

SAMPLES FROM THE PROPOSED BOOK

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF  
LIVING LONGER & LIVING BETTER™

by Barbara L. Miklos  
with Stuart P. Johnson

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viewing in a web browser)

The following pages contain three sample sections from the proposed book:

- **Forward**—Barbara introduces life with her grandmother, Elsie, whose enduring wisdom plays a part in each chapter of the book.
- **Introduction**—A general introduction to the book discusses the “Age Wave” in which we live, as the number of people living well into the “second half” of life is not only expanding in number, but in the potential for Living Longer Living Better.
- **Chapter 5: Redirect Your Path in the Second Half of Life**—this sample contains all of the elements common to each of the six chapters in the book. (See the book proposal for the complete outline).

This sample has been styled in book format, using a 6-1/2 x 8-3/4 page size. It was done to help us as authors to get a sense of how best to present the content, particularly because it is sprinkled with quotes, illustrations, and other material. It is not intended to suggest a design, but simply to make the proposal easier to read.

The proposal is presented in two PDF files. LLLB Sample appears in the formatted page size. LLLB Printable Sample includes crop marks.



# FORWARD

All of us remember certain events from our childhood with great detail and clarity. The reason for this is more chemical than experiential. Recent studies have shown that when we are in exciting, traumatic, or life threatening situations adrenalin kicks in and even after the event is over it keeps those memories vivid. That's why people suffer from post traumatic stress syndrome .

My first vivid memory was not a happy one. It was having my tonsils removed when I was 3 years old. I'm at the top end of the boomer chain and that's how they treated you if you experienced more than 3 throat infections.

I remember my dad standing on the side of me as I lay on the gurney going into the operating room, I remember the man with the mask saying in a very nice voice..."now I want you to dream about a butterfly and then you'll wake up and you'll have a little sore throat." (Later in life the doctors would say you'll experience some "discomfort," which translated into "a lot of pain.") I also remember every detail staying in the hospital overnight, missing my parents, but then getting some ice cream.

Fortunately, my next vivid memory was a much more positive one and though I didn't realize it at the time, it helped to establish my views about living and aging very early in my life.

I grew up in Forest Park, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. The first house I lived in had two bedrooms, a small living, dining room and a kitchen. My mom was a housewife although I never did understanding the term, was she married to my dad or our house? My older brother, Tom, my baby brother Steve and I were in one bedroom and my parents in the other.

It was getting crowded and we needed more room. At that time they were building new houses just a block away and it was decided that my grandmother who had recently been divorced (one reason being that her third husband didn't want her to work), was going to move with us into the new house. Looking back, that was the only way we could afford the new house with the extra bedroom.

I was five years old and remember the day we moved. I carried a small

box of my toys down the alley one block to my brand new house. It was a tri-level. A combined living dining area, seven steps up to the second level with two small bedrooms and 1 bath and another seven steps to the third level, hence “tri-level”. That top room was like a dormer and one year after we moved in my baby brother Mark was born and that became the boys’ room.

There also was a very, very small kitchen on the first floor behind the “attached” one car garage. The only problem was we couldn’t afford a car, and didn’t get one until I was 18. But like most things in life...if you’ve never really had something, you don’t know what you’re missing!

So my grandmother and I became roommates. I was 5 years old and she was 65 years old...a perfect match! We shared an 11x12 foot bedroom for the next 16 years, excluding the time I was away at college.

The room had two twin beds against opposite walls. A little end table with one drawer between the beds, a six drawer maple dresser which I still have. She had 3 drawers and I had 3 drawers. We also had a small closet that somehow we shared.

When I was little I had to get to sleep before my grandmother because she snored, and when I was a teenager we had some tough times because she didn’t like my cheerleading pom, poms hanging from the top of the dresser mirror and I didn’t want to tell my friends I had to share a bedroom with my grandmother. But most of the time, we got along remarkably well and although she never lectured me she showed me lessons of life that remain a part of who I am.

In many ways she was a woman before her time. When her first husband, who had an alcohol problem, left her she had two children she needed to provide for and she did a very good job of that. She started her own business. It was a ladies millenary store, which over the years became a children’s and woman’s apparel store, and finally a children’s store. She was the first woman to be elected president of the Forest Park, Illinois. Chamber of Commerce.

By the time she became my roommate, she no longer had her own business but she took a job in a very fine dress shop as a sales person. I had some of the best clothes when I was in high school...a time when you wore matching skirts and sweaters...never slacks.

My grandmother dressed very well and kept up with all of the current styles. She also maintained a good balance in her life. In addition to working, she went out socially. My brothers and I used to look out the window when she would come home from bowling with her “tiger club”

bowling shirt and giving her current boyfriend a goodnight kiss.

