



Research Article

The Daily Life of Ninety Year Olds

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to understand more about the daily life of the 90 year old. In order to accomplish this I focused on two research questions, describe your daily life, and what is your response to topics for seniors such as mobile phones, internet, scams, hearing aids and housing. I chose twenty participants that had made it to the age of 90 and who agreed to be in this study. I interviewed the participants several times in order to answer the purpose of the study. The interviews were transcribed and evaluated for their content's relation to the research questions. The results of this data indicated several findings. 1. There is a wide variety of older adults who are 90. 2. They are active and moving in their own unique ways, this is often around their home as well as their yard. 3. They have a community around them who are taking care of them. 4. Each person discussed the use of phone, television, internet, hearing aids, and automobiles. 5. Most are driving. 6. Regardless of the situation of these participants there was an overwhelming positive outlook about their life. 7. Hearing aids are a part of most of these participants. 8. Most everyone is involved in food, cooking, and preparation of food. 9. One cannot overlook the moral and ethical uprightness of these older adults. 10. All of these older adults live in a society which is trying to get at their money. As a result of this study I conclude it is possible to live a vibrant and active life at 90 years of age. Also, the daily life is increasingly influenced by the phone, internet, media, transportation, scammers and hearing aids.

Keywords: Aging; Daily life; Interviews; Very old

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Considerations

1. What do we already know about the topic? We know the world is aging, therefore there is need to learn more about the very old. We have a variety of resources about aging within medical aging as well as social aging. However, research that focuses on younger older adult is the dominant aspect of aging research. It is possible to live a vibrant life at 90 years of age. I have interviewed 20 different people who are 90 and are living enjoyable lives in a variety of ways. Participant 13, 14, and 15 are all three involved in the same Senior Center. Participant 14 described this, "Well, let me tell you, the three of us are down there all the time, I am even a volunteer, and I am doing a lot of work there, and every time we are there, we are playing cards, and for hours, we have the best time (with laughter)." These are active older adults. The daily life of ninety and above is not just a time to sit and wait for the final part of one's life it can be a vibrant segment of one's life. Ten of the participants are actively working in their yards. Participant 15 related, "I have three acres, its right next to my daughter, but I am out there every week on the lawn mower, cutting away. I like to work in the yard and to have flowers." Participant 16 and 4 work hours in their yards every day. Participant 16 described it this way, "So, first thing I do is walk around the yard, and then I decide what needs to be done, and I will spend a few hours in the morning, and in the afternoon, every day." Their daily life is increasingly influenced by the phone, internet, media, transportation, scammers, and hearing aids. Participant 3 said, "I am so thankful for the phone, during covid, we were separated from everyone, and the phone was the only way we could communicate, and now I am talking with you, so it's really wonderful." Participant 10 pointed and said, "See there on the screen of the television, will flash a number, and if we don't know it we don't answer, so no one can scam here." This research calls for new and creative services for the very old. Rather than placing very old adults in similar categories people must create wider perspectives. As age increases so does the uniqueness of the individual, each 90 year old, has their own peculiar history that has created them the way they are. Most medicine, inventions, and products are designed for the most common denominator; whereas the longer one lives the more unique will be the individual as well as their wishes and wants. We must do away with stereotypes of seniors and welcome new ideas to enable this expanding and lucrative market. Rather than forcing seniors to accept the standard deviation of most products we need a new generation of products designed to meet the needs of very old adults.

2. How does this research contribute to the field? I am focusing on a group that is mainly overlooked - the very old. This group is usually focused on when there is a positive dynamic, but this is a very honest perspective of 20 older adults all who are 90 years of age. Further this focuses on the daily life, and what are they actually using, versus, the topics of the commonly used AARP magazine. There needs to be a new type of social arena for seniors. Especially some place for them to meet others for friendship as well as intimacy. Parties and dances and travel are all exciting events for these

seniors. The concept of places to live within churches or schools could allow for more exposure, and, this could help to meet a special need for these older adults. Some churches and schools have interesting activities on a daily basis and could help to augment as well as incorporate knowledge from the older adult's life. Older adults are watching television as well as everyone else, however, this mature watcher is not so easily entertained. The popularity of Jeopardy and Wheel of Fortune reflects an interest in shows with some questions and answers. There is the possibility of using game shows to help for education and to promote knowledge of aging. Television should not be a place where ageism is on display, whereas a special vehicle for reaching out to this age group. The normal 'Nursing home' mentality is no longer working. For example there needs to be creative and alternative places of living instead of putting them in boring, cramped, and smelly locations. One idea is to incorporate a place for living within neutral yet potentially helpful social arenas such as churches or schools. This addition to schools should include all levels of learning from primary through college. There can be dormitories and living facilities for the very old. In turn the university can provide an open laboratory for experimental ideas of inclusion for the very old. This would incorporate opportunities for work for students for assisting with the activities of daily living for the seniors. Classes in sociology, or aging, or gerontology and geriatrics would incorporate these seniors. Situations for the very needy, bedridden adults could be taken care of by giving students class credit for helping with the daily issues of life.

3. What are the implications to theory, or practice? There needs to be a focus on the use of phones, medicine, cars, and homes all must be updated for a very old population that wants to stay home. There must be people there, or some way for them to be taken care of. Especially in the rural area, these folks can be completely overlooked due to missing family or lack of structure within the community. Hearing aids are too expensive for budgets of many seniors. Further, they are too troublesome with tiny small batteries that are in constant need of changing. Hearing aids must be covered by basic insurance, and we call on the scientific community to create some new mechanism that promotes hearing. Similarly devices and tools that enable seniors in the kitchen with food preparation and cleaning, or gardening, as well as within the bathroom are in demand for the very old. We call on creative designers to remake parts of one's house, especially the bathroom and kitchen to incorporate the very old. Gardening tools must be redesigned in order to accommodate arthritic bodies and painful joints. This research calls for innovation in every area of one's life for the very old. Within the USA we have become an automobile society and our country is based on each person having the ability to drive. Automakers must create a car for the 90 year old; a car perhaps wrapped in rubber, styrofoam and activated by voice commands. This would include adequate lighting, larger numbers and easier for access. The automobile could even be conceived as a very safe 'wheelchair' for long travel.

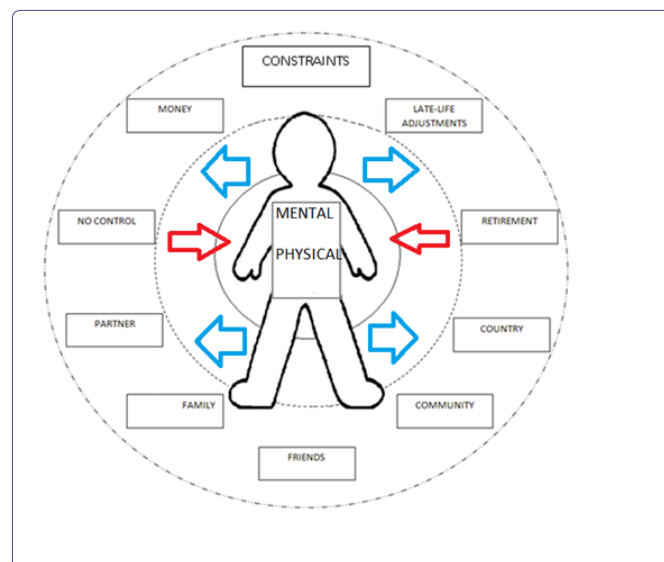
Introduction and Literature

Population statistics concur the population of the world is aging; more people than ever before are living longer. Confirming this is the recent USA Census which has confirmed that the fastest growing segment of our society is that of 65+ (USA Census 2020). Most research of gerontology has focused on ages 65 - 75; there is a lack

of information concerning people who are living longer lives. Because of this increasing segment of the population, there is a need for more details on the lives of the very old. In light of this, the purpose of this study is to investigate the daily lives of adults 90 and above. There is a significant amount of research on the topic of aging. The ever popular subjects of successful or healthy aging and medicine or wellness have motivated researchers around the world. This includes discoveries such as keeping active, meaningful friendships, finances, personal health, family relations, social activity and mental sharpness. Yet there is a greater need for a more realistic and daily detail of those who are getting older and living beyond what others expected. What are they actually doing, these 90 year old folks? Lund and Wang's [1] review of the oldest old showed a rapidly growing yet marginalized group, and many who are living fulfilling lives despite obvious decline in mental and physical area.

[2] 'the Inside/Outside Model of Aging' is a result of a combination of research papers that explain specific issues inside and outside one's life. Although relating to all ages, this model focuses specifically on the older adult. The external or outside issues include those topics that enter one's life from external sources. Family, friends, uncontrollable events, where one lives, finances, and situations of getting older include some of these topics. Each of these can have a positive or a negative impact on the individual. These can be negotiated by the internal aspect of one's life which is mainly the internal mental and physical dynamic of the individual. The mental dynamic, the way one thinks, and the physical aspect, the capacity of the body, combine to enable the individual to negotiate this internal and external complexity. This ongoing interaction between outside and inside aspects of one's life is shown in this model.

Inside/Outside Model of Aging [2].



