

## 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 1: Elementary / Pre-Intermediate

#### 1 Warmer

a. Discuss the questions.

1. At what age do you consider someone a senior citizen? Why?
2. How do you imagine life in your 60s, 70s and 80s?
3. Do you think older people know the secrets of a well-lived life? Why?

#### 2 Key words

a. Fill the gaps in the sentences using these key words from the text. An example sentence is given to help you. You may need to change the form of the word.

accept

cancer

clinic

date

divorce

1. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a legal way of ending a marriage.  
*They were married for three years. Then they got a \_\_\_\_\_.*
2. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a place where people go to receive a particular type of medical treatment or advice.  
*There is no hospital in my town, but there is a small family \_\_\_\_\_.*
3. If you \_\_\_\_\_ someone, you have a romantic relationship with them.  
*Tara and Ben started \_\_\_\_\_ when they were in high school. They have two children now.*
4. \_\_\_\_\_ is a serious illness caused by a group of cells in the body increasing in an uncontrolled way.  
*Her family is very sad because her doctor just told her that she has stomach \_\_\_\_\_.*
5. To \_\_\_\_\_ is to recognise that something is true, fair, or correct.  
*At first, he didn't believe her or \_\_\_\_\_ that she didn't want to get married.*

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patient

retire

session

take care of

trust

6. To \_\_\_\_\_ is to be confident that someone is honest, fair, and reliable.  
*Bruno has been my friend for years. I \_\_\_\_\_ him with my life.*
7. To \_\_\_\_\_ someone means to do the necessary things to help them.  
*Their father \_\_\_\_\_ them and their young cousin.*
8. To \_\_\_\_\_ is to stop working when you are older or you have worked for many years.  
*We are having a party for Sally at work. She is 65 and has just \_\_\_\_\_.*
9. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a period used for a particular activity.  
*Are you going to the question-and-answer \_\_\_\_\_ after class?*
10. A \_\_\_\_\_ is someone who receives medical treatment.  
*She is a doctor, and he is her \_\_\_\_\_, but they have been friends for years.*

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- 1 Gladys McGarey is 102. Just before she was 70, Bill, her husband for 46 years, asked for a divorce.
- 2 McGarey and Bill were both doctors. While they were married, they shared a clinic in Phoenix, Arizona. They had six children together. Bill started dating another colleague. McGarey lost her life partner and business partner.
- 3 "I was broken," she says. She and her daughter Helene started a new clinic in nearby Scottsdale.
- 4 The pain was terrible – "the hardest thing" McGarey has ever felt. Harder, she says, than the two times she had cancer when she was in her 30s and 90s.
- 5 Now, she says that if you can live through your problems, they become your teachers.
- 6 But it was a slow change. "It wasn't until I was 93 that I accepted it," she says.
- 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 thought to myself: 'Are you going to keep on like this?'"
- 8 McGarey's parents were medical missionaries, and she lived in India till she was 15. In the car, a phrase from the Bible came to her. "This is the day that the Lord has made: let us be glad in it."
- 9 So she bought a licence plate for her car that read "BE GLAD" to remember the good things about her marriage.
- 10 McGarey can now see that her divorce brought some good changes. Before it, she didn't trust her voice. Being dyslexic meant that, at school, she always felt slow. She said that, after the divorce, it was no longer Bill and Gladys; it was Gladys McGarey, MD. She was not just Bill's partner anymore.
- 11 McGarey never married again. "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.'"
- 12 She retired at 86 but still gives telephone sessions. She says: "Nobody told me I had to stop talking." At 100, she gave a TEDx Talk about how she believes she has "a colleague within each patient who does the healing". She has just written a book about how to live well.

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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

*healing*: a method in which someone is believed to be able to treat illnesses using special powers to become healthy again

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### 3 Comprehension check

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

1. Gladys McGarey was 46 when she and her husband got a divorce.
2. While they were married, McGarey and Bill worked together.
3. McGarey was sad about starting a new clinic with her daughter.
4. It took her a long time to accept her divorce.
5. McGarey didn't want to be glad about her marriage.
6. McGarey would like to get married again.
7. At 102, McGarey still works, but not at a clinic.

### 4 Key language

a. Match the verbs to form phrases from the article.

ask for   give   have   receive   remember   start   take care of   trust

1. \_\_\_\_\_ a divorce
2. \_\_\_\_\_ children/cancer
3. \_\_\_\_\_ an invitation
4. \_\_\_\_\_ your own voice
5. \_\_\_\_\_ telephone sessions
6. \_\_\_\_\_ someone
7. \_\_\_\_\_ a new clinic
8. \_\_\_\_\_ the good things

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**b. Fill in the gaps with verbs from the previous activity. Then discuss the questions.**

1. Would you like to \_\_\_\_\_ your own business?
2. What good things do you \_\_\_\_\_ about being a child?
3. Do you \_\_\_\_\_ children?
4. Do you \_\_\_\_\_ a person, pet or plant?

### 5 Discussion

**a. Look at some of McGarey's ideas below. Do you agree with each statement?**

- "If you can live through your problems, they become your teachers."
- "BE GLAD"
- "I have a colleague within each patient who does the healing."

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

### 6 In your own words

**a. Imagine you are 102. What life advice would you give your present 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/exercise*

*religion/beliefs*

*friends/family*

*hobbies*

*problems/solutions*

*making decisions*

*home*

**b. Share your letter with your classmates.**