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Oliver Samuels  
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Karen Oliver, Senior Communications Officer  
The Jamaica National Group

He asked her for a dance. She consented. They have been inseparable ever since.

Pearl was 17 years old, and Charles 21, when their paths crossed on the dance floor at a community dance in Siloah, St. Elizabeth. Charles Hoolong, who was then working as a mechanic at Appleton Estate, would always command attention at the weekly Friday night dances.

"People would come and watch me dance and the ladies would always want me to dance with them," he said with a chuckle.

It was Pearl's second time at the dance when she took note of Charles.

"He was a very good dancer and, I loved his hair and his voice," Pearl disclosed, admitting that, for her, "It was love at first sight."

Nineteen years into their relationship, they tied the knot. In August, they celebrated 56 years of togetherness and, it's still very obvious that their love for each other continues to spark. Their union has produced six children, 20 grandchildren, and four great grandchildren. He affectionately calls her 'Pea' while she calls him 'Hol'.

Charles, a half-Chinese, disclosed that he never met his father, who is from Hong Kong. His mother, a Jew, was born in Jamaica.

"I grew up in Portmore with my grandparents. My childhood was difficult and I told myself that I would treat my family well. I'm a God-fearing man, who believes that I must do my best to provide for my family. I would be ashamed if I didn't," he declared.

They now live in Longsville Park, Clarendon, and worship weekly at the Spanish Town Seventh-day Adventist Church. Like other couples, they have had their ups and downs however, they are careful not to prolong any discontentment between them. They believe that their relationship is strong and has withstood the test of time, based on their total commitment to each other.

## 6 Ways the Hoolongs Love Proofed their Marriage

### 1 Always Forgive

**Pearl:** Mistakes and misunderstandings will always arise. Be willing to say, "I'm sorry," when you are wrong. Resolve things quickly and forgive.

**Charles:** No one is perfect therefore, you must be willing to forgive. Jesus is our greatest teacher and, He commands us to "Forgive one another".

### 2 Spend Quality Time Together

**Pearl:** If you spend quality time together it will enhance the quality of your relationship. We go for walks in the mornings and evenings, watch TV and study the bible. Sometimes, we go to the beach. In past years we would have game night every Wednesday and music night every Thursday in our home.

**Charles:** Doing fun things together helps us to bond and allows us to reason with each other.

# Together for 56 years

## How the Hoolongs Love Proofed their Relationship

### 3 Share the Chores

**Pearl:** I really appreciate when he helps with the ironing, washing, cooking and cleaning. It shows that he is considerate. He even used to comb our daughters' hair and take the children out for a walk.

**Charles:** Don't leave the burden of the housework on your wife. When you share the work, you make your wife feel special and loved.

### 4 Be Faithful

**Pearl:** Keep yourself circumspect. It is a sin to be unfaithful to your spouse. It is also difficult to continue to trust when there is unfaithfulness.

**Charles:** Unfaithfulness causes friction and lack of peace in the home and, could cause your marriage to break up.

### 5 Treat each other Royally

**Pearl:** Look after him well. Take good care of his clothes and look after his food properly. Serve a variety of foods at mealtime and ensure that the meal looks presentable on the plate.

**Charles:** Give each other a gift from time to time...for no special occasion. She loves perfume therefore, I always buy it for her.

### 6 Pray Together

**Pearl:** We make it a habit to pray together and to call the name of each member of our family in prayer. The family that prays together stays together.

**Charles:** There's power in prayer. When we pray, we ask for God's blessings upon our family and to keep us together.

The Hoolongs are determined, at whatever cost, to remain devoted to each other and, to continue to live a happy life.

# FEEDBACK ON OUR LAST ISSUE



A wonderful magazine that looks really good. The articles are well researched, interesting, relevant and reader friendly. The print quality is also very good. I like the article 'Let's Get Physical' and 'Hurricane Season a Stressful Time for Seniors'.

**Melvin Francis, St. Thomas**

The magazine is appealing and attractive, and covers a wide range of beneficial topics. I like the recipe which I'll try. I'm looking forward to the other issues, keep up the good work.

**Mavis Oneal, St. Andrew**

It's a good magazine. The articles are relevant.

**Patick McLean, Connecticut, USA**

The magazine is very informative and well put together. It is clear that a lot of thought went into organising it. Although it targets persons over 50, the articles are relevant to every age. I like the article 'Let's Get Physical'.

