Journal of Economy Culture and Society
JECS 2024; 70 : 227–241
DOI: 10.26650/JECS2024-1466636

Review Article

Aging Well and the Intersection of Flourishing, Connectedness, and Sense of Meaningfulness in a Changing World: Implications for Personal and Societal Responsibility

Terence SEEDSMAN[1], Nilüfer KORKMAZ YAYLAGÜL[2], Aslı Gözde AKIŞ[3]

[1]Emeritus Professor, Institute of Health & Sport, Victoria University-Melbourne, Australia
[2]Faculty of Health Sciences, Department of Gerontology, Akdeniz University Antalya, Türkiye
[3]Faculty of Health Sciences, Department of Gerontology, Balikesir University, Balikesir, Türkiye

Corresponding author : Aslı Gözde Akış
E-mail : asligozde.akis@balikesir.edu.tr

ABSTRACT

Countries worldwide are now facing a multitude of challenges emanating from population aging, along with increases in human longevity. This demographic transition to older populations globally has created interest in the concept of aging well, with implications for a reconceptualization of the life course. In this study, insights, perspectives, and research findings surrounding human flourishing, social connectedness, and sense of meaningfulness are introduced for the purpose of drawing attention to their respective associations either independently or collectively with aging well. This study by way of a random search of the literature, provides contemporary insights for building a knowledge platform centered on aging well. Societal aspirations for promoting aging well will require a priority focus that promotes the adoption of healthy lifestyles across all ages. To apprehend and confront the challenges surrounding aging well will require new forms of communication and partnership undertakings involving the government, policymakers, health professionals, the general public and especially people destined to live into older age. Consequently, a deeper understanding of aging well and its promotion throughout the life course is urgently needed, including the existential aspects of aging well and the social, political, economic, and environmental forces that influence the level of health and well-being of people.

Keywords: Existential Health, Narrative on Aging, Resilient Aging, Self-Care, Social Embeddedness

Submitted : 07.04.2024
Revision Requested : 25.07.2024
Last Revision Received : 29.07.2024
Accepted : 19.08.2024
Published Online : 18.11.2024

1. Introduction

There has been a revolution in terms of thinking more positively and realistically about the prospect of aging well, however, there still remains the challenge for individuals and societies to adjust their attitudes and mindsets when it comes to aging per se (Diehl, Smeyer & Mehrotra, 2020; Ferraro & Shippee, 2009). Unfortunately, aging is still portrayed in pessimistic and apocalyptic terms while ignoring the potential and possibilities for active and productive aging (Burr, Caro & Moorhead, 2002; Foster & Walker, 2015; Lin, Sindall, Williams, & Capon, 2022; Moulaert & Biggs, 2012). It is relatively easy to understand how younger generations and policymakers can all too easily fail to fully comprehend the lived experiences of older people while they persist in denying their own aging selves. Most people today, and certainly in the future will live long enough to reach the status of older person. With this factual knowledge in hand, would seem inherently sensible for individuals and society to undertake responsible planning efforts to promote and support healthy and meaningful adaptation during later life. While there is not a consensus in the literature on the concept of aging well, theories and models on aging well suggest that the content of the concept varies according to social and political conditions, cultural context, and mainstream approaches.

The notion of aging well may be perceived as more of an individual responsibility in contemporary culture; however, individual actions are not independent of social structures. The World Health Organization (2002) has claimed that the increasing trend towards population aging worldwide will bring to the forefront new social, political, and economic challenges requiring the introduction of policy initiatives that support aging well within a life course framework.

There is now a call for a new narrative on aging that challenges the conventional view that the aging process is fixed and immutable (Diehl, Smeyer & Mehrotra, 2020). Johnson (1995) in a statement on aging well suggested "Aging well is fundamentally a dynamic between the individual and the environment" (p. 26). It is now recognized that aging well across the life course will require responsible actions taken by individuals including support from progressive and insightful social policies that create equitable access to essential health-related services when needed (Commissioner for Senior Victorians, 2020; Halaweh et al; 2018). This paper by way of a review of selected research literature seeks to a) highlight some examples, insights, understandings, and findings surrounding human flourishing, social connectedness, and meaningfulness in life, including their respective and collective associations with aging well and b) encourage further research addressing the impact of sociocultural contexts and their structural configurations that may nurture or impede the existential sense of flourishing, social connectedness, and meaningfulness in later life. Roberts (2012) offered an important and challenging perspective on aging and living well that warrants attention by all and sundry:

> *The goal of a 'good' and productive long life is possible if there are appropriate interventions at the right time, if health inequalities are robustly addressed, and if the individual is treated as a person with capabilities who is rooted in a community, not a bundle of problems and symptoms living an isolated existence. (pp. 14-15)*

2. Aging Well: Conceptual Perspectives and Views on Sharing of Responsibilities

Aging well is a concept that delineates the essence of aging in contemporary societies and offers goals regarding how it should ideally unfold, serving as an overarching framework for various concepts. Defining the boundaries of aging well as a concept is quite difficult. Throughout the history of gerontology, terms such as successful aging, healthy aging, positive aging, and active aging have been used in conjunction (Fernández-Ballesteros et al., 2010; Valiant, 2007; Woods et al., 2016). These concepts incorporate perspectives that transform the meaning of aging in society, which traditionally carries negative connotations, such as physical loss, cognitive decline, and dependency, into a positive light. While nuances exist among these concepts, their similarities in terms of goals and content are noteworthy. The most significant commonality among these concepts is their emphasis on physical, cognitive, and social functioning. The fundamental goals for sustaining and enhancing these functions are commonly perceived as achieving independence and quality of aging (Bartlett & Carrol, 2015). In alignment with all these concepts, the literature suggests that the understanding of aging is multifaceted and typically encompasses satisfying social relationships, a sense of meaning in life, self-realization, and autonomy (Halaweh et al., 2018). On the basis of contemporary research findings, aging is now being portrayed in a more favorable light as a consequence of a more balanced presentation of aging-related processes (Bhattacharyya, 2021; Chapman, 2005). It is now known that aging well is influenced by modifiable interventions aimed at improving physical functioning and independent living (Beswick et al; 2008). Over three decades ago, Maddox (1992) emphasized the modifiability of the aging process, and more recently studies by Tosato et al. (2007), Michel et al. (2016), and Bland (2018) have reported on the influences of such matters as diet, exercise, lifestyle, and the environment as providing physiological, psychological, and functional benefits. Interventions aimed at the modifiability of aging processes might well take note of Seligman (2021), who contends that the disease

model of human functioning requires a balancing perspective, an approach that promotes "the scientific study of what makes individuals and communities thrive" (p. xiii).

Aging well is, in essence, a dynamic construct in that it must be considered amid life changing events and transitions across the life course. As such, older people need to build resilience in order to cope with expected and unexpected circumstances and situations (Fineman, 2012). At the same time, aging well is negotiable to the extent that individuals commit to exercising choices that optimize health-related behaviors that allow for active, healthy, and meaningful personal relationships throughout their lives (Adams & Blieszner, 1995; Hawkins, 2005; Seedsman, 1994). Hemberg, Forsman, and Nordmyr (2017) introduced the notion of existential health with implications for a measure of personal responsibility for aging well. For Hawkins (2005), the notion of aging well is based on an approach that "promotes personal behaviors and life course environments that limit functional declines, especially those caused by chronic conditions, to help older adults maintain their independence and health" (p. 1).

As the population of the world ages the issue of who should be responsible for undertaking actions for promoting aging well will become the subject matter of intense debate and concern across all levels of society. While aging well is primarily a personal affair it carries at the same time policy implications for societal interventions to promote active, healthy, and productive aspects of aging within the context of a life course framework.

Figure 1 provides a listing of eight (8) key attributes of aging well obtained by way of responses received from older people as part of a feedback survey in the Australian state of Victoria (Commissioner for Senior Victorians, 2020). The key attributes provide important clues for implementing future research, policy, funding, and program initiatives aimed at promoting the health and well-being of older people.