She enjoyed life, but Grandma also had her share of difficulties. One day I came home from school and walked into our bedroom. I knew she had to have an operation the day before but I wasn't prepared for what I saw. She had cataract surgery and her head was lodged between two large sandbags. She had to stay that way for two days! She never complained about it.

Nor did I hear her complain during the last few years of her life when she suffered from congestive heart failure. She seemed to accept that this was part of the imperfect world we lived in. Grandma worked until she was 80 and died when she was 82.

I never thought of my grandmother as "getting old"...because she never talked about getting old. What she simply did was live an active life for as long as she could. She was my role model, not for aging, but for living life to its fullest. Because of her example, I truly believe that if we learn and apply the basic psychological success principles presented in this book, we all have the capacity to live longer and live better.

Thanks Grandma. You were a great roommate.

I love you. See you soon.

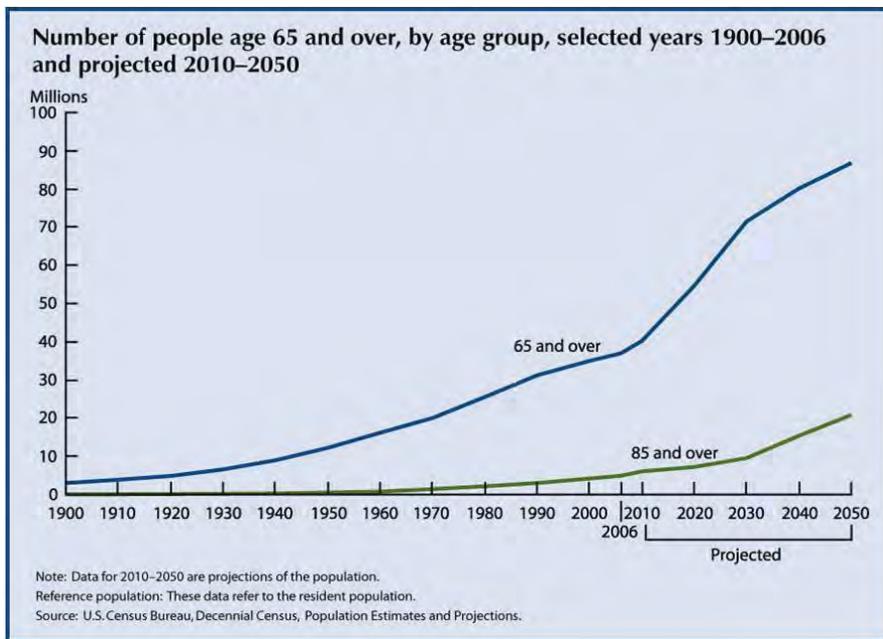
Barbara

*In each chapter that follows, I will share an insight from Grandma, called "What Would Elsie Say?"*



# INTRODUCTION

American society is aging...and it's changing the world for everyone. The Baby Boomer generation will produce a 38% surge in the 65 and older population in the United States as they hit that landmark in the second decade of the 21st century. While the rate will slow for those who follow, the Baby Boomer's influence and increasing longevity will be reflected far into the future.



- The median age among Americans is on the rise. It went up from 35.3 in 2000 to 36.8 in 2008.
- Baby boomers represent the largest group of people in the second half of life in American history. Their impact will be compounded even further by constantly increasing longevity. Life expectancy in the 20th century increased from 49 to 76.
- The number of those 85+ is expected to grow from 4.2 million in 2000 to

8.9 million in 2030. The number of those 100+, while still small, was the fastest growing segment in the first decade of the 21st century, nearly doubling from 50 thousand in 2000 to 92 thousand in 2008.

This phenomenon was highlighted in a February 2010 special issue of *U.S. News & World Report* on Aging Well. The cover proclaimed “How to Live to 100.”

In the labor sector, statistics indicate that the second half of our work life is also changing. Those statistics do not reflect additional changes brought on by the global financial crisis of 2008, a situation that caused many people to rethink “retirement.”

- In 2006, more than 15% of the U.S. labor force was projected to be 55 or older
- By 2020 the average age of employees will reach 41 years, which will be higher than any other period of our nations’ history
- By 2030, the number of those over 55 in the workforce will double in number

By every measure, people today are better equipped and more qualified than their predecessors to live well in what is increasingly being called the “second half” of life. They are better educated, have higher net worth, and longer life expectancy.

The traditional linear life plan is changing. We used to think of life in three major phases.



Now, not only is the phrase “Old Age” not in our vocabulary, but there are new opportunities and challenges at every stage of life. This is already evident in the personal and professional dimensions of those in the second half of life. Individuals are having children later in life, returning to school,

changing careers and thinking of themselves differently.

If you are in or approaching the “second-half,” this book is for you. It is filled with insights and tips to help you make the most of this exciting new era of possibility for a longer and more fulfilling life—making the second half the best half of your life.

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NOTE: The statistics in this section will be updated as needed as we draw closer to publication.

