
KEEP PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE

Companionship Offers Social & Health Benefits

Humans are social beings. We need to share our needs, wants, loves, fears, thoughts and experiences with other people. Social, physical and emotional contact are essential to our everyday life.

As we age, these life-fulfilling forms of contact may be reduced by the loss of loved ones. Also, health issues that limit mobility, lower energy levels and decrease mental acuity may make sustaining relationships much more difficult. The result can be a loss of companionship, along with an increase in isolation, that leads to stress, depression and/or loneliness. In addition, there are studies that link the lack of social support to a greater instance of dementia and to heart trouble.

To avoid these pitfalls, seniors (and their caregivers) should focus on maintaining the life-fulfilling forms of contact and nurturing personal relationships...as well as reestablishing them when they are lost.



In addition to presenting a mental challenge, playing cards can provide social and emotional contact, and be lots of fun, too.

STATISTICS

For the year 2009, the Administration on Aging reported the following figures regarding the living situations of non-institutionalized Americans in their seniors years.

- ◆ More men (72%) than women (40%) age 65 and over lived with their spouse in 2009.
 - ➔ Twice as many women (39%) as men (19%) age 65 and over lived alone.
- ◆ Living alone increased with age.
 - ➔ 49% of women age 75 and older lived alone in 2009.
 - ➔ 28% of women age 75 and older lived with their husband.
- ◆ Living alone increased the chance of an older person living in poverty.
 - ➔ 15% of older persons living alone were poor. In contrast, only 5% living with families were poor.

FINDING CAMARADERIE

As you get older, it can be more difficult to find new companions and fend off loneliness. Here are some helpful "camaraderie" suggestions.

- ◆ Turn to family and reach out to friends.
- ◆ Look inside to your faith and participate at your church, temple or mosque.
- ◆ Focus on common interests. Join activities, clubs and classes offered at community and senior centers. And volunteer your services. There are plenty of organizations that would welcome you and your expertise.
- ◆ Get involved. Active participation in any of the above suggestions increases the odds of people gravitating to you.
- ◆ Love a pet. Critters offer companionship and joy. Pet therapy can help people who suffer with depression, dementia, etc.
- ◆ Assisted living can make it easier to meet new friends and visit with them often.

(Sources: AoA.gov, Health Behavioral News Service, Stress Mgmt. Corner)



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