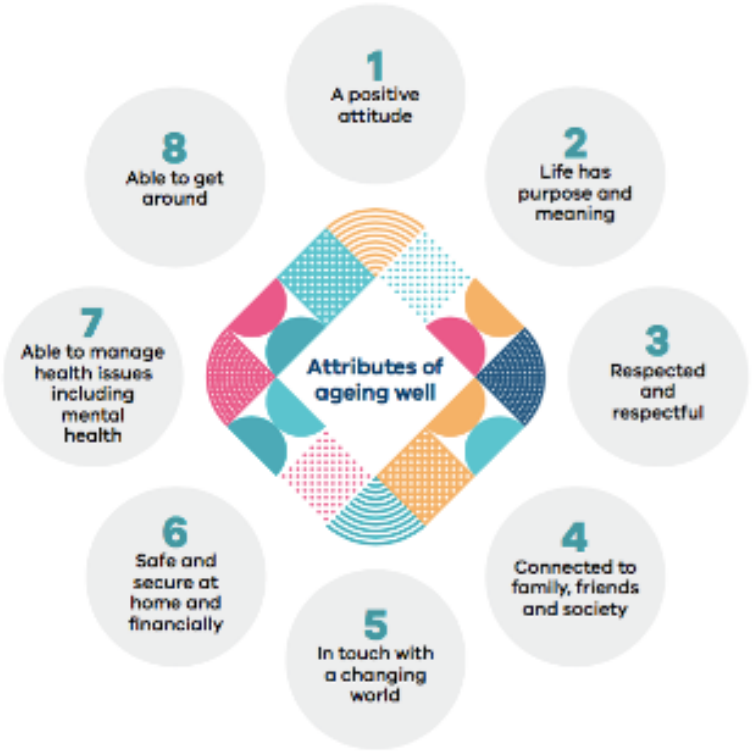

Figure 1. Attributes of Aging Well (*Source*: Commissioner for Senior Victorians, 2020, p.3). [Published with permission from the Commissioner for Senior Victorians].

The aging well concept must also include due recognition of the reality that disability, marginality, isolation, poverty, and pathology will, in some way or other be part of the lived experience of many older people. Johnson (1995) provided a realistic and balanced perspective on aging well by emphasizing that there are many instances that show older adults aging well despite the presence of functional decline, poor health, and adverse life-related circumstances. The preceding researcher added a salient and telling commentary "the most important marker for aging well is one's social-psychological interpretation of whatever one encounters through the aging process" (p. 126). The development of positive behavior by individuals against changes caused by new social risks and uncertainties can also be considered as a fundamental aspect of subjectivity (Giddens, 1991). McLaughlin et al. (2010) in a study of '*successful aging*' in the United States reported that many older people, despite declining health still maintained that they were aging

well. Sadly, Angus and Reeve (2006) identified ageist attitudes and related stereotypes as detrimental to the process of aging well and offered the view that any "aging well initiatives based on individualism and 'self-responsibility' risk reproducing existing power relations that continue to inform ageist stereotypes" (p. 137). Burnes et al. (2019) identified the need for vigorous international research to examine the effectiveness of interventions to reduce ageism. Bugental and Hehman (2007) argued for a more focused approach to combating ageism by integrating theory with policy by drawing upon emerging findings and understandings from the biological and social sciences. Studies by Chang et al. (2020) and Levy et al. (2020) revealed the adverse impact of ageism on the health conditions of older people, including the consequential economic costs on healthcare systems, with a call for strategic interventions to combat societal sources of ageism. Crăciun (2019) provided an interesting range of perspectives on how to think positively about aging, while Bar-Tu (2021) highlighted the value of utilizing positive aging concepts as part of strategic approaches to enhance the well-being of older people. Aging well is most likely to occur through a sharing of responsibilities between individuals and society, involving a sustained focus upon maintaining health, well-being, independence, and quality of life across all ages (Lin et al; 2022). Johnson (1995) argued "The professional and older adult are both intimately involved in the process of aging well and in the outcome" (p.127). With more people worldwide living longer lives, human services professionals need to be more proactive in relation to the area of preventive healthcare within the context of a life course framework (Foster & Walker, 2021; Johnson, 1995; Kuh et al; 2014; Sander et al; 2015). Unfortunately, the preparation of medical and nursing professionals is still aligned to the traditional practice of treating disease and disability, while there is clearly an urgent need to assist individuals to stay healthy for as long as possible, made ever more important with increases in human longevity. Bland (2018) called for the adoption of '*personalized lifestyle medicine*' as an effective means of combating disease incidence.

Foster and Walker (2021) offered the view that "individuals to some extent are agents of their own aging process" (p. 2), which raises the issue of 'self-care' as offering a significant resource for aging well (Høy, Wagner & Hall, 2007; Mielenz, Kannoth & Xue, 2021). Self-care can be seen as involving a diverse range of choices, activities, and behaviors undertaken by an individual to promote personal health, well-being, and independence. Healthful behaviors including physical exercise represent an investment in self-care. According to Manchana (2021), evidence suggests that health conscious decisions by older people along with support from family and friends can assist in maintaining independence as well as combating loneliness. Mielenz, Kannoth, and Xue (2021) contend that the application of self-care patterns in early life can help lower the chance of disability-related problems occurring in older age. As a result, the development of any future aging well framework will need to consider how best to emphasize and promote health literacy initiatives with due consideration given to successful interventions across international and cultural contexts (Levin-Zamir et al; 2017).

The trajectories of population aging vary among countries, and the meaning of aging well may differ between developed and developing nations when combined with the influences of globalization, financial, and political insecurity (Bartlett & Carrol, 2015). Geographic location can be a significant factor in aging well as exemplified by Blackberry (2022), who reported on the extreme difficulties associated with accessing aged care services by older people living in rural (outback) areas throughout Australia. The preceding situation from Australia highlights the need to better understand how aging well various across different geographical areas including the type of policies that may help to amend health inequities across disenfranchised areas. Curtis and Jones (2008) provided a balanced perspective on health inequities that require attention by health care professionals and policymakers "health variation is caused both by the characteristics of individuals, and also by the setting in which they are situated" (p. 666). Fineman (2012) provided a timely reminder that human agency, which concerns the ability to take action, control, and make choices, requires a societal responsibility to embrace clearer understandings of human needs and the implications arising from the fact that "Safety and security are necessary to have the ability to fully and freely exercise options and choices" (p. 122). Obviously, in conflict situations involving wars and aggression the ability for individuals to act as free agents is seriously compromised due to existential anxieties surrounding safety and survival. Any attempt to understand aging well will be limited if there is little or no consideration given to the effects of the environment on a person's sense of belonging and agency (Andrews et al; 2009; Gilroy, 2008; Wahl, Iwarsson & Oswald, 2012). At the same time, the socio-cultural context cannot be ignored, as cultural values and related behaviors are inextricably linked with health and well-being (Howell & Peterson, 2020; Korkmaz Yaylagul & Seedsman, 2012; Torres, 1999).

While research shows that it is never too late to adopt a lifestyle in older age that is conducive to health improvements, it is far better to arrive at an older age with a healthy profile (Goetzel et al, 2007). A focus on personal responsibility for aging well can all too easily deflect engagement from thoughtful and balanced discourse relating to societal support for those citizens made vulnerable as part of the human condition (Fineman, 2012). It is easy to see how key decision-makers may adopt a form of *purposeful inaction* or limited responsibility in relation to promoting aging

well based on a twofold mindset involving 1) ageist-type attitudes that draw upon essentialist beliefs that "define the process of aging as fixed and inevitable rather than malleable and modifiable" (Weiss, 2018, p. 925) and 2) adherence to an ideological stance that maintains "individual liberty should remain exempt from public regulation" (McConnell & Hart, 2019, p. 651). Questions, arguments, and issues relating to personal versus societal responsibility for health and well-being have been longstanding, as shown by Minkler (1999), who advocated for "a more balanced approach one that ensures the creation of healthy public policies and health-promoting environments, within which individuals are better able to make choices conducive to health" (p. 135). It must be accepted, however, that at the individual level the meanings and attitudes surrounding one's own aging-self will undoubtedly impact the ability to age well (Chen et al; 2018). An immediate social imperative facing public and private policymakers along with medical, nursing, and allied healthcare professionals resides in the challenge to provide and promote a balanced reality of aging and old age as a counter to the prevailing and damaging assumptions of decline, redundancy, dependency, non-productive, and economic burden. Unfortunately, it has to be recognized that globally the opportunities and support systems for aging well are not evenly distributed within and between population cohorts (Higo & Khan, 2015). While no single approach exists for promoting aging well there are personal and socio-political challenges and responsibilities that might well be considered within the context of the following commentary offered by Roberts (2012):

> *Policymakers, planners, politicians, designers, technocrats and commissioners all have a role to play in creating a society in which the wellbeing of older people is actively promoted. However, individual responsibility also needs to be exercised to prepare better for the transitions that come with older age and which can dent wellbeing. (p.33)*

2.1. Flourishing as a Salient Factor of Well-Being

Up until recent times, the notion of human flourishing has been essentially a focus of attention through religious and philosophical related discourses. However, the emergence of theoretical and research-based undertakings in the fields of positive psychology and developmental psychology have now moved human flourishing beyond an aspirational endeavor to a position of increasing potential and possibility for enhancing human health and well-being across the life course. The concept of *human flourishing* can be aligned in a general sense of the phrase with the Latin word *florere, meaning* to blossom, bloom, or to be in a healthy state of general mental and physical functioning. Drawing upon Aristotelian ethics, the term eudaimonia is often used to describe human flourishing or living-well (Huta & Waterman, 2014). Seligman (2012), in his landmark publication *Flourish, identified* five (5) pillars of well-being namely: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and achievement. While the ideal would be to maximize all of the preceding five elements of well-being, the reality is that individually and collectively, Seligman's five pillars of well-being provide a lifestyle guide for engaging the task of human flourishing. Seligman also recognized the value-added aspects of self-esteem, optimism, resilience, and self-determination as complementary additions to the notion of human flourishing. According to VanderWeele (2017), human flourishing comprises a range of important aspects of human life and not just psychological well-being alone, and as such, he proposed four pathways comprising family, work, education, and religious affiliation as offering opportunities to nurture life satisfaction and happiness, physical and mental health, meaning and purpose in life, character and virtue, and close interpersonal relationships.

