



The Masterpiece Living Mosaic

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My Story of Meaning and Purpose by Betty Durden

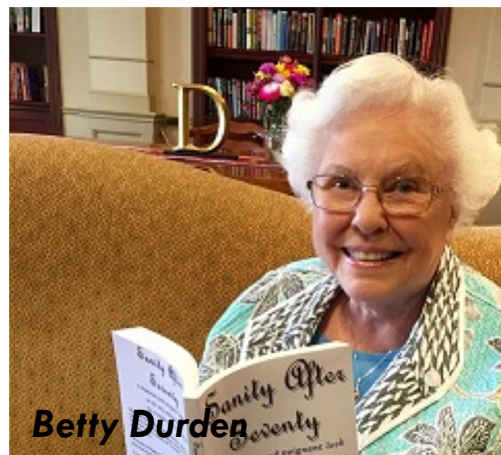
Ten years ago, when I was only eighty-two, I moved into Deerfield, a new retirement community. The pond we called a lake sparkled below me. Numerous Canada geese had moved in before me. The future lawn was now just mud. My house had become too large, too lonely and too filled with ghosts of the past. I downsized until I had only enough stuff to furnish this apartment and a small vacation house. I expected a slow, quiet slide into a dark future.

“Forget that,” I was told. “You have much to do before you sleep.” So prodded, I began to observe and write about this amazing experience of aging. My friendly companions on this journey gave me plenty of material for my observations. I wondered why this period of seventy-plus years had been so neglected in research, fiction, entertainment and social planning. My musings and observations eventually filled a book called *Sanity After Seventy*, published when I was 90. Some of my writings were serious; others were tongue-in-cheek.

Continuing to observe my retirement world, I found much to write about. The Canada geese held early morning meetings on the bank of the pond. White tailed deer emerged quietly from the nearby woods, sometimes meeting human walkers on the bike path. A large spider joined me on my small balcony. A great blue heron visits the pond, walking gracefully along its edge or standing quietly with long neck extended, watching for a tasty fish. There is life all around me.

I was coasting comfortably along on my downhill slide when Dr. Roger Landry spoke to us. With charm and sincerity, he told us that we had control over the length and quality of our lives. He said even a small change could make a big difference. Research from his book, *Live Long, Die Short*, informed us that only about thirty percent of these factors are determined by our genes. That leaves seventy percent of our aging up to us. What a revelation and challenge! He gave us back some control of our present and future years. His inspirational words made me realize that my writing is part of my purpose in life.

I am now convinced that what my future holds is up to me. I intend to participate actively and write about this amazing world. I’ll continue to search for its meaning and my role in it. I will try to “keep up,” as my grandchildren urge me to do. All of this involves accepting change, an essential part of life. I choose to exercise my newfound freedom to make the most of whatever time I have. I’ll enjoy every minute of my long life. Masterpiece Living has given me the knowledge and tools to make my choice a reality.



Masterpiece Living’s mission is to change the experience and perception of aging.

Will you join us? Visit MyMasterpieceLiving.com for more about the movement!

Resolutions That Work!

by Dr. Roger Landry

With each New Year comes the dreaded New Year's Resolution. We approach it as we do most things in our "take no prisoners" society. We resolve to make a dramatic change; we want it to happen quickly, and we want it to last. But the truth is that small steps are what lead to great, and lasting changes.

In his book *One Small Step Can Change Your Life*, Dr. Robert Maurer writes, "Instead of aggressively forcing yourself into a boot-camp mentality about change, give your mind permission to make the leaps on its own schedule, in its own time."

The Japanese term for this is "Kaizen." Kaizen is about small steps. It's about *asking ourselves small questions*. "What is the first step I can take toward my resolution? What small change can I do in five minutes a day to work on my goal?" Little by little these changes become habit and a natural part of our lifestyle. When you're considering making some changes to your life this New Year's, consider the kaizen way. Here's a blueprint for getting started.

Eight Steps Toward Change:

- Identify specifically *why* you want to change.
- Then, zero in on *what* you want to change.
- Ask yourself, "What's the smallest thing I can do to begin this change?"
- Make that small thing, NOT the ultimate change, your goal.
- Imagine yourself doing that thing.
- When you achieve the small goal, add the next smallest thing you can do.
- If you fail to achieve a goal, just step back to the last achieved goal and add a smaller, more achievable goal to that.
- Keep adding very small increments to your progress. It doesn't matter how long it takes. You are changing, and moving toward your ultimate goal.

What's My Motivation?

by Danielle Palli

You knew it as "Walk to Wellness" but, why stop at walking? Why not dance, swim, stretch, strengthen, and find new ways to move and to move more often? Masterpiece Living is excited to announce that Walk to Wellness is being re-mastered and renamed "Movement Matters."

Movement Matters is a month-long initiative that encourages individuals to move more. It's about moving with a purpose, and incorporating movement into the four components



(spiritual, intellectual, social and physical). Whether your motivation to move more is for your health, in honor of your family, or simply for fun, the key is to move more and make it meaningful. The inaugural Movement Matters begins May 1 and runs through the month. What's your motivation?

Happy "Living It!" Month!

February is the month for Living It!, a four-week campaign to inspire and challenge us all to try new pursuits in the four components of successful aging: Physical, Social, Intellectual and Spiritual. The challenge? We try four NEW activities, each week, for four weeks. Participants focus on one component per week and note their activity on the Living It! Campaign Worksheets. At the end of each week, participants have an invigorating group discussion about their experiences and celebrate. If you need a little motivation to jump on the bandwagon, try watching this short TedTalk, "[Try Something New for 30 Days](#)." Now's the time to ask yourself, "What have I always wanted to try that I've never done before?"