Each segment creates its own dynamic situation that ebbs and flows according to the force it brings as well as how the internal aspects negotiate with the external factor. For example, if one very old individual is living in a rural and isolated area, and there is no community there, this can be a large negative factor coming into the world of this older adult. However, if the internal aspect of the individual can relegate this negativity with ideas of competence, or strength, they will adapt and adjust.

Not only are there more people living longer, but compounding this is that many are also alone [3]. Rather than Ezekiel Emanuel's [4] essay refusing medical help because of limited resources, there is a countering idea of Lara, Martin-Maria, Forsman, Cresswell-Smith, Donisi, Adnanes, Kaasboll, Melby, Nordmyr, Nyholm, Rabbi, Amadeo, & Miret [5] whose research shows many older adults are functional and that folks should prepare to live longer [6]. Now we will discuss literature focused on the daily life, free time, physical activity, and perspective of the very old.

Daily life of the very old

Remaining at home, as well as the positive impact of active aging around one's home, helps older adults negate some of the hardships of getting older [7]. Keeping busy with simple everyday activities of daily life while remaining in one's home gives a sense of control and mastery of one's life; whereas if one goes to an institution this may be lost. In Sixsmith et al., [7] research, daily life was evidenced by keeping busy, having some routine, and maintaining meaningful relationships. Some of these activities are internal and contemplative, such as learning to adjust to a slower way of life or remaining independent, or solving some problem.

Meaningful for my research is information from Horgas, Wilms, & Baltes [8]. This research also describes the daily life of the very old with 516 participants. They used the 'yesterday interview' to focus on the actual activities of the previous day. They found personal maintenance occupies most of the time, this includes eating, preparing for bed, getting up, and taking care of one's body. Activities of daily life, mainly light household chores, shopping, and transportation are also a large part of daily life. Leisure time includes reading and watching television, gardening, walking, playing, and listening to music. The main social activity is talking to others. Resting is also a large part of their life, just doing nothing. Important to consider, and something to adjust to, a great amount of time is spent alone. Mainly their time is spent in three categories, personal self-maintenance, activities of daily living and leisure.

Other topics focused on daily life reflect several areas such as remaining in one's home [9], handling and understanding pain as well as the physical dimension of aging [10,11]. Escourrou, E., Durrieu, F., Chicoulaa, B., Dupouy, J., Oustric, S., Andrieu, S., & Gardeete, V.'s [12] extensive review of literature indicates there is cognitive decline and impairment for the very old that affects every aspect of the daily life; yet the interesting issue is that many 90+ year olds have no problems and are completely independent. Although there is some decline for most cognitively, the older person can continue in some limited function especially if care is given for nutrition as well as physical strength.

Leisure activities of the very old

Feng, Fong, Zhang, Liu, & Chen's [13] research shows the life of the oldest old is also a study of leisure; older people have more free time than any others. If someone is 90 they are rarely working or employed for salary. Therefore leisure time is important to consider for its potential to positively or negatively impact the life. Feng et al., [13] incorporated one longitudinal research on the very old for 20 years conducted by Chinese government. Their results indicated television watching had increased, as well as women doing housework;

however, reading, exercise and card playing had decreased. This alarming study showed how Chinese older adults 85+ are more sedentary and solitary than over the last two decades. Further results indicated there is a lack of information about leisure. Interesting to consider are the eleven most common activities of Chinese older adults - television, reading, exercise, outdoor activities, tourism, cards, flowers, birds, gardening, housework, social activities and religious activities.

It is important to consider other leisure activities for older adults. For example art [14] was shown to be particularly meaning for this age group, especially traditional and indigenous art. Adding to this, the impact of media and all of its diversity on the lifestyle of older adults continues to increase. Also, Deeming [15] focused research on the surrounding community and its influence on the aging older adult with financial needs. Of special concern was how this research indicated that local senior centers are a pivotal segment of their lives. An evaluation of the Survey of Health, Ageing, and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) by Nimrod and Srira [16] indicated the priority of leisure as adding to one's physical, psychological, social and spiritual well-being. The seniors who continued with high levels of leisure involvement positively impacted one's well-being and resilience. However, the paradox is also that as one becomes very old the constraints of daily life often interfere with one's leisure.

Physical activity of the very old

The reduction of physical activity and functional fitness is a normal part of the aging process. Aging naturally results in an increase of body fat, reduction of muscle strength, less flexibility, agility and endurance. The ability to work and remain physically fit are compromised in older people, the older the worse [17]. This process is natural and inevitable, yet the good news is that an adequate level of physical activity should slow down the loss of functional and physical ability and help maintain a healthy way of life. Milanovic et al., [17] has shown the importance of physical activity for the lifetime of the individual including the oldest old. Aging seems to bring about various health problems, fear of falling, and various inconveniences - but these were negated by social support, physical activity, and mental attitude [18].

However, regardless of this looming negativity there is good news. For example, findings from a variety of research have indicated the overall positive impact of even moderate activity, and even more with intense exercise. Cress, Buchner, Prohaska, Rimmer, Brown, Macera, DiPietro, & Chodzko-Zajko [19] discussed how one of the simpler ways for improving the lives of older adults is through physical activity. Not only can this extend years of active and independent life but it can also reduce functional limitations [20]. This research showed some key ways that this can take place by exercises that promote endurance, flexibility, balance and strength. In order to be involved with this one must be motivated, Tulle and Dorrer's [21] research found older adults who were very integrated into an exercise mentality, that exercise was important to these older adults, and that each person had their own individual way of aging and looking at aging. Further they saw the positive impact of older adults having their own trainer. Motivated older adults for exercise were discussed in Heo, Stebbins, Kim, & Lee [22]; these participants were involved in the Senior Olympic games. Older adults who are active during leisure through exercise gain personal and social benefits, such as personal enrichment, and self-image.

Witcher, Holt, Spence, & Cousins [23] show how 60% of the world's population fails to meet the minimum moderate physical activity for older adults. They showed the importance of considering the motivations people have in order to help them to exercise. A better understanding of older adults' physical activity experiences over the life course is helpful. Many older adults today in western countries are from the depression era generation and there was not time allotted for exercise or leisure time activities, such as pursuing physical activity. The social context of individuals can help one to understand more about them, and know how to get them to be more physically active. Among the variables influencing aging adults, is that many of them, estimated 60%, are not getting enough physical activity. It is important to try to motivate this aging population in creative and new ways for physical activity. Western societies have become conditioned to comfort, creating a 'pillow top' society. Exercise is shunned, sweat is overlooked, and people are not willing to exercise in many situations. The main people who are exercising are those who love it, physical education majors in colleges. There must be a new renaissance of interest in physical activity for life.

How to age in a positive way

There continues to be a focus on aging with a positive perspective. Perhaps writers and researchers are intent on finding the positive side of a potentially negative event. Regardless it seems that most of this research is hopefully repetitive in its findings which indicate a positive collective dynamic of social connections, mental abilities, and physical conditioning. And, each researcher seems to find one or two unique aspects of this healthy mixture. Horgas, Wilms, & Baltes, [8] discussed the dynamic of a positive mental attitude. Torres and Hammarstrom [24] showed the impact of knowing how to access resources. Nordmyr et al., [25] emphasized connection to others, and Cho, Martin, and Poon [26] found the value of finances. Yet in all of these research activities there was a common focus on a balance of social, physical and mental aspects of the aging individual.

The continued influence of previous research from Baltes and Baltes and Rowe and Kahn [27] must be mentioned. These overlapping issues of avoiding disease, high social and cognitive function, physical development can even be seen as one is selecting, optimizing and compensating. These other findings have surfaced as a result of these various studies. 1- Learning about death and dying; 2 - Living a full and balanced life, 3 - being surrounded by people you love, 4 - Financial independence 5 - making one's own decisions, 6 - Having a comfortable home, not being institutionalized, 7 - Doing something helpful through various organizations, 8 - and participating in recreation or entertainment or hobbies some pleasurable free time activity. It seems to cover the entire gamut of every possible issue of the aging individual.

The insight and advice from the research based "Understanding the Oldest Old" [28] contains reliable and sufficient information for anyone on this important topic. Their practical message can relate to anyone who is working or around the oldest old. This includes the diversity of the oldest old, the importance of continued watch over one's physical health, keeping a positive attitude, preventing loneliness and depression, continuing to make your own decisions. Lastly, this important group of gerontologists and geriatric clinicians state we simply need more research about the oldest old, and on most any topic. Similar to Black and Rubinstein [29] who focused on overlooked aspects of aging such as suffering, my research has focused on

the overlooked topic of the daily life of 90 year olds. To that end this research will attempt to describe the daily life of folks who are ninety and above.

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to understand more about the daily life of the 90 year old. There is a lack of variety of research on the very old; research involving the daily activities of the very old is missing. Two research questions dominate the interviews. How does the individual describe their daily life, and how does the individual interact with some of the main topics of other very old adults. There is an abundance of research within the medical aspect of aging; however, the social and daily life of the very old has not been thoroughly explored. Most of the participants are from this area where I am from. And, because most of the participants have known me, they were open and transparent about this delicate time in their life resulting in rich and thick data. Similar to Roper, Molnar, and Wriusberg [30] this research focused purposely on those who had achieved the unique status of living to 90. Each person was interviewed several times, all were recorded and transcribed. This interview was semi-structured and was guided by a list of probes in order to answer the purpose of the study and the research questions. Further, Roper showed how the impact of a sample of one is worthy of consideration, similarly our sample of 20 uniquely shows the daily life of 90 year olds.

