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50+ Living our best lives now and in the future!

Forever a Resilient, Life-Long Learner

Cindy McSperitt recalls always having a “curious nature and enjoying reading about anything and everything.” However, when she graduated from high school in 1973, she discovered that her opportunities as a female were limited; she could be a nurse, a secretary, or a stewardess (flight attendant). It wasn’t until 2011, when she was between jobs, that she chose to pursue a degree in journalism at the age of 55.



Today, McSperitt is a caregiver for her adult son, who was injured in a motorcycle accident. She also continues to write. At seventy, she lives a full life and continues to learn and grow.

Growing Up in the Late 1960s and into the Early 1970s

When McSperitt finished high school, no one talked to her about college; “it wasn’t expected of women. At the time, women were primarily seen as wives,

mothers, and homemakers.”

In the workplace, “women could be fired for being pregnant, and there was no recourse against sexual harassment. Banks could deny women loans...and even credit cards unless they had approval and a male's signature, such as her husband...”

McSperitt recalls society dictating her choices. She married young and had a son, Ryon. Later, she remarried but divorced at 32. “I told my family and everyone around me, “Never again!”

Informal Educational Opportunities

For ten years, McSperitt was the sole proprietor of a limousine company. She enjoyed making her own decisions and having a sense of independence. Later, she landed a job as a reporter in Arizona.



Because she had no background in writing or formal education in journalism, she wondered why she was even hired. Her boss told her he could teach her to write like a reporter. However, he was looking for someone who had qualities he couldn’t teach, such as telling a story in an interesting way. He also wanted someone who could think critically and

“discern fact from fiction. Further, he wanted someone who had “an affinity for the truth.”

A Life-Changing Moment

Nine months after she started her position as a reporter, McSperitt got the worst news of her life. Her grown, married son, Ryon, “was in a near-fatal motorcycle accident and sustained a traumatic brain injury.” In that moment, life forever changed for both of them. Ryon spent nearly a month in critical care. McSperitt eventually became his full-time caregiver and continues to lovingly tend to his needs.

Starting College at 55

“Even though college seemed like an impossible reach for me, I still thought about it often. I saw it as the key to a better life—for myself and my son.” In 2011, with the help of loans, grants, and scholarships, McSperitt enrolled in a journalism

O program at Umpqua Community College. After receiving her associate’s degree, she transferred into a journalism program at the University of Oregon and graduated in 2016 with a bachelor’s degree in journalism. “I DID IT!”

“I will never regret deciding to go back to school. For anyone out there who is wondering whether they should attempt something similar late in life, I say, ‘Just do it.’ My father used to say, ‘Regret the things you did, not the things you didn’t do.’ I think that is sound advice.”

A Journalist’s Perspective on a Significant Social/Political Change

When McSperitt completed her degree, an unprecedented social and political upheaval was in the wind, and she recognized the potential threat it posed for democracy. “I believe it is Thomas Jefferson who is credited with saying, ‘Democracy depends on an informed electorate.’” Unfortunately, what she observed was a significant number of ‘our

population operating off of disinformation’ generated by various privately owned ‘news’ stations and media outlets. “The truth is becoming harder to find—smothered by lies...”

For Relaxation

Relaxation can be elusive. “Did I mention that one of my biggest challenges is time? I spend all day, every day, 365 days a year, caring for another individual. Some days are easy, some are hard, but it is constant, so I don’t have much time during the day to pursue my own interests or for things that may be considered relaxation. But I cherish the roughly hour or so (two on a good night) I have completely to myself. Early evening is spent watching a little TV with Ryon, but once I have him settled in for the night, I head back to my own space, and for just a little while, it is quiet and I’m alone. I love this time of day; I can think my own thoughts and unwind. Sometimes I make myself a cup of tea and grab my dog and a good book. Sometimes I watch a movie. Sometimes I paint my nails.”

Life at Seventy

“I don’t know how to be seventy! Honestly, I don’t. I say that repeatedly because the number is not registering in my brain. I hesitate to advise others when I am struggling myself with trying to grow older. I’m just winging it. I have no real concept of what aging means or how to go about it.”

Advice for Others

“Find what brings you joy and do it! Don’t let our culture tell you it’s too late or you’re too old—just do it! I got a degree in Journalism at 61! Secondly, pay attention to the little things. It’s the little things that add so much richness to our lives. Smelling a flower, watching the sun rise, or watching the sun set can greatly enhance our well-being. And thirdly, practice gratitude. Acknowledge and appreciate your blessings. There is so much we all have to be grateful for, and the more you look, the more you’ll see!”

