

A new start after 60: I was devastated by divorce at 70. But at 102, I know the secrets of a well-lived life

Level 2: Intermediate / Upper Intermediate

1 Warmer

a. Discuss the questions.

1. At what age does someone become a senior citizen? Why?
2. How do you imagine life in your 60s, 70s, and 80s?
3. Has an older person ever given you great advice? What was it?
4. Do you think most older people know the secrets of a well-lived life?

2 Key words

a. Fill the gaps in the sentences using these key words from the text.

associate	blindsides	constructive	dimension	extreme	guidance
healing	reclaim	rejoice	treasure	turning point	verse

1. To _____ is to give someone an unpleasant surprise by doing something that they were not expecting.
2. If something is _____, it is very great in degree.
3. A _____ is a sentence or group of sentences that the text in holy books is divided into.
4. To _____ is to feel very happy about something or to celebrate something happily.
5. To _____ is to keep or look after something because it is very valuable or important to you.
6. If something is _____, it is intended to be useful or helpful.
7. A _____ is a time when an important change takes place in a situation, especially one that makes it better.
8. To _____ is to get something back that someone has taken from you.
9. A _____ a different perspective or way to look at or think about something.
10. To _____ is to form a connection in your mind between different people or things.

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11. _____ is the process of becoming healthy again.
12. _____ is advice about what you should do or how you should behave.

b. Complete the sentences with words from the previous activity. You might have to change the form of the word.

1. Some couples having relationship issues see a professional for marriage _____.
2. My favourite Bible _____ is "Do everything in love."
3. Giving up smoking was a critical _____ in her life.
4. He was completely _____ when his parents announced that they were moving to Chile.
5. My grandpa is ninety-eight, and I _____ my Sunday afternoon chess matches with him.
6. Many young people are _____ the traditions of their ancestors.
7. They had only had one disagreement, so a divorce seemed _____.
8. Some employers complain that young graduates are not used to receiving _____ feedback.
9. Most people say that parenthood has added a whole new _____ to their lives.
10. I _____ the sound of the sea with my childhood because I grew up in a house by the beach.
11. My friend swears by the _____ powers of group therapy.
12. The whole family _____ when Danny was released from hospital.

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- 1 "It's hard to put a size on things that happen in your life," Gladys McGarey says. At 102, it's understandable she would feel that way. Shortly before she was 70, Bill, her husband of 46 years, divorced her.
- 2 McGarey and Bill were both doctors and co-founders of the American Holistic Medical Association in 1978. While married, they had shared a clinic in Phoenix, Arizona, and had brought up six children together. So, when the marriage ended – Bill had started a relationship with another colleague – McGarey lost her life partner and business.
- 3 "It blindsided me. I was broken," she says. Her daughter Helene had recently joined the practice, and mother and daughter opened a new clinic nearby Scottsdale.
- 4 The pain of the separation was extreme – "the hardest thing" McGarey has ever faced. Harder, she says, than the two periods of cancer she went through in her 30s and 90s.
- 5 "It's not a matter of getting over stuff; it's a matter of living through it," she says now. "If you can live through the issues that you have faced, they become your teachers."
- 6 But it was a slow process. "It wasn't until I was 93 that I really accepted it," she says, "You get to the stage where you can hang on."
- 7 One day, McGarey was driving back from her and Helene's clinic. She had just received an invitation to Bill's wedding. "I was so angry, I was screaming. I pulled over to the side of the road and thought to myself: 'Are you going to keep on like this?'"
- 8 McGarey is a Presbyterian; her parents were medical missionaries, and she was raised in India till she was 15. In the car, a Bible verse came to her. "This is the day that the Lord has made: let us rejoice and be glad in it."
- 9 So she bought a licence plate for her car that read "BE GLAD" to remind her that there was a lot in her marriage that she really treasured.
- 10 Looking back, McGarey can now see that her divorce was a constructive turning point: "Prior to that, I really didn't trust my own voice." Being dyslexic meant that, at school, she always felt slow. "I really didn't think I had a voice," she says, yet, "I knew I had a voice. After the divorce, it was no longer Bill and Gladys; it was Gladys McGarey, MD. I reclaimed what I had, not just as Bill's partner."
- 11 "I don't regret one minute that I spent as Bill's wife," she says. But, when he died in 2008, "My life has taken on these amazing dimensions that are completely not associated with him," she says. "What I chose is working for me."
- 12 McGarey never remarried. "People would ask if I was dating, and I would say, 'Why would I want to take care of another old man? No, thank you.'"
- 13 She retired at 86 but continues to offer telephone appointments. She no longer has a licence to work as a doctor but says: "Nobody told me I had to stop talking." At 100, she delivered a TEDx Talk – on holistic medicine and her central belief that she has "a colleague within each patient who does the healing, as I do the other part of it. This is what I know and understand in the field of medicine." She has just published a book, *The Well-Lived Life: A 102-Year-Old Doctor's Six Secrets to Health And Happiness At Every Age*, that offers guidance for a well-lived life.

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Glossary

missionary: someone who has been sent to a place by a religious organisation to teach the people there about a particular religion

dyslexic: affected by a medical condition affecting the brain that makes it difficult for someone to read and spell words correctly

holistic: based on the idea that you should take care of your whole body and mind rather than just treating a part of the body that is ill

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3 Comprehension check

a. Are these statements True (T) or False (F) according to the article? Correct any that are false.

1. Gladys McGarey wanted a divorce after being married for over forty years.
2. McGarey and Bill ran a medical clinic together until they divorced.
3. After the divorce, their daughter Helene took over the clinic where both her parents had worked.
4. McGarey's separation was almost as difficult as having cancer.
5. McGarey now lives with her daughter, Helene.
6. It took her more than twenty years for her to completely accept the separation.
7. McGarey grew up in a religious household.
8. After the divorce, she found her voice again.
9. McGarey feels that she is too old to get married again.
10. She believes that within each person, there is an ability to heal themselves.

4 Key language

a. Refer back to the text and find the phrasal verbs that match the definitions below. Paragraph numbers are given to help you.

1. _____: look after a child until he or she becomes an adult (paragraph 2)
2. _____: experience something difficult or unpleasant (paragraph 4)
3. _____: start to feel happy or well again after something bad has happened to you (paragraph 5)
4. _____: continue doing something and achieve success even though there are difficulties (paragraph 6)
5. _____: (in a car) stop by the side of the road (paragraph 7)
6. _____: continue doing something (paragraph 7)
7. _____: do the necessary things for someone who needs help or protection (paragraph 12)

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b. Complete the questions with phrasal verbs from the previous task. Discuss with a partner.

1. What difficult situation have you _____?
2. What is the best way to _____ a personal loss?
3. What advice do you have for people who are just trying to _____, one day at a time?
4. Do you want to have a partner who will _____ you in your old age?

5 Discussion

a. Look at some of the things that McGarey said. Do you agree with each statement?

- "It's hard to put a size on things that happen in your life."
- "It's not a matter of getting over stuff; it's a matter of living through it."
- "If you can live through the issues that you have faced, they become your teachers."
- "BE GLAD"
- "I have a colleague within each patient who does the healing, as I do the other part of it. This is what I know and understand in the field of medicine".

b. What advice do you think Dr McGarey gives in her book?

6 In your own words

a. Imagine you are 102. What life advice would you give your current self? Write a letter from your future self. You can write about the topics below or your own ideas.

love/relationships

work/success/money

health/fitness money

well-being

spirituality/beliefs

home/friends/family

hobbies

problems

finding your voice/direction

b. Share your letter with your classmates.