The sample selection began as I started noticing in the local paper when families would highlight one of their older relative's birthdays. If they were ninety years old I would eventually contact someone in their family. I asked others in this area if they know someone else who is ninety, this snowball sampling proved to be the best in this situation. Surprisingly, I had collected 15 articles from the local paper highlighting a local who had turned 90. I had to contact someone in the family to ascertain if they would be interested in being involved in this project, and half said yes.

I spent two to five sessions with each participant; depending on how much time was needed to gain the information from the research questions. Also this depended on the openness and cooperation with the participant. The first session was to meet the individual and to explain about the research, sometimes this was over the telephone. The second, and main interview focused on the questions from the interview guide at the home of the individual, and later sessions were a follow up on previous questions also at the home of the individual. This resulted in rich and thick data on the general topic of what life is like when one is 90 years old. Analysis was based on the interviews. I used a thematic analysis with an inductive approach and analyzed the data set to understand the interviewee's perspective of the questions. The analysis in this study was based on the interview segments that concerned the purpose of this study and the research questions. The interviews were transcribed according to their answers to these questions. We coded the data based on how it is answering the research questions and the purpose of the study [31]. Axial coding process connected the coded categories. This identified relationship among the data that could reasonable be taken to represent the research question. This comparing and contrasting themes, allowed for the discovery of similarities and differences in the data [18].

I am also a gerontologist, a trained interviewer, and have conducted several research projects with seniors. This previous knowledge on this topic enabled me to relate more to the issues of the very old. This took place in rural south Georgia, USA. This is a fairly remote area,

most of the participants live near a town of 4000 or less. However, the largest town near this area is approximately 100,000. This larger town has many activities for older adults including Learning in Retirement as well as two senior centers with a variety of programs. Three of the twenty participants take advantage of meals cooked for older adults at senior centers or churches. Six of the participants live in their home in a very rural area or farm. This means they must drive at least 20 - 30 minutes even for groceries.

A semi-structured interview approach was used to obtain data. With this approach the interviewer develops rapport, puts minimal emphasis on the ordering of questions, probes interesting areas, and follows the respondent's concerns. The main question of the interview was the focus of the study which is to understand the daily life of the individual. The participant would describe their typical day from waking to going to sleep. I would walk with them around their home and property confirming some of the information they had shared. This triangulation of data resulted in reliable and accurate data. Adding to this data, I stopped by their homes during this time spontaneously which also added to the depth of this research. Because of being in the home of the participant this allowed for more reliable information since the person would show, point, or take me to something they were describing.

Ethical considerations

All ethical guidelines were followed according to university protocol for working with individuals. There was no potential of conflict nor were there situations which placed the sample in a difficult situation. This verbal and written consent was received by each individual involved in this research. Further each person and family members who were attending were explained the entire research process before we began the interviews. We allowed them to ask any questions concerning the study.

Findings

The findings reflect the purpose of the study and the research questions. This study focused on the daily life of folks 90 years old, and further we wanted to understand the details of their life as well as how each person interacted with some of the major issues of very old adults. First there will be a summary of each participant. Second, the results of specific questions concerning topics from the popular aging magazine AARP (The American Association of Retired People) will be presented.

Finding one

In summary I spoke with twenty 90 year olds. Two interviews were over the telephone. Three of the participants are living in an assisted care unit, and one of these is basically confined to a bed. Seventeen of the participants I met at their homes. All twenty were very engaging, and attentive, interactive, and were trying to communicate. Approximately 80 visits over a two year period resulted in rich and thick data which has allowed the purpose of this study to be fulfilled (The details of these interviews are in the appendix.)

Finding Two: Results of specific information concerning topics of older adults in AARP

One of the research questions - What are the daily concerns of older adults based on the topics found in popular media. These were some of the main topics concerning older adults that have been the focus of the magazine AARP (American Association of Retired People).

AARP is singularly focused on retired, or older adults. Its popularity should be noted as a source of information for the general public concerning aging.

I reviewed two years of AARP magazines from 2019 - 2021. AARP The Magazine was the leading U.S. consumer magazine in the second half of 2021, with a paid and non-paid circulation of 22.89 million. In second place was the AARP Bulletin with 22.57 million. These seven topics are among the most commonly presented and discussed: phone/communication, living situation, use of media, transportation/driving, daily activities, scams, and hearing aids. I tried during the interviews to get input from each participant on each of these topics. These are summarized in table 1.

As discussed earlier, AARP had identified several main issues for older adults. This is interesting for this research because each of these affects the daily life of the older adult. This included the previous chart which covers topics of communication (phone, mobile, land line, smart phone), living situation (alone, with help, family, nursing home, assisted living), media (computer, television, cable, internet), transportation (driving, someone else driving), daily activities (cooking, physical activity, various projects), people taking advantage of older adults (scams), and hearing aids. All of these topics were the main subjects of the magazine for a two year period, and each of these was discussed with each participant during the interviews.

An abbreviated summary of these findings

Communication: Mobile Phone - 10, smart phone (connected to the internet) - 6, land line - 11, special phone for hearing - 1. All participants have some type of phone. Six of the participants are using a smart phone. (The language used for phones is constantly evolving, cell - mobile - flip - it was somewhat confusing. After repeated questions and looking at the individual's phone we were able to get the right information).

Living Situation: Home alone - 10, home with someone - 7 (married, friend, family member), assisted living - 3. 17 of the participants out of 20 are at their homes with plans to stay there. Three were moved to assisted living due to health complications, mainly for the prevention of falls.

Media: Television - 18, cable with television - 7, satellite with television - 4 (The most popular programs mentioned are games shows, and in particular Jeopardy and Wheel of Fortune, other important media outlets are You Tube, sport, news and weather.); internet - 5; local papers ? 1; popular magazines - 2; tablets - Facebook - 3. Television dominates the media, although it may only be on in the background, 11 out of 18 with the television also are connected to cable or satellite.

Transportation: Driving automobile - 14. 14 out of 20 of these 90 year olds are driving.

Daily Activities: Food/cooking and preparation; yard/gardening; chores needing to be done/driving; television/news/game shows; church/senior center; 2 of the participants are still working.

Scams: 15 participants had some encounter with a scam, 3 of those had a close encounter but were stopped, 5 had people helping them. No one has had money lost.

Hearing Aids: 12 yes, 8 no; interestingly several of them had hearing aids, yet did not use them at home, some refused them.

Participant Number; Age, Gender	Phone	Living Situation	Media (computer, tv, cable, etc)	Driving	Daily activities	Scams	Hearing aids (what is working)
One Age 93 Female	Mobile or flip phone (not smart phone)	Assisted living; and keeps regular home	Very limited tv, some news, some documentaries, cable in the assisted living area	Some, just in town	Check on mail, keep up with appointments, eating in dining room at assisted living area	Yes; someone tried but did not succeed	No, can't hear so well in groups, but in regular areas my hearing is okay
Two, Age 93 Male	Smart phone	Assisted living	Cable , internet, (very active over internet) , television, movies, news	Does not have car, but can drive	Eats in the dining room; swimming laps in pool; walking; participates in several classes, or groups; especially over the internet, and in the housing; zoom; watches tv, especially news; documentaries.	Yes, but we were able to catch it before	Yes
Three Age 94, Female	Yes, but only to talk with, someone else must manage it	Nursing home private, being taken care of	No, she lost interest in television	No	Eats in cafeteria, lays in bed, thinks about her past and positive memories; talks to her children every day and others	No	Yes/No she used them for a few years, but found them too difficult
Four Age 94 Female	Mobile, called a 'jitterbug' no internet	Lives at home, independent, family is checking and visiting often and lives next door	Watches some tv, only at night, for background noise; some old shows, and also 'Jeopardy,' 'Wheel of Fortune,' no internet	Yes she drives in the area, maybe a ten miles radius, not at night	Prepares food, working in yard, flower garden area, tends to cats and dog, plays games, especially scrabble, various card games	Yes, someone was talking to me about cashing a check, and going with me to the bank; but no it did not happen	No, has told people they can write down what they want to say , does not like hearing aids
Five Age 94, Female	I have the regular phone, land line, and a mobile phone; but no internet	Lives at her home, same one for 50 years	She is somewhat bored with tv, she prefers reading, cable tv, it's on in the background; some on internet	Yes she is driving, just in this small town for errands or other necessary trips	Cooks, prepares three meals a day, some tv in the background, reading is the main activity of her life, takes care of chores, and what is necessary; talks to daughters	Yes, someone was calling her about something she needs to pay extra for an item ordered over Amazon, she called and asked her daughter, and they ended it;	No hearing aids, I can hear fine
Six, Age 99 Female	Mobile or flip phone, smart phone for a few years, but did not like	She lives at her home, or a cabin next to her home; regular daily visits with three women, two daughters and one step daughter, one will sleep over twice a week	No internet, there was dish tv , and she watched jeopardy and wheel of fortune, but nothing for last few years	No	Feeds cats, other animals around, ducks and fish; tries to do some cleaning, sits and looks out; takes care of needed business; my 3 helpers, two daughters and one daughter in law, bring food;	No, she is aware of it, and watches for it; (she has always been watching for people trying to take from her)	Yes; and they were helpful for her.
Seven Age 95, Female	Regular phone or land line, no mobile or smart phone	Lives alone at her home, children are regularly coming by, and two each day for lunch	Tv game shows, and local tv stations, I have an antaenna, my son put up; mainly listening to Bible program over radio	Very limited just in this area; ok to drive, if weather is good	Reads Bible, listens to Bible show, cooks for family, makes quilts, and other crafts for family; does small chores around house and yard	Yes the phone rings all the time trying to sell me something; and several people I know are getting scammed at the bank	Yes, and they help especially at church, but around the house I don't wear them
Eight, Age 92, Male	Yes smart phone, and land line	Live at home with my wife	Cable, internet, and looking at various programs over the tablet	Yes I am driving	Watch news, word games, Facebook, do some project that needs doing, especially outdoors; helping with cooking and cleanup	"It is there, but no one has gotten me, we have come across it."	No hearing aids, I hear very well

