



### **From the desk of Managing Director, Aaron Lieberman:**

Over the years, I've learned the importance of seeking wisdom from my elders. Lessons imparted on me have allowed me to successfully navigate many life transitions. The perspective you gain from someone who is 80, 90 or even 100 can be invaluable. Their experiences may shed new light on the way you approach your life, your job and even your finances.

By seeking wisdom, you may also develop a better understanding of what your values are. For clients of Marathon Wealth, clearly defined goals and values are crucial to the development of successful financial life plans. If you are someone who struggles with goal setting or are unsure of what truly brings value to your life, this exercise in seeking wisdom may help you find the answers you are looking for.

I'd like to encourage anyone reading this to seek out an elder relative, friend or even a stranger and talk to them. Everyone, without exception, has an interesting story to tell. What if you knew 20 years ago what you know today? What would you have done differently and why? Seeking wisdom can pay dividends. Give it a try!

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## **RECOMMENDED READING**

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### **SEEKING WISDOM**

The secret of successful aging is to **always maintain a "future focus"** by acknowledging the impact of choices made today on your life in the future. In addition, it is important to seek growth and development in all areas of life throughout adulthood. Those who do will more likely view old age as a meaningful and purposeful stage of life.

Erik Erikson was a 20<sup>th</sup> century psychologist who greatly contributed to our understanding of how humans develop—both socially and psychologically—and how they age. He was the first to recognize the potential for growth and development throughout our lifespans, even into very old age.

Erikson taught us that the developmental task of old age is **reflection**—to thoughtfully review and evaluate our lives. He believed that those who are able to look back and accept the course of events and choices made, and to view their lives as being necessary and important, will experience a sense peace and satisfaction.

This process of reflection not only helps individuals come to terms with their past, but also helps them come to terms with the end of their lives as well. Feeling fulfilled and content with how one's life has evolved is the most valuable legacy a person can leave their loved ones. Erikson wrote that the successful outcome of this later life developmental milestone is **wisdom**—the ultimate gift to one's self and to others.

Daniel Goleman, author of *Focus* and *Emotional Intelligence*, interviewed Erikson and his wife, Joan, in the late 1980s when both were in their 80s. He wrote that "**generativity**," was a term often used by Erikson, and means giving back without needing anything in return. Goleman explained this form of giving back can be creative, social, personal, or financial. In addition, "the wisest people" don't see the positive influence of giving back as being limited to one's lifetime.

Similarly, many experts on successful aging promote the concept of **Elderhood**—a role in later life that brings a deep sense of meaning and purpose. But, what does it really mean to be an Elder? What qualities do we look for or try to cultivate?

Barry Balkan, co-founder of the Live Oak Institute, describes an Elder in a way that defines—in a clear and concise way—the characteristics, rewards, and responsibilities of Elderhood:

*An Elder is a person who is still growing, still a learner, still with potential, and whose life continues to have within it, promise for and connection to the future. An Elder is still in pursuit of happiness, joy, and pleasure; and, her or his birthright to these remains intact. Moreover, an Elder is a person who deserves respect and honor and whose work is to synthesize wisdom from long life experience and formulate this into a legacy for future generations.*

Therefore, as you seek wisdom, the greater your understanding of what is truly important to you, the easier it will be to determine and design what you want your legacy to reflect.

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