

Letter to the Editor: The Pundit Speaks

By Randolph M. Howes, M.D., Ph.D.

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“Eight Ways to Make 2020 Better”

With the arrival of a new year, many are considering ways to make it the best year ever. A recent article in *Newswise* discussed some of the reasons put forth by faculty members of California State University. Many of these are based on common sense and observations accumulated over a lifetime and include the following: **1) Surround yourself with positive people.** Nothing can pull you down faster than the constant complaining of negative people. That is a real “downer.” A positive mind-set is one of the most important features of a happy and productive life. **2) Consider your legacy.** One so-called expert said, “There's something called “gerotranscendence” theory, which is the view that as we get older, it's less about us and more about altruism. A lot of older adults get to the point where they want to find the legacy they will leave to family and to the world. But you don't need to be older to think about how you want to give back or to be remembered.” **3) Be kind to yourself.** Psychologists say we have to learn to love ourselves, just as we learn to love others. So, be good to yourself and treat yourself kindly. Life is not meant to be an obstacle course of pain and misery that we have created for ourselves. **4) Forgive.** I like the old saying regarding those who have offended us that I may forgive them, but I will never forget them. Forgiveness can be very difficult to achieve but remember that hate or revenge can eat away at you like cancer. **5) Set up priorities.** Make commitments to those things that really matter in the long run. Stop wasting time on frivolous ventures or notions. Get away from destructive people and jobs. For people who are dying, it really comes down to family, friends and having a purpose. There's a truism that people never ask to have their ashes scattered at work. **6) Be grateful.** Instead of dwelling on things that we do not have, be grateful for all that you do have. This is especially true if you are blessed with good health. Give thanks to God. **7) Follow the golden rule.** This is as basic as it gets, and it should apply throughout your life. If you do this, it is likely that others will treat you the same way. **And 8) Don't wait.** For God's sake, if there are things that you really want to do, do them now, without hesitation, if you can afford them. There will come a time when you will not be able to them in your old age.

In the America that I love, we must learn to live better.

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