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## Chapter 5

# REDIRECT YOUR PATH IN THE SECOND HALF OF LIFE

*Learn how to redirect your path in the second half of life by revitalizing the “LLLB Components of Your Personal Framework.” Make sure there are no “should have, could have, or would have” by making a paradigm shift, mastering your Current Dominant Thought, and identifying your desired, motivated goals. Be proactive and direct your path to make the second half of your life, the best half of your life.*

### Chapter Outline

#### **Introduction**

#### **LLLB Success Principle**

Redirect Your Path in the Second Half of Life  
Your Personal Framework = Character + Integrity

#### **LLLB Role Model**

John Glenn

#### **Wisdom Words Old & New**

What would Elsie say?  
Psychological Observation

#### **Personal Review**

#### **LLLB Success Action Steps**

Make a Paradigm Shift  
Focus on our Current Dominant Thought  
Identify Your Desired Goals

#### **Barbara’s Top Three Tips**

Follow the Path You Desire in the Second Half of Life  
Maintain a Personal Framework of Which You Can be Proud  
Be Proactive, Not Reactive

## INTRODUCTION

**E**ach of us has a primary pathway in life whether we are aware of it or not. Depending on individual circumstances, for some people it may be a very limited one such as finding their next meal or getting up and going to work everyday. As a child one of your main pathways in life was to attend school. In addition to this childhood path you stopped along the way to do things you loved, like playing a sport, reading books, listening to a certain music group, or collecting things.

As we journey through our life our pathways change. We complete our formal education, begin a career, many people seek out marriage and become parents. The responsibilities of our daily lives often take away from our ability to pursue our passions. In order to remain well and experience “optimal living” in the second half of life, we must renew and in some cases redirect our pathway.

## LLL SUCCESS PRINCIPLE

### **Redirect Your Path in the Second Half of Life**

**T**here is an old adage that states, “If you have your health, you have everything.” There is certainly more than a grain of truth in this statement. But there have been many people impacted by life changing events who have said, “If this hadn’t happened to me I would never have stopped and looked at my current path, nor would I have gone down a new path which would enhance the quality of my life.

But there are also many people who approach the second half of life with many “should have, would have, and could have’s.” That’s because they never stopped the daily action of their lives to take an honest assessment of what they really want to do, or how their life paths might have changed due to a variety of life experiences. They have repeated the same mistakes and habits that have prevented them from coming to a place of contentment in the second half of life.

There is a brief story written by Portia Nelson that illustrates this point. It’s titled:

*An Autobiography in Five Chapters*

- Chap I: I walk down the street. There is a deep hole in the sidewalk. I fall in.  
I am lost...I am helpless...it isn't my fault.  
It takes forever to find a way out.
- Chap II: I walk down the same street. There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I pretend I don't see it. I fall in again. I can't believe I am in the same place. It isn't my fault. It still takes a long time to get out.
- Chap III: I walk down the same street. There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I see it is there. I still fall in...it's a habit. My eyes are open.  
I know where I am.
- Chap IV: I walk down the same street. There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I walk around it.
- Chap V: I walk down another street.

**Redirecting Your Path**

The good news is that throughout our lives we always have a choice to walk down another street. Is there a different street you would like to walk down? In order to successfully redirect your path, I believe there are two components which will provide a solid foundation for renewal in the second half of life. The first component is your character. The second is an important part of your character... your integrity.

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*What kind of person do you want to be?*

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“Character is a tree and reputation its shadow.”

*Abraham Lincoln*

It has been said that character is the kind of person you are when no one else is looking. Your character includes your individual values and traits that you live by on a daily basis. Character is the consistent manner in which each of us behaves. There is a distinction between

our character and our reputation. Character defines the kind of person you really are. One’s reputation is what people say you are. Your character will have a direct impact on how you redirect your path in the second half of life.

As a psychology major my undergraduate and graduate education included internships. These are valuable learning experiences which help students take psychological theories and apply them to real life situations. They also help you realize that these theories don’t always apply and in addition to educational knowledge you have to use your intelligence and common sense as you deal with daily career challenges.

One of my internships was working in a Federal Probation and Parole Office under the supervision of an experienced Federal Officer. My tasks included gathering social history information from individuals who had been found guilty of a federal crime. This information was then used by the judge in the case to determine what type of sentence the convicted individual would receive. Prior to meeting with Mr. J, I had gathered background information from his mother who had done her best to raise her son under difficult circumstances.

In addition, I reviewed information from a previous arrest regarding this individual. When I met Mr. J he looked much older than his age of 27. But the thing that stood out most to me was that his main path in life was getting enough money, primarily through the sale of illegal drugs, which would finance his heroin habit.

I had no doubt he would continue to do whatever he needed to, including potential harm to others, to achieve that purpose. His path at this point in his life defined his character which could be summed up in one word...bad. Could his character change if he received the proper

treatment? Possibly, but at the time I met him that was the furthest thought from his mind.