The worldwide existence of human inequality and associated issues concerning health equity might well suggest that the realization of human flourishing for much of the world's population presents a fairy tale or far-fetched utopian dream. In light of the preceding perspective, the following question requires attention by scientists, health practitioners, bureaucrats, public health officials, and human rights activists who aspire to advance policy and related actions and practices to promote flourishing across the life course. *Where on the spectrum of possibility does human flourishing reside?* A thumbnail explanation of human flourishing illustrates the importance of establishing sustainable and meaningful interpersonal relationships that allow for genuine connections with others, resulting in a positive sense of belonging (Ekman & Simon-Thomas, 2021).

Any discussion on the construction of an ideal or practical blueprint for a flourishing life in older age must necessarily realize the limitations that impact both the individual and the contextual socioeconomic situation prevailing at the time. Cebral-Loureda et al. (2022) and Younkins (2008) emphasized the need to understand that the concept of human flourishing and happiness is linked to matters concerning human rights, dignity, social justice, ethics, equity, and the law, including due consideration of sociocultural influences on health and well-being. The preceding researchers also cautioned against over-emphasizing the individualistic or existential responsibility for human flourishing and well-being as this approach represents a failure to acknowledge the import of sociocultural, economic, and environmental factors. Some three decades ago, Maddox (1992) reminded us that "Well-being has social as well as personal determinants. A word of caution is required, however. Though material resources surely help, such resources alone do not ensure

well-being" (p. 62). The concept of human flourishing opens a myriad of opportunities to engage questions and issues that arise within a host of domains, including ethical, philosophical, political, psychological, medical, educational, environmental, cultural, and socio-structural. For example, Wolbert, de Ruyter, and Schinkel (2019) argued a case for more debate and discussion by educational philosophers and practitioners surrounding the kinds of theoretical approaches that may be considered in promoting human flourishing.

According to Sorrell (2017), human flourishing in later life is exhibited by those older individuals who view themselves as evolving, growing, and open to change. The preceding aspects of human flourishing align well with Hillman (1999), who argued that life in older age provides opportunities for a new way of being that involves "Unfolding, evolving, developing, improving" (p. 60). While there is no such thing as the correct way to thrive and flourish in later life, there is, however, a high degree of consensus that a sense of general health and well-being is best achieved in a community with others. In other words, personal growth requires sustained and meaningful interaction between the self and others. Any genuine attempt to advance human flourishing across all ages must recognize and act upon the challenges facing humanity relating to inequality and marginalization, with particular attention to income, housing affordability, education, and access to healthcare and health coverage (Gebremariam & Sadana, 2019; Prince, 2020). It may well be that flourishing is nurtured by the adoption of an optimistic orientation to life, which is reflected in a genuine willingness to allow for the unfolding processes of life while holding onto a sense of hopefulness along with an openness of mind and an acceptance of one's journey. Taylor (1981), in his essay *The Meaning of Life, offered* the view that for some individuals, "What counts is that one should be able to begin a new task, a new castle, a new bubble. It counts only because it is there to be done and he [*she*] has the will to do it" (p. 150). Kenyon (1991) provided a characteristic of the life journey that might well be amenable to inclusion in any realistic interpretation of human flourishing, in so far, that the quality of an individual's life journey is "informed by the positive qualities of an adventure, namely wonder, anticipation and openness, and perhaps enthusiasm even in the face of loss, suffering, and disillusionment" (p. 27).

Baars and Phillipson (2014), drawing upon the detrimental consequences of social exclusion and marginality impacting many older people, argued that more sensitivity should be forthcoming from the adoption of humanistic policies that address the existential limitations and vulnerabilities that circumscribe their life world. Likewise, Ferraro and Shippee (2009) offered a related perspective that has implications for outcomes relating to human flourishing "social systems generate inequality, which is manifested over the life course via demographic and developmental processes, and that personal trajectories are shaped by the accumulation of risks, available resources, perceived trajectories and human agency" (p. 333). The focus on human flourishing should not be confined solely to community-dwelling members of society but should also include individuals who are living in care-type environments, such as nursing homes and residential aged care facilities. There is the moral imperative whereby people living in aged care settings are provided the opportunity to thrive rather than merely survive until the end of life. More serious undertakings are required to explore ways of restructuring the life world of aged care residents with the primary goal of fostering opportunities for aging well. The potential for human flourishing in residential aged care facilities is heightened when care is provided in an operational climate that fosters kindness, respect, understanding, and compassion (Minney & Ranzijn, 2016; Rhodenizer, 2014; Seedsman & Seedsman, 2019; Seedsman, 2021). Unfortunately, all too often, adherence to rigid rules, regulations, and inflexible timetables as part of nursing home organizational structures denies aged care residents the opportunity to experience the therapeutic benefits arising from access to garden and parkland environments. Magnussen, Alteren, and Bondas (2021) reported that aged care facilities that provided opportunities for '*nature-human interactions*' through access to garden environments assisted in the creation of flourishing outcomes evidenced by older people repotting that gardens enabled them to connect with self, others, and the world of nature. Work on the value-added outcomes for older people engaging with garden environments during COVID-19 provides ample evidence for aged care settings to include the garden as a salient health resource within the overall aged care support agenda (Corley et al; 2021; Levinger et al; 2022). Policymakers and health professionals might well take notice of Weziak-Bialowolska, McNeely, and VanderWeele (2019), who asserted:

> *The measurement of human flourishing—the ability of humans to thrive – has potential to inform policy and personal reflection, to guide design of interventions and to monitor societal wellbeing. (p.11)*

2.2. Health Promoting Potential of Social Connectedness

The trajectory of individuals throughout their life course is simultaneously individual and societal, or more precisely, it is interpersonal (Kenyon, 1991). The development and aging of each person take place in a changing world with other persons. The choices that each individual makes in relation to engaging with the outside world (including

the ever-expanding digital world) determines to a large extent the overall structure of their lives, with consequential implications for health and well-being across the life course (Aung et al, 2022; Hooyman & Kiyak, 1992; International Telecommunications Union, 2021).

Seligman (2012) in his pioneering work on human flourishing offered the view that meaningful connection with other people, friends, family, and the general community provided an effective antidote to the low points of life as well as presenting opportunities to share personal achievements that occur over the life journey. Schotanus-Dijkstra et al. (2016) in a Netherlands study reported that while personality traits were a strong factor associated with understanding human flourishing, there was a need to recognize the importance of situational factors such as social support and positive life events. Douglas, Georgiou, and Westbrook (2017) in their work on social participation as an indicator of successful aging made a case for health professionals to be more assertive in targeting social participation as an effective approach for improving health and general well-being. Katz (2009), based on a cross-national study, highlighted the significance of intergenerational family relationships in supporting both cognitive and emotional aspects of subjective well-being among older adults 75 years and older. Andrews et al. (2003) reported on a 'befriending' scheme that offered the potential to combat loneliness among older people and while acknowledging the value of strong family connections to counter loneliness they also asserted that "non-family social interactions are also important for an older person's subjective sense of wellbeing and happiness" (pp. 349-350). However, Adams and Blieszner (1995) argued that having a family relationship is not necessarily an indication that an older person is aging well. Notwithstanding the preceding viewpoints, Adams and Blieszner reported that research indicates a strong connection between the quality of family interactions and the psychological well-being of older people. The point must be made, however, that while grandparenting provides many opportunities to positively connect older people with their respective family members, there can be evolving circumstances whereby the grandparenting role becomes too demanding due to downturns in general health and well-being (Danielsbacka, Křenková & Tanskanen, 2022).