**Howard Mardner, Kingston**

## EDITORIAL

A publication of The Jamaica National Group, the **JN Living Well Magazine** is issued in April, August and December of each year. The magazine is targeted to persons who are fifty years or older. However, many of the features will appeal to all age groups.

Please share with us your feedback on the magazine and suggestions for areas that you would like to see in upcoming issues. Send an email to us at [corporatecommunications@jnsgroup.com](mailto:corporatecommunications@jnsgroup.com).



**Tanya Pringle, Senior Manager**  
Corporate Communications  
The Jamaica National Group



**Karen Oliver, Senior Communications Officer**  
Corporate Communications  
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# 5 APPS

## Every Senior Citizen Should Have

Alex Thompson, Cyber Security Analyst  
The Jamaica National Group

If you own a smartphone or tablet, there are many apps that you can use to help make life easier. Here are five apps that you can consider:

The apps featured are all free and are compatible on any Android or IOS devices. They are also some of the most popular and widely used apps in their respected areas.

Always ensure that the apps on your mobile devices are regularly updated to protect the confidentiality, integrity and availability of the app.



### 1 Stay in touch with WhatsApp or Skype

Stay in touch with friends and loved ones with two of the largest and most popularly used apps. Features to take advantage of include, but is not limited to: making voice and video calls, sending text messages and sharing of articles, news feeds, videos and photos.

### 2 Keep the mind active and sharp with Lumosity

Lumosity is just one of many apps that provides the same or similar service of keeping one's mind alert. What makes Lumosity stand out is the huge player database of over 60 million persons and excellent reviews shared by senior citizens globally, who say that they feel more alert after interacting with this app.

### 3 Stay current on news with Loop, Jamaica Gleaner and Jamaica Observer apps

Three of Jamaica's more popular/go-to apps for news-related articles are Loop, Jamaica Gleaner and Jamaica Observer. Enjoy breaking news notifications straight in the palm of your hands.

### 4 Manage your medication with Medisafe

Medisafe Pill Reminder and Medication Tracker does as the name implies. It keeps track of your medication schedule, provides real-time missed medication alerts, and reminds you when you will be needing refills.

### 5 Read fine prints easily with the help of Magnifying Glass Apps

A popular app on both the Android and iPhone platforms for reading fine prints is called Magnifying Glass + Flashlight. This app not only allows you to magnify any objects that you point your hand-held device's camera, but it also has a flashlight to help you see in the dark.

## How to Turn on auto-update on your Android Device

Follow these simple steps to enable the auto-update feature for the apps:

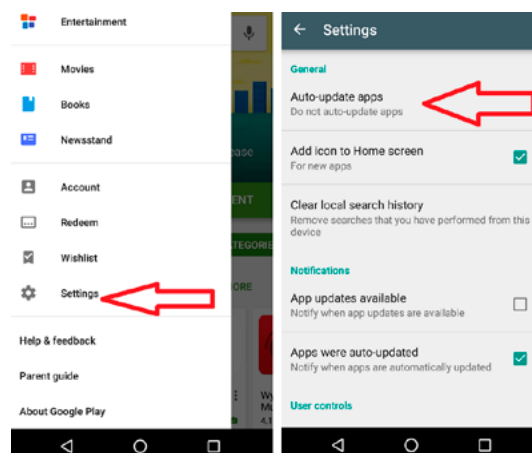
**Step 1.** Open Google Play.

**Step 2.** Tap the hamburger icon (three horizontal lines) on the top-left.

**Step 3.** Tap Settings

**Step 4.** Tap Auto-update apps

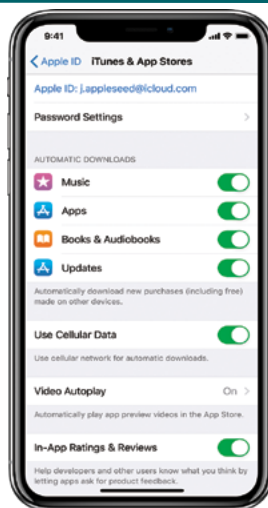
**Step 5.** Check Auto-update



SOURCE: <http://www.bsocialshine.com/2016/09/how-to-stop-auto-updating-apps-do-it.html>

**Note.** If you want to auto-update apps only when you're connected to a WiFi network, tap Auto-update apps over Wi-Fi only in the same pop-up.

