

52 baby steps to Grow Young

Michael Brickey, Ph.D., ABPP

Published by New Resources Press
865 College Ave., Columbus, OH 43209
www.NewResourcesPress.com

Printed and bound in the USA.

Cover design by New City Graphics (www.NewCityGraphics.com)
Cover pictures are of Dr. Brickey's twin daughters Sharon and Sonia at age three in 2003.

ISBN# 0-9701555-9-X

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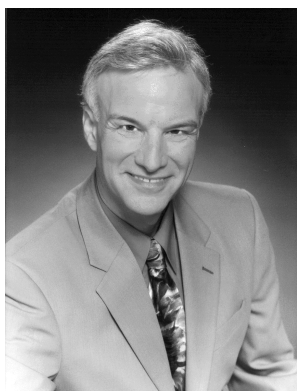
The Tortoise and the Hare: A Modern Day Sequel

In the 1950's Japanese goods were cheap junk. An American engineer, Edwards Deming went to GM, Ford, and Chrysler and offered his system of "continuous quality improvement." The automakers scoffed, saying they didn't need it-besides, if the quality of their cars improved, people wouldn't need to buy new ones as often. Other American businesses gave similar responses.

Deming took his ideas to Japan. Within a few decades, Japanese goods-like Toyota, Honda, Nissan, and Sony-became the standards for quality and American automakers and electronics companies struggled to catch up. Deming is a national hero in Japan.

What was his secret? Make a baby step tweak in quality and lock it in permanently. Make another baby step tweak in quality and lock it in permanently. Before long the baby steps make a profound difference. And so Detroit learned the lesson of the tortoise and the hare.

You too can easily make a profound difference in your life. It just takes a baby step a week.



About the Author

Change can be easy, fast, fun, and painless when you engineer it well. Dr. Michael Brickey shows you how. He teaches and coaches you how to grow young by changing your mind-and keeping the change.

When Oprah did a program on “Growing Old Gracefully” she quizzed her audience with Dr. Brickey’s Test Your Mental Longevity Test and put an abridged version of the test on her web site.

When *Let’s Live* magazine did life makeovers on three women, they selected Dr. Brickey to be the life coach for all three makeover teams. The women lowered their body fat percentage from an average of 32% to an average of 27%, improved their health, developed new career plans, and became more confident, *can do* people. Their stories were featured in six issues of *Let’s Live*.

When American Academy on Anti-Aging Medicine President Dr. Ronald Klatz and gerontologist and feminist Betty Friedan, read his book *Defy Aging*, they were among many who wrote glowing endorsements. Dr. Bernie Siegel wrote, “An excellent road map and tool kit to assist you in creating a longer, healthier, more joyful life. Read and learn how to be too busy to die and become ageless by losing track of time.”

Dr. Brickey is a Board certified psychologist, a Fellow of the American Psychological Association, and is on the staff of several hospitals. He also is a skilled hypnotist. His hypnosis CDs, *Hypnotic Journeys to Ageless Lifestyles* help people effortlessly absorb ageless concepts.

He is passionate about what it takes mentally to live well into your hundreds and to have age be an advantage. Note how old you feel now, because you will feel considerably younger after you take your 52 baby steps.

Introduction

What does it take for you to develop a longer, healthier, happier life? You might have an epiphany and change your life overnight. You might have a crisis, like a heart attack, and make drastic changes. Perhaps you make New Years resolutions (but usually don't keep them). The most likely way for you to be successful in achieving your goals, however, is the way you learned to walk—by taking baby steps.

52 baby steps is a 52-week program that gives you a baby step each week. The steps are so small that each step requires little time or effort and easily becomes a habit. They are practical steps that intuitively make sense so it is easy to convince yourself to make them a habit. It's that simple. Follow the weekly program for a year, and the quality of your life will profoundly improve. It may well be the best year of your life and a turning point in your life.

You may enthusiastically think that a step was a nice change—I think I'll do several steps this week. Please don't. The system works best one week at a time. Let me make an analogy. People decide to lose weight and go on a diet. What usually happens? They are on good behavior for a few days or a few weeks and then go "off" the diet and gain the weight back and maybe more. People who lose weight permanently are usually the people who continuously and gradually improve the quality of their eating habits. The benefits are like compound interest on investments.

Each baby step is so small that it can become habitual for you in just a week. The best way to use this program is to pick a particular day of the week to start each step. Read the step each day. Reinforce the step with post it notes on your mirror, refrigerator, calendar, etc. People used to tie a string around their finger. You don't need to be that tacky, but wearing a piece of jewelry you don't usually wear can be a good reminder. The idea is to be reminded of the step several times a day for a week.

Ready to change your life for good?
Log the date in the blank beside footprint #1
And take your first baby step

#1 How Old Are You?