Bradfield (2020), reporting on the conduct of community-based non-clinical arts programs for older people, revealed favorable outcomes in relation to engagement and social interaction. The results of an international literature review on older volunteering by Gil-Lacruz et al. (2019) revealed positive psychological benefits arising from opportunities to expand social connectedness, leading to increased social networks and an improved sense of meaning and purpose in life. Notwithstanding the research evidence surrounding the health and well-being benefits arising from opportunities for older people to engage in volunteer-type activities there nevertheless remains the need to ensure the application of quality assurance approaches to volunteer opportunities (Matthews & Nazoo, 2021). Indeed, connection is why we are here, it's what gives purpose, substance, and meaning to our existential lives. Schlossberg (1989) provided what might well be seen as the quintessential purpose relating to human connection ". . . the most important lesson is that even with our differences, we are connected by the need to matter and the need to belong." (p. 15). Matos et al. (2021), in an international study of the COVID-19 pandemic across 21 countries worldwide, reported major stress-related outcomes from respondents arising from a pervading sense of social disconnection and loneliness. Another area demanding more detailed examination in relation to aging well concerns the extent to which expatriates are able to adjust their thinking, attitudes, and behaviors as employees and ultimately following retirement in their respective host countries (Chen, 2019). The extent or otherwise of social integration and meaningful adjustment into local community life by expatriates and their families will be an important determinant for mental health and general well-being. For example, Palmberger (2017), in a study of older Turkish labor migrants and their spouses, found that positive social ties and enhanced sense of social embeddedness resulted from "active participation in one of Vienna's Turkish cultural/religious/political associations" (p. 235). An obvious policy and strategic challenge for host countries relying on migrant labor concerns the establishment and ongoing evaluation of voluntary programs and support systems to assist with the social integration and well-being of expatriates.

Lifelong learning emerges as a crucial dimension for the meaningful adjustment of older individuals to the community. Narushima, Liu, and Diestelkamp (2018) provided research evidence supporting engagement in non-formal lifelong learning by older adults as an effective means for helping to sustain their psychological well-being, along with positive improvements in their overall reserve capacities. The preceding study provides clear evidence of the value-added outcomes resulting from the provision of informal community-based learning programs that promote active aging. Hayslip (2014) in an examination of lifelong learning found that such learning produces opportunities for older learners to a) build meaningful social connections b) establish positive intergenerational relationships c) create improved attitudes within the community on the health benefits of later life learning and d) gain new skills, competencies, motivations and self-confidence. The preceding researcher also spoke of ensuring a '*person-environment fit*' with respect to an older person engaging in community-based learning programs. Schoultz, Öhman and Quennersedt (2020) called for deeper research initiatives on the connection between older adult learning and the link with positive health

outcomes in the interest of strengthening "the cumulative knowledge production about the relationship between adult learning and health" (p. 528). Machielse and Hortulanus (2014), in their research on social ability and social frailty, offered the following realistic and yet supportive commentary on balanced living in later life:

> *For future generations of older adults, a good balance between independence and connectedness is crucial: only then can they fully enjoy the freedom, and at the same time feel safe and protected in the face of limitations and adversity. (p. 135)*

2.3. Meaning and Purpose: A Primary Ingredient for Living Well

The link between having a meaningful life purpose in older age and aging well has been reported by a number of research findings (Musich et al, 2018; Pachana & Baumeister, 2021; Pinquart, 2002; Windsor, Curtis & Luszcz, 2015). The choice in later life might be for some to disengage, step back, and become at best an observer of life. On the other hand, there will be those who prefer to retain their '*self-hood*' through the role of risk taker which entails an openness and acceptance to create new meaning and purpose as part of a continuing and active engagement with life. For de Beauvoir (1977) "There is only one solution if old age is not to be an absurd parody of our former life, and that is to go on pursuing ends that give our existence a meaning" (p. 601). Wong (1989) made the point that personal meaning should be seen to be a significant component in the promotion of well-being in later life and emphasized "prolonging life without providing any meaning for existence is not the best answer to the challenge of aging" (p. 522). The maintenance or progress toward meaningful living in older age may be stymied by a pervading sense of "fatalism implicit in metaphors of deterioration, decline and disease as-aging precludes many individuals from re-establishing or maintaining adequate levels of physical, psychological and social health" (Davidson, 1991, p. 177). Even today, in modern medicine and nursing, along with a myriad of allied health professional services there still persists institutionalized elements of negative metaphorical thinking, attitudes, and practices towards aging and old age (Ben-Harush et al; 2016). While Van Winjngaaden, Leget, and Goossensen (2015) identified older people who were tired of living and who expressed a willingness to give up on life, the work of Dannefer, Lin, and Gonos (2021) revealed that "One of the now-well established principles of positive mental health is the importance of a sense of control over one's life" (p. 75). Hence, the need for the development of vigorous and sustained public health promotion programs that highlight the realities and value outcomes emanating from the adoption of healthy lifestyles and active living. Older people, like everybody else, live in a world of rapid change, and as a consequence, they require periodic bouts of re-orientation to meaning and purpose in life. While Laceulle (2014) posited the view that charting one's life course is a difficult task, she also argued "that almost all aspects of people's lives are susceptible to revision in light of new information and knowledge" (p. 97). The meaning and purpose of the life of an older individual are shaped by personal, social, and environmental factors. Hence, the need for the development of vigorous and sustained public health promotion programs that highlight the realities and value outcomes emanating from the adoption of healthy lifestyles and active living. While acknowledging the relevance of structural issues and socio-political-economic dynamics impacting the lived experiences of people across the life course, the matter of meaning of life is first and foremost uniquely existential as it arises "within us, it is not bestowed from without" (Taylor, 1981, p. 150).

In addition to socio-cultural and existential conditions, the influence of older individuals' interactions with societal institutions and other organizations should be considered in shaping the meaning and purpose of their life. For instance, the impact of working in advanced age on the meaning of an older person's life and well-being needs to be explored more deeply (Martela & Pessi, 2018). Barlin et al. (2023), in their study focusing on older individuals in the workforce, demonstrated that engaging in work in advanced age contributes to a sense of purpose in life and supports subjective well-being. Kim et al. (2021) reported research findings showing that resilient aging among people was associated with an encouraging of optimism and purpose in life. Charles and Carstensen (2010) noted that people with strong social networks, particularly those with supportive friends and family members, were inclined to report a positive sense of meaning and purpose in their lives. Flett and Heisel (2021) responded to the COVID-19 pandemic provided a valuable commentary on the relevance of '*mattering*' among older people. In other words, the preceding researchers highlighted the detrimental effects impacting older people who experience a pervading sense of not being valued or feeling that they are no longer of any significance whatsoever to other people. In particular, Flett and Heisel offered the following viewpoint "mattering deserves much more focus among psychologists than it has received thus far; knowledge of whether an older person feels like she or he matters to others is fundamental to understanding this person and how life is going and how it is likely to go in the future" (p. 2449). In a related way, the work of Rinnan et al. (2018) on the meaning of life and joy among residents in nursing homes was very much dependent upon the extent to which staff were perceived as being competent, attentive, respectful and prepared to carefully listen to their needs and concerns. Schlossberg (2009) in recognition of people now living longer reminded us that life in older age still involves the

existential challenge of finding meaning and purpose. For Schlossberg, the issue of mattering and that we count for something worthwhile is crucial for our health and well-being. Baumeister and Vohs (2002) proclaimed that the field of positive psychology offered supportive approaches for building human well-being by focusing on positive qualities of living that nurtured a solid sense of meaningfulness in life.

Gewirth (1998) articulated the notion of self-realization in a manner that assists in helping to understand how an individual comes to understand the evolving self within the context of "an unfolding of what is strongest or best in oneself, so that it represents the successful accumulation of one's aspirations or potentialities" (p. 3). Likewise, Laceulle (2018) reminds us that "each socio-cultural context also harbors a variety of forces that may impede the optimal realization of a good, meaningful life" (p. 10). Steger (2012) reported that making meaning in life is now held to be an essential ingredient in fostering human well-being by influencing key psychological domains, including the sense of self-worth, efficacy, and self-justification. It has to be accepted that some people, particularly those in later life, may choose for whatever reason(s) to disengage from authentic living due to the feeling that life has become meaningless. For Kenyon (1991), the outcome of such a choice is to "disarm before the inevitable" (p. 29). It must be said that when individuals display a lack of interest or outright indifference about issues and concerns related to meaning and purpose in life, there is every chance that they will experience some form of depression and ill-health (Dewitte & Dezutter, 2021; Frankl, 1961). Max Lerner (1990), a distinguished American author, educator, and columnist, offered an important and highly relevant viewpoint that aligns with the need to retain the capacity for meaning-making and purpose in later life:

> *Back in the late 1950s and 1960s, experts were saying that old age was a time for a man or woman to "disengage"- to mute their intensities, diminish the life-roles they had played, in short, to prepare for death. . . Who were these savants of aging to tell me when to disengage at the very moment when I felt the fire of battle, like Nelson at Trafalgar? Who were they to tell me to prepare for death, when death was exactly the adversary I had to confront and somehow outwit. (cited in Carlsen, 1991, p. 167).*

3. Conclusion

Preparation for developmental and adaptive responses to later life requires deliberate and carefully focused interventions that include education and training at selected points throughout the life course. Any societal attempt to seriously implement a strategic policy approach to foster aging well will necessarily require a sustained political will and unwavering commitment to support "developments that can enhance the possibilities for a socially supported yet flexible "age-integrated" life course" (Dannefer, Lin & Gonos, 2021). The preceding approach offers a strong alternative to the mix of historical age-differentiated institutionalized structures such as education, work, and retirement that have limited the possibilities and potential of many people living a vital life in older age. The 21st century has heralded the need for people to establish a *modus operandi* for living in a world of increasing uncertainty and unprecedented change. Harari (2018) in his text *21 Lessons for the 21st Century*, suggested that "To survive in such a world, you will need a lot of mental flexibility and great reserves of emotional balance" (p. 265). With human longevity on the increase there exists the need to address the unacceptable situation whereby far too many older people experience a pervading sense of personal irrelevancy and invisibility in their later years (Neel & Lassetter, 2019).