## How to Turn on auto-update on your iOS Device



Follow these simple steps to enable the auto-update feature for the apps:

**Step 1.** Go to Settings

**Step 2.** Select iTunes & App Store.

**Step 3.** Turn on the APP notification to automatically download updates

SOURCE: <https://support.apple.com/en-us/HT202180>



# LONELINESS is not in my VOCABULARY

Carmen Tipling, Communications Consultant

As we approach the Christmas holidays, some seniors are already dreading the prospect of spending another holiday by themselves or, starting to feel left out of the festivities, during the joyous religious and secular events of the season.

Some years ago, the Emotions produced a song, "What Do the Lonely Do at Christmas," which contains emotive lyrics.

The reality is that many persons do not know how to cope with loneliness, whether at Christmas, or other times during the year. Consequently, in today's ageing Jamaican population, there are many retired seniors, who are cut off from their work environment, and who mourn the loss of relatives, friends, and associates.

As a result, they withdraw from the social environment, become reclusive and lose their connection with the vibrant world, which continues to ebb and flow around them, but seems to exclude them. And, if they do not foster independent spirits then, they sit and wait for others to seek them out hence, their loneliness builds over time, and ultimately diminish their natural drive and zest for life.

However, there are numerous exceptions, such as, journalist and media veteran, Christene King, who declares that, "loneliness is not in my vocabulary, and I have no time to live loneliness."

A cancer survivor, Ms. King asserts, "I give thanks for the gift of life every day. And, I am living my best life ever, when I spend a lot of time with me."

Communications Consultant, Berl Francis, concurs with Miss King's premise, and advises that, "Giving into a feeling of loneliness is almost a manner of self-indulgence. Being alone doesn't mean you have to be lonely. The two words, 'alone' and 'lonely', are not synonymous. You can be in a relationship, living with someone, and still be lonely."

Mrs. Francis maintains that, not giving into loneliness means keeping your mind busy and active, reaching out to friends to share experiences and, chances are there is someone you know who is also alone.

"My personal philosophy is that I am a complete person and I can make of my life what I want. If I am alone, it is because I choose to be alone and, therefore, I am not lonely."

"Coping with loneliness means keeping your mind busy and active and includes reaching out to friends on a regular basis to share experiences," Mrs. Francis informs. "I find that reading also helps a lot. I am a regular and faithful member of the Jamaica Library Service."



...I am living my best life  
ever, when I spend a lot of  
time with me."

In today's connected technology environment, some seniors are determined to continue to maintain rich, active lives. They seek rewarding ways to keep in touch with an exploding social environment, through senior citizens associations, golden age clubs, and via the pervasive connectivity of the internet and radio talk shows.

There are also many seniors who have kept pace with the times and embraced new technologies, from emails to Facebook and Instagram. And, by participating in WhatsApp Chat Groups or via Skype, they are able to communicate in

real time with young family members and friends, both in this country and overseas.

Dr. Herbert Lowe, who graduated from Columbia University in Counselling Psychology, says that during his clinical training at Lincoln Mental Hospital, of the Bronx Hospital, New York, USA, he realised that, "One should accept the fact that you can

be 'alone' without feeling 'lonely'."

"Loneliness is more than not having people around you. Most of all, be aware that the world won't come to you therefore, you need to reach out, and realise that your own negative self-talk could keep you in a state of loneliness," he opines.

He recommends that, "seniors should identify their passions and explore ways to share those passions with like-minded people."

"We also need to understand that things and circumstances do change," Dr. Lowe advises, "Nothing remains the same forever. You never know when the prayers and answers you are looking for will come your way."

In the final analysis, there are so many ways in which one can circumvent being alone. For example, you could re-read a book you enjoyed the first time around watch a movie which never fails to thrill you, although you've seen it countless times learn a new skill play some of your favourite music and allow positive memories to buoy your spirit.



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# Oliver Samuels **King** of the **THEATRE**

Karen Oliver, Senior Communications Officer  
The Jamaica National Group

Say the name, “Oliver Samuels” and immediately one conjures up classic Jamaican humor.

For the past four decades, Oliver Samuels has commanded respect for his brilliant and “side-splitting” theatrical performances. His signature comedy “Oliver at Large,” which Calvin Butler, Aston Cooke and Patrick Brown were instrumental in creating, ushered him into the hearts of Jamaicans in the 1980s.

