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to do. There's a time to observe and a time to evaluate – almost never a good idea to do both at the same time.”

- 2) **Feeling:** You might not have frank alexithymia (problem with feeling emotions), but many of us demonstrate a kind of “dyslexithymia”: we don't distinguish between our feelings (e.g. anger), and our evaluations (e.g. that someone deliberately slighted us). NVC encourages us to identify and express our feelings (e.g. I feel lonely) instead of expressing our evaluation, interpretation or judgment (e.g. I feel that you are always too busy to care about me). Expressing an emotion without tying in a criticism of the listener is more likely to get a compassionate response instead of leading to an escalation of conflict.
- 3) **Needs:** We're to state what need we're experiencing that's not being met (What would make life more wonderful). The first time I tried this, I choked on the word “need”—and yet, we do have needs. Everyone does.
- 4) **Request:** This is a clear, specific way that we're asking the other person to help us.

Identifying and sharing our feelings and needs or making a request may at times be restrained by our cultural upbringing, our trust of the person in front of us and our pride — it takes time and much effort.

Identifying and sharing our feelings and needs or making a request may at times be restrained by our cultural upbringing, our trust of the person in front of us and our pride — it takes time and much effort. To encourage us to learn and practise NVC Rosenberg describes how different people have successfully used NVC: embittered spouses; feuding West African warlords; disenfranchised inner-city youth; even a woman who deflected a physical assault using only her words.

We can also help others express themselves with elements of NVC., e.g. “Am I right to say that in this moment I'm not meeting your need for (efficiency/understanding/orderliness/pain relief)?” Rosenberg pointed out that these empathic statements don't have to be accurate. Just by eliciting their feelings, needs and/or requests, we're guiding them towards constructively expressing what is alive in them.

Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing, and right-doing, there is a field. I will meet you there.

- Rumi

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What concoctions make a fulfilling GP's tequila sunset?

by Dr Lye Tong Fong, Family Physician, Editorial Team Member (Team B)

Tequila sunset? ...What cocktail is that? We probably heard of tequila sunrise more often than tequila sunset. Now let us look at the recipe of tequila sunrise to appreciate the difference between these two cocktails. (Feel free to go ahead and try it)

Tequila sunrise: Pour the 3 parts tequila and 6 parts orange juice into a highball glass over ice. Add 1 part grenadine, which will sink to the bottom. Stir gently to create the sunrise effect. Garnish with orange slices and cherry and serve.

Tequila sunset: The main difference is grenadine is substituted with dark rum, Soda (with red food coloring) or blackberry brandy which is less sweet.

Please allow me to share with you my perspective on preparing for our sunset years as a General Practitioner (GP) who just passed 50. Having run a 24-hour medical practice for the last 20 years, it is probably a blessing for me to meet locums of different shapes and sizes (some of them are concurrently running their own clinics). I got to know some of their stories. Some do it to supplement

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their monthly income, some do it to pass time while some need some extra support for their newly established practices. But there is one interesting group that I get to meet, which will be our senior locums who share some stories with me.

Some stories:

Dr A, a GP who runs his own practice, decided to give up and start working part-time for us in the mid-2000s. He was in his mid-50s with kids who graduated. He decided to migrate to New Zealand to enjoy the fresh air and pursue his interest in strawberry farming.

Dr L, a GP in his 60s, flies in from Canada to work 3 months before returning to take a break from work for 9 months for about 4 years.

Dr. O, a GP in his 60s gave up his own practice to come and work for us. He was happy working his allotted hours as he gets to travel a few months a year doing his favourite photography. Till this day, he is still actively practicing with us.

These are just some interesting stories I have come across of our GP colleagues in their twilight years.

Of course, there are some of us who work till our life or mental capacity expires. Some luckier ones get bought out and rest on their bounties. Others may be struggling with failed contracts of promises of mergers and acquisition.

Whichever the endings are, we cannot avoid the truth of life that one day we will have to come to a stop. The question is how and when will we stop.

To start with, as of all good cocktails we need a good recipe.



A tequila sunset

A few good ingredients are important:

Main ingredients:

1. Business plans (winding down/out — probably start planning a good 10 years ahead, exit strategy)
2. Personal plans (e.g. LPA, AMD)
3. Family plans (e.g. Will)

Garnishes

1. Bucket list
2. Wish list (yet to be fulfilled)

Remember the difference between the two cocktails? Grenadine substituted with other less sweet alternatives.

We should keep in mind that health (both physical and mental) will dwindle as time goes on. Much effort will need to be allocated towards our health in order for us to enjoy a more fulfilling life.

What about Money?

While it is an essential part of retirement life, money is not the most important. Many of us have already pursued money most of our lives. There will come a time when the value money brings to us just does not justify the time and effort we have to invest to obtain it. Our perspective of the value of money will change as we age. Money cannot be used to exchange for time or relationship lost. For some of us, money can even bring with it chaos, infighting, breakup among partners or future generations. So be mindful not get too engrossed in money.

Having a good life is about being balanced. Just like in a good cocktail the amount of each ingredient have to be right, so that the best flavour may blossom in one's taste buds. Hopefully, this article reminds us that we should not be blindly pursuing wealth or career, casting aside relationships.

Lastly, I believe that we should actively pursue goals and objectives in life, enjoying our time with our loved ones when we are still basking in good health, before our sun sets. Hopefully, by then, we should be smiling as we have already lived our life the way we had envisioned.

Wishing everyone all the best in health and happiness as we walk into our sunset years or for the younger ones as you prepare well in advance for them!