While individual aging represents a climax to a life lived there still remains the challenge to continue the journey with purpose and resolve to remain relevant by engaging in a continuing medley of positive thoughts, intentions, and subsequent occupations that support health and well-being (Barbaccia et al; 2022; Steptoe & Fancourt, 2019; von Humboldt et al; 2014). Britts (2016) offered a Danish perspective on living well that sits comfortably with the pursuit of aging well offered by the field *of positive psychology*: "If we make an effort to stay in love with life itself by cultivating contentment, we engender wellbeing. Our methods are unique to each of us" (p. 133).

The need to establish and maintain a sense of self-purpose and self-worthiness is fundamental to human flourishing and general well-being. It is ever so important throughout the life course, and equally so in later life (Roe et al, 2022). For Huppert and So (2013), the enhancement of flourishing in the general population will require the implementation of progressive strategic approaches based upon deeper understandings surrounding the determinants of human well-being across varying socio-cultural contexts (Höltge et al, 2022). No statement or recommended approach to aging well can be held to hold true for all of us as the aging process is a uniquely personal experience that involves periodic episodes of negotiations with self and others arising from "interruptions of plans, the unpredictabilities of health, the uncertainties brought by shifting contexts and relationships" (Carlsen, 1991, p. 190). It is the contention of the current authors that continuing multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research on flourishing, social connectedness, and a sense of meaningfulness in life offers the potential for enhancing further evidence-based findings and understandings on aging well. At the same time, aspirations for healthy aging as an individual or social goal might well be realized by the adoption of the following recommendation offered by Kuh et al. (2014) "Given the growing evidence that the

majority of older people are aging with chronic conditions, research on maximizing physiological resilience, capacity to cope and maintaining social participation should become priorities" (p. 244).

The research findings surrounding the domains of flourishing, social connectedness, and a sense of meaningfulness in life, as presented in this paper, have important implications for governments, policymakers, health practitioners, educators, key community leaders, and individuals, that aging well should be a matter of serious interest for everybody. Gilleard and Higgs (2014) rightly reminded us that aging today is entirely different to the historical portrayal of aging as a process that was fixed, homogenous, and involving physical and cognitive decline. It is now time for nations worldwide to undertake a radical rethink of the potential for aging well in the 21st century, and in so doing, develop and implement innovative policies and relevant interventions that optimize the quality of life and overall well-being of older people's lives. In closing, it must be emphasized that aging well manifests itself in ways that are uniquely personal and reflected in ways that encompass and embrace a range of dynamic lifestyle practices and activities that allow for the emergence of varying aspects of flourishing, social connectedness, and a sense of meaningfulness in life. Deeper understandings of how the preceding three domains operate interactively to promote a person's aging well journey would bring forth valuable knowledge for application across a wide range of health promotion services and activities. Aging well as a priority focus involving a life course approach, has the potential to create a range of opportunities for increasing numbers of older people to be healthier, happier, and meaningfully engaged in community life. At the same time, society stands to witness a reduction in overall economic and health care costs. If aging well is to become a prevalent goal for aging societies, then societal institutions (public and private) will need to develop and implement new policies that emphasize and promote productive community participation and sustained engagement in healthy lifestyle patterns across the life course (Mielenz, Kannoth & Xue, 2021; Visser et al, 2019; Woods et al, 2016; Giddens, 1991). Fineman (2012) emphasized that while societal institutions pervade our lives across the life course there exist urgent questions relating to their relevancy, purpose, structure, design, and commitment to fairness and justice. Riley (1992), in her vision of changes required to correct the mismatch between individual aging and access to appropriate social support systems contended "After all, the future does not just happen, it is created by human beings" (p. 24). In particular, the way forward for aging well may rest in policy initiatives and subsequent actions aimed at a reconceptualization of the life course incorporating a new moral economy in aging, as advocated by Minkler and Cole (1991):

> *A new moral economy of later life will require attention to quality of life issues in education, work productivity, and health care at each stage of the life course. . . and new arenas that bring old and young together. It will require too a vision of the whole life course, which affirms the intimate interdependence of generations. (cited in Johnston, 1995, p. 128)*

Peer-review: Externally peer-reviewed.

Author Contributions: Conception/Design of Study- T.S., N.K.Y., A.G.A.; Data Acquisition T.S., N.K.Y., A.G.A.; Data Analysis/Interpretation- T.S., N.K.Y., A.G.A.; Drafting Manuscript- T.S., N.K.Y., A.G.A.; Critical Revision of Manuscript- T.S., N.K.Y., A.G.A.; Final Approval and Accountability- T.S., N.K.Y., A.G.A.

Conflict of Interest: The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

Grant Support: The authors declared that this study has received no financial support.

ORCID :

Terence SEEDSMAN 0000-0002-6594-3742
Nilüfer KORKMAZ YAYLAGÜL 0000-0001-9918-7968
Aslı Gözde AKIŞ 0000-0003-2141-2787

REFERENCES

Adams, R. G; & Bleiszner, R. (1995). Aging well with friends and family. *American Behavioral Scientist, 39*(2), 209-224. https://doi.org/10.1177/000276429503900200

Andrews, G. J; Gavin, N; Begley, S; & Brodie, D. (2003). Assisting friendships and combating loneliness: Users' views on a 'befriending' scheme. *Ageing & Society*, 23(3), 349-362. doi: 10.1017/S014468X03001156

Andrews, G. J; Milligan, C; Phillips, D. R; & Skinner, M.W. (2009). Geographical gerontology: Mapping a disciplinary intersection. *Geography Compass*, 3(5), 1641-1659. doi:10.1111/j.1749-8198.2009.00270. x

Angus, J; & Reeve, P. (2006). Ageism: A threat to "ageing well" in the 21st century. *Journal of Applied Gerontology*, 25(2), 137-152. https://doi.org/10.1177/0733464805285745

Aung, M. N., Koyanagi, Y., Nagamine, Y., Nam, E. W., Mulati, N., Kyaw, M. Y., Moolphate, S., Shirayama, Y., Nonaka, K., Field, M., Cheung, P., & Yuasa, M. (2022). Digitally inclusive, healthy aging communities (DIHAC): A cross-cultural study in Japan, Republic of Korea, Singapore, and Thailand. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 19*(12), 6976. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19126976

Baars, J; & Phillipson, C. (2014). Connecting meaning with social structure: Theoretical foundations. In J. Baars, J. Dohmen, A. Grenier & C. Phillipson (Eds.), *Ageing, meaning and social structure: Connecting critical and humanistic gerontology*. Bristol, UK: Policy Press.

Barbaccia, V., Bravi, L., Murmura, F., Savelli, E., & Viganò, E. (2022). Mature and older adults' perception of active ageing and the need for supporting services: Insights from a qualitative study. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 19*(13), 7660. MDPI AG. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19137660

Barlin H., Korkmaz Yaylagul N. & Mercan M. A. (2023). Decision to Extend Working Life in Turkey and Its Relation to Subjective Well-being: A Qualitative Analysis from a Gender Perspective. In *Well-Being and Extended Working Life* (pp. 159-176). Routledge.

Bartlett, H. P., & Carroll, M. (2015). Connected environments for healthy aging. In M. W. Kazer, & K. Murphy (Eds.), *Nursing Case Studies on Improving Health-Related Quality of Life in Older Adults* (1st ed., pp. 213-222). New York: Springer.

Bar-Tur, L. (2021) Fostering well-being in the elderly: Translating theories on positive aging to practical approaches. *Front. Med*. 8:517226. doi: 10.3389/fmed.2021.517226

Baumeister, R. F., & Vohs, K. D. (2002). The pursuit of meaningfulness in life. In C. R. Snyder, & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology* (pp. 608-618). Oxford University Press.

