

The Secret to Happiness? Aging!

It's no secret - our culture is obsessed with youth. You can't walk down the street without being bombarded with Photoshopped pictures of celebrities, ads claiming to hold the secret to everlasting youth, and magazine covers with slogans such as "Have the Skin of a 20-Year-Old!" or "Banish Those Greys with this One Trick!" This obsessive focus on staying young has led many to believe that life goes downhill after your sprout your first grey hair. Time and time again, however, this has been shown to be untrue.

It turns out that as we age, our happiness grows; especially as we reach what some refer to as mid-life, the years we have after we hit 50. Time Magazine has cited a study that claims that 69 is one of the happiest years of our lives overall. A 2010 Gallup poll showed that 85-year-olds are generally happier than 18-year-olds. Why is this? To find out, we must visit our past.

Remember when your mom and dad couldn't possibly understand you? When your clothes fit funny, your hair wouldn't lay right, and, despite your best efforts, you were still unsure of who you were and what you wanted? Despite what TV and magazines tell us, adolescence is a pain. Even in our 20s, when we enjoy that brief sense of invincibility, many of us can sense that something is missing. During our 30s many of the pieces may start coming together, but oftentimes our 40s find us still frustrated. Sometime during our 50s, though, and through to our 60s, 70s, and 80s onwards, things have settled down. We've become who we are. Many of us have found that

special someone and have crafted a life together. If we have children, we're far past the sleepless nights of their infancy. We start to find joy in the little things, to cherish each moment, not because we know our time is running out, but because we've discovered what really matters.

At our campuses, it's our goal to make sure that those we serve get the most out of these special years. Our residents can pursue the passions they've had since they were young, and our Life Enrichment staff is dedicated to helping them discover new talents, cultivate new hobbies, and get out and explore the surrounding community. This month, our Campus in Color competition has prompted many of our residents to rediscover their green thumbs, and the results are beautiful to behold.

Those living in our Independent Living Villas delight in the fact that they don't have a To-Do list a mile long. Living here, they can begin using the phrase "I want to" more often than "I have to." Whether they spend the morning gardening, reading, going for a walk, or doing nothing at all, the options are endless, and each choice is theirs to make. They are free to pursue their passions, and many finally have the time to discover new hobbies and develop new interests.

When every day is so full of opportunity, we think you'll agree with us that the term "over the hill" is a misnomer. Perhaps we should replace it with something more realistic: "Enjoying the view from the top."