Nine Age 99, Female	A special phone for hearing impaired	She lives at her home and has a house mate, and they enjoy living together, for 20 years	Some tv, but they look at and interact with others on facebook,	She is not driving, but her housemate is driving her places, or someone comes for her	Work in the yard, meet with and try to help friends, teach Sunday school class (for singles), cook food, read, Facebook; help take care of flowers at senior center; activities at senior center	Yes people are trying to scam me all the time, and send me something; I am on the watch for them, and do not allow it to work	Yes
Ten Age 96 Male	House phone, also mobile - flip phone, and you can see who is calling on a screen	Lives at home, with son and his wife (they work together on the farm, and are living together, they attentively watch for him)	There is a dish satellite for tv and there is internet; they are daily watching programs on tv, especially Wheel of Fortune and Jeopardy; likes to read farm magazines (has been reading them all of his life)	He is not driving regularly, maybe around the farm, and he is driving tractors, and farm equipment, but in small amounts	Organize my Breakfast, watch TV the news, do some work on the farm that needs, eat lunch with family, and then I rest some, and then again go outside and work on the farm till dinner time, and then I will watch some television; my daughter in law is doing the cooking;	Yes I often get scams, but now we don't answer the phone if I don't know the person, and that has stopped it; yes they are calling all the time.	Yes
Eleven Age 94 Male	Land line phone, and a smart phone	Lives at home with his wife	Cable, enjoys tv shows, game shows, yes internet	Yes they drive in the local area	Cooking and food, activities about house and yard, study the Bible, tv shows (does all with wife)	Yes, someone had talked me into meeting them at a local store to buy a gift card, however, my wife had put a hold on our bank accounts; nothing since then	No
Twelve Age 91 Female	Land line phone, and smart phone	Lives at home with husband	Satellite cable, internet, Enjoys tv; Facebook, internet; shows, game shows	Yes, she and her husband both drive	All the same activities with husband; maybe more activities with internet, such as fb; they watch Bible inspiration talks	Nothing for me, but the above involved me, and I was able to stop it	No, she and participant 11 hear very well
Thirteen Age 90 Female	Mobile phone, no wifi	Lives alone	Yes tv, no wifi	She is driving in this area	Prepares food (it is a lot of work), senior center, plays games there; make sure work is done in the yard; church is very important and active there	No scams	Yes, and she does not hear very well
Fourteen Age 93 Female	Regular phone (land line)	Lives alone at her home	No internet; cable tv	She is driving in the area	Works at senior center as volunteer, and plays many activities there; prepares all her food; church; takes care of house and yard	Yes, but I ignore them	Yes
Fifteen Age 90 Female	Mobile	Live at my home alone; yet family is close by	Tv, no internet, cable	Driving in the area	Active at senior center, church, yard, family	No	Yes
Sixteen Age 91 Female	Regular phone (land line)	Lives at home, half the time her daughter is sleeping also in her house, her one daughter lives a 5 minute walk away; other daughter 20 minute drive, and she is often there	Television with dish/satellite connection, internet, Facebook, you tube, very active on various shows on fb, you tube	Driving in the area	Active in yard, and garden; prepares food, spends all day in the yard, very active and concerned for area around her house	Yes, had some try to get me, but it did not happen, I asked others, every day they are calling me; the phone can indicate a scam, and if not, I can say I am not interested and hang up	No

Seventeen Age 94 Male	Regular phone, intercom system around house	He lives alone, has one son, a few miles away	No internet, but satellite tv, watches mainly sports, especially football	Yes he is driving	Getting food (no cooking) just going out to eat, this is 30 minute drive, watching tv (sports), very active in church	Yes this happens a lot on the phone, and I just hang up	Yes
Eighteen Age 94 Female	Smart phone	She lives alone	Uses internet, and watches all on internet, no regular television	She is driving	Food, cats, tv, or news, and work, very active with family, she works everyday with her daughter, also active in senior center and art and culture in the area	Daughter warns her, and if I see one, hear one on phone I hang up	Yes
Nineteen Age 95 Female	Land line and mobile, smart phone	She lives at her home, and now her son is living with her; has one caretaker (working there 7 - 2)	Watches cable tv, will watch some things on you tube, internet; reads newspaper in print; magazines, like southern living;	No driving	Look at magazines, papers, see what needs to be done and organize how to do it (very limited use of legs, knee pain); often in a wheelchair;	My phone warns about possible scam; my son is on the watch for it	Yes
Twenty Age 94 Female	Land line, mobile phone	Lives at home, and daughter or granddaughter come every day and help to take care of her; she is alone at night, cannot see very well	Cable tv, tv is on in the background, no internet	No driving	Eats on a regular routine, which others prepare, tv is always on; she is engaging with what is on the television, or who is in her house, and later, she will go through some of her 'things' in her life and look at them; she uses a walker to get around	No, her daughter and granddaughter are watching her accounts	Yes

Table 1: Summary of the main issues of aging.

Discussion

This research is similar to Nordmyr’s et al., [25] study which focused on 28 participants and from focus groups realized the importance of activities, capability, awareness and connectedness of these very old individuals. Adding to this research, my paper goes into more details of the daily life of the older adult. Each participant in my study has some project nearby to work on - mainly gardening or yard or house. Usually they are passionate about it, and they are spending time with this every day. Concerning location of home, Sixsmith et al., [7] concur the importance of life at the individual’s home and being involved in programs at one’s home. Participant 4 said, “Yes, you see, my garden, out there, it surrounds my house, and I am there every day, four to six hours.” These homes of the 90 year olds have been transformed into carefully organized industrial outlets making products of plants, flowers, pets, hobbies and housework. Bordering on ideas of ‘serious leisure,’ some of these projects are a determined pursuit. For example, Participants 5 said, “And let me tell you, the older I have gotten the more I have started reading. People are bringing me books, I go to the library, but I am fascinated by reading. This is better than any entertainment I can find.” Another, participant 9, even with a vision problem said, “And see those books over there, I have read about a hundred of those, I can read one of those books in 4 days.” These romance novels provided a source of joy regardless of age.

Most of the participants were active with an assortment of projects which is a part of their daily routine. Participant 4 said, “I get up about 7 in the morning, and I will organize myself, and then feed the animals, finish getting dressed, the tv is on, but I am not watching it, it’s just on in the background, and then I get dressed to work outside. I am outside for a while, and will come in and make breakfast. Then I go back to the garden and continue to work until lunch time.”

Another important topic is that these older adults are spending consistent time watching particular programs. This may be on the internet, such as Facebook or You Tube; the television is usually on, as a background noise, there was the repeated discussion of how much they enjoyed ‘Wheel of Fortune’ and ‘Jeopardy.’ Some people will have the television on in the background, but rarely are they watching regular programs. Participant 4, “Yea, the tv?, I am not watching it, I just have it on, it’s sort of fun, and I like to see ‘Wheel of Fortune’ and ‘Jeopardy’ and what the answers are.” These programs have their own unique ways of helping these older adults to cope and to adjust.

One common issue shared among all of these participants is dealing with people trying to coax them to give away some of their money to various causes. In particular, this involves the intrusions of ‘scams’ especially over the internet, or through the mail, or on the telephone. Participant 10 explained, “Let me tell you, just this morning I hung up on one of them. They are calling me all the time. I can see numbers now on the phone, and if I don’t know it, I hang up.” Tanner’s [32] information showed older adults who had some difficulties in life. Similar to my participants they were not allowing difficult situations to stop them, they continued to forge ahead with their life.

Participants 9 almost 100 years old, said, “Oh no, me?, I am not scared at all, if I cannot get rid of this person, I am going to get the wasp spray, and that will put him into the hospital.”

Craciun [33] as well as Carlsson et al., [34] stated how the very old must learn to live independently and to cope with changes. One of the primary ways this happens is for the very old to have someone near them, or living with them. Participant 16, “Well, yes I am alone since my husband died, but not really, see one of my daughters lives right there, (500 yards away), and her husband drives a semi truck and every time he leaves she and my grandbaby come here and live with me, and well, my other daughter who lives down in Nashville, she is here every day for a few hours.” Each of the individuals in this study had someone with them, near them, someone they could count on. Usually this was a family member, but sometimes not. One participant 9 explained, “See her? She has been living here 20 years. We are like sisters. I needed someone a few years ago to help, and I ask her if she wanted to move in, and she never left, we are together now.”

