

My Favorite
**SENIOR
MOMENTS**

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To my hiking pals.

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*Our mouths were filled with laughter,
our tongues with songs of joy.*

PSALM 126:2

A Note from Karen

Do you, like me, sometimes look in the mirror and wonder whose face that is? You no longer see the handsome dude of 50 years ago or the glamorous gal with long red hair who was voted homecoming queen in high school. *Ack!* The years have gone by quickly, and suddenly we're facing the second half of life... or maybe the last quarter. It can be a discouraging prospect if we let it be. But it can also be one of the best seasons of our lives if we choose to make it so.

One thing always cheers me up—knowing I'm not alone. Other people are looking in the mirror too and deciding how they will live these final chapters of their lives. Will we choose love and laughter or fear and worry? I choose love and laughter! In that vein, I've compiled some of my favorite senior moments from my life and from the lives of others to help you choose the funny side of the street too.

I hope these stories and prayers encourage you to look at life from the positive, sunny side of the street so you can continue to live wholeheartedly—especially knowing that God is with you...and always will be.

Karen O'Connor
Watsonville, California



Looking Good

Whose Face Is That?

Louann's granddaughter Chloe was quick to tell her grandmother she had the figure of a teenager—but then she added these dreaded words: “Well, I mean, except for your face.”

That did it. Louann ran to the bathroom as soon as Chloe left for home. The sweet girl didn't mean to hurt her feelings. She was just speaking the truth. But still, it did hurt to hear it put so bluntly. Louann knew she looked older—but really old? “I'm not ready for that,” she murmured to her reflection. “Lord, whose face is that in the mirror? It can't be mine. Why, it seems just yesterday that I looked like her.” Louann pointed to a photo on the wall of her sister Amy and herself taken when they were in high school.

Louann moved to the living room and surveyed her wedding photo and then one of her first child, Robert, and her on his fifth birthday.

“I was a pretty good-looking chick in those days. What happened?”

“A lot,” God seemed to whisper in her ear.

Louann thought about it.

- college
- marriage
- childbirth
- school
- graduation

- work
- illness
- parents' deaths
- grandchildren
- more...so much more

Life happened, that's what. And with every year, Louann had experienced a little more wear and tear. She went back to the bathroom and peered into the mirror again. She smiled this time. "It's okay. You're still young at heart, Louann. And you're still beautiful in God's eyes. And, most important, you're deeply loved!"

Today's Thoughts

*See what great love the Father has lavished on us,
that we should be called children of God.
And that is what we are.*

1 JOHN 3:1

Thank you, Lord, that I'm alive at this "advanced" age.
It's a privilege not everyone gets to enjoy.

Trashed Hopes

Manny liked to be his wife's hero. Whenever he could impress her with his prowess, he did, whether it was climbing a ladder to take down a hornet's nest, hanging a picture above the mantel, or changing the oil in her car. He also made a point of being the one to put the trash bin at the curb every Thursday night for pick up on Friday morning.

Elsie could take out the trash since the container had wheels and handles, but Manny considered this smelly, messy work—a man's job. And he did it valiantly until...

One Thursday evening he set out the can as usual and then went to bed. The next morning at six o'clock he heard the rattle and roar of the sanitation truck driving up and down the neighborhood streets, picking up the trash cans with its strong metal arms, and heaving the garbage into the large opening at the top. He knew it would take a while to get to all the homes, so he decided to turn over and catch an extra 40 winks.

At seven, Manny's eyes popped open. He glanced at the alarm clock on his nightstand. He'd overslept! He bounded out of bed—well, not exactly bounded. But he did get up and pull on his sweats, ready to retrieve the trash bin and wheel it back to the garage. This had been his routine for some 15 years. He headed outside.

When he got to the curb he stopped and rubbed the sleep from his eyes. No trash can in sight. Nada! Nowhere! *How odd*, he thought. His neighbors' containers were in place. Not one missing except his.

Manny instantly got mad. Someone had stolen his trash can! Well, whoever it was wouldn't get away with it. He'd have the individual's hide and more. And he'd report it to the cops too. What kind of neighborhood was this anyway? Why, a man couldn't even trust his neighbors! Then Manny felt guilty. His shoulders slumped as he looked at the houses on his quiet street. Good, decent people lived inside each one. And they all had their own trash cans, so why steal his?

A stranger. That's it, he decided. Someone outside the area. That had to be the case. Manny marched inside. He was a man with a mission. He had a lady inside who needed him to protect her from the thieves in the area.

When he got to the kitchen he explained the situation to Elsie, who was sipping a cup of coffee at the table. "And don't you worry, honey," Manny assured her. "I'll get to the bottom of this. There is nothing to be afraid of. I'll take care of it." His chest puffed out a bit as he reached for the phone.

Elsie leaned over and touched his arm. "Who are you calling?"

"The city offices—the Sanitation Department, that's who."

Elsie put down her cup. "I already took care of it, dear."

Manny scratched the bald spot on his head. "How'd you do that? And when?"

"This morning. I couldn't sleep with the sun streaming through the window, so I got up early and made coffee. I heard the garbage truck coming and going, so I sat and watched. I've always been fascinated with those big rigs and how they heft such heavy bins, dump them, and bring them back down to the street—all in a matter of seconds."