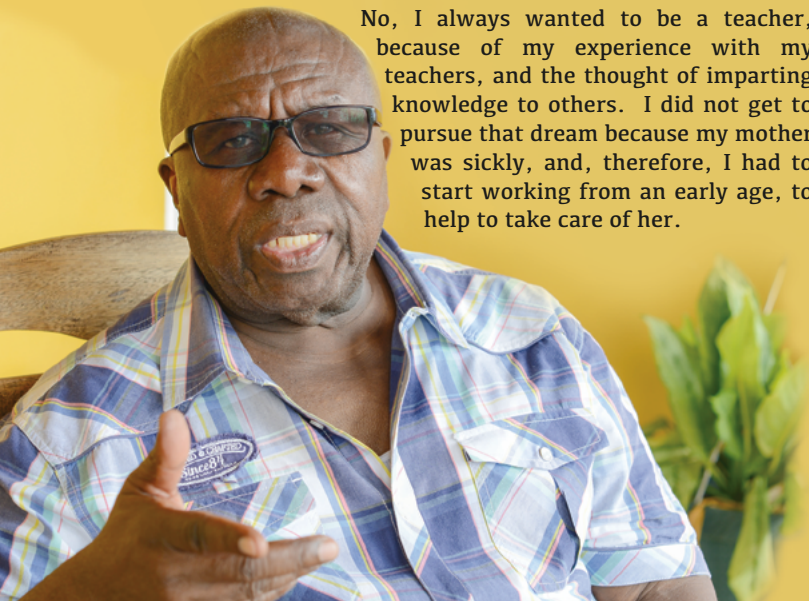
Subsequently, plays such as: “Large Abroad,” “Class of 73,” and several Little Theatre Movement (LTM) pantomimes, cemented his reputation as the Jamaican “King of Comedy.” His most recent production, “56 East Avenue,” is set to open at Phoenix Theatre, 8 Haining Road, in Kingston, on New Year’s Day, January 1, 2019.

The 70-year-old comedian and actor, who was also featured in the “Royal Palm Estate” soap opera series, has received numerous awards, including the Order of Distinction, bestowed by the Government of Jamaica. His most recent award was the Marcus Garvey Lifetime Achievement from the Institute for Caribbean Studies, which he received in Washington DC, in November 2018.

Learn more about this phenomenal person from his response to the following questions:

## Did you always aspire to work in theatre?

No, I always wanted to be a teacher, because of my experience with my teachers, and the thought of imparting knowledge to others. I did not get to pursue that dream because my mother was sickly, and, therefore, I had to start working from an early age, to help to take care of her.



I worked for half a day at The Gleaner as a junior proofreader. However, when I discovered it would be a night job, I didn’t bother to go back after lunch.



## How did you end up in theatre?

I always enjoyed performing, however, I never thought about making a career out of it. As a youngster, I used to perform at ‘penny concerts’, at church and school, to raise funds. My interest in acting was sparked by the magic of the silver screen. After I came to Kingston to live, two of my friends who knew about my interest in theatre, showed me an advertisement, which invited persons to go to the Little

Theatre to audition for the establishment of a drama school. I went and was selected. I was then 22. The rest is history.

## Outside of theatre, what other kind of work you did?

I worked for half a day at The Gleaner as a junior proofreader. However, when I discovered it would be a night job, I didn’t bother to go back after lunch. I also worked

as a Cultural Officer at the Social Development Commission and, as head of Marketing and Public Relations at Mac D’s Auto, from where I retired.

## Who inspired you the most?

My mother. As I mentioned before, she was a sickly person, and, whatever I did for her, her way of expressing thanks was to say to me, “You are going to be a great man.” She said it often although I never gave much thought to it. Unfortunately, she passed away without knowing about my achievements. The person in theatre who inspired me the most was the Hon. Louise Bennett Coverley. She made Jamaica a brand, using our dialect.

## What is your favourite childhood memory?

I have fond memories of catching janga and crayfish at rivers near my home, where I grew up in Tremolesworth, St. Mary. Every weekend and on holidays, my brother and I, as well as other children from the community, would go to the river. I remember one day when I was cooking janga soup in an Ovaltine tin, the steam spewed into my face completely peeling the skin off my face. For days I couldn’t go to school. Up until now, I still have a scar from one of the blisters. But, that incident did not stop me from cooking janga soup.



