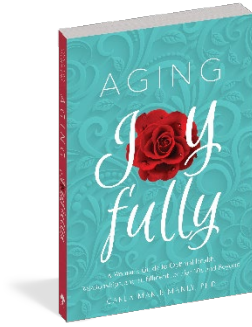


“YOUR JOURNEY”



Aging Joyfully: A Woman's Guide to Optimal Health, Relationships, and Fulfillment for her 50s and Beyond

by Dr. Carla Marie Manly

LOVING YOURSELF AT EVERY AGE

Our mindsets have a profound effect on how we view the aging process. No matter your age—whether you're under 30, over 60, or somewhere in between—you may find yourself worried that you're not as beautiful or relevant as someone younger than you. Our minds (and society) have a way of tricking us into believing that we are “less than” as we age, but this is far from the truth. When we mindfully embrace positive attitudes and healthy behaviors, we can find joy, delight, and wellbeing in *every* stage of life.

This worksheet will lead you into embracing yourself at every age. The journey involves mindfully looking at how we unconsciously let the forces of internal ageism (i.e., *self-ageism*) and external ageism affect our self-love and self-esteem. As you delve into gentle self-discovery about your relationship with the aging process, you'll find yourself falling in love with the beautiful face in the mirror just a bit more every day.

- **Wisdom Exercise 1: Address Any Age-Negative Attitudes.** This is your opportunity to notice if you are affected or held hostage by an age-negative mindset. Using the spaces below, write out a list of any age-negative thoughts that come to mind. Set judgment aside and allow the list to reflect any conscious and unconscious thoughts that begin to arise. For example, your list may include items such as: “Younger people are more desirable.” “I don't want to be old.” “My body is changing, and I'm no longer as attractive.” “I can't do what I did ten years ago.” “Women over the age of 'x' aren't sexy.” “I'm past my prime.” “Who would want me at my age?” “I'm not as smart as I used to be.” Once you have completed your list, notice how you feel. Make notes about the feelings and thoughts that arose during this exercise. Allow yourself time to appreciate and digest your experience.

- **Wisdom Exercise 2: Create an Age-Positive Attitude.** Enjoy using the space below to create age-positive phrases. Although your words may not initially ring true, you can mindfully adopt a more age-positive attitude over time by paying attention to your thoughts and words. It's often difficult to free ourselves of the internalized ageism that results from years of societal brainwashing. Be kind and patient as you consider a variety of uplifting words and phrases that will help you love yourself, your life, and the body that has been your wonderful home for decades. Your age-positive list might include thoughts such as: "I cultivate a positive, vibrant mindset." "I embrace who I am today." "I love and honor the face and body I see in the mirror." "I don't compare myself to others or to others' standards of what I 'should' be." "I've learned so much in my life journey and am proud of how I've grown and transformed over time." "My future is bright and full of freedom and promise." After completing your list, repeat the phrases to yourself; notice if they feel inspiring and empowering. Feel free to post a copy of your uplifting age-positive phrases as a reminder of self-acceptance and self-love.

- **Wisdom Exercise 3: Create Your Personal Mantras.** This is a perfect opportunity to create personalized mantras to guide you today and into the future. You are a wonderfully unique person, and your mantras can be tailored to reflect your personality, needs, and goals. You may be drawn to certain mantras depending on your mood, circumstances, and pace of your day. Feel free to adjust your mantras as often as you like. Your mantras can guide you into greater self-love. As an example, one mantra might be, "I am valuable, passionate, and resilient." Another mantra may simply note, "I love who I am—all parts of me." A different mantra may offer, "I'm vibrant and beautiful—inside and out." In the space provided below, outline several different mantras that feel right to you. Although certain mantras may not ring true at first, the goal is to emphasize the positive thoughts until they are integrated and internalized. After you've written your mantras, make a few copies to post on your mirror, desk, refrigerator, or doors. Repeat your mantras as joyfully and often as possible. The more you embrace your positive mantra statements, the more optimistic and radiant your outlook will be.

- **Wisdom Exercise 4: Create a Simple Action Plan.** In addition to embracing the power of your age-positive attitude, uplifting mantras, and increasing self-awareness, you may be ready for another step forward. This is your opportunity to create a simple action plan geared toward bringing your hopes and dreams to life. You can begin by crafting an outline of small, positive goals that feel doable. Although it might be tempting to create a plan to fully revamp your life all at once, change is easier and more lasting when we stick with a series of simple, attainable goals. You'll be more likely to continue on your path when you can see and feel steady progress. One goal of this exercise is to give yourself the gift of positive reinforcement, so keep your action plan simple, focused, and specific. For example, your action plan might read, "Item 1: This weekend, I will begin walking twenty minutes a day, three times per week. Item 2: Before this weekend, I will research the starting date of the next community center class on healthy eating and cooking. Item 3: By next Saturday, I will enroll in the next healthy eating and cooking class available. Item 4: Within 30 days, I will join a hiking or gardening club. Item 5: Within 60 days, I will find my knitting supplies and knit a colorful scarf for the cancer center. Within 90 days, I will research volunteer opportunities at the hospital and apply for a position." In the spaces below, create your own simple action plan. You can include goals for anything that calls to you from self-care, self-development, and relationships to work, hobbies, and volunteering.

As you move forward with a positive, can-do attitude, your life will begin to take on a different flavor. You will, in fact, slowly but surely begin to radiate a most beautiful, dynamic energy. As you cast aside self-ageism, you will shift your internal world. And, due to your *personal* changes, you will also begin to alter the hold of ageism in the greater *world*. You may not notice yourself changing; the shifts may be quite imperceptible to you at first. Trust, however, that you will become more of who you want to be with every step you take forward in the name of your own joy-filled journey. Thank you for having the courage and desire to shine with powerful, ageless beauty—to radiate as you are truly meant to do.

CONGRATULATIONS ON A JOB WELL DONE!

Every step you take forward in loving and accepting yourself is a gift to yourself and your world. You'll find more compassionate guidance and uplifting exercises like this in Dr. Carla Marie Manly's encouraging book, *Aging Joyfully: A Woman's Guide to Optimal Health, Relationships, and Fulfillment for her 50s and Beyond*.

Free to You: If you want to be the first to enjoy new "Your Journey" worksheets and details on upcoming books and seminars, I invite you to subscribe to my private email list at www.drcarlamanly.com

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