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LET GO!

Often life's changes can be major stumbling blocks on the road to health; but they don't have to be when we learn to put them in a healthy perspective. Any change, positive or negative, marks the end of a page in your life; but it also signals the beginning of another chapter with the potential to be richer and more exciting than the last because you've grown through your past experiences. To stop changing is to cease living and that helps explain why the ability to change is such an important factor in longevity. Any radical change in your life can be followed by a difficult period of adjustment, but know that, in time, you must let go of the past and move forward.

There are many exercises we can learn which will help us to let go. One called progressive relaxation is a technique that involves the systematic tensing and release of individual muscle groups beginning with the toes and working upward through the muscles of the legs, pelvis, arms, shoulders, neck and face. Try making a fist and thinking of the motion symbolically as "holding on." How does it feel? Are you straining? How long can you hold it comfortably? Then when you release, imagine yourself letting go of whatever it is that you're clinging to in real life. Think about how it feels to let go. Does it feel easy, natural? How much are you willing to let go? Repeat the exercise with each muscle group. Also you can use deep breathing to imagine the exhalation as "letting go." Breathe out all unnecessary thoughts and pressures and feel the silence and calm of the pause between exhalation and inhalation, letting this become another way of letting go. After the breathing exercise you'll feel the burst of energy and your body expands and awakens. Letting go can really energize you and help to make your life less stress-prone.

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