

SENIOR LIVING GUIDE

Seniors Who Have a Purpose Live Longer and Age Better

BY JULIE ROSE

Having a purpose in your life may help you maintain your function and your independence as you age.

Multiple studies, including those conducted at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Boston University School of Public Health and National Institute on Aging, done during the past 17 years show that purposeful living has been linked to other components of well-being such as:

- Living a longer life
- Being more resilient to stress
- Having a more robust immune system
- Being more proactive about taking care of your health and using preventive healthcare services
- Lowering risk of disease
- Enjoying better sleep
- Engaging in healthier behaviors
- Having stronger impulse control
- Experiencing less depression
- Feeling better

People over 65 who reported having clear goals and a sense of purpose or meaning in their lives were less likely to have a weak grip strength and slow walking speeds – two signs of declining physical ability and risk factors for disability.

Having a strong sense of purpose was even linked to an increase in walking speed over time – delivering the effect of being 2½ years younger. This link between purpose and better health is true for older adults across race, ethnicity and gender. Although beneficial for both men and women, it is slightly more beneficial for women.

How can you find a purpose in life as you age? You can find and cultivate a purpose in your life at any age – including in your later years. Here's how to fuel getting out of bed each morning ready to enjoy your day:

- Develop a growth mindset
- Explore and deepen your relationships
- Practice gratitude
- Recognize and share your unique gifts



Julie Rose

- Give back and help others
- Explore your passions and turn them into hobbies
- Become an active part of a community
- Spend time with people who inspire you

Time is often at a premium in your earlier years as you were very busy working and raising children. Now you have some

time to dedicate to identifying a clear purpose in your life and enjoying the many health benefits having that purpose delivers.

Caregivers and family members can play an important role in helping their loved ones and those they care for find their purpose. Recognizing the critical health and longevity effects of purpose and encouraging those in your care to define and embrace that purpose is essential for caregivers.

Purpose enriches your life and delivers significant quantifiable benefits. When you create your clear purpose, you can tap into these many life-changing benefits.

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