Ben-Harush, A., Shiovitz-Ezra, S., Doron, I., Alon, S., Leibovitz, A., Golander, H., Haron, Y., & Ayalon, L. (2016). Ageism among physicians, nurses, and social workers: Findings from a qualitative study. *European Journal of Ageing, 14*(1), 39–48. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10433-016-0389-9

Beswick, A. D., Rees, K., Dieppe, P., Ayis, S., Gooberman-Hill, R., Horwood, J., & Ebrahim, S. (2008). Complex interventions to improve physical function and maintain independent living in elderly people: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Lancet (London, England), 371*(9614), 725–735. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(08)60342-

Blackberry, I. (2022, August 4). Rural aged-care crisis is just getting worse. *Herald Sun*, p. 23.

Bland, J. S. (2018). Age as a modifiable risk factor for chronic disease. *Integrative Medicine (Encinitas, Calif.), 17*(4), 16–19. - PMCID: PMC6469457

Bhattacharyya, K.K. (2021). Healthy Aging and Aging Well. *In: Rethinking the Aging Transition*. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-88870-1_4

Bradfield, E. (2020). Creative ageing: Participation, connection and flourishing: A mixed –methods research study exploring experiences of participatory arts engagement in later life through a systematic review of literature and focus groups with older people. *Doctoral dissertation*, College of Health and Social Care, University of Derby, UK.

Britts, L. T. (2016). *The book of hygge: The Danish art of living well*. London: Ebury Press.

Bugental, D. B; & Hehman. J. A. (2007). Ageism: A review of research and policy implications. *Social Issues and Review*, 1(1), 173-216. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-2409.2007.00007.x

Burnes, D., Sheppard, C., Henderson, C. R., Jr, Wassel, M., Cope, R., Barber, C., & Pillemer, K. (2019). Interventions to reduce ageism against older adults: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *American Journal of Public Health, 109*(8), e1–e9. https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2019.305123

Burr, J. A; Caro, F.G; & Moorhead, J. (2002). Productive aging and civic participation. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 16, 87-105.

Carlsen, M. B. (1991). *Creative Aging: A meaning-making perspective*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Cebral-Loureda, M; Tamés-Muñoz, E; & Hernández-Baqueiro; A. (2022). The fertility of a concept: A bibliographic review of human flourishing. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19,2586. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19052586

Chang, E. S., Kannoth, S., Levy, S., Wang, S. Y., Lee, J. E., & Levy, B. R. (2020). Global reach of ageism on older persons' health: A systematic review. *PloS ONE* 15(1): e0220857. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0220857

Chapman, S. A. (2005). Theorizing about aging well. Constructing a narrative. *Canadian Journal* on Aging. 24(1), 9-18. doi:10.1353/cja.2005.0004

Charles, S. T., & Carstensen, L. L. (2010). Social and emotional aging. *Annual Review of Psychology, 6*(3), 383-409. doi: 10.1146/annurev.psych.093008.100448

Chen, J; Zheng. K; Xia, W; Wang, Q; Liao, Z; & Zheng. Y. (2018). Does inside equal outside? Relations between older adults' implicit and explicit aging attitudes and self-esteem. *Front. Psychol. 9:2313*. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2018.02313

Chen, M. (2019). The impact of expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment on work stress and job involvement in the high-tech industry. *Front. Psychol*. 10:2228. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02228

Commissioner for Senior Victorians. (2020). *Ageing well in a changing world*. Melbourne: State Government of Victoria.

Corley, J; Okley, J. A; Taylor, A. M; Page, D; Welstead, M; Skarabela, B; Redmond, P; Cox, S. R; & Russ, T. C. (2021). Home gardening use during COVID-19: Associations with physical and mental wellbeing in older adults. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 73, Article 101545. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2020.101545

Crăciun, I. C. (2019). Positive aging theories and views on aging. *In: Positive aging and precarity. International Perspectives on Aging*, vol 21. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-14255-1_2

Curtis, S; & Jones, I. R. (2008). Is there a place for geography in the analysis of health inequality? *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 20(5), 645-672. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467.9566.00123

Danielsbacka, M; Křenková, L; & Tanskanen, A. O. (2022). Grandparenting, health, and well-being: A systematic literature review. *European Journal of Ageing*, 1-28. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10433-021-00674-y

Dannefer, D; Lin, J; & Gonos, G. (2021). Age-differentiated vs age-integrated: Neoliberal policy and the future of life course. *Journal of Elder Policy*, 1(2), 59-82. doi: 10.18278/jep.123

Davidson, W. (1991). Metaphors of health and aging: Geriatrics as metaphor. In G. M. Kenyon, J. E. Birren, J. E, & J. F. Schroots (Eds.), *Metaphors of aging in science and the humanities*. New York: Springer Publishing Company.

De Beauvoir, S. (1977). *Old age*. New York: Penguin Books.

Dewitte, L; & Dezutter, J. (2021). Meaning reflectivity in later life: The relationship between reflecting on meaning in life, presence and search for meaning, and depressive symptoms in older adults over the age of 75. *Front. Psychol*. 12:726150. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.726150

Diehl, M; Smeyer, M. A; & Mehrotra, C. M. (2020). Optimizing aging A call for a new narrative. *American Psychologist*, 75(4),577-589.

Douglas, H; Georgiou, A; & Westbrook, J. (2017). Social participation as an indicator of successful aging: An overview of concepts and their association with health. *Australian Health Review*. 41, 455-462. http://dx.doi.org/10.1071/AH16038

Ekman, E; & Simon-Thomas, E. (2021). Teaching the science of human flourishing, unlocking connection, positivity, and resilience for the greater good. *Global Advances in Health and Medicine*, 10, 1-11. doi: 10.1177/21649561211023097

Fernández-Ballesteros, R; Garcia, L; Abarca, D; Blanc, E; Efklides, A; Moraitou, D; Kornfeld, A;. . . Orosa, T. (2010). The concept of 'ageing well' in ten Latin American and European countries. *Ageing and Society*. 30. 41 - 56. 10.1017/S0144686X09008587.

Ferraro, K. F., & Shippee, T. P. (2009). Aging and cumulative inequality: How does inequality get under the skin? *The Gerontologist, 49*(3), 333–343. https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gnp034

Fineman, M. A. (2012). Elderly as vulnerable: Rethinking the nature of individual and social responsibility. *Emory Legal Studies Research Paper No: 12-224*, Volume 20. Emory University School of Law, Atlanta, Georgia, United States. Available at: SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=2088159

Flett, G. L; & Heisel, M. J. (2021). Aging and feeling valued versus expendable during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond A review and commentary of why mattering is fundamental to the health and well-being of older adults. *International Journal of Mental health and Addiction*, 19, 2443-2469. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-020-00339-4

Foster, L; & Walker, A. (2015). Active and successful aging: A European policy perspective. *The Gerontologist*, 55(1), 83-90. doi:10.1093/geront/gnu028

Foster, L., & Walker, A. (2021). Active ageing across the life course: Towards a comprehensive approach to prevention. *BioMedR Research International, 2021*, 6650414. https://doi.org/10.1155/2021/6650414

Frankl. V. (1961). *Man's search for meaning*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Gebremariam, K. M., Sadana, R. (2019). On the ethics of healthy ageing: Setting impermissible trade-offs relating to the health and well-being of older adults on the path to universal health coverage. *Int J Equity Health* 18, 140. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12939-019-0997-z

Gewirth, A. (1998). *Self-fulfillment*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University.

Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and Self-Identity*, Polity Press, Cambridge

Gil-Lacruz, M; Saz-Gil, M. I; & Gil-Lacruz, A. I. (2019). Benefits of older volunteering on wellbeing: An international comparison. *Front. Psychol. 10:2647*. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02647

Gilleard, C; & Higgs, P. (2014). *Cultures of ageing: Self, citizen and body*. New York: Routledge.

Gilroy, R. (2008) Places that support human flourishing: Lessons from later life. *Planning Theory & Practice*, 9(2), 145-163. doi: 10.1080/14649350802041548

Goetzel, R.Z; Reynolds, K; Breslow, L; Roper, W. L; Shechter, D; Stapelton, D. C; lapin, P. J; & McInnis, J. M. (2007). Health promotion in later life: It's never too late. *American Journal of Health Promotion*, 21(4), 1-8. doi; 10.4278/0890-1171-21.4.TAHP-1

Halaweh, H., Dahlin-Ivanoff, S., Svantesson, U., & Willén, C. (2018). Perspectives of Older Adults on Aging Well: A Focus Group Study. *Journal of aging research, 2018*, 9858252. https://doi.org/10.1155/2018/9858252

Harari, Y. N. (2018). *21 Lessons for the 21st century*. London: Jonathan Cape.

