

# I'm Greedy

By Joyce Siegel – Rockville, MD

While looking out the window of my condo one day I saw a woman who appeared to be 30"ish" walking by. She had a sprightly gait and was dressed for the summer heat...short shorts, bare midriff, flip-flops.

I didn't begrudge her the youthful outfit but I did envy her obvious youthful look (relative to my 92 years). I did envy her confident stride and perfect posture, neither of which I have. Once, maybe. Not now.

At my advanced age I'm using a walker. I have a wheelchair to use on an "as needed" basis. For me, my longest self-propelled walk is in our apartment, from the kitchen to bedroom.

Most of what I want is on shelves that are now too high for me (I've shrunk). Grocery shopping, restaurant dining and theater going...almost everything I used to do have become more difficult. With restaurants it's the usually crowded seating. The walker is always in someone's way. Theater seating involves another problem since there are usually stairs and I need to be near an aisle because of the walker. It's easier to just stay home.

I look in the mirror and don't recognize ME. When about and around, my all-gray hair, my walker and my stooped posture announce OLD to everyone. Most people open doors for me and let me get ahead of them on lines. Some even help me unload my groceries from the shopping cart to the car.

Thinking about all of this and that young woman I saw from my window I think, too, about when I was about her age. I think of things I wanted to do but didn't....about the trips I didn't take and the books I meant to read...once or once again.

I feel greedy, even though I've had "my turn." I feel greedy although I've done rewarding work (and received more than enough recognition for it.) Certainly I feel grateful too... especially grateful for my loving, attentive family (including my beloved eight grandchildren).

That gratefulness extends to my home. Unlike the majority of our earth's population, I live in a secure, comfortable home, temperature seasonally adjusted. There's a full fridge and artwork I enjoy on the apartment's walls. I feel blessed. But, "blessed" is tempered by reality. The daily news is full of horror and despair. Anyone with an ounce of empathy must feel saddened and anxious in these troubling times. So, along with my "blessings" I worry about what's ahead for my incredible grandchildren and for that 30ish, snappily dressed woman I saw from my window.

They'll all have to figure how to deal with what's ahead. They'll have to face their inevitable aging. The only certainty is that nobody gets out of here alive. I envy them their problems. I'm greedy for more of that precious and so often taken for granted element ...time.