Participant 9 has solved so many problems with this one action. She has an instant family, she has a companion, someone to drive her, and she has benevolently helped to meet this woman’s needs. Participant 6, who turned a hundred, lives alone in a cabin she had built. Only 200 yards from her regular home, it reminds her of her cabin in the mountains 300 miles away. However, twice a week one of her daughters spends the night, and every day someone is bringing her food. Between two daughters and one step daughter, she is being well taken care of. They know to make it to 90 and above, one must have a network of people who are helping. They seem to have created their own team of family, friends, or acquaintances, people who are reliable for them to call on. However, there is still a great amount of loneliness, being alone. Eventually they get to the point where they will need more help. Activities of daily living, bathing, toilet, getting food, cooking, cleaning all will require some sort of help from others. Most of the people in this study were financially able to hire others, or to purchase certain devices that can help their situation.

As one ages, each physical body becomes more unique, and possibly more difficult to treat. Topics of medicine, hearing aids, can be a frustrating experience also addressed by ideas of Horder et al., [35] and Torres and Hammarstrom [24] and Nordmyr et al., [25]. Their focus of a positive mental attitude, access to resources, and connection to others can lessen the negative impacts of aging. Most of the people I interviewed have been prescribed a considerable amount of medicine. Most of their time is being driven from doctor to doctor, or specialist to specialist. Especially if they have a way to cover the costs, there seems to be an exaggerated amount of tests given by the medical community. However, it rarely seems these tests, or medicine, can really help the situation. Participant 3 said, “Listen, the best medicine I have, is when I can think about that poem, “the Bar,” written by R L Stevenson, I can close my eyes and imagine going on with the tide and joining everyone, and it is wonderful.”

In addition, even though many older adults have hearing aids; these devices are not always covered by insurance. The loss of hearing can be a significant negative impact, it can cost thousands of dollars, and it may not be helpful. Also the batteries have to be changed often, a fine motor skill, which many older adults do not have. The lack of others ability to transition to being around a loved one who cannot hear is often a dilemma played out in most families. There is

misunderstanding due to a lack of patience, loss of hearing, confusion, and even termination of relationships. Rather than letting others know they are losing hearing, many seniors, will try to answer the best way they can.

It is important to consider that these individuals are living on the edge of frailty. They have to deal with daily changes, new pains and failures in their physical body. However, personal health and maintaining one’s physical dynamic remains the top priority of the individual. Because of this, going to the doctor, and the referrals of the doctor can take up most of the time of the very old individual. If one includes the ‘at home therapies’ that many doctors or therapists suggest, this can be a full time job. This seems to reflect ideas of Rowe and Kahn [27] and successful aging which highlights the significance of active lives, social engagements, and avoiding diseases. Even though there is some decline [12] most of these older adults have figured out how to continue to be an active part of society.

Nosraty et al., [9] explained how older adults are succeeding at this difficult topic of aging. This paper showed how developing the - physical, mental, spiritual, social, and being prepared for one’s departure contribute to the dynamics of a long happy life. Most communities in the USA have programs that also help to promote this. Some of the participants lived in an urban area with impressive programs for older adults. This includes the American version of ‘University of the Third Age’ called ‘Learning in Retirement.’ They were constantly discussing the local senior center and its variety of programs. There is a positive impact of having an effective senior center in one’s area. For example, the one in this area has an indoor pool for water exercise, a travel program involving 500 participants, and a variety of programs during the week. These places have become an oasis of support for older adults. I visited several times, and many of my participants from this study are active in a variety of their programs, volunteer to work there, and some of them go every day. Certain activities at the senior center have become a vital and significant part of their life, especially cards, games, and social events. Several participants, 13, 14, 15, said with emphasis, ‘Our program here is so popular and meaningful, we have had people to move here just to be involved during their retirement.’ Despite Blak and Rubinsteins’s [29] focus on suffering, the seniors in this study, were fiercely positive despite the common themes of suffering. If one lives to be 90 or more, they will experience a great deal of suffering, mostly seen as [2] graph as unseen or unplanned events, however, the suffering is offset by a fierce determination for happiness and joy at the life they now have.

[2] graph on the inside/outside aspect of aging, outlines the inevitable late life adjustments of older adults. Each person has learned to deal with and adapt to loss. Seeing one’s family, friends, slowly leave this world is a normal issue with each participant. Actually, watching friends and family die - becoming familiar with the inevitable, being with them in the last moments of their lives, is something most all participants have experienced. Also part of this is helping others or their family deal with this loss. Only two of the individuals in this study were currently married, all the rest of them had buried their life partner. Participant 4, “I am telling, you, we were so excited, and we went to the ship, for gambling, I was playing some slot machines, and I came back, and he was on the floor, and he just simply fell over and died, there on the ship.” And further, most of them were the last ones of their friends, or groups, or family. They have others around them they are not the old faces they were familiar with. Participant 17 explained, “Well, since no one is around me, I will later in the morning,

get in the car or truck, and drive to someone, to see what they are doing. I have been widowed now, almost 20 years and its lonely. I have given up now, finding the right person, it's just not there." Similar to ideas of Carlson et al., [34] and Nosraty et al., [9] this participant has learned to be on his own, dealing with despair by being around others, especially the church, family, and choosing to go and remain active. He will drive 30 miles every day to join a group of others who are eating together on Sundays after church.

Another part of this adaptation of 90 years of life is an acceptance of one's life, how each participant "eventually get used to things."- Difficult topics such as living with the loss of a body part, or loss of friendships, one's partner, home, etc. In the words of Participant 1, "You do the best with what you have. Yea, so I can't drive well, I have diabetes, and my son lives far away. You just do with what you have." This is also very similar to how they are adapting to all the changes they have seen in their life. This generation has gone from no television to smart phone. The scope of the internet and telephone service has changed many aspects of life for older adults. Participant 8 described, "We enjoy being on the internet, both of us, each of us has a tablet or a smart phone, and we are looking at this and that, and we are talking about it." One positive aspect is how rural older adults can gain access to what they need and have it delivered over the internet. Some of these aspects of adapting are negative, but some are positive.

Despite issues of aging and nearness of death, in contrast there is also a sense of play that each person seems to maintain. They are keeping humor and fun at the end. Hobbies at home, entertaining one's self and enjoying their life. The twenty individuals I spent time with had no obvious sadness, or depression, or remorse about coming to the end of life. Participant 1 said, "Some of those people calling me, I just start to play with them, I will go along, and get them to think I am going to buy something, and then just hang up, or holler on the phone, or make up something (laughing)." Participant 9 who lives with another lady, the interview almost seemed like a comedy show, they were so positive and so happy, it was surprising to me. Another participant 4 would continuously interrupt me to tell me a joke, and she spends hours several days a week playing various games such as scrabble with various partners.

Many older adults experience daily physical changes and they are living on the edge of frailty. Personal experiences include changes in one's body, falling, forgetting, or bleeding. Remaining active and keeping one's physical health [18,19] is one of the most important concerns. Incorporating trainers and fitness centers [21] can enable the active senior to add a significant meaning to one's life [22]. One of the main concerns of each person is their health and maintaining a sense of independence. Some of my participants would spend all of their time going to doctors, or therapists, or doing something that was prescribed for them to do by the medical establishment. Participant 8 said, "We are looking forward to tomorrow, we have a nurse that comes to our house, and she will check us over, and we really like this."

Concerning mental ability my participants were somewhat slower but completely engaged and there was a calm and peaceful aspect of their life, even happiness. Participant 3 explained, "Oh listen, I am here every day waiting for the 'ship to cross the bar,' (laughing softly), one day I will join everyone with the Lord and my husband out in the great wild, as we cross the bar, as it says in Robert Louis Stevenson's poem, which is such a comfort to me." She had memorized this poem and would say it often during the day. Participant 2 explained,

"I enjoy eating in the common room, it's a nice meal, but we often have engaging conversations, and I try to help others understand my point of view of life, a more open view."

Each person was active yet in a limited or confined way, around home, or gardening, television or tablets, or games. They may be going to bed at 8 pm, but the entire day is full of activity, and they are going from one event to another. Each participant realizes they cannot make it during the 90's alone. There is a network of people that are helping each person - friends, family, paid workers, etc. Only one of the 20 people, seemed to be without others actively helping. Participant 17 does have family close by, and his one son, was quickly there when he had a small stroke. Participant 18 is also very independent and is still working. She explains, "Well, I am working for my daughter and her husband, but I enjoy being with them, feeling useful and having this extra focused time with them." For those who are without a partner, there is a lot of time alone. Retired, outliving everyone they are close with, one finds themselves alone. They all were financially independent and not dependent on anyone, and they could also afford to hire people to help if that was necessary. Regardless, the imperative for seniors to maintain their physical ability, they must continue to walk and be physically active for at least 30 minutes a day [18].

