

The Fitness Center

By Diane Parker

Mounted on the walls of the Windsor Gardens Fitness Center are five framed pictures. Each one has a significant title. Each one defines a purpose, why I am there in the first place. Who I am or who I might want to be.

There are reasons why these pictures are hanging on the walls of a fitness center equipped for senior citizens who may want to maintain their health and to keep their bodies strong and vital. Past sixty, it takes a lot of courage to do this.

The five pictures are scenes of challenge, determination, commitment, attitude and perseverance. Now, you ask, why would these five words be so important as to write an essay about them?

I never gave any of these words any special thought or took any particular time to stop and think about how they might have affected my life until now. In my youth I was too busy discovering what was out in the world after leaving my parents' nest.

The fitness center is my second home. On any given week I may spend as much as six to eight hours working out on machines, free weights, the bar bells and the treadmill. My aging body challenges me every breathing moment. It demands commitment and perseverance. Attitude dictates how safely I will conduct myself when I work out.

I reinforce with changing my lagging attitude with a self-help pep talk. Who else knows me better than myself? Determination is my best ally. It is attitude I have the worse problem with so perseverance kicks in and says, "Yes, you can." And I go for it!

Challenge is to dare, to defy. It can be a contest. Why not be a contestant? You can be your own greatest challenger.

Commitment. It's a word with a huge definition. It means obligation, the need to be responsible. Most of us live by it every day. It is my altar.

Determination is firmness of purpose. Life is lived determining this road to take, that corner to turn. I hate it when I end up in a dead end alley!

Perseverance is to carry on. Interesting word. Insistence to be strong enough to keep pressing on when every fiber in one's body is sending messages that it wants to quit. I like to ignore the word quit.

Attitude is a posture, a state of mind or a feeling. How many times in one's life does attitude decide whether we like a situation we are confronted with? A person we may decide whether or not we may or may not like or want to be around?

Attitude is a word that signifies being strong in commitment, challenging my perseverance and determining my commitments.