

Interview with a senior citizen

Sociology, Communication



I am interviewing my 72-year-old cousin; she is a mother of 4 children, 3Boys, and 1 Girl. She is still married her husband of 55 years is semi-retired from thefamilybusiness. They both still live in the same house that they raised their 4 kids in. 1. What physical activity were you doing in the past and now in the present? When I was younger I ran the kids everywhere. To school, and school functions, such as sports, clubs, dances, play dates. I went shopping with my sister and mother, with the family or just the kids. I was involved in clubs with my girlfriends such as card games, tennis.

I played the piano, did yard work, worked in my garden, laundry. My husband and I went out to dinner, spent time with friends. I also worked in the family business when I could and more so when the kids could work there too or at least help. Now I work at the business 3 times a week, meet cousins for lunch once a month, meet friends for lunch a couple times a week. Still play cards, we take turns on whose house is hosting it. I go with my husband when he shows his cars at the Frog Follies. I spend time with my grandkids. I also have to keep the house up; it has 5 bedrooms, 3 baths, den, living room, and kitchen.

I dust, vacuum, and mop floors. I also have treadmill and walk on that, and other excercises I do to keep my joints limber. 2. What do you do to keep yourself mentally alert, any activities or excercises you used in the past and present? Well in the past I helped the kids with their homework so that kept me on my toes. I was also working as the bookkeeper for the family so I was doing a lot of math. I have always read a lot, and I love puzzles, find a word and others. Even now I still work and do the books, I am still reading only on

my iPad instead of actual books, still doing puzzles, find the word, and others.

I am on the computer or my iPad surfing the net and playing games on Face Book, such as finding hidden objects. Word games, card games and others, I really like cross word on line no erasing. I also took some craft classes on line and learned to crochet, and cross-stitch. I now belong to a book club on line and we read a chosen book and then discuss it, and not just fiction but nonfiction. 3. What meaningful activities give your life meaning? I think spending time with my grandkids gives a lot of meaning to my life, being a grandmother. I did not always get to spend time with my kids.

Not like I can with my grandchildren and spending time with my cousins, our family has all but died out except for our generation the 2nd. We all grew up together we were all close. Not our kids they don't know their cousins like I did mine that's why we get together now so we can keep in touch, and that's sad because they have missed out on so much, and I don't know how that happen with the 3rd and 4th generation of our family. I guess that is why it means so much to me I grew up with them and we are all friends. And we will continue to get together every month until there are none of us left.

Our kids come to the lunches but not enough to get know each other. 4. Do you pass on to others what you know, or teach others? Well what crafts I do I have passed on to my granddaughters, just like my mother did, she taught my younger cousin to crochet, and other things. So I am doing the same thing, just like my husband is passing on what he knows about restoring an old car to our grandsons. I know some of my cousins are doing the same

thing. I think you should pass on crafts and other thing that we know so they do not die out. 5. What do you do for recreation or leisure now?

Well I love cards and still play cards with my friends we get together once or twice a week. My husband and I go to car shows all over the place. I love to go to flea markets and yard sells and will get my sister and we will do that. I still do crafts. I do ceramics, and will take my grandkids with me sometimes. I keep my days full; I am always busy doing something. 6. She and her husband still live in the same house that they have lived in for 45 years; it has 5 bedrooms, a den, living room, kitchen, and 3 baths. It is a brick home out in the country on the Westside of town.

It is not out in the boonies like it use to be it is about 5 miles from USI (University of Southern Indiana) but it is not in the city. She still drives they both do, and goes everywhere, she still goes to social events that her and husband belong to. They are very civic minded. For her age she has not slowed down one little bit, she runs her errands goes to the store all on her own. I do not see her stopping what she is doing unless her health becomes an issue, but she has her children that will be there as well as her husband to take her or do for her at any time.

As for as environmental issue even the weather does not slow her down, she takes everything in stride, she is not careless, but just has a positive attitude and will continue to do what she has been doing until she cannot do it any longer. She does not feel her age, she does realize how old she is but does not let that define her, she follows the old saying you are as old as you do

feel. Part II - My cousin surprises me with her get up and go attitude, she is happy, and projects a very positive outlook for someone her age.

She does not let being 72 stop her from doing the things that she has been doing for years. I am sure she has her down days everyone has those but I am sure not very often. She surprised me by all the things that she does in a week's time, she actually works circles around me and I am her junior by 10 years, it does not seem to bother her that she has aged, she is happy with who and what she has become [(Berger, 2011)]. Her overall functioning is amazing; her memory and brain activity does not show any kind of slowing down on her part.

When asked about her memories of what she did in the past the way she talked and relived them you would think that it happened yesterday, she is alert, and as total recall, she may have some cognitive problems but I didn't witness any during the interview. According to our book it states the brain slows down as we reach old age. The elderly does not think as fast as a younger person. When talking with her, she did not have to sit and think about what or how she was going to answer the question there was no hesitation, her recall did not seem to have slowed down at all (Berger, 2011).

Her appearance has changed from the blond/brown hair color to a all white color. Her skin is a good color, although it does show some saging under the eyes. She doesn't wear makeup unless it's some place required such as funerals etc. She is no more that 5' 4" she is the shortess in our family and her weight for her size is right. She has no age spots, deep wrinkles, she also does not have the hump on her back like so many adults of her age. She

wears reading glasses when she reads but doesn't require glasses. Her vision has not changed much over the years (Berger, 2011).

Her hearing is the same and she says it is better than most of her friends. After looking over the material in our book she is very healthy for a 72 year old woman. She keeps active, exercises, eats the right food, gets enough rest she seems to be doing everything right. Any improvements on what she is doing are very few, maybe slowing down a bit might be in order, but that's not likely she has always been this way. She doesn't take on more than she can handle. She is doing very well on keeping as little stress out of her life as she can (Berger, 2011).

Talking to her was interesting and it was not as hard as I thought it might be. I am aware that not everyone will talk as freely as she did to me, but it was very informative on finding out about someone by asking questions. Taking down the information and then writing it out. I noticed that while talking she was very relaxed, arms to her sides or laying loosely in her lap. She also appeared open to the whole interview, everything about her was open and relaxed, at the time I wasn't aware I had been watching her in this manner until I went to transcribe my notes. I did it without thinking. I hope to follow her inspiring example.