

Maturing In JOY

by J. Grant Swank, Jr.

At 90, Grace Pierce said: "Stop learning and you stop living." This woman is the head sales clerk at an art supply store. She determined some time ago to work beyond retirement age. "Grace has more pep and energy than anyone here," a workmate related.

"My job is important to me because it lets me be among people. You learn by being with people. When you stop learning, you stop living. I don't intend to stop either one," she reasoned.

When Louise Casey's pastor husband died, the Maine's Lakes Region congregation asked her to be their minister. She agreed.

She, a senior citizen, then went to work at the city hospital--rocking little babies who eventually would die because of incurable diseases.

Learning and Living Go Together

A minister friend of mine who approached his ninety-fifth birthday told me that he wished he had not left the full-time pastorate at age 83. He wanted back on the job. He missed the books, preparing sermons, being with people every day, learning new concepts at clergy conferences--the whole world of what had fed him down through his adult life.

One of his favorite Scriptures was Psalm 71:8-9: "Let my mouth be filled with thy praise and with thy honor all the day. Cast me not off in the time of old age. . ."

Another friend who turned 55 promptly enrolled in a doctoral program. For years he had wanted to continue his studies beyond his master's degree. At 55 he concluded it was time! Learning and living go together.

Is it enough to close out life with an evening newspaper, feet up on a hassock and then the lights out? There must be more than that for a mind that has been productive over the years.

Making A Lasting Impact

Maggie Kuhn, 78, founded the Gray Panthers. That meant she had to keep up to date with public relations skills, communicating with the media, organizing her senior citizen forces. Yet, she knew she could do it. With that, she made a lasting impact on our culture.

"The junkyard haunts me because America does the same thing to people. When we

turn 65, we are trashed. Well, I don't want to be dumped on a scrap heap," she protested.

Start now to learn more and live more. What we are right now is what we will become even more so. Habits make deep grooves.

Counselor Gary Collins declares that "cheerful old people were once cheerful young people, and complaining, miserable old people griped when they were young, too."

**“If I Stop,
I’ll Die”**

When Cab Calloway turned 72, he was playing the lead in "Bubbling Brown Sugar." Dubbed the "King of Hi-De-Ho," he explained that the title came about this way: "Once I forgot a lyric and I just started singing hi-de-ho. Pretty soon, it became a part of my routine."

Regarding his outlook on life, Calloway said: "I am not a worrier. I never have been. Whatever came, came. Right now, I want to do my music forever. I love to entertain. That's my whole life. I know if I stop, I'd die."

"They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be. . .flourishing to show that the Lord is upright. . ." (Psalm 92:14-15) •••