More recently, as part of the Behavioral Health Services Practice I maintain, I work with court Mandated follow up counseling for people who have received DUI convictions. The majority of offenders admit their poor choice of driving after drinking and take responsibility for their actions. But it is always fascinating, from a psychological perspective, those individuals who are unable to take responsibility for their actions even after they are caught and have verified evidence of their law breaking behavior.

One man suggested in anger, “Okay so I was drinking too much, but everyone does it and I just happened to get caught!” “This isn’t about everyone else,” I replied. “It’s about you. You are responsible for making the choice to get into your car and drive. There are two good things that have come out of this situation, the first thing is that you were stopped from continuing to drive drunk. The second is that you were stopped before you experienced the statistical probability that you could have killed someone.”

Of course this denial is a component of the addiction process, but it also reflects on an individual’s character. A person of good character has enough self-esteem to take responsibility for their actions even when the consequences for themselves will be difficult.

### **Your Personal Framework: Character + Integrity**

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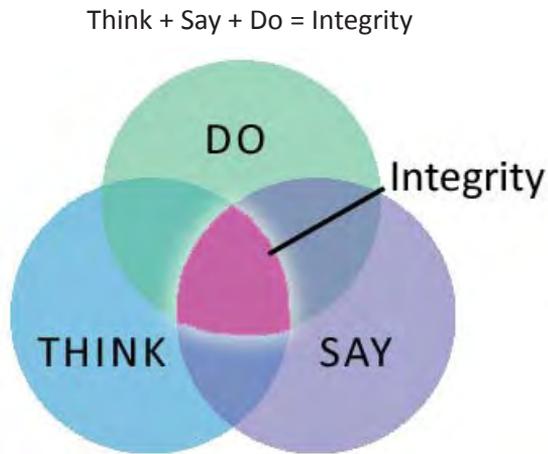
#### *INTEGRITY*

*Do my words and deeds reflect honesty and responsibility,  
and demonstrate trustworthiness to others?*

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There are many different traits that make up a person’s character, but I would like to focus on the one I believe is crucial to the path you take in the second half of life. That trait is integrity.

“Integrity” comes from the Latin, “integritas” and “integra” meaning whole, complete, one. Integrity is the alignment between what one THINKS (beliefs, values), what one SAYS to others, and what one DOES.



When the three circles are separated, when there is no alignment between the three behaviors; the person is out of integrity. When the circles approach each other and overlap to become one circle, the person is integral. Some of the behaviors within the concept of integrity include: sincerity, truthfulness, keeping one's word and agreements, punctuality, ethics, and fairness.

Imagine a world in which everybody is always a world of honesty and sincerity, of being able to rely on what others say. People are punctual and fulfill their obligations and duties in life willingly and to the best of their ability. This would be a world without lying, cheating, stealing, fraud, and criminality.

Then imagine a world in which nobody tells the truth if it serves their interests not to, everybody is out to get everything they can, any way they can, including lying and not keeping agreements and contracts. People shirk duties, obligations, and only pay debts when forced to. They will commit fraud and steal when there is an opportunity to do so.

Each group within humanity (nations, cultures, ethnic groups, corporations) has different levels of cultural respect for integrity. A good measure of a society is how close to the first scenario of full integrity it operates. The cost to a society of no-integrity is enormous: all the wasted

time, energy and money of big groups of lawmakers and enforcers (police and government agencies); courts and millions of lawsuits; walls, fences, locks and bars on homes and businesses; verification, security guards, and alarm agencies and systems, internet mal-ware (virus, spyware, spam, etc) protection—to name a few. The total cost of no-integrity on the planet is at least one-third of the gross planetary product. Unfortunately, it seems that there is less and less, rather than more and more, integrity on the planet.

It used to be a very powerful thing for people to say “I give you my word.” The person hearing this phrase knew that he could trust whatever that person said. Unfortunately, it is not a phrase that is commonly used in society today either in business, politics or between individuals. In his research on the Everyday Ethics of the American people, Joshua Halberstam discovered that approximately 9 out of 10 Americans admitted to lying more or less regularly to give themselves an advantage, to escape the consequences of some action, or to “protect” someone from the truth.

“Sin has many tools, but a lie is the handle that fits them all”

*Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.*  
*Associate Justice, U.S. Supreme Court, 1902-1935*

We of course don’t always have control of others, but each of us has control of the personal choices we each make on a daily basis. On the personal level, the lack of integrity destroys one’s self-respect and self-esteem which are absolutely essential for personal happiness. There are two ways to accumulate great power and wealth in life. One is by taking the path of integrity, by maintaining respect for ones self and others. The other is by taking the path of no-integrity, by lying, cheating, stealing, criminality, and having no respect for one’s self or others. Taking the path of no-integrity will always, with no exceptions, cause harm to ourselves and others.

