

How to Stay Young

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Well, "Making Youth Long Lasting," "Making Youth Long Lasting," or to put it in a few words, "How to Stay Young," isn't it? "How to Stay Young."

Well, what is it that grows old? Did you ever stop to think? What is it that grows old? It surely isn't the Soul. Because, the Soul, we know from the scriptures, from the teachings of the great saints: Soul is Eternal, Everlasting, Unending, "never was born," and "never can grow old, nor die." And so, surely it is not, it is not the Soul Consciousness that ages. Well, then what is it that ages? What is it that ages? Did you ever stop to think?

It is simply that the Soul has become identified with the body – body consciousness – and it sees that the body changes – is impermanent – and in time passes away. So, your own Soul Consciousness thinks that it is limited to the body consciousness, and under the same influences that it sees going around – going on all around it, that's all it is – it is simply identification of your own Soul, a ray of God's Presence, with these changing conditions of outward, or human, consciousness. That's really what happens.

Of course, there is a cycle. There is a cycle of the Soul's presence in the body, which goes on, and finally, is terminated. But, that can be lengthened, even, if we know the Higher Laws of God. And surely, that cycle can be of a much better nature, so to speak, if we do not allow ourselves, by controlling our minds, to be identified with these changing conditions. That's the important thing to remember. We cannot, under the present conditions, live eternally in this body. Although, my, Master told me, one time, that, if you can live somehow to be 120 – I saw a lady the other day in the paper was 120 – but if you can do that, then you don't get older after that. Isn't that wonderful? But who can live to the 120? That's what I asked him. He says, "That's right." So these things are nice to remember anyway.

And some people look old, and some people feel old. Some people look young, and some people feel young. Now, there's a reason for that. Of course, I realize there are inherited tendencies within us that we have brought over. Some have a

greater resistance to disease than others. Some have a resistance to wear and tear. You cannot keep them down. But others do not have that resistance.

Well, now there is a reason for that – and this is the important thing to remember. Why is it? Why is it that some look old, and some look young, and some feel old, and some feel young? It is this: that the mind has not accepted these conditions of age. That's all it is. The mind has not accepted these conditions of which we call "age." And, therefore, as the mind, and the body, are very closely related, if within yourself you have that idea of youth, and also really feel it, so that the mind picks it up, because the mind can do anything. Then the body reacts to the power of the mind, and keeps you youthful, and cheerful. That is the key. The key is that for some reason – now, we must find out that reason – for some reason, the mind has not accepted the ordinary change which goes on within as a normal thing.

There was a lady, I went, I saw at a banquet at one time. I went there with the Master, and to some club in Los Angeles. Forgotten the name of it now, but it makes no difference. And on the platform was this, this lady – had something to do with health, and proper eating, and such things. And so, they had her stand up. Of course, her hair was gray. I guess, she thought that was all right. But they asked, "How old do you think the lady is?" Well, there were all kinds of ages. To me she, she didn't look 50. And she stood up and said that she was over 80. Now what was the trouble? Or what was the reason, not trouble, what is the reason? The reason was that, somehow, her mind had not accepted age – and I know I was dumbfounded. And I know that was true, because it was under the ah...the banquet was under the auspices of a very reliable club. So that's the point. If we understand that reason and apply, apply the power of the mind then we can keep much more our youthful nature.

And so, it is our mind, and our consciousness, acting under various influences – inherited tendencies, type of life you lead, type of environment, attitude, attitude and will and resistance – it is that, which governs how your mind reacts toward age. These various things play an important part. And attitude, I think, coupled by will and resistance, is the greatest thing. Because, if you have within yourselves a cheerful mood, a cheerful buoyant mood, and you will have it for one reason – one of the greatest reasons is that you will feel the Presence of God in everything you do – if you have that, you are bound to show the reaction to that attitude in your body. Oh, a little gray hair doesn't make any difference, you know. Sometimes that's inherited. But how do you feel inside? How is your Soul Consciousness? Is it youthful, and healthy, and buoyant and cheerful?

Even though you do have a few hundred aches and pains, you can do it. But you can only do it when you feel the Presence of God within you. Then it reacts through your mind, and in spite of all those troubles, you can have the signs of youth. In fact, you can be youthful, and healthy – “How to Stay Young.” And so, remember, the law of mind is, that it reacts on the body; if you have a cheerful mind, and especially, if you have conscious communion with God, it will react on your body, without question. We will come to that later, about the causes of correcting these different things, which prevent our having a youthful body and appearing young.

