

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO...



Intrinsic Coach Rudy Rodriguez explains the importance of learning something new, and area experts answer our questions about their activity to prove you can still tackle it, no matter your age or skill level.

Have you ever arrived at a point in your life where you're feeling unhappy, bored or are simply looking for something new? When life isn't as fulfilling as it used to be? When work is no longer your primary focus? Or, when your children have grown and you have more free time and independence? For many people, these are examples of naturally occurring circumstances of the life cycle.

These circumstances may arise as we grow older or face changing values about life, work and relationships. The good news is that we're always given an opportunity to choose *how* we want to experience these times in our lives. It's helpful to not look at your circumstances as bad or good—they just are what they are.

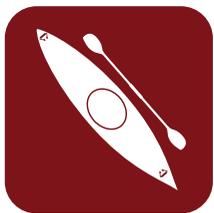
Looking at changing times in your life with acceptance is where the adventure truly begins. These circumstances can guide you to points of decision and new choices that can be exciting and open up abundant opportunities. It's helpful to remember that it's never too late and you're never too old to create something new or different in your life.

There's a great deal written about the value of learning. A Google search will turn up a plethora of articles on the importance of keeping your brain sharp by learning and trying new things. Additionally, change can provide stimulation (mentally, emotionally and spiritually) as well as bring joy and pleasure into your life. Maybe you'll add a new activity that provides privacy, solace and fun. Maybe you'll select an activity that provides you with a feeling of accomplishment and tangible outcomes. Or, it may be an activity that allows you to become a part of a community where you share your interest and activity with others.

Whatever your circumstances, allow yourself to embrace life with an adventurous spirit and step out of the box of what is already familiar. Just go for it!

Rudy Rodriguez is a licensed clinical social worker and certified Intrinsic Coach™. He counsels children, adolescents and adults and is the founder of the ADHD Center for Success. He can be reached at coachrudy@adhdcenterforsuccess.com or 828-301-1904.

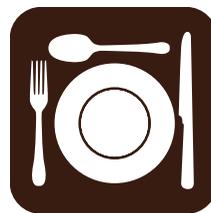
WE ASKED FOUR EXPERTS FIVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THEIR HOBBY OR CAREER (AND YES, WE ASKED THEM TO REBUT ANY REASON YOU MIGHT COME UP WITH NOT TO GIVE IT A TRY!) TO HELP YOU SEE THAT IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO...



...LEARN TO KAYAK, WITH ANNA LEVESQUE, a world-class whitewater kayaker who has a passion for inspiring and teaching women and for providing a holistic paddling experience. She teaches paddling workshops out of the Nantahala Outdoor Center in Bryson City, NC, and in Veracruz, Mexico. For more information, visit www.watergirlsatplay.com.



...CREATE FROM WOOD, WITH JIM SUGRUE, who has been in woodworking for 60 years as a master cabinetmaker and teacher. He currently shares his knowledge and "tricks of the trade" for the City of Asheville Parks and Recreation Department; their woodshop is located in the Harvest House Community Center. For more information, contact Jim at 828-350-2051 or woodworkteacher1@aol.com.



...COOK AND EAT DIFFERENTLY, WITH BRENDA COBB, founder of the Living Foods Institute in Atlanta, where she has taught thousands of people from all over the world how to heal disease and achieve health with raw and living foods. She is the author of *The Living Foods Lifestyle*® and *101 Raw and Living Foods Recipes*, and she can be reached at www.livingfoodsinstitute.com, 404-524-4488 or 800-844-9876.



...LEARN TEXTILE ARTS, WITH BARBARA ZARETSKY, a fiber artist and director of Cloth Fiber Workshop located in Asheville, NC (www.clothfiberworkshop.com). She also operates BZDesign, a textile design and manufacturing company; she can be reached at barbara@clothfiberworkshop.com.

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I HAVEN'T TRIED BECAUSE...

 The most common concerns I hear from people, especially women, as to why they're tentative about kayaking is that they're too old, not strong enough, or that it's too dangerous. But, kayaking is all about finesse; you don't need to be strong to kayak. Strength and fitness do make it easier, but you'll build those qualities the more you get out on the water. With whitewater, it's all about learning to read the water and to use the flow to help you get where you want to be.

And, people are often afraid of kayaking because they feel there's no way to be in control on the water. This simply isn't true. There's a very nice progression for learning how to read whitewater, and if you don't leap way out of your comfort zone too soon you'll find that you have a lot of control moving with the water. Investing in good instruction with a reputable instructor is the best way to progress comfortably. Once you have a better understanding of the water, it's a lot less intimidating.

 People are often afraid of getting hurt on the machinery or don't think they have what it takes for all of the detail parts of woodworking. Or, they think they'll get discouraged and quit.