What is ‘Real’ News vs Fake News? It Depends on Who You Ask

Into the 1970s, the dominant news stations included ABC, NBC, and CBS, and viewers generally got the same news and news perspectives each evening. Now, depending on what news sources we choose, we may get very different perspectives.

A 2025 Pew Research Center [study](#) found that Republicans, Independents, and Democrats are likely to watch or listen to very different news programs and distrust others that are not consistent with their worldviews. The study's findings indicated that most Republicans trust Fox News as their primary source, while Democrats tend to use a wider range of sources, such as CNN, NPR, NBC News, MSNBC, and others. Fifty-six percent of Republicans or leaning Republicans indicated they trusted Fox News, while only 19% of Democrats or leaning Democrats agreed. Thirty-one percent of Republicans (or leaning) indicated they trust The Joe Rogan Experience, while only 9% of Democrats agreed. Most Democrats agreed that they trusted ABC, NBC, PBS, and CNN more than other news channels.

“If It’s Too Good to Be True, It Probably Is”

If you or someone you know has been a victim of financial fraud, you are not alone. On March 20, 2024, the [National Institute of Justice Journal](#) reported that 604,200 adults 60 and older experienced financial fraud related to products and services in just one year. Another 135,880 older adults were victims of fraud related to alleged charities. According to the [Better Business Bureau](#), “older adults lose more than \$36 billion to financial fraud every year.”

Psychological Triggers That Target Older Adults

According to a 2023 Psychology Department [article](#) from USC University of Southern California, “Deceptive advertisers use psychological triggers and specific messaging to appeal to older adults seeking miraculous cures or get-rich-quick opportunities. They exploit vulnerabilities such as health concerns, financial anxiety, loneliness, and a trusting nature.”

A Case of Medical Fraud

One notable example involves an organization that promotes alleged quantum healing devices in exchange for donations. A [law firm](#) in California posted a consumer warning for victims and potential victims, claiming this is a case of medical fraud and is a public scam. The warning also points to various ‘red flags’ on the organization’s website that consumers must recognize.



Help Family and Friends Recognize a Scam by Thinking Like a Journalist

[LinkedIn Journalism](#) recommends steps that we can all take to help avoid becoming victims of advertising scams and fraud. Here are brief explanations of each step:

- (1) Investigate who is “behind” the ad, the reputation of the organization, the credibility of the organization’s leaders, and the organization’s transparency. You may not find some of this information on the organization’s website. However, it is essential to look beyond claims made by the organization. For example, the company advertising quantum healing devices referenced a doctor allegedly affiliated with their organization. Still, it did not note his credentials,

and additional information was not available through various searches.

- (2) Fact-check any evidence that is used to support claims. Is the evidence verifiable and independent? Start with any reference listed and do some of your own research online. Locate expert sources, research papers, and information from educational and government organizations.
- (3) Make sure claims are logical rather than just based on an emotional appeal.
- (4) Consider whether the claim misrepresents or distorts any critical information.
- (5) Can you find critics who disagree with the claims made? What is their evidence?
- (6) Consider your own biases, hopes, and assumptions.

Click [LinkedIn Journalism](#) to get a full explanation of each step. We all must take time to investigate claims that are “too good to be true,” no matter how much we may want to believe them.

We Can’t Always Believe What We See

According to a [blog](#) from the psychology department at USC, “Some ads use ‘deepfake’ technology to create videos of medical specialists endorsing bogus products. Others feature testimonials from people who claim to have experienced amazing results, though these are often actors.”

Tai Chi for Reducing Stress and Other Benefits

According to [Everyday Health](#), nearly four million older adults in the U.S. practice Tai Chi for its many health benefits, including relaxation and balance. A McMaster University Optimal Aging Portal [article](#) suggests it may also reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety in older adults.

The National Center for Complementary and



Integrative Health [describes](#) Tai Chi as “a practice that involves a series of slow, gentle movements and physical postures, a

meditative state of mind, and controlled breathing. Tai chi originated as an ancient martial art in China. Over the years, it has become more focused on health promotion and rehabilitation.”

If you want to try Tai Chi, check with your local YMCA or gym to see if they offer classes. You can also try Tai Chi online for free. Here is a [link](#) for a beginning Tai Chi Class on YouTube.

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