

## **Be active and you will keep well and fit - - - -**

This is the topic given – quite simple, very uncomplicated and easy to understand for everyone in its pragmatic wording.

I was asked to talk about this topic here today. Why? Well, I was born in 1921, I am quite active from a general point of view and quite well and fit from my personal point of view. And if you asked me why this is so, I would need to go into greater detail.

The tenor of this speech topic certainly contributes a lot to this state deserving of thanks. But this is not enough – it is not enough by far. It is an essential starting point, but there are many, many helpers, co-players and companions involved in the result.

Just a few details on my CV:

Unfortunately I cannot help with illustrating photos as they got lost in the course of my roundtrip bit by bit.

I was born in Magdeburg in 1921. My mother had a successful dentist's practice, my father was a banker, I was the only child in a lucky relationship. I grew up in a family that was interested in music, I was educated in a rather Prussian style, I had effective piano lessons at the age of 5. Today I still try to hit some keys in a totally unprofessional way from time to time using the rather poor remains of my quite considerable skills of those days.

The studies of music in Berlin that I had intended were not allowed by my worried parents as a lot of bombs were already coming down there. As my mother urgently needed a second medical secretary I found my war job with her. By the way, everybody thought that I would marry anyway and therefore would actually not need any further professional training. I had no other professional plans in any event as Berlin was no longer a topic.

I should mention one thing when talking about all this: I thoroughly appreciate still today that my parents conveyed the idea of music to me already at a very young age. At the age of 3 I was allowed yet to listen to the music-making in the home before going to bed; my parents listened to opera radio programmes with me before I then had the chance to go to the theatre or to concerts with them. My father insisted on me reading the librettos before. At the age of 12 I was allowed to accompany them to Bayreuth – my father was a Wagner enthusiast.

Music is a central theme as a helper in my life; I was able to discharge my desperation and mourning on it in those hours that were particularly hard and unfortunate. But on the

other hand, it is the source of joy and enthusiasm still today, no matter if it is jazz or classical music.

I married during the war, and after the Russian invasion and my husband's return from captivity we moved to Hamburg with our first son. Our second son was born there. My professional activity started after my husband's death in 1960.

First activity:

5 years as an assistant to general management in the Hamburg office of a big German business group/ authorized officer for development, production and sales of new construction materials. After knowing contents and extent of the activity I cancelled my working contract as well as the retirement pension agreement linked with it. Reason: And this is it? No need to say more about this topic.

Second activity:

Co-worker and publisher in the magazine business for 44 years now

Sectors: Lifestyle & society, trade magazine on cosmetics and perfume, jewellery

Places: Constance, Munich, Pforzheim

That's enough. I do not want to tell you my entire life story now. It may be exciting, may be not. A lot of books on life stories were written and still are – some are exciting, some are not. They are retrospections, and in many cases personal life stories are most interesting mainly for their tellers.

You get stuck in looking back – time flies and at the same time the current daily business called life passes you by without being seized – life carrying exciting new creations, findings, developments and information every day.

It is like the story of the three men. They wanted to hunt down a white stag and waited for him to show. In order to pass the waiting time they talked and told each other stories of former times when they were hunting down a white stag. And the text says: "And they talked and talked, the three of them, and the white stag passed them by." We should not do it this way.

Let us go on in our analysis of life:

Creativity is the second elixir we were given as a sort of basic equipment by nature – or by the Creator. There is no chance to survive without creativity.

Man was born to be creative. Every day is new, it does not know any copy; every hour presents new individual challenges to us and expects successful and meaningful solutions

– may they be essential or not. If it wasn't so there would be no evolution, no change, and the continuation of the human history would be finished right after the first chapter. If activity is depleted to monotonous repetition then it will freeze in oppressive monotony. The adventure to direct your thoughts onto unknown paths, to find and develop new solutions and ideas there and thus shape your everyday life with a discoverer's desire and joy of success to make it a flourishing garden of new horizons full of ideas and the joy of experiencing and to harvest happily – this adventure is hidden in every human being. Human creativity shows in design – the design of your life, your day, your environment, your communication.

“Retirement” is basically a rather disqualifying term for a generation that is asked to verify the previous results with its experience and findings and to bring them in to a new phase of life. Now a time has come opening up new opportunities to design the third life. What you need is volition, creativity and thirst for knowledge.

We, being the third power, are the co-players of our time's history, we are the third power of a generation facing huge tasks in this millennium.

And there is something more to this new task: you have to be curious in order to discover new design opportunities, curious in order to be on the pulse of time you live in and telling us that this third life is a new gift which was unknown to previous generations - or known to just a few of them. We should accept this gift happily and thankful, design it in a meaningful way and bring it in as a helpful co-operative power. It is because the time we live in needs this third power. It needs it as a source of energy for positive active thought. This is the dawn of new frontiers.

And once again – if we want to activate and maintain the power of our body, our mind and our soul, we need the volition to be active and to act, we need to develop our creativity and the curiosity to learn and to experience what tasks are to be achieved by this existing third power. The notes of music and the power of imaginative design are waiting in line, being companions for assisting us as a striking force. This third power of our generation is allowed to live and learn, to fight and love; there will still be sufficient time to “rest”. And never forget that laughing is a source of energy [and] a wonderful communication partner.

And there is something else that you should not forget:

In every one of us there is a tiny little bit of the endlessly wise Creator's power – it is waiting for our questions! Well, immortality has quite a lot of facets.

Stages (Stufen)  
by  
Hermann Hesse

As every flower fades and as all youth  
Departs, so life at every stage,  
So every virtue, so our grasp of truth,  
Blooms in its day and may not last forever.  
Since life may summon us at every age  
Be ready, heart, for parting, new endeavor,  
Be ready bravely and without remorse  
To find new light that old ties cannot give.  
In all beginnings dwells a magic force  
For guarding us and helping us to live.  
Serenely let us move to distant places  
And let no sentiments of home detain us.  
The Cosmic Spirit seeks not to restrain us  
But lifts us stage by stage to wider spaces.  
If we accept a home of our own making,  
Familiar habit makes for indolence.  
We must prepare for parting and leave-taking  
Or else remain the slaves of permanence.  
Even the hour of our death may send  
Us speeding on to fresh and newer spaces,  
And life may summon us to newer races.  
So be it, heart: bid farewell without end.

*Poem translated by Richard and Clara Winston,  
in: The Glass Bead Game (Magister Ludi), p.444  
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