Wrinkle in Time

I t seems clear enough: the secret to a long and productive life is to love what you do, eat wisely, and exercise regularly. At least that’s the gist of what the eight folks we profile in our latest 8 Over 80 special report said in this week’s issue. Simple, common-sense advice via a group of people – from a broadcaster to a doctor, an architect to a nun – who into their 80s and beyond are still at the office every day, contributing to their enterprises.

Of course, nothing is as easy as a short bullet-point list of do’s and don’ts for longevity and happiness. When one gets to a certain age, friends and acquaintances start to fall, and the frequency only increases with time.

No, there’s got to be more to it. There are some clues in the answers these eight gave us, hints about what it takes to keep coming back, day in and day out. Sure, the body does not respond as well as it used to, but the mind is a muscle they all still use – and with a great deal of vigor.

As a group, these eight have stayed actively involved in their enterprises, embracing new technology (though not always adopting it), the ideas of younger colleagues, and engaging in day-to-day operations. Indeed, most said their work routine had not changed much over the years, other than cutting back on hours. Don Neutra, the architect, even said technology had allowed him to become more productive than he had been in years past. For Dr. George Berci, the difference between then and now is simply the scope and nature of the projects he works on.

And yet, there is an inevitability, too. Most of those we spoke to did not seek to deny that they were in their final acts and, indeed, embrace it. (And with humor – see the response of Jose-Luis Saavedra, founder of Tapatios Foods who asked about what his future holds.) That kind of comfort, that assurance, surely makes the days at work easier, the sense of contribution greater, and fuels the satisfaction that comes when they leave the office each day.

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Making Space For Humans

Adam Mendler
Chief Executive Video Group

Given that a trip to space is expected to cost $250,000, I can think of much better uses for a quarter of a million dollars and would encapsulate it in something of transformative beauty and cultural power, I’d do that without a moment’s hesitation. Virgin Galactic and Space X’s Elon Musk are maintaining their drives to send people out of this world with commercial space programs. So the Business Journal asks: Would you want to be a “space tourist”?

Brandon Fitts
Producer-Writer
Revelations Entertainment

To see what only a sliver of the 107 billion humans to ever walk the Earth might see, and perhaps, while there, encapsulate it in something of transformative beauty and cultural power, I’d do that without a moment’s hesitation.

Babette Pepaj
Founder BakeSpace.com

Absolutely, I’d like a chance to see Earth from a distance. Plus, I think it would be a tasty experience to find out what it’s like to cook and bake in space.

Matt L. Ganitch
Executive Vice President

Would you want to be a “space tourist”? A “space tourist” would contribute more to the world than any 2½-hour trip would contribute to me.