

Maggie Time!

*By Mary Jane McCormick*

Two days each week, I show up at Maggie's home for what can only be described as "Time Well Spent." This woman of 90 years greets me with her signature smile and asks me how I am doing. And as the morning unfolds, she typically remembers some meeting I had scheduled, an appointment I had to keep or a family gathering I had mentioned. And now she wants to know how things went. She has every reason to be focused on herself but begins our days with something about me!

Just last week, Maggie helped me celebrate my birthday. We discussed current political news, opened several gifts, had cake and ice cream, listened to Holiday music and danced to a concerto by Mozart.

We often sort through Maggie's volumes of writings from her days as a traveling journalist and together we visit places like India, China and the Incan citadel called Machu Picchu. We revisit her creative depths by reading the hundreds of poems written about love and life.

We reminisce about the people that have come in and out of her life: family, friends, teachers, gurus, lovers, and confidantes.

We take walks outside and, in spite of lost vision, she takes in the warmth of the sun, notices the shades of the sky, and the shadows of people passing by. Maggie sees more than I do.

Maggie pushes through the frustration of trying to find a word, remember a name or recall a memory. Her soul peeks out every chance it gets to push through the fog we call dementia. Maggie's longing for her 'good old days' gets short-circuited by her determination to live in the present. A quote I found recently, says it all:

"What is the point of being alive if you don't at least try to do something remarkable?"

My time well spent with Maggie teaches me more about aging with grace than I could ever hope to know! And for me this goes far beyond remarkable.