 Many people stay out of the kitchen because it seems like too much work or feel it's easier to just go out to eat or heat something up in the microwave.

 I hear worries like "I'm not creative," or "I've never done anything like this before."

I SHOULD TRY BECAUSE...

 The great thing about kayaking is that you can choose the type of experience you want to have. You may decide that peaceful flatwater and easy-going current is what you enjoy most. If you get into whitewater, you may choose to stay on easier rivers or you can choose to paddle harder whitewater. The ocean may be where you feel the most comfortable.

 Woodworking is fun and creative, and it gives you a sense of pride to make something beautiful with your own hands. And why not try it? You won't know the joy of being creative unless you give it a shot!

 Preparing raw and living foods is a great way to overcome your fears. Raw and living foods are easy to prepare because no cooking is required. And, you don't have to worry about burning your dinner because you never have to turn on the stove! You can start with a quick and easy soup or salad dressing mixed in a blender for two or three minutes to create a delicious treat without the heat. There are many recipe books with easy-to-follow instructions for even the most novice person in the kitchen. Try one new dish at a time. Once you see how easy it is, you'll be motivated to try another new creation.

 Everyone is creative—from the way you arrange your living room or plan your garden or meal to your choice in what to wear. Even though we don't think about it, choosing colors and textures are things we do everyday. So, tap into your natural creativity! Functional textiles can enhance our lives in subtle, yet powerful ways—from expressing who we are to communicating emotion.

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THE PHYSICAL BENEFITS ARE...

 Even though kayaking doesn't require a lot of strength, it does help to build strength, especially in the core and upper body. The lower body benefits from walking around with and loading your kayak! Paddling helps with balance, too, and most importantly, kayaking will keep you outside and active.

 Working with wood helps you with dexterity.

 Preparing food is good exercise for your hands and arms. It improves dexterity and gives you the opportunity to experiment with chopping, mincing, grating and blending. The more you do it, the more comfortable you can become with it. And, raw and living foods can contribute to your overall health and well-being.

 Using your hands is beneficial as we age, to help prevent joint stiffness, and is necessary in creating with textiles.

PADDLING BUILDS CONFIDENCE AND TEACHES CONSTRUCTIVE WAYS TO FACE CHALLENGES.

-ANNA LEVESQUE

THE MENTAL BENEFITS ARE...

 The mental benefits of kayaking, especially whitewater kayaking, are life-changing. Paddling builds confidence and teaches constructive ways to face challenges, to make good decisions, to work through fear and to let go of old habits that are self-limiting. Whitewater paddling is a moving meditation that keeps your focus on where you want to go and what you need to do to get there. It's a beautiful dance with the water in which the paddler's power and the power of the water work together to create a fun, focused and effortless experience.

 The mental benefits of woodworking are many. You need to be clear about following instructions, measuring correctly, cutting and assembling. And, working through the detailed process can help you conquer any fear you might have about using new machinery. Not to mention the enjoyment you get from seeing your finished product.

 Reading and following recipe directions can keep your mind sharp. As with any type of foods and cooking, you have to pay attention to what you're doing and be sure that you're using the right ingredients and the right measurements. Your reading and comprehension skills will be ramped up, and best of all you'll get a real reward when you finish the recipe—you'll get to eat foods that taste good and are good for you!

 Participating in the textile arts can help you conquer your fear of not being creative enough, as well as exercise your mind and test your imagination.

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THE SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL BENEFITS ARE...

 The social aspect of kayaking is another benefit, and one of the main reasons I love the sport so much. The paddling community is filled people who love to be outside, and kayaking provides the opportunity for travel, another benefit. You can see places from your kayak that few people get to see.

 Being in a shop and interacting with others who are doing similar projects helps you to have a feeling of self-worth. Learning something new and the different methods of working with wood can give you a sense of accomplishment and reward. As a teacher, I've seen many men and women pick up woodworking quickly and go on to make large and small projects and enjoy it very much, for themselves and together with the group.

 You might enjoy taking some raw food preparation classes so you can get in the kitchen with an instructor and other like-minded people who want to learn how to prepare raw food recipes, too. You could create an entire meal with each of your fellow classmates and then have a luncheon or dinner party with your new creations. You'll have a great sense of accomplishment when you taste your delicious recipes and gain companions to enjoy them with. When you've done it once, you'll have boosted your confidence and satisfied your taste buds to boot.

 The satisfaction of finishing a project, taking classes and sharing ideas with others, joining guilds and associations, and creating group projects that support causes is great.

In a recent class, I had a student that had never done anything with textiles before. He just decided that he wanted to make a scarf for his girlfriend. He came to the class, learned how to carve designs into a block, and proceeded to print a lovely scarf. He was so thrilled, that he was inspiring—to others and me! People in classes make great connections and often exchange contact information.