

## 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 3: Advanced

#### 1 Warmer

a. Discuss the questions.

1. At what age would you consider someone a senior citizen? Why?
2. How do you imagine the last decades of your life?
3. Have any pearls of advice been passed onto you from an older generation?
4. Do you think most older people have discovered the secrets of a well-lived life?

#### 2 Key words

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

blindsided	bout	clutch	constructive	consultation
critical	general practitioner	gross	immense	practise
reclaim	rejoice	treasure	turning point	

1. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a doctor who deals with general medical problems and treats families in a particular area.
2. If you \_\_\_\_\_ someone, you give them an unpleasant surprise by doing something that they were not expecting.
3. If something is \_\_\_\_\_, it is extremely large.
4. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a short period when you are ill or you feel unhappy.
5. To \_\_\_\_\_ is to try to take hold of someone or something because you are afraid or in pain or to stop yourself from falling.
6. If something is \_\_\_\_\_, it is extreme and unreasonable.
7. To \_\_\_\_\_ is to feel very happy about something or to celebrate something happily.
8. To \_\_\_\_\_ is to keep or look after something very carefully because it is very valuable or important to you.
9. If something is \_\_\_\_\_, it is very important.
10. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a time when an important change takes place in a situation, especially one that makes it better.

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11. If something is \_\_\_\_\_, it is intended to be useful or helpful.
12. To \_\_\_\_\_ is to get something back that someone has taken from you.
13. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a meeting with an expert or a professional person to get advice or discuss a problem, especially an appointment with a doctor.
14. To \_\_\_\_\_ is to work in a particular profession, especially in the medical or legal fields.

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

1. Locals want to \_\_\_\_\_ parks as spaces to be enjoyed by multiple generations.
2. She completed her degree but has never \_\_\_\_\_ law.
3. Parents try to \_\_\_\_\_ every moment of their children's childhood because they grow up really fast.
4. He waited three months for a \_\_\_\_\_ with Dr Singh, a renowned dermatologist.
5. Laura could be described as a melancholic child, overcome by regular \_\_\_\_\_ of sadness.
6. She comes from a family of doctors. All her siblings are specialists, but she decided to pursue a career as a \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Please provide only \_\_\_\_\_ feedback and refrain from any harsh criticism.
8. Getting enough sleep is \_\_\_\_\_ for well-being, especially during adolescence.
9. We were all \_\_\_\_\_ by the cancer diagnosis; she had just run a marathon and seemed to be in good health.
10. Winning his first match was a \_\_\_\_\_ for Raul; it really helped him gain confidence.
11. We all \_\_\_\_\_ when we got the news that the search and rescue team had found the missing children.

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12. We went to a restaurant that sold \_\_\_\_\_ hamburgers. I couldn't even finish one!
13. She \_\_\_\_\_ her bag to her chest when the mugger tried to grab it.
14. It is shocking that he still has supporters after his sexist comments and \_\_\_\_\_ misconduct.

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***Dr Gladys McGarey thought she would never recover when her husband and work partner walked out after 46 years. Then she found her voice, happiness, and her own direction.***

**Paula Coccozza**

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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, her husband, Bill, to whom she had been married for 46 years, handed her divorce papers. He had been carrying them in his briefcase for six months and said he would appreciate a prompt signature.
- 2 McGarey and Bill had not only been married for decades but were also close colleagues. They were both doctors who had trained as general practitioners and were among the co-founders of the American Holistic Medical Association in 1978. For the duration of their marriage, they had shared a clinic in Phoenix, Arizona, and had six children together. So, when the marriage ended – Bill had started a relationship with another colleague – McGarey lost not only her life partner but her business partner, too.
- 3 "It blindsided me. I was broken," she says. Her daughter Helene had recently joined the practice, and mother and daughter went their own way, opening a new clinic in nearby Scottsdale.
- 4 While McGarey still had "something to get up for each morning", the pain of the separation was immense – "the hardest thing" she has ever faced. Harder, she says, than the two bouts 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, speaking on a Zoom call from the house that she built, at Helene's invitation, behind her daughter's home. "If you can live through the issues that you have faced, they become one of your teachers."
- 6 But it was a slow process. "It wasn't until I was 93 that I really accepted it," she says. And, clutching the air with her hand: "You get to the stage where you can kind of hang on."
- 7 One turning point came when 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? I mean, this is really gross.'"
- 8 McGarey is a Presbyterian; her parents were medical missionaries, and she was raised in India till she was 15. In the car, a verse from the Bible 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 I really treasured".
- 10 Looking back, McGarey can now see that her divorce was a critical and 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 consultations; she has an appointment after we finish speaking. She no longer has a licence to practise, but, as she puts it: "Nobody told me I had to stop talking." Indeed, at 100, she delivered a TEDx – 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, which is what I know and understand in the field of medicine." She has just published a book,

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*The Well-Lived Life: A 102-Year-Old Doctor's Six Secrets to Health And Happiness At Every Age*, offering guidance for a well-lived life. Her hair, which she has not cut since her 40s, is neatly plaited into a white crown, ready as ever for work.

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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. After being married for almost five decades, Gladys McGarey filed for divorce.
2. Until their separation, McGarey and Bill were romantic partners and ran a medical clinic together.
3. Post-divorce, their daughter Helene took over the practice where both her parents had worked.
4. McGarey's separation was even more rattling than dealing with cancer.
5. McGarey now shares a house with her daughter, where they both practise.
6. It took her more than twenty years to fully come to terms with the separation.
7. McGarey did not have a religious upbringing.
8. The divorce marked the beginning of her discovering her voice and life again.
9. McGarey claimed that her age is an obstacle to her getting married again.
10. She believes that each person has an innate ability to heal themselves.

#### 4 Key language

a. Find adjectives in the article to form collocations with the nouns below. The paragraph numbers have been given to help you.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ signature / reply (paragraph 1)
2. \_\_\_\_\_ colleague / relationship (paragraph 2)
3. \_\_\_\_\_ pain / relief (paragraph 4)
4. \_\_\_\_\_ missionary / association (paragraph 8)
5. \_\_\_\_\_ turning point / decision (paragraph 10)
6. \_\_\_\_\_ dimension / experience (paragraph 11)
7. \_\_\_\_\_ medicine / treatment (paragraph 13)
8. \_\_\_\_\_ belief / tenet (paragraph 13)

b. Find synonyms, antonyms or other adjectives that can also be used with the nouns.

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#### 5 Discussion

a. Look at some of the things that McGarey said. Do you agree with each statement? Say why (not).

- “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 one of your teachers.”
- “BE GLAD”
- “I have a colleague within each patient who does the healing, as I do the other part of it, which is what I know and understand in the field of medicine.”

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 current self? Write a letter from your future self. You can choose to write about the topics below or your own ideas.

*love/relationships*

*work/success/money*

*health/fitness money*

*well-being*

*spirituality/beliefs*

*friends/family/home*

*hobbies*

*problems*

*finding your voice/direction*

b. Share your letter with your classmates.