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Culture Change in Practice



Do Not Go Gently



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posted by Steph Kilen

"Culture Change in Practice" is our own weblog where people can become involved in a conversation about Culture Change as it is practiced by professionals in real nursing homes. Feel free to join the conversation, or post a comment about something you have learned on your journey.

Have you heard about a new documentary called *Do Not Go Gently: The Power of Imagination in Aging*? It's out on DVD and in showings around the country. It shares stories of some creative people who just happen to be in their 80s, 90s and one is even 109. Now, most of these people have been pretty amazing all their lives – a woman from the Gees Bend quilting community, a famous composer, a career ballet dancer – but of course we find them more so for continuing to do it in their late years. For them, it is just continuing to do what they've always done – what they have dedicated their life – their *whole* life to.

One of the folks from Arts for the Aging, a group out of Washington D.C., says about a poetry group for people with early Alzheimer's in the movie, "They don't have to remember, they can imagine something in *this* moment." Others in the film mention how aging seems to give a person more liberty to be creative. Elders are more in tune with themselves and tend to care less about what people think of their creative expressions.

So, I'm recommending the movie. Here's the site <http://www.donotgogently.com/>

However, the backbone of this movie is the importance of creativity in later years, even if it means shaking a tambourine for the first time in your life while you're living in a nursing home. We know how important it is for elders to be able to contribute to their community – to have meaning and purpose – and the thing is, being creative is one thing, even on the smallest cognitive or physical level, that every elder can do. They can put something out into the world that wasn't there before, even if it is just a smile.

It is interesting because of the stories of the artists involved, but I think it is most helpful, or inspirational in the way that it reminds us of how important creativity is in our communities and our lives, no matter what age.