They seem to have specific parameters about their life. Without excuses they will say, no, or yes, easily. They will not put themselves in a compromising position. "I will not drive at night," or "go out after 6," or "answer the door, or the phone," or "give money," or "eat this or drink this." Regardless of living in a liberal age that is welcoming various ideas and thoughts, this group of folks is quick to limit their activity. There is a great need for someone to assist and genuinely help these 90 year olds. Many of them are alone, family may not be around, and they live separated from others. They need help with many activities - driving, dressing, cooking, housework and more. There is a need to find a way to get someone to help with the needs of this group. The important question is who will do this? In our ageistic society which assumes older adults should go to a special home, people are too busy with their own lives to be concerned with helping an older person with the details of their life. Activities of daily living are a complicated issue; eating, buying and preparing food, toilet, bath, and moving around their home area. Their home may need some structural change to accommodate a 90 year old. If someone is alone, or if they are separated from their family, they must depend on others. For some people even if they have children and grandchildren, they may be scattered across the area, too far to come often, or they may have lost interest in caring for an elderly parent.

In order to understand this time of someone's life we concur with [2] model on the 'Inside and Outside Issues of Aging.' The individual is surrounded by an onslaught of activities that are daily coming into their life. These activities or situations may involve community, friends, family, money, weather, health and others. Each one can be positive or negative. Inside the person is the mental and physical dynamic that helps one to meet these issues outside of their life. If the external issue is something positive then that only helps the individual. However, if it is negative then it must be met with a positive response, stronger than the force it came with. Mental and physical internal strength can help the individual overcome any negative issues.

Conclusion

I will conclude this research with eleven statements concerning the purpose of the study. In addition I will suggest various applications that others may want to incorporate.

- There is a wide variety of older adults who are 90. Each of these twenty participants is a unique individual with his/her own set of positive and negative aspects due to 90 years of life choices as well as each person's inheritance, internal and external. Participant 1 explained, "Well, I don't know how I got here, it's really a mystery and to live to be 90 is something unique."
- They are active and moving in their own unique ways, this is often around their home as well as their yard. They are continuously trying to improve their living situation as well as the yard, which is often the focus of their time. Participant 2 added, "You see this garden, well, I am in this every day, and I am working on this and working on that. I come in and rest, but I keep occupied, with this work."
- They have a community around them who are taking care of them. Some are paid, some are family, and some are friends, some are neighbors and community/church members. Participant 3 described her family, "Over there is my son, and down the road is my daughter, and they are here, briefly, everyday, and then I am surrounded by friends, who come for games."
- Each person discussed the use of daily activities as well as how they incorporated a phone, television, internet, hearing aids and automobiles. Participant 4 said, "The television is always on, I am not listening to it, it's just background noise, there is nothing on it worthwhile, maybe I will watch a game show." In contrast participant 14 described, "Well, I will sit right here and watch sports, I can see sports from a thousand miles away right here, and watch the Georgia bulldogs, I love that."
- Most are driving. This is essential in rural areas otherwise older adults may be completely cut off from society. Many of them are using golf carts around their homes. Participant 5 explained, "Yes of course we are driving, not far, and then to get around the yard we have this golf cart, and we will get in there and pick up the trash in the yard and do other activities in the yard."
- All of these participants are living at home except for two. These two individuals have physical limitations that need professional care. Participant 6 explained, "I am in this house now, 30 years, and it's my personal museum and my family, I like being here." Participant 3 explained, "Well, I had a fall, and we all felt it would be better if I was here, and then I fell again, and I had to be here, and now I am just sitting here in this bed. They have to do everything for me."
- Regardless of the situation of these participants there was an overwhelming positive outlook about their life. Their ideas and expressions were hopeful, meaningful, and looking forward to their life. These 90 year old folks were funny, optimistic, and content. Participant 7 said, "Listen don't you worry about that, we are always going to have problems, things are good, the good Lord is taking care of us and everything will get better."

- Hearing aids are a part of most of these participants. Each person has their own unique history of the use of hearing aids, based on the dynamic of their own hearing as well as expectations of people around them. Participant 8 said, "They are hard to get used to, and hard to get the batteries situated, but I can hear much better." In contrast, participant 18 said, "No, I do not have a use for them, I put them away. If you need, just speaker louder."
- Most everyone is involved in food, cooking, and preparation of food. For many of these participants it is one of the main activities of their day. Usually there is a preparation for a large lunch, and breakfast or dinner is more simple. But the lunch meal will be a large 3 or 4 dish meal cooked at home. Yet some are going out to eat at restaurants that cater to older adults, or getting food at senior centers which has special meals for older adults and even some are delivering. Participant 10 stated, "I will drive to the store, and then get the groceries, and then I am preparing a nice big lunch, with meat and three vegetables, I am eating a hearty meal." Participants 4, 5, 7, 9, 16 all incorporate cooking into their daily schedule. One of them said, "I will go outside and begin chores, then I come inside and start on the lunch, I will prepare one part, and then back outside, and then the next time I am inside I will prepare another part of the meal."
- The careful investigator can not overlook or deny the moral and ethical uprightness of these older adults. No one is smoking, alcohol is very limited, no one is overweight, nothing frivolous, no negative habits. All of them are active in churches, conscientious citizens and loyal to their families. They have all saved money, no one was in a financial need. Participant 3 explained, "I was in the army 70 years ago, the World War Two, and we were out, and one of them boys said, drink this, and we started drinking some sort of alcohol, and I tell you, that was it, then and there, never again."
- All of these older adults live in a society which is trying to get at their money. Every day each person receives phone calls from a caller, or receives something in the mail with the promise of extra money. Participant 4 said, "We got this, special device, and it tell us the phone number, it is flashing there over the television, and if I don't know it, I don't answer it. Look there is one now, I get about ten calls a day, someone trying to get my money."

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Summary of Twenty Interviews/Appendix

Participant 1

This 93 year old lives in an assisted living facility. She emphasizes that she can do this only because she bought the insurance for the possibility of having to go to an assisted living facility when she was younger. In addition, each day she will drive to her regular home, which is about two miles away. During the day she will stay there and process bills, mail, make necessary phone calls, and see to the details of her home and property. Although vision in one eye is gone, diabetes, and somewhat bent over; yet she comes across as positive, happy, and a fun sense of humor. She has a son, 800 miles away, rarely sees him, but they talk regularly on the phone. Her philosophy is to adapt and learn to do what needs to get done. If she needs to go to the doctor, then she will find someone to drive her. If she needs someone to help her manage diabetes, then she will move into the assisted living. She has several very active friends in the community calling, visiting, or helping her to do what she needs to get done. "I am telling you, you just got to make up your mind, and adapt and adjust, and go on." Recently, she has reduced her amount of driving. I just saw her at a Christmas Eve Church service where friends had gone to the assisted living, taken her, and were sitting with her. This is her new community and family. I stopped by a few weeks later to confirm some issues on this research. Her son was there, and they are discussing the details of her estate and bills. He is staying a week. She looked quite frail and in a wheelchair, but alert and with great wit and conversation. They seem to be enjoying being together, and said they were both going out tonight to meet some friends.

Participant 2

Participant Two is 93 years old, very active, and involved with his family. He lives near one daughter, and recently moved into an assisted living area, rather than being on his own. He is very engaging and active. He eats the three meals a day provided by the facility; and he is involved in several online academic programs. He is always trying to improve himself through education such as taking classes on art or reading or physical activity. He is very conscious of the racial situation around him, and he is always trying to improve this. This individual has been in other research I have conducted, and rarely have I met someone so engaging, so prepared for aging, and so interested in many subjects. Showing adaptability and preparation for the future, he recently gave up his car and is relying on public transportation. "Oh listen, I am still enjoying swimming, yes I will go almost every day. And then during the day, I am involved with various programs over zoom. I have learned a lot about poetry, and literature, through these classes."

Participant 3

Participant Three is 94. She can no longer function alone. The muscle-skeletal aspect of her life has degenerated, she is too brittle, or unable to use her muscles. She needs help in every situation. Within the assisted care facility they dress her, bathe her, and get her to the dining room, and then she mainly lays in her bed, until she needs the toilet. She is laying there during the day, using her imagination to remember and to think about life. We had several conversations on the telephone which were very meaningful and enjoyable. Participant three was the most infirmed of the 20 participants. She represents for this study, how the end of life may come about regardless of one's situation. In contrast to this woeful scene, she was a very positive,

happy mother of three, now with great grandchildren. She was very active, an informational seeker, and pursued a healthy diet and lifestyle. However, at the time of this interview she had been reduced to a bed and a room. Her daughter describes her mother, "She had hearing aids, but found it too difficult to get them into her ears, so she quit wearing them. She even used a microphone, a live transcriber to type onto her tablet, but it did not work in conversations with groups. She could use a cell phone for a while but this became too difficult. The cordless phone attached to the landline was helpful. Toward the end we (my two brothers and I) were still talking with her everyday; and sometimes her sister, who is 101. (But they were both deaf, and needed transcription machines, but that did not work at the end.)"

Having known this woman all of my life it was not easy to see and hear about her in such a state. She greeted me with kindness over the phone and assured me she was looking forward to the next step of life and of being with family and her husband. Her description of lying in the bed, creating scenarios in her head, or remembering her life was interesting but sobering to hear. She wanted me to read the poem, 'The Bar,' which had become a great inspiration for her. Sometimes she really wanted to die, and was wondering why, had she lived so much longer than all of her friends and family. "Mainly I am just sitting here, and imagining some of the really happy moments, walking my dog, or playing with grandchildren, and that gives me a great comfort."