Now, one of the references I’d like to give you at this time from our Master’s Autobiography [of a Yogi]. “The power expressed by a man’s bodily instrument depends on his aggressive will and courage.”¹ The body is literally manufactured and sustained by the mind, or the Consciousness of God in us. How from one cell and its union can this whole thing come? Because God’s Consciousness is behind all things and the Power that does that is your own Cosmic Energy. When you operate it under certain conditions, it’s called “the mind.” But, nevertheless, isn’t it God’s Consciousness, and His Power in that Consciousness? And so that’s what happens. “Through pressure of instincts from past lives...” those are inherited tendencies, of which I spoke, “strengths or weaknesses percolate gradually into human consciousness. They express as habits, which will in turn manifest as a desirable or an undesirable body. Outward frailty has a mental origin...” outward frailty has a mental origin, which in turn manifests the corresponding body, “in a vicious circle, the habit-bound body thwarts the mind.”

How can you have a strong mind, if your body is all shot to pieces, so to speak? It can be done, but it’s difficult. It’s much easier to find God, and have a strong mind, if the body is fairly healthy. And so, “In a vicious circle, the habit-bound body thwarts the mind. If the master allows himself to be commanded by a servant...” if you allow yourself to be commanded by the body, within certain limits, “the latter becomes autocratic; the mind is similarly enslaved by submitting to bodily dictation.”

There is, there is a little matter, which I’d like to bring up at this time, about the different cells of the body. There are two kinds of cells: a germ cell, and a somatic cell. The germ cells are those cells which keep the human race going, so

¹ Chapter 6, Page 54, “The Tiger Swami”, Autobiography of a Yogi, 1951 Revision

to speak. They pass from one generation to another; from one body to another. Those cells are active. Naturally, they're very vital.

Now the other cells, which are germ cells, they have made up the different organs of the body: the tissues, bones, internal organs, such things. These are called somatic cells. Now these cells follow a different pattern, and sometimes, especially, if the mind is not active and strong, they become fixed, and they lay down, so to speak, on the job. That's why age comes upon us. Now, if you can reactivate the somatic cells of the body, which you can, especially by the techniques of Self-Realization Fellowship Yoga, you can reactivate those cells. They will, once more, take up their function, and age will not come upon you – except in its natural way. It is a good thing to remember, that we can control those somatic cells within us – those cells which make up the formation of our body. And they are under control of the mind, plus God's Consciousness within it.

Now, going on a little further – mind can do anything. Mind can do anything. And when I say mind, do not think I mean the "ordinary" mind that keeps us in such a turmoil all the time. Not that mind. We might call it the Higher Mind – the Mind in which the Consciousness of God is very active. That can do anything. And it improves with usage.

If you're continuously saying about your ill health, and enjoying ill health, as they say; then it certainly will be so. But, if you start, and do the little things, first; the mind will improve with usage. But do the little things first. Do not start and try to do big things with it, so to speak, until you are able. But, start with little things. Then all things are possible, according to the Will of God. And, if you feel your will united with God's Will, things are possible according to His Will. Attempt the little things first.

Likewise, the care of the body is very important. Why should we care, take care of the body? Because it is the only vehicle you or I will have to manifest Divinity. Did you ever stop to think of that? It is the only vehicle you will have, until you get another. But you've got this one. Let's make the best use of it. It's the only vehicle you'll have to attain your heritage – Divine Union with the Eternal Father. Therefore, we should take care of it. We should take care of it. We should exercise the health laws: proper food, right food, natural food, and food we can assimilate. We should be practical in the application of taking care of our body. If we cannot tolerate certain things, we should not take them. But above all, we can eat natural and vital foods, and exercise, and such things are

necessary. Take care of the body, for the simple reason; if you do not care about the body, you must care, because it is the vehicle whereby you will find God. The only vehicle you will have. And so, it is the only instrument that we can have the freedom of Divinity, by which we can feel our oneness with God.

Remember, I, I have told you the Soul cannot be seen. The Soul Consciousness cannot be seen. But Its manifestation in the body can be seen. And that is where you can change; eliminating the drawbacks of that body, and assimilating Eternal Concepts, and properties of your Soul. Take care of the body.

Now another point is this. The mind, the mind, which you are going to use to keep yourself youthful – because I know that’s what you’re interested in – so are we all. The mind is unable to act to its fullest extent with a diseased or unhealthy body. So, practice these health laws. Also I, also keep away from excesses – excesses in any field – especially, in sex. But any – in eating even. If you go to the excess in eating, in eating you will look old pretty soon. You’ll be all out of shape, and such things. So much food in you and you’ll be lazy, and lethargic, if you overeat. If you over indulge in temper you upset the workings of the Finer Forces of the body of assimilation, and such things – elimination – and you will begin to look old. And one thing, you can never, you can never, retain the youth, if you’re oversexed. Be normal. But don’t, do not be oversexed.