She smiled. "But the strangest thing happened this morning. The truck came up, grabbed our bin and lifted it up. And our bin disappeared! Then the truck drove away. I couldn't get outside fast enough to flag the driver to stop. So I called the Sanitation Department, and the customer-service person said not to worry. "This

happens sometimes,' he told me. He said he'll have a new bin sent out on Monday."

Elsie picked up her cup and sipped more coffee.

Manny put down the phone and scratched his head again. Looks like he'd have to postpone being a hero. Elsie was clearly able to take care of business.

Today's Thoughts

Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you.

PSALM 55:22

Lord, I'm often preoccupied with being a hero instead of realizing that you are the only hero anyone needs. Thank you.

Romeo, Romeo...

Chuck had a pleasant conversation with his new friend Barney, who'd recently turned 90.

"It would be wonderful to see more of you," Barney said.

Chuck agreed. "We ought to get together for coffee some weekday since we're both retired. How about meeting downtown at Starbucks on Friday morning?"

The men picked a time and said goodbye.

Chuck was aware of how quickly time was passing. It was important to stay in touch with people he cared about—and Barney was one of them. "We never know how much time we have left to socialize with good friends," he told his wife over dinner that evening.

Later that week, the two men met for coffee and chatted about old times, solved the world's problems, and told a few corny jokes. When they were ready to part, Barney shared an idea. "Chuck, how about being my guest at a new men's club in town? You can see if you like it. If you do, you can become a member too."

"I might be interested. What club is it?" asked Chuck.

"It's called Romeo. You'll love it. After speaking with you a few days ago, I knew you'd be an ideal recruit."

Chuck felt his stomach clench. Just the name of the group chilled him. He was long past the age of even imagining himself as a Romeo. "I'm sorry, Barney," he said with a catch in his voice. He didn't want to offend his friend, but for sure he wasn't about to risk his reputation by joining such an organization. In fact, he

was pretty disappointed to learn that Barney was *that* kind of man. “That doesn’t sound like my kind of club.” He added, “I’ll stick to Toastmasters.”

At Chuck’s look, Barney broke out laughing—so loud, in fact, that Chuck was taken aback. Barney said, “I apologize, Chuck. You’ve got the wrong idea. Romeo is an *acronym*.”

Chuck wasn’t sure he wanted to know what the letters stood for. *Maybe ignorance really is bliss*, he thought.

But Barney didn’t wait for Chuck’s go-ahead. He belted out the letters and what they stood for. “R–O–M–E–O: Really Old Men Eating Out.”

Then it was Chuck’s turn to laugh out loud. “Count me in!” he said. “I’m all about being that kind of Romeo.”

Today’s Thoughts

*If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God,
who gives generously to all.*

JAMES 1:5

Lord, I’m so glad I can have fun with family and friends at this stage of life. A good belly laugh helps ease the tension and keeps me from becoming a sourpuss.

Happy Golden Years

Millie glanced at her reflection in the front window of Bartlett's Department Store. My, she was a sight. She needed new glasses, a new hairdo, new makeup, and a new outfit, to say nothing of a new pair of shoes—especially this week. She and Joe were going on being married 50 years now. They planned to celebrate their golden anniversary on Saturday. Millie wanted to look beautiful for her husband. They were going to restate their vows in front of their family and a few close friends. She hoped Joe would tell her she looked as beautiful as the day he married her.

Just the thought brought a flush to her cheeks. Here they were in the happy golden years of life that people always talked about. *They are golden*, Millie thought. She and Joe had a rich life filled with faith, family, friends, and plenty of opportunities for fun. They'd had their mishaps, misunderstandings, health issues, and money challenges like most couples, but they'd gotten through them. Life was indeed good.

Millie walked into the store and headed toward the escalator. She wanted to concentrate on creating a new image, but she couldn't stop thinking about the past and how quickly time was moving. Where had the years gone? She and Joe had been high school sweethearts once upon a time. Now they were 70-something seniors. They'd been together for so long they could hardly remember when they were apart.

They were as compatible with one another as a sock and a shoe.

Joe provided the sturdy exterior that shielded them from harm, and Millie lined their marriage with her love and warmth. God kept them together by his grace. They had a good life, and Millie hoped many more years were ahead.

She looked up and realized she was on the second floor—women's wear. Perfect! She wandered through the dresses and casual wear, but nothing seemed quite right. Then on the back wall she spotted a simple silk blouse with gold flecks. On the rack below was a matching skirt. She tried them on, and they seemed made just for her.

Next Millie sailed into the shoe department and purchased a pair of gold-colored sandals with little straps across the insteps. She was set. She already had gold earrings and a bracelet. Now she needed some pretty makeup, a haircut, and a perm.

Millie's heart pounded. She'd never spent money on herself like this. But it seemed right to give herself something new and pretty for such a memorable occasion. *Won't Joe be surprised when he sees me waltz into the banquet room all golden and happy, she mused. I'll be ready to celebrate our happy golden years on our golden anniversary!*

Today's Thoughts

Marriage should be honored by all.

HEBREWS: 13:4

Dear God, the golden years are for people who trust in you and then live life to the fullest till you call them home. May I be among them.