Participant 4

This 94 year old is very active. Every day she will work in her yard or garden, this personal pursuit of happiness is the main focus of her life at home. Gardening can combine to create a scenario of personal happiness, physical activity, and purposeful life. She has a special concern for animals and enjoys taking care of her cats and a dog. She is also preparing her food - breakfast, lunch, and dinner. She is involved in playing games with friends and family, and she will spend 2 - 4 hours participating two or three days a week. Each day she may spend up to six hours in the yard, and then several hours playing games. She has a sense of humor and is often joking and laughing during our visits. She would sometimes interrupt my serious interview to tell a funny joke. She has started to limit some of her activities, "Listen, I am just happy right here, why do I need to go to some family dinner and bring backbone and rice, or sit in some church social function, when I would rather be outside working on my flowers. So now, I just tell them no, I can't go." Some of her family, two of her children live walking distance from her, and they see each other often. They are constantly checking up on her.

Like some of these other active older adults, I was amazed at this 94 year old's positive attitude and laugh, her stubborn resolve to get outside to work in her garden which surrounds her house 4 - 6 hours a day, her interaction with friends on a daily basis for fun, relaxing games, and that her family lives all around her.

Participant 5

She is 94 and enjoys these 'later days' of her life. She cannot 'believe that I am this old.' She does all of her cooking and has a big meal in the middle of the day. She has three daughters who live nearby (15 - 70 - 150 miles away) - and if she needs something they will come, and she talks with them often and they see each other at family gatherings, but not on a regular basis. She is driving when she needs something from the local town, or grocery, but not out of town or at night. She

has become an active reader and this has become very meaningful to her. Her positive attitude is shown by her activity at home such as reading, cooking, buying groceries, and reading. Participant 5 is similar to some of the others who seem to live an idyllic life. Preparing food, active with chores, driving when she needs, talking on the phone with daughters, and enjoying life by reading. She fills her day with these activities, and the reading, with all of its creative power has opened a new segment of life for her. 'I tell you, I am bored by the television, but books, they have opened up the world to me.'

Participant 6

This 99 year old woman lives in a small cabin three hundred yards from her 'regular' house. Several years ago she wanted to move out of her larger house, so she had a cabin built nearby on a large pond. The cabin is similar to one she has in the mountains. She is no longer driving, or cooking, and cannot do much because of arthritis, and she is bent over from some skeletal issue in her back. However, she keeps busy, with this or that around her house, she is constantly cleaning. She has a positive attitude. She has care and help from three women - two daughters and a daughter in law; also her grandchildren and great grandchildren come to visit her. She is thinking about the different aspects of her life and enjoys focusing on her business. She keeps up with her business, mainly rentals; and her family. When I came for one of the interviews she had created three piles of money (from a previous collection of coins), she was creating one for each great grandchild.

A few months later I went for a visit, and I took her some fruit and popcorn. Her daughter in law was also there. As I came up the daughter in law was coming out with a mop and cleaning the area. Participant Six was sitting in her chair, where she looks out, and was eating 'pig skins' and a drinking a coke. She was also trying to get batteries in her hearing aids, after this was accomplished, we talked a while. "Oh, I just sit here and look at on the water, and see what I can see." This is the everyday experience of participant six, she has some very attentive family involved with her. We talked about different topics such as politics, religion, and finances as well as local events in the community. She is very engaging, a sense of humor, and said with a twinkle in her eye, 'Soon I am going to be one hundred, now that will be something.' I was amazed at her adaptation. Previously she was very hard working business woman, raising three children after being widowed. A constant cleaner of her property and yard, and now she is simply sitting in a wheelchair, looking out.

Participant 7

This 95 year old woman enjoys her current life; she smiles and says, "The good Lord is taking care of me." Although diabetic, and some trouble with kidneys, she has continued to be active and involved. She listens every day to one or two Bible programs, reads the Bible, and she is in the kitchen preparing her meals as well as lunch every day for two of her adult children. Every Sunday all of her children are there at their home and enjoying food and family time. A former seamstress, she is still involved in some sewing on small projects. She has recently completed a quilt project for all of her grandchildren. She works in her yard, home, and keeps an aquarium in memory of her husband. Never drank alcohol, never gambled, saved all of her money, an upright woman, from a sharecropper family, "Let me tell you, we were poor, dirt poor, and my Mama and Daddy worked hard, and now here I am with all of this, and my children who have done so well, I have lived a blessed life." Continuing her story, "And on

Sundays, we all go to church together, out there in the county where we were raised, and it means a lot for me to go to the same church that my Pa built."

Participant 8

Participant eight is 92 years old. He explains, "Every day I am up about 7, make breakfast, and then see what project I need to work on. We cannot do as much with covid, but we are active. We will normally go to lunch at the senior center here. And we will watch news, and I will play some games, such as Sudoku, or word games, and then maybe something in the house or in the outside." National news is often on the television, and he and his wife are involved with various activities on their internet tablets. "We will make food, run errands we need, then go to bed." He is surrounded with a large lawn, pond, and a workshop; he is often involved in some activities concerning these. They are both active in a local church, and it means a lot to them, "We will go to lunch each Sunday with the pastor." On another visit, he was limping. "Yes, I fell off of the porch, and broke part of my foot, and have been wearing a boot for a while." He explained, they were looking forward to tomorrow, because they have an annual nurse home visit tomorrow. He and his wife are reliable companions and enjoy living together, for both of them, it is a remarriage from being previously widowed.

Participant 9

This woman is almost 100 and is full of activity and purpose. She is a volunteer for many programs in this area. Although she does not drive, has limited vision, she manages well. Perhaps because she invited another person to live with her 20 years before. They are like roommates enjoying and sharing life together. She works in the yard and garden, is active on Facebook, uses a special phone with a large screen so she can see what people are saying. Many people visit her and often she is inviting others to come to see her. She was excited that a nephew and his family were on the way to visit, and she described how she was going to cook for them a country breakfast. Even with limited vision she is an active reader of the Bible and romance novels. The senior center is a ten minute walk from her house, she is very active there, and takes care of the shrubbery and flowers. This woman takes care for her appearance, dresses very well, and there is a strong sense of confidence, and positive attitude about her. "Well listen, if somebody comes by, then I am already dressed, I don't have to go inside and dress, and then even if I am working in the yard, I will look nice, and if someone stops and says, lets go somewhere, then I don't have to stop and get dressed." This particular woman was well known in the area for community and social service. Nearly 100, she has continued this fortitude of life with humor, working outside, eating well, finding someone to live with, and making life at 100 work. On another visit I was amazed that on their backporch were several squirrels that had obviously made themselves comfortable. "Oh, listen, aren't they fun to watch, so full of energy, and cute, and how they run around, we love to watch them."

Participant 10

This 96 year old farmer still lives on the farm and in the house he started with his wife almost 70 years ago. His son and his wife moved in with him a few years previously. He continues to work in a limited way on the farm, drive the tractor, and said to me, "I love farming." He is not as active as he was, but he is still involved on the farm. He continues to read, and educate himself on current issues in

agriculture by reading various magazines about farming. After waking, he will see what needs to get done that day and start working on various tasks. His son and wife, and he will discuss and decide what should be done that day. This varies between machinery, or cows, or something in the field. His son's wife will prepare or arrange lunch, and they will come in for that. He will come into the house about 11-12 and rest or sit in a recliner chair, get under a blanket, and watch television. After lunch he will return outside and see what needs to be done; he will come in and rest if he needs to. Later in the day, there will be food together with his son and his wife. They will watch television and soon to go to bed. Usually I will see them in town at a local restaurant on Sundays.

Participant 11

This 94 year old is an active man. He enjoys his relationship with his wife. They are a team working and enjoying life together. He is very active in his church, also Sunday school class, and he studies and reads the Bible. The church has become their new family. Like many older adults who have families scattered, they have recreated a new family where they are living. He enjoys some television, game shows, and some of the news. Every day he sees what needs to be done that day, and he attempts to do it. The last time I was there, there was some family visiting from Atlanta, and the entire house was very decorated for Christmas. They enjoy watching many various Bible speakers over the internet.

This participant was in a dangerous situation from a possible scam. Someone had called him and continued to call, even threatening him, telling him he was about to lose money unless he met him in town and bought a gift certificate. Although his wife did not want him to go, he met the man. However, the wife knew about the situation, called their bank, and put a stop on their bank accounts. He admits it was an unusual situation and it will never happen again. He and his wife are vigilantly watching for such intrusions.

Every day he and his wife are up early and immediately begin chores as needed. With breakfast, organizing the house, and planning the day. They are doing all of this together. In the middle of the day they will have lunch, watch some television, read and study the Bible. In the afternoon there are more chores such as yard work and maybe even a nap. They have a golf cart in order to get around easily on the property. In the evening they enjoy game shows on television if they are not involved with some program at church. He and his wife enjoy eating and socializing with church friends and neighbors. He says, "I am very thankful for every moment of life, and looking forward to many more. I enjoy watching some television, I am still driving and going to church and doing a lot of things, I do not need hearing aids, I am thankful for a good health and good wife to be so supportive - amen!"