Former heavyweight champion George Foreman, who has been a success both in and out of the ring, has some good advice regarding integrity.

Something else very important happened to me when I left boxing the first time. I found out who I am, and I became happy with who I am. That might sound easy, but it's hard for a lot of people. I know, it was very hard for me, but I finally learned that you have to cast off everybody else you're trying to imitate and be yourself. Forget about trying to be like sports heroes. Forget about trying to be like this person or that person. Just be the best person you can be. You need self-respect before you can respect other people properly.

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“What good is it for you to gain the whole world,  
and yet lose or forfeit your very self?”

*The Bible, Luke 9:25, TNIV*

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Working as a human behavior specialist in a variety of settings, I have met with many individuals in positions of “leadership.” Individuals can be leaders and not have the character trait of “integrity.” There are examples at every level of society...gang leaders, corrupt government leaders, corporate leaders whose greed has ruined countless lives...they can lead... but it is a worthless leadership because it doesn't have the component of integrity.

I was meeting with an executive of a large corporation. David was in his early 50's, beginning the second half of his life. As part of the assessment

process to determine the appropriate coaching and training needed for his managers I interviewed him and one of the many questions I asked him was how he had obtained his high position within the corporate structure and if he had gained or lost anything in the process.

“To thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man.”

*William Shakespeare  
spoken by Polonius in Hamlet*

For a moment he looked very surprised and didn't respond.

Then he looked at me with very sad eyes and said, "No one has ever asked me that and I've never really sat still long enough to think about it." He again took a long pause and said, "It's funny you should ask me that question, I've been

thinking about the same thing. I have gained the top position in this organization, I have acquired wealth, status in political circles, power to make or brake people's careers. I have manipulated people and situations to my advantage to get where I am today. My wife has left me, I barely see my children, I've been drinking too much"...and he just stopped talking and looked sad.

I was surprised at what he said and was silent for a moment. Obviously, I had touched on something that had been a burden for him. I said, "David, before we talk about training for your company, would it be alright if we took some time to explore how you can start going down a different path at this time in your life?" He replied, "How can I do that at this stage of my life?" "You can do it at any stage of life," I said. Each of us has a choice to make, no matter who we are, no matter where we have been, to redirect our path. David made that choice to go down a different path and on that day, in that moment, he began to regain his integrity.

"Watch your thoughts; they become words. Watch your words; they become actions. Watch your actions, they become habits. Watch your habits, they become character. Watch your character; it becomes your destiny"

*Frank Outlaw*

The Great Wall of China is a gigantic structure that cost an immense amount of money and labor to build. When it was finished, it appeared to be impregnable. But three times the enemy breached it...not by breaking it down or going around it. They did it by bribing the gatekeepers.

Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, in referring to this historical fact had this to say: "It was the human element that failed. What collapsed was character which proved insufficient to make the great structure men had fashioned really work."

## LLL B ROLE MODEL

**T**he great American Astronaut John Glenn redirected his path several times throughout his life. He was a pilot in World War II and the Korean War. Flying was his passion in life which he took to a different level when he worked with NASA. After his historic first orbit around the earth in 1962, he was not permitted to go back into space. It was later reported that John F. Kennedy grounded him because he didn't want to take the risk of this American hero possibly being killed on future missions.

So he redirected his path and served our country in another way. He became a US Senator from Ohio serving from 1974 to 1997. A year later, NASA invited him to rejoin the space program as a member of the Space Shuttle Discovery Crew. On October 29, 1998, at the age of 77, John Glenn became the oldest human ever to venture into space.

Even after that incredible experience he again redirected his path to serve others. He and his wife, Annie founded the John Glenn Institute for Public Service at Ohio State University. Through its programs, the institute seeks to improve the quality of public service and to encourage young people to pursue careers in government.

Obviously, not all of us will have the same interests and talents that John Glenn had. But each of us does have a choice to take active steps to redirect our path no matter what our age. In doing so we will greatly enhance our ability to keep well, "Living Longer & Living Better."

## WISDOM WORDS OLD & NEW

### What Would Elsie Say?

**E**lsie was pretty direct both in what she did and what she said. She had to be. She lived in a time when women were second class citizens. Elsie began working as a teen-ager and never stopped. One of her jobs was as a ticket taker at the Forest Park Amusement Park. It wasn't much of a job, but she always worked hard and gave her best.

When she married she had to work because her first husband was an alcoholic and she needed to support her two children, Leroy & Adeline. Her path at that time was survival. She remarried a wonderful man and she wanted to do more with her life so she redirected her path.

She took a risk, received a loan and opened her first store in 1927. As mentioned in the introduction, it was a millenary (hat) shop. Six years later

even though the economy was in the midst of the Great Depression, she expanded her store to include children's and women's apparel.