## What do you do for recreation?

I read theatre books. I used to love reading ghost and suspense novels and about politics, but not anymore. I play "Toy Blast" and "Toon Blast" on my phone. I promised myself to take them off my phone, because sometimes I get vex when I realize that I spend so much time playing them.



Oliver Samuels (right) from a scene in "56 East Avenue"

## What is one thing persons would be surprised to know about you?

I'm dreadfully afraid of worms and maggots. The fear started when I was much younger. I was shelling gungo and a worm crawled onto my hand and bit me. One day while I was walking on Oxford Road, I saw thousands of them crawling from a Lignum Vitae tree. I was so terrified that I ran right out into the traffic.

## How do people react to you when they see you on the road?

"Give me a joke," or, "beg yuh something," are what people often ask me while others will say, "thanks for the laughter". It's rewarding when they share how they enjoyed the shows. One gentleman from the US reached out to me, and told me that he brought some of my tapes for his mother who has cancer. He said that although she doesn't understand the dialect, she would laugh a lot, and the laughter helped to ease her pain. I also met another cancer patient, who shared a similar experience.

## What is one thing you would love to accomplish?

For many years, I have wanted to write a children's story book, but, I haven't gotten around to doing so. I already have the names of the characters in my head. I would also like to write about my experience in theatre.

Mr. Samuels is the father of five adult children, 13 grandchildren, and one great grandchild.





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# The Rewards of Foster Parenting

Karen Oliver, Senior Communications Officer  
The Jamaica National Group

“It’s a rewarding experience to assist a child to grow up in a caring environment,” declared Verona Case, a foster mother to 11-year-old daughter, Alicia. “You will never know what the future has in store for the child you fostered.”

The Portmore resident, who does not have biological children, has been a foster parent for the past four years and, she has no regrets about her decision.

“Growing up, I did not have the support of my father. Now, as a teacher, I interact with many children in situations which I can identify with, and that’s the reason I decided to help. It was a teacher, who provided support for my sister to get through life and it was that same sister who, in turn, was able to help me later,” she disclosed.

Similarly, Edna Kelly, a retired midwife from Heartwell, Clarendon, who is a foster parent to a nine-year-old boy, since he was two, finds foster parenting to be fulfilling. She is also in the process of fostering the boy’s sister.

“I love children. I have a biological son, and have fostered more than 40 children over the years. Two are in the army, some are teachers and nurses, and some are now living overseas. It’s the Lord who prepared me to nurture children, because I don’t believe I could have done this all by myself,” Ms. Kelly said.

Taneka Cassanova-Durrant, Foster Care Officer with the Child Protection and Family Services Agency, explained that foster parenting is a legal process, which facilitates the placement of a child aged zero to 18 years, in the care of an adult person or couple, who are not the biological parents of the child.

## A Satisfying Experience

“Foster parenting often provides a satisfying experience for those who venture into this aspect of child care. Many foster parents also have biological children however, they choose to extend their love to care for a child, or children, who require a stable and nurturing environment in which they can thrive,” Mrs. Cassanova-Durrant explained.

“We have quite a few cases in which older adults, whose biological children have grown up and left home, have opted to become foster parents. In cases such as those, it is a win-win for both parties. The foster parent benefits from the companionship, while the adopted child gets to enjoy the comfort of being cared for by a loving adult,” she said.



Verona Case shares bonding time with her daughter, Alicia.

Mrs. Cassanova-Durrant also pointed out that, anyone between the ages of 25 and 65, who is of good moral and legal standing, can become a foster parent, while adding that persons over 65 can also become a foster parent, if they are still gainfully employed, in good health, and have an excellent support system.

“We provide counselling and training for prospective foster parents, so that they can be more informed about how to raise a child successfully and, importantly, to ensure that the child’s wellbeing is safeguarded,” she explained.

## Requirements for Foster Parents

“Other requirements for foster parents are that they should have: suitable home accommodation, a steady source of income, be willing to undergo a medical examination, and be willing to be supervised by a social worker,” she outlined.

“One of the things we always advise a foster parent is that, they must be willing to allow the children to maintain contact with their biological parents or relatives. In addition, on the recommendation of the social worker, a child can be re-integrated with his or her family,” Mrs. Cassanova-Durrant emphasised.

