 71 who had mildly elevated blood pressure.

Some of the studies participants were tracked for up to 18 years.

Compared with the control group (who were either taught techniques for stress reduction, such as muscle relaxation, or given standard

medical advice about how to manage hypertension) the transcendental meditation group had a 30 per cent reduction in the rate of death from cardiovascular disease and an aggregate 23 per cent reduction in mortality rates from all causes during the study period.

The study was a collaboration between several universities in the United States. Published in the American Journal of Cardiology.



PHILS FACT FILE

■ **Longest dog tongue**—Brandy, a boxer owned by John Scheid (USA) had a tongue that measured 43cm

■ **Highest jump by a dog**—The world record for the highest jump cleared by a dog is 167.6cm, achieved by Cinderella May A Holly Grey, a greyhound owned by Kathleen Conroy and Kate Long (both USA) at the Purina Dog Chow Incredible Dog Challenge show in Missouri, USA in 2003.

■ **Oldest tree documented** - A bristlecone pine known as Prometheus, which was cut down from Mt Wheeler in Nevada USA in 1963 and dated at approximately 5200 years old. Although 4867 rings were counted, the most ever, the tree was growing in a harsh environment which slowed its development, and so its actual age has been adjusted to approximately 5,200 years.

■ **Tallest woman**—Zeng Jinlian (China) measured 2.48m when she died in 1982.

■ **Tallest living man**—After seven measurements taken over 1999, Radhouane Charbib's (Tunisia) height was confirmed as 2.35m.

■ **Shortest man**—The shortest mature human of whom there is independent evidence was Gul Mohammed (India). In 1990 he was measured at Ram Manohar Hospital, India, and found to measure a height of 57cms.

■ **Shortest woman**—Pauline Musters (Neverlands) measured 30cm at birth, and at

nine years of age was 55cm tall and weighed only 1.5kg. When she died in 1895, aged 19, a post-mortem examination showed her to be 61cms tall.

■ **Oldest man ever**—Born 29 June 1865 the oldest man ever recorded was Shigechiyo Izumi (Japan). He died on 21 February 1986 aged 120 years and 237 days.

■ **Oldest woman ever**—Born 21 February 1875, Jeanne Louise Calment (France), died on 4 August 1997 aged 122 years and 164 days.