

What are children? They are enthusiastic about life, they love unconditionally, and always are ready for a new adventure. Now, that is how I want to spend the remainder of my life, even if society wants to call it “aging.”

Surfing has been one of many passions since moving to Hawaii in 1964 at age 29. There were so few women surfers, I would get strange looks from the men, but after proving myself on big waves, I was accepted.

You see, from a very early age, knowing I wanted to be a physician was a sign that I would not live by the rules and attitudes of the society and times into which I was born. So, being one of the few female surfers was nothing new. Therefore, as I hit the half-century mark, I never bought into the notion that being old was unfashionable, unattractive, or even frightening. Oh, I stopped surfing some of the really big waves and stopped wearing a bikini. And I use my boogie board more because of inner ear balance problems, but I am in the ocean I love! I cannot imagine never surfing any more than I can imagine not practicing medicine. Medicine has never been just a “job” . . . it is a part of my being. I may hang up my stethoscope, but I am not retiring from “Life”!

My mother and grandmother were amazing role models; they set an example that taught me beautiful lessons about aging: Firstly, each day is a gift . . . choose to celebrate it! Secondly, nothing keeps you young like vigorous activity, whether in the ocean, pool, garden, or gym. And lastly, old age is like a bank account . . . you withdraw from what you’ve deposited. I learned to deposit many healthy habits, giving to others, and memories from an abundant life well lived. I look forward to the future with enthusiasm and am confident of more time surfing with my 9-year-old granddaughter. To me, success in retirement is wondering when I ever had time to go to work.

So, hey kids, I’ll see you on the playgrounds!!!



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