She also noted that a bi-monthly allowance is provided by the government for the maintenance of each foster child.

To become a foster parent, you can submit an application to the office of the Child Protection and Family Services Agency in your parish. You may also visit the agency’s website at: [childprotection.gov.jm](http://childprotection.gov.jm) or, call the corporate office at: 876-948-2841-2.

Photo credit: Child Protection and Family Services Agency



# How to Save Money on Prescription drugs

Karen Oliver, Senior Communications Officer  
The Jamaica National Group



Medical conditions such as diabetes, arthritis, hypertension and glaucoma are often associated with ageing. It is therefore quite common for persons over 50 to have one or more of these conditions which require them to be dependent on prescription drugs to manage their condition. This monthly expense becomes a concern, especially during retirement, when income is limited or non-existent.

It is recommended that persons do comparison shopping when filling prescriptions to get the best prices. Money for prescription drugs can also be saved by purchasing generic drugs, using a National Health Fund (NHF) card, a Jamaica Drug for the Elderly Programme (JADEP) card, and asking for discounts.

## 1 Generic Drugs

Christine Barnaby, Pharmacist and Manager of MegaMart Pharmacy, advised that a generic drug has the same active ingredient, same rate and extent of absorption, strength, dose, performance, safety and quality as the brand name drug.

“This means that the generic drug should produce the same therapeutic drug effect as the brand name drug,” she emphasised.

She further pointed out that the generic version is priced up to 60 percent lower than the brand and that approximately half of all generic drugs are manufactured by the brand name companies.

“Whilst the active ingredients must be the same, generic drugs may differ in colour, shape, packaging, markings, taste because of the excipients (inactive ingredients). These excipients will only matter in rare cases of allergy in a patient. They do not affect safety or effectiveness of the generics,” she advised.

## 2 National Health Fund (NHF)

By using a NHF card, persons of any age who are diagnosed with any of the 16 chronic illnesses that are covered under the programme can obtain medication at a significantly reduced cost. The illnesses that are covered are: asthma, arthritis, breast cancer, benign prostatic hyperplasia (enlarged prostate), diabetes, epilepsy, glaucoma, high cholesterol, hypertension, ischaemic heart disease, major depression, prostate cancer, psychosis, rheumatic fever/heart disease, sickle cell disease and vascular disease.

You may obtain an NHF card application form at your pharmacy or doctor. Complete it including your TRN, and have it certified by your doctor who should sign and add his/her registration number.

The completed form can be submitted for processing at a NHF Same Day Card Centre located at major hospitals and Drug Serv pharmacies or at the NHF Head Office at 25 Dominica Drive in New Kingston.

## 3 Jamaica Drug for the Elderly Programme (JADEP)

Under the JADEP, persons who are 60 years or older, can access specific drugs free of cost for the treatment of ten chronic illnesses. These include: hypertension, Cardiac conditions, arthritis, benign prostatic hyperplasia, high cholesterol, vascular disease, diabetes, glaucoma, asthma and psychiatric conditions.

“Senior citizens can use the JADEP card for those prescription items covered by JADEP and the NHF card for other items they need that are covered by the NHF but not by JADEP,” said Shermaine Robotham, Public Relations and Health Promotions Manager at the NHF.

Carnel Gowdie, a retired driver, is the holder of a NHF and JADEP card.

He attests that he saves money every month for prescription drugs to treat the three medical conditions he has.

“They help me so much. I don’t know where I would find that money every month,” the St. Catherine resident disclosed.

## 4 Discounts

Many pharmacies offer discounts on prescription to seniors while some do so on designated days. Ask your pharmacist about any discount that you can access.

Medication can be costly, therefore, always explore the various options available to reduce the burden on your pocket.





# 50 AFTER FIFTY

## Life's Only Just Begun

Kadeem Rodgers, Fashion Stylist/Writer (@TheStyleRedeemer)

You've made it to your golden year. 50 looks good on you, but, something's missing. What is it? Your teenage fervour, the nonchalant I-do-what-I-want-when-I-want attitude, or the independent, goal-oriented, purpose-driven persona that moulded you into becoming the woman or man you are today. Let's change that today. It's necessary to feel empowered to refuel that long-lost passion, take that trip to Cuba that you've evaded for 20+ years or indulge in retail therapy. The goal here is to do more selfish things, develop an appreciation for the finer things in life, and just... live. It's a lot safer to be "20" this time around because you're wiser and more experienced. Really, one of two things is holding you back: your mind or fear – let go.