Week starting _____

Adopt the belief that like a fine wine you get better with age. Look for information and role models to support this belief.

Step

When someone asks you, “How old are you?” Tell them, “many ages.” For the next week, whenever you look in a mirror, ask yourself how old you are and answer, “many ages.”

Why

How old are you? Careful, this is a trick question. If you give your chronological age, your mind associates all of the stereotypes you have for that age. Those stereotypes are based on the way people aged in the past—not the way your generation will age, much less the way a growing young person like yourself will age.

A librarian told me that she happened to mention to her twenty-something staff that she is over fifty. Suddenly they started treating her differently—apologizing for talking about Britney Spears (because “of course” she wouldn’t know who Britney is), leaving her off committees, etc. She was young at heart. They had arteriosclerosis of the attitudes. When you tell someone your chronological age, they pull out their stereotypes for that age and expect you to “act your age.” However, if you tell them you are many ages, it prompts an interesting conversation.

Picking role models of vital, active people your age or older helps. One of my role models is Tina Turner who is in her sixties. She exudes vitality and moves better than most teenagers.

Bob Hope describes himself as “many ages.” Always a teenager at heart, he lived to 100. What a wonderful concept! There are times when you want to be like a six-year-old and play with children. Other times you may want to play a sport like a twenty-year-old. And there are times for giving mature sagely advice. The trick is shifting gears to fit the occasion. Thinking of yourself as many ages

avoids stereotypes and suggests that your repertoire of ages becomes richer the older you become chronologically.

Quotes

How old would you be if you didn't know how old you was?

~Sachel Page

Humor

Injured in an auto accident, Lena was in a coma for days. The doctor told her husband the grim news that she would probably never come out of the coma.

"But she is only 42," her husband lamented.

A weak voice came from Lena, "30."

A centenarian goes to the doctor complaining of a pain in his knee. The doctor said, "At your age what can you expect?"

The patient replied, "To fix my knee. My other knee is the same age and it works fine."

For the next seven days leave the book, turned to these pages, on top of your desk or somewhere you will see the pages frequently. The repetition of seeing the pages several times a day (even if you only read it once) reinforces the message and helps you effortlessly absorb and adopt the belief or behavior. After a week, turn to the next page for a week. Periodically skim through previous steps to remind you of the previous steps and reinforce those beliefs or behaviors.

#2 Cultivating Fond Memories

Week starting _____

Step

Make it a personal goal to have at least twice as many fond memories as painful memories. Enhance the good memories. Let the painful ones wither or see the humor in them.

Why

Carrying around resentments and bad memories weighs you down, slows you down, and serves no purpose. Resentments consume a lot of energy. Researcher Belle Boone Beard, who studied thousands of centenarians, found that centenarians have twice as many fond memories as negative memories. It isn't that they had an easy life. They experienced the Great Depression, two world wars, and several other wars. They also dealt with the deaths of many friends and family members.

Despite their adversities, you would have a hard time finding any centenarians who see themselves as victims or carry resentments. Instead they focus on the good things that happen, let the bad memories wither, and cherish the lessons learned from adversity.

See yourself as a gardener who weeds out the bad memories and cultivates the good memories. Better yet, see the humor and character building in the bad memories and transform them into good ones.

Quotes

Resentment is warmed-over anger. Anxiety is warmed-over fear. Self-pity is nothing more than warmed-over grief.

~Robert Jean Bryant

Humor

One Sunday morning, the pastor noticed seven-year-old Alex was staring endlessly at the large plaque that hung in the foyer of the church. The plaque was covered with names and had small American flags mounted on each side. "Pastor, what is this?" Alex asked. "Well, son, it's a memorial to all the young men and women who died in the service." Little Alex's voice was barely audible when he asked, "The 9:00 or the 10:30 service?"

A Legionnaire visited a bar and lamented to his comrade,

"I can't remember why I came here."

"Forget it," his comrade said.

"That's it," he said, "I came here to forget."

#3 I Get Better With Age

Week starting _____

Adopt the belief that like a fine wine you get better with age. Look for information and role models to support this belief.

Why

Think back to when you were thirty years younger. Remember what you thought was important and how you spent your time. Does it seem a little immature now? Would you want to trade your maturity now for your maturity then? Why not?

Consider an analogy with computers. Thirty years ago you could do things a little faster (megahertz) but your hard drive had far less information and far fewer programs. Now you have a wealth of information and programs in your hard drive. Would you want to trade speed for your hard drive data and your programs?

Of course getting better with age doesn't happen automatically. As employers say, you can have thirty years of experience or one year of experience thirty times. But if you are continually learning and growing, you have paid the price of admission and are indeed getting better with age.

As the Beatles' song puts it, "I've got to admit it's getting better- It's getting better all the time."