Her store provided Elsie with another new path which led her to become a successful business woman at a time when there weren't even many women in business. She enjoyed providing children and women with quality clothes and Elsie would always say, "the minute they try on those clothes or see them on their children, they feel beautiful!"

In addition to her business, Elsie also had another path she followed. This was her path of fun. She loved to fish and would row her own boat. She also loved bowling. After her second husband passed away she always had "boyfriends." She worked every day until she was 80 years old. She was a wonderful example of a woman of good character who had integrity.

### Elsie's Wisdom

"Get up and out and do what you need to do, when that's accomplished do what you want to do, and always have something you love to do."

### Psychological Observations

**R**edirecting your path in the second half of life gives you an opportunity to renew yourself. The quote that I cited at the beginning of this chapter has always stayed with me. It said, "Character is who you are and what you do when nobody else is looking." Character is of primary importance because it determines whether you will be selfish or selfless. When you act, do you only take into account your own personal good or do you have in mind the common good and the impact your conduct will have on others?

From a psychological perspective, individuals can place themselves in situations which can destroy both their good character and integrity. This can lead to significant emotional problems including depression, broken relationships and possible criminal behavior.

I have known many people who have started out their adult lives with a foundation of good character that has been destroyed through vanity,

greed, and addictions. This loss of character and integrity has no respect for socio-economic status or educational attainment. Remember, there are many things that can be taken from you, but your good character and your integrity are not among of them....*Only you can give that away!*

The good news is that at any time in your life you have the ability to make a conscious choice to change your behavior and redirect your path to become a person of integrity and good character.

“The people who make a difference in your life are not the ones with the most credentials, the most money or the most awards. They are the ones who set the best examples because of their good character and their care and concern for others.”

*Source unknown*

## PERSONAL REVIEW

### Your Path

Rate the way you feel about the path of your life at this time

1.....5.....10  
negative      medium      very positive

What factors in your life today are affecting your path

Positively \_\_\_\_\_

Negatively \_\_\_\_\_

### Your Integrity

Rate your level of personal integrity—the convergence of what you think, say, and do

1.....5.....10  
low              medium              high

Do you need to increase your integrity? If so, how?

### Positive Role Model

Name someone you know who is a good role model for redirecting his or her path while demonstrating character and integrity. What can you learn from this person?

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## LLLB SUCCESS ACTION STEPS To Redirect Your Path in the Second Half

### ACTION STEP #1: Make a paradigm shift

Throughout history we've seen examples of people and groups who have limited themselves in what they have done with their lives simply because there is an unsaid paradigm or frame of reference that "it's just not done." Women are one such group. years ago society's attitude gave some of the following messages: Women don't need to go to college, interscholastic sports aren't necessary for women, they're too emotional to handle leadership positions, she became vice president of the company but it's only because she was so "aggressive." And the list goes on...

Another old paradigm is the use of seat belts. It took more than 60 years from the time the automobile was invented for people to use seat belts. When I was in 8th grade, my uncle was in a serious auto accident and died as a result of a head injury which would not have killed him if he had just been wearing a seat belt! But no one even mentioned that after his death because at that time, the paradigm of our society was there were no seat belts in cars. He left a wife and two children ages five and six.

Take a moment to reflect on your own life. How often have you experienced the effects of a paradigm that has impacted your life in a negative or positive way. Some of them can be very humorous. I've always loved the classic story of "the family ham" which I think illustrates this point well.

There was a family fortunate enough to have four generations, new baby to great grandmother. Each year at Easter the family got together and had a traditional ham dinner. This was the first year the new mother was hosting the dinner.

As she was preparing the meal, she cut off both ends of the ham before putting it into the baking pan. As she did this, all of a sudden she stopped, looked at her mother and said, "Mom, why do I have to cut off the ends of the ham before

"Don't wait for your ship to come in, swim out to it."

*Source unknown*

putting it into the baking pan it?" Her mother replied, "I don't know, that's the way my mother always did it, let's ask her." They went into the living room where the great grandmother was sitting. "Grandma, said the young woman, why did you always cut off the ends of the ham before putting it into the pan?" The elderly woman looked up and with an irritated glance replied, "Because it didn't fit in the pan!"

There are also paradigms that are currently applied to people in the second half of life. Because we are living longer we must begin to change not only society's attitude about the options we have during this time of life but also change our own. We limit ourselves and others from experiencing the most in life because of our inability to change our paradigms about aging.

I was teaching a program I designed titled "The Psychology of Positive Aging." at a retirement community. When the class was completed I asked participants to comment on how their ideas had changed and if they would do anything differently as a result of the information that had been presented in this program. One woman in her 80's said excitedly, "I'm going to Italy!" "That's great!" I replied. "But how did this program help you to come to that decision?" "It has always been my dream to visit Italy, but I haven't done it because my children said I was too old and that something could happen to me. This class has helped me clarify what I really want to experience and just because my children believe older people don't do those kind of things, isn't going to keep me from accomplishing my dream." She went on to say, "What's the worst that could happen, I could die in Italy!" She changed her paradigm, from "older people don't do those kind of things" to... "as long as I'm well enough to get up and go I can do what I want!" She very specifically redirected her path to visit Italy and had a great time!

## PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. Identify one paradigm shift you need to make at this time in your life.

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2. As a result of this “shift” how would it help you to redirect your path?

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3. What resources would you need to complete this action step?

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**ACTION STEP #2: Focus on your Current Dominant Thought**

**H**ow many thoughts can you hold in your mind at one time? Focus on the picture below. What do you see? If you focus on the middle of the picture you will see a goblet. If you focus on the outside of the picture, you will see two faces. Do this a few times. Lock your focus on the goblet, then on the faces. Now try to see both images, the goblet and the two faces at the same time. You can't do it!



This illustrates the simple but powerful concept of CDT—Current Dominant Thought. When you lock your gaze on the goblet, you lock out the image of the faces. When you lock your gaze on the faces, you lock out the image of the goblet. We have been created with the most wonderful computer in the world, our brain. But we can only hold one thought in our mind at one time...we cannot hold two parallel thoughts.

But how can this simple concept help us redirect our path in the second half of life? Studies show that we move in the direction of our Current Dominant Thought. If we consciously think about the path we want to take and keep bringing that thought into our mind, we will move in that direction....if we don't, we won't move at all.

For example, if I wake up in the morning, look outside and see it rainy and gloomy and I say to myself, "I hate it when it's rainy and gloomy, this is going to be a bad day. What is the last thought I have begun the day with..."it's a bad day." If I continue to say that subconsciously to myself

as I leave for work...guess what...my CDT will be, "it's a bad day"...and it will be!

If I wake up on the same day with the same weather conditions but change my thought to, "It's raining, rain is good for my garden, I'm going to have a great day." The last thought I have begun the day with is, "I'm going to have a great day." And I will have a great day, if I maintain that as my CDT. Remember, we move in the direction of our CDT...each of us has the choice to make that direction positive or negative.

What we say to ourselves is our "inner dialogue." The average person talks to themselves at the rate of about 900 words a minute. These are our thoughts, they never stop. They keep going when we are awake or sleeping. What we say to ourselves directly impacts our CDT which in turn, effects the path we take at any given point in our life. We need to focus our thoughts on what we desire to achieve:

### **Current Dominant Thought = Desire Motivation**



There is a right and wrong way to dialogue with ourselves...here are some guidelines to use:

#### **1. Use first person pronouns**

*Always use words such as I, my, mine. You are affirming what you want to be or change.*

- DON'T SAY, "New friends are fun to be with"
- DO SAY, "I enjoy being with new friends"

The more you personalize a statement over and over, the more you

internalize it. You are affirming what you want to change or become.

## 2. State what you want: not what you don't want

*Focus positive thoughts on your desires.*

- DON'T SAY, "I will stop worrying"
- DO SAY, "I am an optimistic person who enjoys each day"

Remember, you go in the direction of your Current Dominant Thought. Therefore, you want to think about and talk to yourself about what you want, not what you don't want.

## 3. Use the present tense (the here and now)

*This allows your subconscious to get a picture already having that quality.*

- DON'T SAY, "I'll get more involved tomorrow"
- DO SAY, "I am an involved, active person"

Your subconscious can be compared to a recording device. Think about this . . . when you repeat a negative message to yourself that was placed over and over again on your recorder as a child, you say it in the present tense. For example, if you were "stupid" all your life, that's on your recorder and if you make a mistake you will probably replay that message to yourself by saying, "I am stupid" in the present tense. But you have the power to record over these negative thoughts and replace them with realistic positive ones.

## 4. Do not make comparisons

*Inner dialogue is personal. Don't compare yourself with others, but strive to encourage and improve yourself.*

- DON'T SAY, "I'll do better on this project than she will"
- DO SAY, "I'm doing the best I can on this project"

Using inner dialogue statements to compare yourself with others will not be productive and it won't help you to internalize what *you* want to improve for yourself. Focus all your positive talk on *you* in order to get maximum benefit.

Right now you might be saying, “You mean to tell me that I’m going to go around saying to myself, I am smart, I am a great athlete, I am an involved, active person!” There is one important thing you need to remember: *you are making these statements only to yourself . . . no one else can hear you!* If you learned to believe the negative things about yourself by saying them in the present tense, why can’t you learn the positive things? Let me repeat an important message . . . *you* have the power to record over any negative messages you might have had placed on your subconscious by practicing positive inner dialogue . . . *start today!*

Positive inner dialogue leads you towards your desires and what you want to do and be. These are very simple guidelines, but ones that can have a powerful effect on your daily life if they are learned, reinforced, and practiced.

