

Growing Further: The Prospect for Continued Growth Regardless of Health

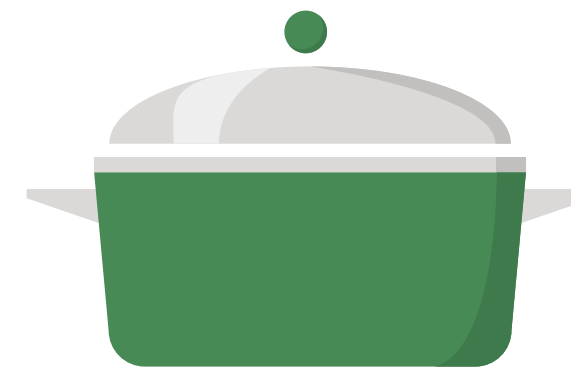
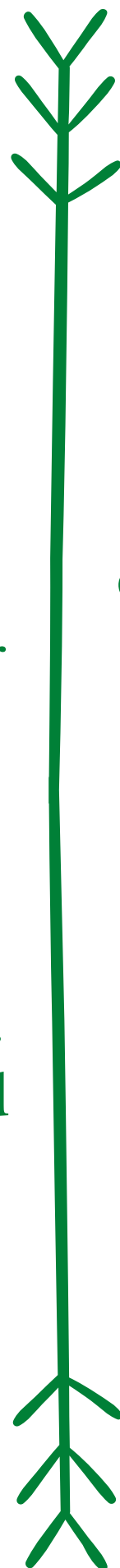
By: Scott Wallestad



This humanistic gerontology study recounts the significant milestones and important experiences of older adults through oral history interviews which includes a particular focus paid to their perspectives on aspects of health.



L. S. recounted stories of growing up during the Depression when her mother made her clothes, her adolescence when she wrote letters to soldiers fighting in WWII, her older daughter walking through miles of orange groves to get home while military vehicles took the roads during the Cuban Missile Crisis, moving from place to place while her husband of over fifty years worked on the St. Lawrence Seaway, meeting Billy Graham and becoming a Baptist, being involved in many businesses, and, to this day, being a prolific dancer.



D. D. told of times growing up in a lower-middle class household where, in addition to his daily chores, he mowed lawns, shoveled driveways, and picked cherries to pay for the things he wanted. He shared memories of the numerous creative extracurricular activities he busied himself with including photography, theater, and choir. He thought about the good times with past loves, the not-so-good times working in management, his daughters whom he continues to cherish, and his continuing pursuit of the passion he first discovered in his mother's kitchen as a child: cooking.

At first blush, the stories of these two may appear dissimilar. However, common themes tie them together. Both individuals share an appreciation for hard work, being there for others, taking the good with the bad, appreciating family, maintaining busy lives, and continuing to grow in those lives. Both shared health concerns but continue to take care of themselves regardless of them. Again, they take the good with the bad in their lives as they continue to grow in them. Such are healthy mindsets to maintain when one is older. Such are healthy mindsets to maintain at any age.