Participant 12

Very similar to her husband (the previous participant), they are very close and do everything together; she mentioned more information about internet, computer, mobile phone, and Facebook. She adds that she will often take a nap or two during the day if she needs. They seem to really enjoy their life. She has a nearby daughter, and this daughter and her husband are checking on them often, and sometimes it could be every day. They get a lot of enjoyment and community activity by being involved in their church and by watching Bible programs. They have gotten used to the internet and are on their

'kindles, or tablets, or facebook' and using mobile phones. Like so many others, they enjoy the game show 'Jeopardy' and 'Wheel of Fortune.' They are both limited in some ways physically, yet they have a golf cart so they can get around in their yard, and they continue to drive the automobile. Although their life is fairly limited to their home and yard, they seem to enjoy their life and their time together. She named three Bible teachers that they listen to every day over the internet.

It was her insight that stopped a potential scam. She called their bank to freeze their assets while her husband went to meet a stranger who wanted him to buy a gift certificate. Although somewhat limited, they are both getting around and are active in many ways. She says, "I would tell anyone to enjoy life and forget about the pain and aches, and just keep going around people." I am often driving by their home, and will see them sitting in the screened in porch, together, doing something or planning some activity. I recently dropped by to say hello while running some errands, and she gave me an old local newspaper that she had found with my picture in it from high school.

Participant 13

This woman is 90 and lives alone. She enjoys life and has a positive attitude. Someone is helping with her yard and housework. She prepares her breakfast, rests, then lunch, reads, prepares dinner. Food preparation is a lot of work, time, and focused energy. The preparation of food is a large part of her daily activity. She is very involved in the local senior center, especially playing games. She will join others several days a week and play card games during the day. She is also a reader. She is recovering from a fall, with therapy, and now needs help to get around. She is involved with her church. Despite this recent set back, she is very positive and encourages others to enjoy every day.

Participant 14

This 93 year old woman is very active. She lives in a diverse neighborhood. She is preparing all her meals at home. She is very involved in the senior center; she is a volunteer worker there and participates in some of the activities. She especially enjoys playing games and cards at the senior center. She mows her own grass. She is recovering from recent sickness and is now doing well. Every day during the week she is at the local senior center helping to organize various activities. After this she will work in her yard and house and also watch some television.

She will complete some physical activity at home. She is a positive woman, very active, and says, "Don't be lazy, keep busy, The Lord can't do it all, you have to go on." She has been recovering from a recent fall, she has shoulder pain, and difficulty with hearing. She says she is never lonely, she explains with the Lord she is fine. She encourages others to stay happy and not to complain. Interestingly, this woman is up around 4 am.

Participant 15

"I am 90 years old and very active. I enjoy being near my family and especially around holidays. I am still mowing the yard, three acres each week. I clean my own house, and do other yard work. I have a lot of flowers and I really enjoy them. I am active at church and at the senior center. I enjoy playing cards at the senior center during the morning. I am playing cards almost four hours there each Wednesday and Monday. At church I am in Bible study and am a regular attendant in the programs at the church. In the evening I do enjoy

watching some television, mainly Hallmark Channel. I do have high blood pressure and I am taking medicine for this. My family lives all around me, we are on the same property, and I enjoy so much being around my family. I am active in church, and my faith is very important, I thank Jesus Christ every day I am still alive.”

Participant 16

This 91 year old woman loves to work in her yard. This is her primary responsibility during the day. Although she cooks her food, and often cooks for her family, she is looking forward to being outside. After breakfast, she will spontaneously decide what needs to be done that day and she goes about these meaningful tasks. She is also very meticulous about her house and keeps up to date what needs to be done. At night she will enjoy going on the internet, and Facebook, and watching different shows, especially about cooking in other countries. She is living on land which has been in her family. Her daughter is 100 yards away, and the other daughter is twelve miles away. However, she lives in a remote area of the county. Possibly a 15 - 30 minute drive to the nearest town. I returned for another visit, the chandelier in the dining room was down, every piece of crystal was on the table being hand cleaned by her. Full of purpose and activity, she smiled at me, “Listen, I do this every year about this time.” We walked around the yard as she explained the trees, foliage, and seasons of year. This 91 year old great grandmother was full of peace, joy, happiness, with her life and her activities. She has two daughters who are actively involved with her, and one is often sleeping in the same house when her husband is away on work.

Participant 17

This 95 year old man lives in a remote area of the county. He must drive almost 30 minutes in any direction to reach different towns or stores. He enjoys walking, watching tv, especially sports, participating in church through Sunday school and singing. He is a friendly man, with a smile, laugh, and a Bible verse for everyone. He enjoys going out to eat and will often sit with different people and discuss various topics. He spends time talking with his son, who is farming his land, and also on the phone with his other son, who is far away. He is very positive, and seems very confident. He lives at home in the house that he and his wife built 40 years previously. However, much of the kitchen has not been touched since she has passed away twenty years ago. On the counter were packages of cereals and ready to eat meals. Showing me a handful of peanuts, “Now listen here, these raw peanuts and water, that is all you need for breakfast, these are raw peanuts.” He loves to watch the Georgia Bulldogs football team. He will go outside twice a day and walk the length of his driveway and back. When I asked him about being older he calmly said, “its very lonely.”

A few years ago, he had a strange sensation while in the bathroom, and he called his son. He came very quickly and took him to the hospital 30 minutes away. Participant #17 had a small stroke, but has completely recovered. Like many older 90 year olds, he has saved an amount of money and lives on a nice farm. He has a lot of local knowledge about the area, knows the best restaurants in the area, he knows how to farm, and he can answer many questions about the Bible. He tried several times to remarry but each person had a dependent adult child living with them, and he would not marry them with this overly dependent adult living there. I see him often in a local restaurant in town and will sit with him and knowing he had driven 25 miles just to get there. He smiles and looks at me with confidence, “how are you, young man.”

Participant 18

This 94 year old woman is “pressed for time” because she is still working. She helps her daughter’s family with their business, entering data concerning patients into the computer. She is very independent, and lives in a beautiful home and neighborhood. She is active on the internet, and chooses entertainment in that way; she does not look at regular television programs. She enjoys taking care of cats. She is very active in the senior center and art programs in this area. She enjoys being with her family, children, and grandchildren, and feels useful working with her daughter and her husband. She had prepared homemade cookies for our interview. This woman defied all of the stereotypes of aging, she is engaged with the world in which she lives, she is knowledgeable about important issues of her life, she is contributing to her community, and has created a beautiful home with art, cats, and internet where she can access anything she needs.

Participant 19

This woman, 94, has become frail, because of arthritis in her knee. It needs to be replaced, but the doctor does not think she can manage the therapy after the surgery. So mainly she is immobile, in pain, sits in a wheelchair, and basically stays at home. She needs help moving, once sitting, she is fine. Since a recent burglary, one of her sons moved into the house. She goes through a daily routine. Breakfast is cooked by one lady who works there, her son is there, and then she will sit, read, or watch television, or look at magazines, or catalogues. Then the helper will give her a bath and help her to dress. ‘If I need to go to any doctors or anywhere then I will go at this time. My son drives me. I will read the local paper, and look at these magazines, and I will think about what needs to be done around the house or the yard. We have lunch and later we have a dinner. I really do not go anywhere, people are coming to see me.’

I visited participant 19 at her house. I gave her a homegrown grapefruit. One of her granddaughter’s is there and her son who is helping her. We talk a lot about different topics. She is sitting in her chair, and looks the same from my previous visit; she is surrounded by a granddaughter, and her son. She is enjoying herself, talking and laughing, she is apologizing she cannot do more for us. She never moved from the chair. There is very positive atmosphere there. At the same time, there is a sense of loss, a missing of the former active life in which she and her husband lived. They were especially involved in a local church where she led Sunday School classes for college students. She discuss those experiences often. She was showing me her mobile phone, “Look every night, before bed, I just love Andra Bocelli, and I will watch this.” Sitting in her chair, she had mastered this new technology, and had found a way for personal inspiration through a musical voice.

Participant 20

This 94 year old, very similar to the previous interview, is confined to her home with some physical difficulties. She can get up and move around, but barely. She has some vision problem and her daughter said she really can’t see. However, she is ‘going through’ her old things, looking at them, the television is on, she knows what is on the television, and she says to me with a smile, ‘I still enjoy watching the Braves.’ Mainly she is sitting in a big chair in front of the television and glancing at different programs. Her activity consists of interactions with her daughter, or granddaughter, or great grandchildren, and discussions about what is on her mind. Her daughter says at night, she

will go into one room, and there are a lot of things there from her life, and she is going through them, and is often talking about them. She is randomly talking to me about different things. She will speak to her granddaughter, make a comment about the show on the television, and then look at me and ask me a question. And, then she would make some comment about someone in the nursing home, or something about the church that she and I attended, or even one time, she made some comments about my parents. She has various physical complications, but seems to be in positive spirit. About the only place she goes is to get her hair 'fixed' once a week. She is fairly mobile around her house, and can hold on to different pieces of

furniture as she moves around or use a walker. She is also unable to drive. She has help everyday from her daughter or granddaughter, but at night she is alone. The daughter and granddaughter take turns watching over participant 20. So every day she is around her family, her daughter, or granddaughter, and her granddaughter always brings one of her children. When I was there one time, her 3 year old great granddaughter, was inventing her own games and talking; participant 20 was always talking with me, yet watching her great granddaughter as well as glancing at the television. Like many of the participants, she also enjoys watching 'Jeopardy' and 'Wheel of Fortune.' Mainly this participant is sitting in the den area, with the television on, and her granddaughter or daughter is doing most everything for her.



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