Hawkins B. A. (2005). Aging well: Toward a way of life for all people. *Preventing Chronic Disease, 2*(3), 1-3.

Hayslip, B. (2014). Lifelong learning: A dyadic ecological perspective. *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships*, 12(4), 368-380. doi: 10.1080/15350770.2014.961826

Hemberg, J.A., Forsman, A.K., & Nordmyr, J. (2017). One day at a time: being in the present experienced as optimal health by older adults; the existential health dimension as a health-promoting potential. *Nursing and Palliative Care*, 292), 1-7. doi: 10.15761/NPC.1000148

Higo, M., & Khan, H. T. (2015). Global population aging: Unequal distribution of risks in later life between developed and developing countries. *Global Social Policy, 15*(2), 146–166. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468018114543157

Hillman, J. (1999). *The force of character: And the lasting life*. New York: Ballantine Books.

Höltge, J; Cowden, R. G; Lee, M. T; Bechara, A. O; S. Joynt, S; Kamble, S; . . . VanderWeele, T. J. (2022). A systems perspective on human flourishing: Exploring crosscountry similarities and differences of a multisystemic flourishing network, *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, https://doi.org/ 10.1080/17439760.2022.2093784

Hooyman, N. R; & Kiyak, H. A. (1992). *Social gerontology: A multidisciplinary Perspective* (3rd ed.). London: Allyn and Bacon.

Howell, B. M., & Peterson, J. R. (2020). "With age comes wisdom": A qualitative review of elder perspectives on healthy aging in the Circumpolar North. *Journal of cross-cultural gerontology, 35*(2), 113-131. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10823-020-09399-4

Høy, B; Wagner, L; & Hall, E. O. C. (2007). Self-care as a health resource; An integrated review of the concept. 21, 456-466. doi: 10.1111/j.1471-6712.2006.00491. x

Huppert, F. A., & So, T. T. C. (2013). Flourishing across Europe: Application of a new conceptual framework for defining well-being. *Soc. Indic.*

Res. 110, 837–861. doi: 10.1007/s11205-011-9966-7

Huta, V; & Waterman, A. S. (2014). Eudaimonia and its distinction from hedonia: Developing a classification and terminology for understanding conceptual and operational definitions. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 15(6), 1425-1456.

International Telecommunications Union (ITU). (2021). *Ageing in a digital world: from vulnerable to valuable*. Development Centre, Geneva: International Telecommunications Union.

Johnson, T. F. (1995). Aging well in contemporary society. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 39(2), 120-130.

Katz R. (2009). Intergenerational family relations and subjective well-being in old age: A cross-national study. *European Journal of Ageing, 6*(2), 79–90. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10433-009-0113-0

Kenyon, G. M. (1991). Homo viator: Metaphors of aging, authenticity, and meaning. In G. M. Kenyon, J. E. Birren, J. E., & J. F. Schroots (Eds.), *Metaphors of aging in science and the humanities*. New York: Springer Publishing Company.

Kim, E. S; Tkatch, R; & Martin, D. (2021). Resilient aging: Psychological well-being and social well-being as targets for the promotion of healthy aging. ö*Gerontology and Geriatric Medicine*, 7, 1-12. https:/doi.org/10.1177/23337214211002957

Korkmaz Yaylagul, N., Seedsman, T. (2012). Ageing: The Common denominator. *Population Ageing*, 5(4), 257-279. doi: 10.1007/s12062-012-9072-x

Kuh, D; Karunananthan, S; Bergman, H; & Cooper, R. (2014). A life-course approach to healthy ageing: Maintaining physical capability. *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society*, 73(2), 237-248. doi: 10.10.1017/S0029665113003923

Laceulle, H. (2014). Self-realization and ageing: A spiritual perspective. In J. Baars, J. Dohmen, A. Grenier & C. Phillipson (Eds.), *Ageing, meaning and social structure: Connecting critical and humanistic* gerontology. Bristol, UK: Policy Press.

Laceulle, H. (2018). *Aging and self-realization. Cultural narratives about later life*. Bielefeld, Germany: Transcript Verlag.

Lerner, M. (1990). *Wrestling with an angel: A memoir of my triumph over illness*. New York: Norton.

Levin-Zamir, D; Leung, A.Y.M; Dodson, S; & Rowlands, G. (2017). Health literacy innselected populations: Individuals, families and communities from the international and cultural perspective. *Information Services & Use*, 37, 131-151. doi: 10.3233/ISU-170834

Levinger, P., Cerin, E., Milner, C., & Hill, K. D. (2022). Older people and nature: The benefits of outdoors, parks and nature in light of COVID-19 and beyond– where to from here? *International Journal of Environmental Health Research, 32*(6), 1329-1336. https://doi.org/10.1080/09603123.2021.1879739

Levy, B.R; Slade, M. D; Chang, E-S; Kannoth, S; & Wang, S-Y. (2020). Ageism amplifies cost and prevalence of health conditions. *The Gerontologist*, 60(1), 174-181. https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gny131

Lin, V; Sindall, C; Williams, C; & Capon, T. (2022). Launching a global movement for societal wellbeing. *Public Health Research & Practice*, 32(2), e3222209. https://doi.org/10.17061/phrp3222209

Machielse, A; & Hortulanus, R. (2014). Social ability or social frailty? The balance between autonomy and connectedness in the lives of older people. In J. Baars, J. Dohmen, A. Grenier & C. Phillipson (Eds.), *Ageing, meaning and social structure: Connecting critical and humanistic* gerontology. Bristol, UK: Policy Press.

Maddox, G. L. (1992). Aging and well-being. In N. E. Cutler, D. W. Gregg, M. P. Lawton (Eds.). *Aging, money, and life satisfaction; Aspects of financial gerontology*. New York: Springer Publishing Company.

Magnussen, I.-L., Alteren, J., & Bondas, T. (2021). "Human flourishing with dignity": A meta-ethnography of the meaning of gardens for elderly in nursing homes and residential care ettings. *Global Qualitative Nursing Research*. https://doi.org/10.1177/23333936211035743

Manchana, V. (2021). Interrelationships of physical activity, loneliness and social support among older adults: Health and wellbeing in later life. *Academia Letters*, Article 3478. https://doi.org/10.20935/AL3478.

Martela, F., & Pessi, A. B. (2018). Significant work Is about self-realization and broader purpose: Defining the key dimensions of meaningful work. *Frontiers in Psychology, 9*, 363. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.00363

Matos M, McEwan K, Kanovský M, Halamová J, Steindl SR, Ferreira N, et al. (2021) The role of social connection on the experience of COVID-19 related post-traumatic growth and stress. *PLoS ONE* 16(12): e0261384. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0261384

Matthews, K; & Nazoo, J. (2021). The impact of volunteering and its characteristics on well-being after state pension age: Longitudinal evidence from the English longitudinal study of ageing, Journals of Gerontology Series B Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences, 76(3), 632–641. https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gbaa146

McConnell, A; & Hart, P. T. (2019). Inaction and public policy: Understanding why policy makers 'do nothing'. *Policy Sciences*, 52, 645–661. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11077-019-09362-2

McLaughlin, S. J., Connell, C. M., Heeringa, S. G., Li, L. W., & Roberts, J. S. (2010). Successful aging in the United States: Prevalence estimates from a national sample of older adults. *Journals of Gerontology Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences, 65*(2), 216-226. https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gbp101

Michel, J. P; Dreux, C; & Vacheron, A. (2016). Healthy ageing: Evidence that improvement is possible at any age. *European Geriatric Medicine*, 7(4), 298-305. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eurger.2016.04.014

Mielenz, T. J; Kannoth, S; & Xue, Q-L. (2021). Patterns of self-care behaviors and their influence on maintaining independence: The national health and aging trends study. *Front. Aging* 2:770476. doi: 10.3389/fragi.2021.770476

Minkler, M; & Cole, T. R. (1991). Political and moral economy: Not such strange bedfellows. In M. Minkler & T. R. Estes (Eds.). *Critical perspectives on aging; The political and moral economy of growing old*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Minkler, M. (1999). Personal responsibility for health? A review of the arguments and the evidence at century's end. *Health Education & Behavior, 26(10. 121-140*. https://doi.10.org/1177/109019819902600110

Minney, M. J; Ranzijn, R. (2016). "We had a beautiful home . . . but I think I'm happier here": A good or better life in residential aged care, *The*

Gerontologist, 56(5), 919–927, https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gnu169

Moulaert, T; & Biggs, S. (2012). Internationalnand European policy on work and retirement: Reinventing critical perspective on active and mature subjectivity. *Human Relations*, 64(1), 23-43. doi:10.1177/0018726711435180

Musich, S., Wang, S. S., Kraemer, S., Hawkins, K., & Wicker, E. (2018). Purpose in Life and Positive Health Outcomes Among Older Adults. *Population health management, 21*(2), 139–147. https://doi.org/10.1089/pop.2017.0063

Narushima, M; Liu, J; & Diestelkamp, N. (2018). Lifelong learning in active ageing discourse: Its conserving effect on wellbeing, health and vulnerability. *Ageing and Society*, 38(4). 651-677. doi:10.1017/S0144686X16001136

Neel, R; & Lassetter, B. (2019). The stigma of perceived irrelevance: An affordance-management theory of interpersonal invisibility. *Psychological Review*, 126(5), 634-659. https://doi.org/10.1037/rev0000143

Pachana, N. A; & Baumeister, R. F. (2021) Better later than never: Meaning in late life. *Front. Psychol*. 12:693116. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.693116

Palmberger, M. (2017). Social ties and embeddedness in old age: Older Turkish labour migrants in Vienna, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 43(2), 235-249, doi: 10.1080/1369183X.2016.1238907

Pinquart, M. (2002). Creating and maintaining purpose in life in old age: A meta-analysis. *Ageing international, 27*(2), 90-114.