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### Learning from “failure”

#### *Thomas Edison’s CDT*

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Thomas Edison was the greatest failure in the history of invention. He failed more times and lost more money than any other inventor. He was also the greatest inventor in history, patenting 1,097 devices. He experimented over 10,000 times and failed in these attempts on his way to developing the carbon filament which led to the first light bulb. During this time, the scientific journals said that he was out of his mind and wasting his time.

A reporter interviewed him when he was in the middle of this experimental process for developing the light bulb. He asked Edison, “Isn’t it true that you have failed five thousand times in your attempts?” Edison replied, “I have not failed at all. I have successfully identified 5,000 ways it didn’t work which puts me that much closer to finding the way it will work! Edison’s Current Dominant Thought gave him the ability to redirect his path towards success.

“Not all who dig for gold find it, but they do strengthen their muscles.”

*Source unknown*

## PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. Identify one negative message you give to yourself via your thoughts on a regular basis.

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2. Following the “guidelines for inner dialogue,” change the message above to a positive one.

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3. As a result of the change you have made to this specific inner dialogue message, what will your Current Dominant Thought be as you redirect your path?

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### ACTION STEP #3: Identify your goals to redirect your path

“The tragedy of life does not lie in not reaching your goals, the tragedy lies in not having any goals to reach. It isn’t a calamity to die with dreams unfulfilled, but it is a calamity not to dream. It is not a disaster to be unable to capture your ideals, but it is a disaster to have no ideals to capture. It is not a disgrace not to reach the stars but it is a disgrace to have no stars to reach.”

*Dr. Benjamin Mays*

I believe that throughout our lives we are in “the process of becoming.” During that process we need guidelines to help us redirect our path. These guidelines come by identifying clearly defined goals that we want to achieve. Goals can be short term or long term, big or small. Although we might not reach all the goals we’ve set, they still guide us as we redirect our path.

Going through life without goals is like playing football without the end zone. You can play the game but you never really know if you’ve won. According to Dave Kohl, Professor Emeritus at Virginia Tech. people who regularly write down their goals earn nine times as much over their lifetimes as the people who don’t, and yet 80% of Americans say they don’t have goals. 16% do have goals, but they don’t write them down. Less than 4% write down their goals and fewer than one percent actually review them on a regular basis. *Remember, the reward comes not just in the achieving but also in the doing.*

The exercise I do the most is swimming. If I set my goal to increase the amount I swim from a half mile to a mile, it is both achievable and realistic. I can accomplish this by increasing the distance I swim over a reasonable period of time. On the other hand, if I set my goal to be a participant in the Senior Olympic swim competition, for me, due to some chronic medical

“If you aim at nothing every time you’ll hit it.”

*B. J. Marshall*

conditions, it does not meet the criteria of being achievable or realistic. As a result it becomes a set-up for frustration. I would like you to do a brief active mental exercise that will help you crystallize your thoughts regarding your personal goals that will move you forward as you redirect your path.

Think of one goal you want to achieve during the next year. Now I would like you to answer the following questions regarding your personal goal:

- Is this goal achievable and realistic?
- What benefit will you receive from accomplishing this goal?
- Are there any obstacles you must overcome to achieve this goal?
- What knowledge, people, resources, or organizations will help you in this process?
- What's a realistic time frame for you to reach this goal?
- Can you visualize the goal as if it were already attained?
- Will you take a moment to write down this goal and put it in a place where you will see it daily?

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*A goal not written is only a wish!*

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## PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. Identify one goal that would help you redirect your path in the second half of life.

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2. As a result of achieving this goal, what benefit would you enjoy?

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3. What resources will you need to achieve this goal?

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## BARBARA'S TOP THREE TIPS for Redirecting Your Path

### TIP #1: Follow the path you desire in the second half of life

If you are not happy with the current path you are following or if there is something you've always wanted to do, today is a good day to begin. What's the worst thing that could happen?...you might fail! But failures can be stepping stones to success. When redirecting your path, make sure you consider not only yourself, but also those who love you. Be considerate of how the direction of your path will effect them.

### TIP #2: Maintain a personal framework of which you can be proud

In today's world it is very easy to follow someone else down a dark path at any time. Don't let others direct your path. Before you decide to get involved with someone or something that could possibly impact your character and integrity, ask this question...Is this something that is consistent with my values and can bring pride to those who care about me?

### TIP #3: Be proactive, not reactive

Most people go through life reacting, they never stop and think what they really want to do. If you are proactive, you are in control...if you are reactive, someone else is in control. Remember, one of your greatest powers is your power to choose. Make the choices that are right for you, those who love you, and enjoy your journey.

"You have brains in your head and feet in your shoes  
You can steer yourself any direction you choose  
You're on your own and you know what you know  
And you are the one who'll decide where to go."

*Dr. Seuss*