Now another thing that enters into keeping young is suggestion – Power of suggestion and the thought pattern – the thought pattern which you have within you. If you have such a thought pattern, which has come and grown there by your continual suggestion that you’re ill, and sick, and all done up; naturally you’ll continue to be that. The thought pattern is what governs our life here. If your thought pattern is on God, and you’re buoyant, and cheerful, because you know He’s with you every moment of your existence; your bodily, your body will react to the suggestion from it – your mind – and it will be healthy, and you will look much younger, because there’s nothing like the Glow of God’s Presence within a person to give them the youthful appearance and look. And not only appearance, but function. You’ll be much healthier, if you’ll do these things.

And so the thought pattern must be right. Thought pattern must be right. What do we give? “Am I all in...” There’s another word I won’t use, that I hear everybody saying. I don’t like it, but it’s...you know what I mean. “I’m all something...,” or, “Boy am I...,” “Am I all in...” That’s, well, what’s gonna happen? You’re gonna be “all in” all the time. You’re suggesting this every moment. Don’t suggest that. But rest, quietly, and recharge the body. That’s all.

But, if you keep saying, “all in,” “had a terrible day,” “Oh, it was awful.” Well, it’ll go on that way, that’s all. So that’s the first thing is to do away with those suggestions – suggestions [tape skip] have of courage, and such things.

I have a something I want to give you, at this time, if I can find it, which I think you will enjoy. Another thing, before we get to that point. Do not mix with negative people, or those who enjoy ill health; enjoy ill health all the time. And pretty soon, you will enjoy ill health, just the same as they do. And rather be careless, or carefree, rather, with them, and nonchalant. How: through wisdom. How does that wisdom come: by feeling God in you every moment. These are the rules.

Now speaking about youth, or age must give way to youth. Age, we know, must give, give way to youth, but the old must step aside. That seems to be true. But to impress it on your mind, this little story comes to me, which I think you will enjoy.

A small boy told his father, he said, “When I grow up,” he says, “when I grow up I wanna drive a great big army tank. I wanna drive a great big army tank.” Father says, “Well, son, that’s all right with me. I won’t stand in your way.” You will get it after a little bit. Age must give way to youth. Age must give way to youth, but not in that way, I hope. Now, somebody just got it, that’s all right.

Now the power to do these things; the power to overcome, and keep youthful, comes from where: comes from God. Comes from the practice of yoga, whereby you attain communion with God. When Jesus expressed the wonderful power, and showed these great things which he did – changed people, even in the state of death, brought them to life – why: because he was in contact with the Power of God within him. So can we be that way.

God communion, God communion is the greatest thing to keep you young, and full of good cheer, and a credit to God’s Handiwork. God communion is the greatest thing. We must not forget that. If you have God communion, how can the pattern in your mind be anything but right? It cannot. This is the greatest key. That’s why I’m pointing it out as forcefully as I can. Keep the thought pattern right. And the thought pattern will absolutely be right, if you commune with God through regular meditation; by following the techniques in meditations, which He has left for us through the channel of our Master. Keep the thought pattern right. That’s the greatest thing you if we will but realize that.

In God are all things. In Him are all things. And yet we do not go to Him. Even in retaining youth, we should go to God, because that's the right way. He can give us all things, because all things are in Him. He has made all things. He has made each and every one of us. He is seated behind the thoughts of us all. He is in every cell; the correct function of which makes you look and be youthful. Why shouldn't we go to Him in all matters, even in, even in the matter of retaining youth?

I have a reference, at this time, to give you from the Master's writings: "Life has a bright side and a dark side, for the world of relativity is composed of light and shadows. If you permit your thoughts to dwell on evil, you yourself will become ugly."² If you permit your thoughts to dwell on evil, you yourself will become ugly. The saints do not do that. They dwell on what? They dwell on God, and good, and are in communion with Him. "Look only for the good in everything, that you absorb the quality of beauty."

And finally, "With the sharpness of my will, I tore to shreds the stifling chrysalis of ignorance."³ Ignorance is the thing. Ignorance is what keeps us from being youthful, and feeling the Presence of God. "Out of the dark threads of my shrouding fears, O my brothers," says the Master, "follow me in the flight to Him."

From God we have come, from His Great Love. Master often said, "He is crying for us more than we can imagine, much more than we are crying for Him." If we will but give Him a little time, just a little time each day, and keep our most important engagement with Him, He will sustain us in all ways, all ways, even in retaining our youth, because He is All.

² Now published by SRF in "Sayings of Yogananda"

³ Reference unknown.