

A Senior Activity: When Your Mind and Body Debate

By Irv Sternberg

We seniors frequently observe that the so-called *golden years* are a bit tarnished by failing health, family or financial issues, and the prospect that our automobiles will outlive our bodies. Of course, for those who no longer drive, that's not an issue. For those folk, the question is whether their bodies will outlive their walkers. But that is not the only subject that lingers on my mind.

As I accumulate years, I find that my mind is in constant argument with my body. My mind is always making promises that my body refuses to keep. The conversation goes something like this:

Mind: *We're going on a motorcycle ride in the mountains.*

Body: *We're going to do WHAT? Are you crazy?*

Mind: *Okay, don't get your pants in a twist. Forget the motorcycle ride. We're going to try a ZipLine ride over the Colorado River.*

Body: *Now I know you're crazy. You go. Send me card if you survive.*

Mind: *You really are a pussy cat! How about we accept that invitation to have dinner at 10 and party till 3 in the morning?*

Body: *Hah, that's a laugh. Have you forgotten that even your brain sometimes goes to sleep at 6 o'clock?*

But that's one of the nice things about living longer. Your mind and your body can have these debates. You still enjoy contemplating the thrills and excitement that border on fantasy even as your body exercises its veto power.

I recently had such an internal debate. My mind wanted to go see a movie playing in our Auditorium on a cold January night after a day of snowing.

My body said: "It's dark and freezing outside. You can hardly see where you're going. There's snow on the ground. Stay home and watch TV."

My mind said: "Don't be such a party-pooper. The Auditorium is only 100 yards away. No problem. And it's a really good movie."

So my mind prevailed. I took the backstairs and started walking, unaware that the sidewalk was covered with black ice. One moment I was standing, the next I was flat on my back with a broken ankle.

When will my mind ever pay attention to my body?

Some day. But don't bet on it.