

THE PREMIER LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE FOR ALL AGE

HEALTHY

AGING

How I Reinvented Myself After 60

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By Robin Kencel

Whenever people my age start talking about “reinventing” themselves and ask how I’m doing it, I start to get a little clammy. The sweaty palms aren’t from the question itself, but from that word: **reinvent**. It makes it sound like there’s something so fundamentally wrong with me that I need to scrap the whole operation and start from scratch.

Not only does that feel like a sweeping indictment of the person I’ve spent 67 years becoming, but also—frankly—I like a lot of me. I’ve worked hard on this journey. So rather than calling this chapter a reinvention, I see it as a continuation of what’s always been my *modus operandi*: continual self-improvement, with occasional detours for dark chocolate and dance shoes.

Step 1: Define Your Pillars

When I turned 60, I didn’t meet the day with dread. I saw it as a rare opportunity: a clean page, a permission slip to grow deeper, not just older. But to move forward, I had to first take a good, honest look at where I was.

As a strategist by nature, I began by identifying my Five Pillars of Aging Well—the core categories that would support my sense of purpose and well-being going forward:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Relational
- Cognitive
- Spiritual

Each one matters. Each one needs tending. And each one, I realized, was holding a different weight in my life—some more robust than others.

Step 2: Write a Mission Statement for This Chapter

Next, I wrote a mission statement. Yes, an actual, honest-to-goodness mission statement for this stage of my life. I briefly flirted with asking ChatGPT for help—because, well, who hasn’t?—but soon realized: no AI can articulate what resides in the core of your soul. That’s your work, and yours alone.

My mission statement isn’t on my refrigerator. (Nobody needs that kind of performance pressure while getting coffee.) But it does live somewhere important: in my awareness. It’s there to remind me what really matters, and whether how I’m spending my time still aligns with what I truly want from these years.

Step 3: Do an Honest Assessment

Armed with my mission, I revisited each pillar and asked myself: What am I doing that supports this? What’s working? What’s not?

What surprised me wasn’t that some areas needed attention—I expected that—but just how lopsided things had become. I was pouring a great deal of energy into one pillar while practically ignoring another. Even if life isn’t perfectly balanced, some minimum investment in each area felt essential.

Another realization: I’d grown a bit too... efficient. My calendar was so neatly packed, so tightly orchestrated, that I had left little room for spontaneity—no space for surprise, or for newness to sneak in and delight me.

That insight alone was worth the whole exercise.

Step 4: Make a Plan

As my ballroom dance teacher loves to say, “If you want a different outcome, you have to do something different.” He was talking about my foxtrot, but it applies to life.

With fresh insight, I made a plan. Not a 47-step, color-coded binder full of bullet points—but a thoughtful reorientation. I wanted my next steps to strengthen my mission, not just fill time.

Here's what changed:

- I made sure the majority of my activities actually feed my purpose.
- I carved out unscheduled time to allow space for the spontaneous.
- I added new experiences—ones that spark curiosity, challenge my brain, and nudge me into unexpected conversations or perspectives.

Step 5: Adjust Your Attitude

Mindset matters. We all know this, but we forget it—especially when joints ache, phones ding too much, and society starts acting like women over 60 vanish into the ether.

Aging with empowerment means taking ownership of your narrative. It means being curious, open, and just stubborn enough to keep growing.

For me, life has always included sports, and each decade has required a shift. I've traded long-distance running for team tennis, and now, team tennis for ballroom dancing. My joints may not approve of every transition, but my spirit is game. I've learned that fun and challenge still exist—they've just moved to a different time slot.

So, is this reinvention? Maybe. Or maybe it's just **living with intention**—embracing the idea that you're never too old to grow, pivot, or book a tango class because... why not?

In the end, I think aging well comes down to two things:

1. **Have a positive, eager mindset**
2. **Have a plan—even if it's written in pencil**

And maybe also: **Have good snacks, good friends, and good lighting.**

Let's not pretend this is easy, or always graceful. Sometimes aging feels like a never-ending game of "Guess What Hurts Today." But it can also be rich, laugh until you cry, meaningful—and yes, empowered—if we show up for it, eyes open and heart ready.

After all, we've spent a lifetime becoming ourselves. Why stop now?

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