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Signature Wellness

DR. ARNOLD'S OFFICE

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THE SIGNATURE WELLNESS WEEKLY · SPECIAL THANKSGIVING EDITION

The One Thing We Can *Never Get Back*

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A PERSONAL MESSAGE

> **A Thanksgiving reflection on family, health, and the gift of time**
> A personal message from Dr. George Arnold

Thanksgiving is a time when we traditionally pause to reflect on the things we are grateful for. Our families. Our friends. Our health. The opportunities we have been given.

But this Thanksgiving, I find myself thinking about something a little different. Not simply being thankful for the people in our lives, but remembering to make time for them while they are still here.

A PERSONAL REFLECTION

This past week, an aunt of mine passed away at the age of 97. Her passing brought back memories of losing my own mother almost five years ago and my father almost eleven years ago.

I had the honour and privilege of welcoming both my father, and later my mother, into our family home to care for them during their final time on earth. Looking back, those were incredibly meaningful experiences. They weren't always easy. Caring for someone as they approach the end of life comes with emotional and physical challenges. But I wouldn't trade that time for anything.

It was time together that I can never get back, and time that I am profoundly grateful we shared.

As we move through life, something happens almost without us noticing. The generation ahead of us begins to disappear. Our parents. Our aunts and uncles. The people who were always there, who seemed as though they would always be there. And then one day, they aren't.

We become the older generation. And eventually, it will be our turn.

> ***That isn't meant to be a depressing thought. Quite the opposite. It is a reminder of just how precious the time we have really is.***

SOMETHING A PATIENT REMINDED ME

During a visit this past week, one of my patients spoke about losing her partner almost ten years ago. As we talked, she reminded me of something we all know but sometimes forget.

We never really know how much time we have left with the people we love.

It is so easy to become distracted. Work demands our attention. Businesses need to be run. There are bills to pay, appointments to attend, responsibilities to manage, and an endless list of things that need to get done.

We tell ourselves we'll visit next weekend. We'll make that phone call tomorrow. We'll take that trip together next year. There will always be another opportunity. Until there isn't.

And when someone we love is gone, it is rarely the unfinished work or the unanswered emails that we wish we had spent more time on. It is the conversations we didn't have. The visits we postponed. The ordinary moments together that, in retrospect, were anything but ordinary.

> ***"Sometimes the most valuable gift we can give someone isn't something we buy. It is our time."***

BEING HERE IS ONLY PART OF THE STORY

There is another side to this reflection, and it brings me back to something I spend much of my professional life thinking about. Our health.

We cannot control how long we will live. None of us has that guarantee. But we can influence how well we live during the years we have. I often remind patients that there is a difference between simply getting older and maintaining the ability to enjoy getting older.

What those additional years can look like

Being able to travel. To play with grandchildren. To remain physically active. To maintain our independence. To continue enjoying intimacy and relationships. To have the energy and mental clarity to participate fully in our own lives.

These are not small things. They are what make those additional years meaningful.

And this is why I believe so strongly in being proactive about our health rather than simply waiting for something to go wrong.

SUPPORTING OUR BODIES THROUGH LIFE'S CHALLENGES

Another patient I saw recently had just lost her mother, who was approaching her 97th birthday. During our conversation, she told me how grateful she was to have her hormone medications during such an emotionally stressful time. That comment stayed with me.

Hormone optimization cannot remove grief. It cannot prevent difficult experiences or make life's challenges disappear. But for people experiencing hormone-related symptoms, appropriate treatment can improve sleep, energy, mood-related symptoms, and physical well-being. And when life becomes especially demanding, having those aspects of our health better managed can make a meaningful difference in how we feel and function.

The same broader principle applies to weight optimization. Maintaining muscle, improving metabolic health, reducing excess body fat where appropriate, and preserving strength and mobility are not simply about appearance or a number on a scale. They are about supporting our ability to remain active, independent, and engaged in life.

Hormone treatment is not necessary or appropriate for everyone, and neither hormone nor weight optimization can promise a longer life. But improving our health today can help us make better use of the time we have.

> ***"That, to me, is the real purpose of preventive and personalized healthcare. Not chasing a particular age. Not trying to turn back the clock. But helping people feel and function as well as possible through the different stages of their lives."***

A DIFFERENT KIND OF THANKSGIVING REMINDER

This Thanksgiving, I would encourage you to think about two things.

First, the people who matter most in your life.

- If your parents are still with you, make time for them.
- If there is someone you haven't spoken to in a while, pick up the phone.
- If you've been meaning to visit someone, don't keep postponing it.
- And if you're fortunate enough to have family or friends gathered around your Thanksgiving table, take a moment to appreciate just how special that really is.

Second, think about your own health.

- Are you doing what you can to protect it?
- Are you giving yourself the opportunity to remain healthy, active, and independent in the years ahead?
- Are there symptoms or health concerns you have been putting off addressing because life has simply become too busy?

Taking care of yourself isn't selfish. It is one of the ways you give yourself the best opportunity to continue being there for the people you love.

ONE FINAL THOUGHT

As I reflect on my parents, my aunt, and the conversations I've had with patients this past week, I am reminded that life is not measured simply by the number of years we accumulate. It is measured, in so many ways, by what we do with those years and the people with whom we share them.

I am grateful for the time I had with my parents. I am grateful for the patients who continue to share not only their health concerns with me, but also their lives, their experiences, and their wisdom. And I am grateful for the opportunity to continue helping people make the most of the years ahead.

THIS THANKSGIVING

Be thankful for the people you have. Make time for them. And remember to take care of yourself, too.

Because time is the one thing none of us can replace.

Wishing you and your loved ones a peaceful, healthy, and meaningful Thanksgiving.

"*Don't wait for a special occasion to spend time with someone you love. The time you spend together is what makes the occasion special.*"

Dr. George Arnold

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