This article is dedicated to Elvis Pinnock: an old friend, father, kind spirit, mentor, role model and a beacon of light that never stopped shining... more so, this article is dedicated to you, men and women who are alive but not living. Here are 50 reasons to wake up and live:

1. You've been alive for 50 fabulous years: celebrate it!
2. Courage brought you this far, stay fearless.
3. Love your reflection in the mirror.
4. "Golden" should not be frowned upon. It is your birthright, own it, appreciate it, and love it.
5. Hit the gym.
6. You've probably been doing this since you were in your teens – stop thinking about what others think of you.
7. Sunday's new mood: Do absolutely nothing except luxuriate.
8. Watch your favourite movie over and over.
9. Live fabulously in every way, your way.
10. Ladies: Purchase a silk robe, and actually wear it.
11. Start doing - you have all the time in the world.
12. Spend the money you only live once.
13. Gents: Facials, pedicures, and manicures are harmless. Do yourself a favour.
14. As adults, some of us are still finding excuses for doing the things we love. Stop!
15. Smile.
16. Laugh.
17. Be grateful. Be graceful.
18. Create something.
19. Educate yourself.
20. If you're feeling lonely adopt an animal.
21. Find solace in the things that make you happy.
22. Sing your favourite song out loud.
23. Listen...
24. Share ideas.
25. Communicate.
26. Love yourself, love others. Then, love some more.
27. Check-in at trunk shows or art fairs.
28. Meditate.
29. Revisit and revamp that thing you were so passionate about in your 'teenties' that you tossed aside for your career.
30. When you communicate with self, speak kindly.
31. Express yourself.
32. Unplug your grandkids and take them out of the city into the countryside for a weekend. No grandkids? Unplug yourself.
33. Rest.
34. Host a Sip and Paint for your birthday.
35. Accept that invitation to Sip and Paint.
36. Be adventurous tap into your spontaneity.
37. Dress up. Go out.
38. Host Christmas Dinner this year.
39. Pull out your charcuterie board and a bottle and invite people over, just for 'convo'.
40. Stop complaining about aches and pains and get active.
41. Ditch the suits, play around with fashion.
42. Eat healthy. Ever thought of going vegan? Try it for two weeks.
43. Reserve a day for self not including your Sundays.
44. Take it easy, don't sweat the small stuff.
45. Live your life. Don't hold grudges.
46. Date often: whether you're single or in a relationship
47. Listen to your heart, then follow the instructions.
48. Be kind. Socialize. Meet new people.
49. Order something new at a restaurant you've never been to before.
50. It is okay to dance off-beat like nobody's watching. Dance away!





# COPING WITH Depression

Karen Oliver, Senior Communications Officer  
The Jamaica National Group



Maxine Williams is all too familiar with the stigma associated with depression and anxiety. To compound the issue, she has lost a few close friends and her job, which she held for the past 10 years.

The 63-year-old mother, who is now self-employed, disclosed that her struggle with the condition started from she was 26 years old.

"Prior to the diagnosis, I was very outgoing and active, although somewhat reserved. However, things changed after I was abducted. Although I managed to escape without being physically harmed, the experience continues to traumatise me over the years. Initially, I became very withdrawn and distrustful of people," she disclosed.

Maxine attended several counselling sessions and was prescribed anti-depressant medication which she took on and off for several years.

"Last year, I decided to discontinue the medication because of the side effects and besides, I didn't want to be totally dependent on it. Sometimes, the medication causes me to become too relaxed and out of touch with reality," she revealed.

As part of her therapy, she decided to engage in playing the piano, gardening and caring for her pets, which have assisted to keep her calm and focused.

She explains that her attacks occur at least once a month and, they emerge suddenly, at anytime, anywhere, lasting from about 15 minutes to up to four days.

"These attacks cause feelings of despair, hopelessness and impending doom which trigger my anxiety consequently, causing me to experience rapid heartbeats and dizziness."

"Interestingly, one of my dogs is attuned to my condition. Although she is not trained to assist me, she always senses whenever an attack is coming on, and would immediately rub her head on my tummy, which helps to calm me," she related.