Prince, R. J. (2020, April 20th). Utopian aspirations in a dystopian world: 'Health for all' and the universal health coverage agenda. *Somatosphere*, Retrieved from http://somatosphere.net/2020/universal-health-coverage.html/

Rhodenizer, M. (2014). *Flourishing in later life: A positive psychology training for care workers*. Master of Education (Counselling Psychology), University of Lethbridge, Alberta-Canada.

Riley, M. W. (1992) Aging in the twenty –first century In N. E. Cutler, D. W. Gregg, & M. P. Lawton (Eds.). *Aging, money, and life satisfaction: Aspects of financial gerontology*. New York: Springer Publishing Company.

Rinnan, E; Andre, B; Drageset, J; Garasen, H; Espnes, G. A; & Haugan, G. (2018). Joy of life in nursing homes: A qualitative study of what constitutes the essence of joy of life in elderly individuals living in Norwegian nursing homes. *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences*, 32(4), 1468-1476. https://doi.org/10.1111/scs.12598

Roberts, Y. (2012). *One hundred not out: Resilience and active aging*. London: Young Foundation.

Roe, J; Blythe, M; Oliver, C; & Roe, A. (2022). Flourishing 'older-old (80+) adults: Personal projects and their enabling places. *Wellbeing, Space and Society*, 3(1), 1-11. https:/doi.org/10.1016/j.wss.2022.100072

Sander, M., Oxlund, B., Jespersen, A., Krasnik, A., Mortensen, E. L., Westendorp, R. G., & Rasmussen, L. J. (2015). The challenges of human population ageing. *Age and Ageing, 44*(2), 185–187. https://doi.org/10.1093/ageing/afu189

Schlossberg, N. K. (1989). Marginality and mattering: Key issues in building community. *New Directions for Student Services, 48*, 5–15. https://doi.org/10.1002/ss.37119894803

Schlossberg, N. K. (2009). *Revitalizing retirement: reshaping your identity, relationships, and purpose*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Schotanus-Dijkstra, M., Pieterse, M. E., Drossaert, C. H. C., Westerhof, G. J., de Graaf, R., ten Have, M., Walburg, J. A., & Bohlmeijer, E. T. (2016). What factors are associated with flourishing? Results from a large representative national sample. *Journal of Happiness Studies: An Interdisciplinary Forum on Subjective Well-Being, 17*(4), 1351-1370. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-015-9647-3

Schoultz, M; Öhman, J; & Quennerstedt, M. (2020): A review of research on the relationship between learning and health for older adults. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*. https://doi.org/10.1080/02601370.2020.1819905

Seedsman, T. A. (1994) *Ageing is negotiable: A prospectus for living in the third age*. St Kilda, Melbourne: Employ Working Effectively Publications Inc.

Seedsman, T., & Seedsman, B. (2019). 'Leaving-but not yet: A rejection of the perception 'God's waiting room in favour of humanistic residential aged care. *International Journal of Studies in Nursing*, 4(3), 94-104. https://doi.org/10.20849/ijsn.v4i3.625

Seedsman, T. (2021). Mitigating the existential suffering of older people transitioning through loss and grief: Understanding the liberating influence of compassionate care. *Journal of Aging and Long-Term Care*, 4(2), 19-30. doi: 10.51819/jaltc.2021.1063924

Seligman, M. (2012). *Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being*. Sydney: William Heinemann

Seligman, M. E. (2021). Foreword. In L. Tay & J. O. Pawelski (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of the positive humanities*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Sorrell, J. M. (2017). Promoting human flourishing in aging. *Journal of Psychosocial and Mental Health Services*, 55(10), 27-30. https://doi.org/10.3928/02793659-20170919-03

Steger, M. F. (2012). Making meaning in life. *Psychological Inquiry*, 23, 381-385. doi. 10.1080/1047840X.2012.720832

Steptoe, A; & Fancourt, D. (2019). Leading a meaningful life at older ages and its relationship with social engagement, prosperity, health, biology, and time use. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Social Sciences*, 116(4), 1207-1212. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1814723116

Taylor, R. (1981). The meaning of life. In E. D. Klemke (Ed.), *The meaning of life*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Torres, S. (1999). A culturally-relevant theoretical framework for the study of successful aging. *Ageing & Society*, 19(1), 33-51. doi; 10.1017/S0144686X99007242

Tosato, M., Zamboni, V., Ferrini, A., & Cesari, M. (2007). The aging process and potential interventions to extend life expectancy. *Clinical Interventions in Aging, 2*(3), 401–412.-PMCID: PMC2685272

Younkins, E. W. (2008). Toward the development of a paradigm of human flourishing in a free society. *The Journal of Ayn Rand Studies, 9*(2), 253–304. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41560362

Valiant, G. (2007). Aging well. *American Journal of Geriatric Psych*, 15, 181-183. 10.1097/JCP.0b013e3180319e0

VanderWeele, T. J. (2017). On the promotion of human flourishing. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (PNAS), 114(31), 8148-8156. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1702996114

von Humboldt, S., Leal, I., & Pimenta, F. (2014). What predicts older adults' adjustment to aging in later life? The impact of sense of coherence, subjective well-being and socio-demographic, lifestyle and health-related factors. *Educational Gerontology, 40*(9), 641–654. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03601277.2013.860757.

Visser, M; Wijnhoven, H; Comijs, H; Thomése, F; Twisk, J; & Deeg, D. (2019). A healthy lifestyle in old age and prospective change in four dimensions of functioning. *Journal of Aging and Health*, 3(7), 1297-1314. doi: 10.1177/0898264318774430

Wahl. H-W; Iwarsson, S; & Oswald, F. (2012). Aging well and the environment: Toward an integrative model and research agenda for the future. *The Gerontologist*, 52(3), 306-316. https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gnr154

Weiss, D. (2018). On the inevitability of aging: Essentialist beliefs moderate the impact of negative age stereotypes on older adults' memory performance and physiological reactivity. *J Gerontol B Psychol Sci Soc Sci*, 73(6), 925-933. doi: 10.1093/geronb/gbw087

Weziak-Bialowolska, D; McNeely, E; & VanderWeele, T. J. (2019). Human flourishing in cross-cultural settings, evidence from the United States, China, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, and Mexico. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10, Article 1269. doi.10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01269

Windsor, T. D., Curtis, R. G., & Luszcz, M. A. (2015). Sense of purpose as a psychological resource for aging well. *Developmental Psychology, 51*(7), 975–986. https://doi.org/10.1037/dev0000023

Wolbert, L. S., de Ruyter, D. J., & Schinkel, A. (2019). Child rearing, risk, and striving for human flourishing. Educational Theory, 68(4–5), 529–545.

Wong, P. T. P. (1989). Personal meaning and successful aging. *Canadian Psychology*, 30(3), 516-525. doi: 10.1037/h0079829

Woods, N. F; Rillamas-Sun, E; Cochrane, B. B; La Croix, A. Z; Seeman, T. E; Tindle, H. A; Zaslavsky, O; Bird, C. E; Johnson, K. C; Manson, J. E; Ockene, J. K; Seguin, R. A; Wallace, R. B. (2016). Aging well: Observations from the women's health initiative study. *J Gerontol a Biol Sci Med Sci*, 71 (Suppl 1), S3-S12. doi:10.1093/gerona/glv054

World health Organization (2002). *Active ageing: A policy framework*. Geneva: World Health Organization.

How cite this article

Seedsman, T., Korkmaz Yaylagül, N., & Akış, A.G. (2024). Aging well and the intersection of flourishing, connectedness, and sense of meaningfulness in a changing world: implications for personal and societal responsibility. *Journal of Economy Culture and Society, 70*, 227-241. 10.26650/JECS2024-1466636