

## MFT 603 Week 12 Three Points

JA 13 Tiffany Elliott

Our textbook delves into the attributes, bodily changes or the late adult phase of life. The three points of significance in this chapter include: biological theories to explain aging, psychosocial theories and suggestions for improving the aging process

I was surprised to learn the lifespan for humans is 120 years and has remained the same for the past 100,000 years and that aging begins at conception and the process of aging occurs at individualized rates. What most interested me is the biological theories of aging developed to explain physical changes that occur as we age. They include the clockwork theory which indicates connective-tissue cells have an internal clock that is genetically programmed to stop cell reproduction at a certain maximum level which determines the length of a person's life. Free-radical theory takes the approach that highly unstable molecules due to cellular metabolism or environmental substances in the atmosphere cause particles to react and combine with proteins, lipids or cell organelles. These free-radicals cause chromosomal mutations which change cellular functions and cause the aging process. Antioxidants such as vitamins C and E are believed to prevent the formation of free-radicals which is why some people consider them important supplements to deter the aging process. However, no real proof exists yet. The theory of wear and tear suggests after repeated injury, cells wear out and cease to function. Metabolic waste products accumulate over time and deprive cells of their nutrition and cause them to malfunction. Another theory, called the immune-system-failure suggests that antibodies and defense against foreign invaders decline as we age, which makes defense against foreign invaders weaken. I wonder if the foreign invaders refer to viruses, bacteria and infection? The

last Biological Theory of aging is called the autoimmune theory that suggests aging is related to the body's weakening immune system, causing it to be less effective and efficient to recognize its own tissues and cause it to destroy itself. The immune system is programmed to detect its proteins from the foreign invaders, and it appears the body loses this ability to do so as it ages. The body instead attacks and destroys its own cells - the autoimmune response, in other words, the older the person, the higher the autoimmune response and increases in these types of diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis and maybe cancer. Because I used to work in research and development and continue to have an interest in life science, it is true that cancer immunotherapy treatment in published clinical trials is showing some early success.

The Psychosocial Theories of aging and how it affects socialization and life satisfaction is of great interest to me as my mother and father and mother-in-law are in this stage of life.

Disengagement theory suggests that society and individuals withdraw and disengage from one another as a result of aging, and for an orderly transfer of power from the old to the new, this process benefits both generations. The elderly are relieved from stress and responsibilities while the younger generation assume leadership roles. What fascinates me seeing the past 35 years, the Baby Boomer generation cling to power and youth, which stands to say the critics of this theory have a fan club because they do not believe older people's levels of engagement and contentment reduces - ever. The activity theory proposes people achieve satisfaction from life by maintaining a high level of social activity and involvement, and advise older adults age best when continuing to find meaning and reward from activities they can substitute for the ones they had when younger. The goal is to continue to reinvent purpose and belonging and personal connection to maintain high levels of morale and life satisfaction. I tend to believe this theory, but I also

believe there is a limit to the effectiveness of people as they age and there is a danger to the person, their family, their employer and community when they stay in powerful roles beyond their capacity for too long. Finally, continuity-developmental theory views each person with a personality and pattern of coping that lasts throughout their lifetime, and aging is seen as no different from any other life transition, not a separate, final act. That personality has more to do with a person's engagement and social connection and interactions than aging, I believe is valid. But, one cannot ignore the physical and biological impacts of illness and overall health and life events that will impact a person, regardless of their personality. The elderly must have support to transition through life changes and stages and illnesses and loss and grief the same as any person of any age. To isolate, reduce value and ignore input and interaction with the elderly is inhumane and sadly has become more common in the world, particularly our nation of self-centered, individualistic and hedonistic tendencies.

As we consider ways to assist the aging process and society, I was drawn to the suggestions outlined in the textbook for optimal functioning which show me there is very little new under the sun, as our Heavenly Father tells us. Healthy living is about proper exercise, weight, nutrition, avoidance of environmental factors like the sun and air and water and noise and light pollution, regular medical and vision and dental exams and adherence to preventive treatments like exams and cleanings and medications. Avoidance of smoking and alcohol which is why the legalization of pot and impact on people, particularly older people and retention of their biological, social and cognitive functions alarms and surprises me. Consumption of clean water, prescribed medications and sleep are essential. What also surprised me was again the fact that stress ages people, particularly it is to be managed for people in slowing the decline of mental functioning

and learning stress reduction techniques, such as cognitive and behavioral therapy interventions as well as keeping socially and cognitively challenged. Lastly, as we age to eat smaller amounts of fresh food and more frequent meals and adequate fiber stood out to me as did the list of herbs and dietary supplements including: ginkgo, saw palmetto, st. john's wort, evening primrose, black cohosh, chondroitin sulfate and glucosamine, celery seed, garlic, vitamin e and c.

In closing, I believe my parents and mother-in-law have done quite well considering these suggestions of how to halt the aging process, and make sure to live a quality life as they age in this late adult stage. I am grateful each of them live near family members from our families of origin, and I am able to visit with them often and focus on our relationships, even at a distance.