Dr. Sidney McGill, a marriage and family therapist, who is based in St. Ann, explains that depression is a mood disorder with symptoms of prolonged feelings of sadness and loss of interest in daily routine activities, which can persist for more than two weeks.

## Symptoms

"The signs and symptoms may vary however, they usually include: persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, worthlessness or emptiness and tearfulness. Some persons may have difficulty falling asleep and staying asleep, or sleeping too much lack of energy or fatigue irritability, frustration or restlessness, and sometimes suicidal thoughts," Dr. McGill outlined.

He also explained that, depressed persons may eat more to feel better and increase their body weight or, eat less because of a loss of appetite and lose weight. They may also have difficulty thinking clearly, making decisions or concentrating.

"The condition is treatable with medication, counselling and psychotherapy. Unfortunately, many persons are afraid of the stigma and, therefore, they do not seek treatment," he indicated.

Dr. McGill further pointed out that, hundreds of Jamaicans suffer from depression and, they are rarely diagnosed, because the condition is associated with other physical or psychological problems.

Maxine said that she has been able to cope with the condition as a result of the support she receives from her family, particularly her brother, who is also diagnosed with the condition.

She informed that, "Loved ones can provide support for persons with depression, by accompanying them to the doctor offering to take a prescription to the pharmacy to be filled not being judgemental and, avoid making unkind comments, such as, 'snap out of it'."

"Don't try to handle the condition alone," she emphasised. "Follow the recommendations of your therapist, spend time doing the things that you enjoy, and seek support from persons whom you trust."

Editor's note: Some facts in this story have been altered to protect the person's identity.





## Good News for Sexy Seniors

Dr Karen Carpenter, Certified Clinical Sexologist & Psychologist

A recent survey conducted by the University of Michigan has some great news for seniors. It appears that nearly five out of 10 persons in the 65-80 age group are still having sex and seven out of 10 are satisfied with their sex life. Older men say they want it more than women, but apparently older women are more satisfied than men in the same age group. Those who were living with their partners were more sexually active.

Sociologist, Erica Solway, who is the Associate Director of the National Ageing Poll at The University of Michigan, in the United States, says, that "sex is an important part of the lives of older people and a part that probably doesn't get the attention it deserves."

By the time seniors get to 76 to 80 years old, only one quarter of that age group are still sexually active, but I'm sure that is more than most people ever imagined.

I teach University students 18 to 50 years and I'm always surprised at their reactions when I mention senior sex. The younger they are, the more shocked they appear when the idea of mom or dad, and heavens forbid, grandparents, are still having sex. So why is it so difficult for us to imagine older persons as sexually interested and active? Perhaps

because older people themselves don't speak up, don't ask their doctors about their sex lives and doctors themselves don't ask the seniors either.

If you're a senior reading this, next time ask your doctor about your sexual concerns, and if you're a doctor, open up the conversation with your patients. When you discuss their health concerns and medication, find out how these prescriptions affect their sexual desire and function. Your female clients may need to talk about lubricants and ways of maintaining their desire. Male patients may be concerned with maintaining an erection and early ejaculation. All of these are important areas for a more fulfilling sex life.

Across the globe people are living longer and more people today know someone who is 90 or older. That shows that the life expectancy for the average person has now exceeded 80+ years. That also means that seniors are a key market for housing developers, health care practitioners and lifestyle coaches. They are all out to get your attention and provide new housing solutions such as assisted living and co-op groups, to combat loneliness.



Lifestyle coaches are brimming with ideas for exercise, new occupations and sexual activity. One such expert is Joan Price, a vibrant senior herself and an activist for lifelong sexual enjoyment. She provides informative and encouraging videos, 'Talking Out Loud about Senior Sex' and a blog post, 'Naked at Our Age'. Both are well worth your time, if you and your partner are interested in keeping your love life active. And when all else fails, make an appointment to see a Sex Therapist.

Dr. Karen Carpenter is a Florida Board certified Clinical Sexologist and licensed Psychologist based in Kingston. She is the author of 'Love & Sex: The Basics' available on amazon.com. You can listen to 'Love & Sex' every Tuesday and Thursday on Nationwide 90 fm, from 9-11 pm. Email Dr. Carpenter at: [loveandsexja@gmail.com](mailto:loveandsexja@gmail.com).



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