

9 Things I Know at 80

(That I Didn't at 50)

The secret nobody tells you about aging well is this: it was never about moving less. It's about getting specific about how you move — physically, mentally, spiritually. Here is what I have learned about that specificity...

1 Get clear with myself so I have a reliable source for appropriate decisions. Forget external scaffoldings; use my inner GPS.	2 Take anything with a grain of salt. Before reacting, breathe out, create space between me and the event or person.	3 Look for the beauty in everything: a coffee spot on my shirt (Rorschach test?), a torn pant that saved me from falling, a car that did not run me over ... A burst of rain that flooded the street and quenched the thirst of Grandmother Earth, bringing out the bird song more clearly. Every moment may strike me with awe, humour, wonder, magic, fun.
4 I have time and I am the only one to decide how I want to use it. What are my personal priorities, when no one else determines my schedule? What brings me the greatest joy?	5 Play my favorite music and let my body move without restraints, as slowly or as fast as it wants, in straight lines or snake-like movements. Only rule: Go to the end of the movement. Don't censure, don't hold back.	6 Laugh! Laughter increases the oxygen uptake, works my inner organs, relaxes my diaphragm and my spine. And takes off a ton of weight with a stroke of a feather.
7 How to win a quarter inch in tallness every day instead of shrinking? Hang from the door frame, jump rope, swim. As long as the energy is circulating freely in my body, the stiffness of age has no say.	8 The lighter I eat the better I feel. I love to take a glorious lunch and to skip breakfast and dinner. How much I celebrate the simple, natural foods I can prepare, testing a different cuisine every day.	9 Keep contact with the Earth. When dry barefoot, in winter by putting my hands on the trees. For me conifers clean out, drain the stale energy while deciduous trees re-invigorate. So I start with a cleansing until I may fall from lack of energy, then fill up my body with deciduous tree energy. Works with or without leaves on the branches.

Today, I can say that I feel much better than in my fifties. Although I have spent more than 30 years as wheelchair driver, my shoulders are at last pain free (no special treatment). I have been swimming with the dolphins and humpback whales, visited 5 continents and am still listening for which destination is calling me next.

No fear, plenty of gratitude and joy.