

COURAGE – the 5th JOY OF AGING

By Donna Deos



Okay, I realize for many, this could well be the first Joy of Aging. To that, I say, please, put them in any order that seems to resonate better with you. I am writing them in the order in which they come to me.

So, why courage? Doesn't that come at most any age? Yes, it does. However, in older age, it comes with all of the previous joys of aging: wisdom, the ability to speak your mind with confidence (filterlessness), respect and time. With youth, courage comes generally from a lack of most of those other things.

When you are older you have done the bold, daring, and sometimes reckless things that younger people feel is courageous and you have learned from them. The courage of the aged comes from a smarter, well-rehearsed, heartfelt, life-lived place. Aged courage comes with more kindness and love, less foolhardiness and less selfishness. It comes with more consideration of others.

The courage of the aged allows them to trek on after some of their closest and dearest friends

are moving away or passing on. It allows them to bravely face their own future. To look at the life they've lived and decide how best to move forward to continue to enjoy it, while at the same time continuing to build the legacy they will eventually leave behind when they too pass on.

It moves them through the day-to-day challenges in entirely different ways. Courage is a daily gift the older we get. It shows up in many different ways. Courage is going out and living your life when your partner of 50+ years is no longer by your side. Courage is listening to your well-meaning friends, neighbors and adult children when they are trying to help you but you see it as them shrinking your world and your freedoms on you – or keeping your right where you are versus allowing you to grow and move forward.

Courage is watching your family make their own life choices, holding your breath and your tongue and letting them make their own courageous decisions. It is watching them succeed and watching them sometimes fail. It

is finding the ways to love yourself and others and it is overcoming things you were taught and the life you have lead to become the next greatest version of yourself.

Courage at any age is beautiful and challenging and promotes growth for you and those around you. Courage in older age simply looks different, especially to those of other ages – they don't necessarily see it as courage, but as long as you do, that is what is most important.

I hope you embrace your courage. I hope you look at the diversity in your life, the challenges and see them for what they really are – chances to flex your courage and embrace where you wish to be and where you wish to go. Courage is standing up for what matters to you.

As you age, please don't lose that courage. Use your courage to lead by example to those younger than you who don't yet understand your version of courage.

All my best, Donna



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(What is Elder Law cont'd. from pg.8)

often leads to permanent severed family ties. The fights are about money, health care, who is in charge, who is the favorite child, who doesn't deserve... The list of WHY families fight is long and often about things that you would never have guessed. A rug, knickknack, license plate... but more often than not, all actually based on childhood disagreements that have never been resolved.

Future columns: If you take the time to read my future (now past columns as well) columns, and I hope you do, you will learn how a relationship with an Elder Law Attorney will benefit you and your loved ones (you can now read them all on the Bow Times website). The columns will discuss various issues and answer questions you have, such as: What is a Power of Attorney, Health Care Directive and Last Will & Testament and how do they benefit me and my family? What is the Probate process? How can I control what happens with my estate after I'm gone and why would I want to? What is a retirement account “stretch” trust? What is the best way to apply for Social Security benefits? What is the Medicaid program and why should I care (if you are over age 60, you should learn about all of these topics! Do this while you are healthy and of sound mind, don't wait for a triggering event!).

A little about me. I was born in Claremont New Hampshire and raised in Newport. I spent most of my youth either playing or working on my grandfather's farm located across route 10 from the Newport airport. I attribute much of who I am today in large part to having been privileged to have worked side by side with my grandfather, uncle, aunts and cousins, all of whom participated in caring for the farm.

I served in the Army after high school, attended Keene State College and graduated from the University of Connecticut School of Law. My first employer out of school was an Elder Law Firm in Connecticut. In fact, the specialty of Elder Law is the only area of the law that I have ever practiced in.

Today I'm am blessed to have been married for 20 years to the most wonderful person I know, Tammy Kiniry, as well as having two children, Dylan (14) and Madison (13), who attend our great schools.

No animals were harmed in the drafting of this article.

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