



RENEWNEWS

*RENEW: Brings good health
to those who give good health*



VOLUME XLI ISSUE TWO

Winter 2024

Solving the Puzzle

Linda Hawes Clever, MD, MACP

The water sparkled; the birds swooped; the islands beckoned. We were also thrilled that someone who worked on the ferry had put out a jigsaw puzzle! We piled into the benches, started to work and had made a good start by the time we docked.

Later, I thought about *life* as a jigsaw puzzle. It's far from a perfect metaphor. Sometimes you don't have a picture and you may not even have all the pieces. Nonetheless, we do know some of the pieces of a colorful, enjoyable, fulfilling, and joyful life.

Over the years, RENEW has found five of these pieces. You may have found other important ones, too. Here are RENEW's:

Puzzle Pieces

1. Have strong relationships
2. Have deep spiritual or religious commitments
3. Take care of yourself
4. Enjoy your work, paid or unpaid
5. Be confident that you can play the hand that's dealt to you

Relationships

Repeated studies show that people who connect with others live longer and better. This makes friends and family important pieces of life's puzzle. They spur you on to eat veggies, exercise, relax. They listen, give good advice, pick you up, give you a hug. They encourage. (Dogs help too.)

Have Deep Spirituality and/or Religion Commitments

Many feel that religion and spirituality are the puzzle's center – or their glue – or guidance – or light – or map – or speed bumps – or quest – or the reason to serve or even to *be*. Both involve *awe*, that overpowering appreciation of a sunset or a healthy baby. Both require time and exploring. Rabbi Eric Weiss points out that religion names that awe – Adonai, Allah, the Buddha, Jesus – and has structure. Spirituality is fueled by the senses and imagination, and has few boundaries.

Take Care of Yourself

You are living your own precious life. Pause right now for a moment and think about yourSelf. Think about how you can “save the only Life you could save” as poet Mary Oliver said in *The Journey*. I suspect yourSelf would opine that you could get more sleep and more time in Nature and that your relationships could be more robust and abundant. Do consider that dreaded colonoscopy. It's time to check, repair and polish your healthy Self so that you, yourSelf, fits nicely into your puzzle.

Enjoy Your Work, Paid or Unpaid

Many are not overjoyed with their work these days. Hybrid work may seem handy yet how do you get ahead if you've never met your boss? Good ideas used to hatch in casual chats by the water cooler. Or perhaps the commute takes forever five days a week or you're the wrong peg. Look around. Maybe the piece you are looking for is hidden in plain sight. You could take a break to get a new perspective. Substitute or supplement that work by doing what you love: sports, volunteering, spending time with dear ones. Renew and refill.

Play the Hand That's Dealt You

Optimists often assert that outcomes will be positive. Disappointments can pepper a life, however. In *Man's Search for Meaning*, psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor Viktor Frankl said, “The last of the human freedoms is to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances...” Believing that you can handle a situation is a smart piece to have for your puzzle. *The Little Engine Could* chuffing, “I think I can, I think I can...” nailed a positive attitude—and she made over the mountain. Also, you have family, friends, mentors, encouragers, experts, prayer, learning, reflection, a good night's sleep, and past experiences. You've got your own back.

Amazingly, the same ferry eased into the dock after our family crabfest and the same puzzle awaited us! The ride was just a bit too short for us to finish. A jigsaw puzzle may not be a perfect metaphor for life yet it's a great start.

RENEW News Winter 2024

California Medical Association 2024 Gary Nye, MD Award for Physician Health and Well-Being

The Gary S. Nye, MD Award for Physician Health and Wellness went to Linda (and to RENEW, really). The California Medical Association cited her “outstanding work, which will continue to resonate as a new generation of physicians develops programs to improve the health and wellness of the profession.”

New Vistas

The Center for Excellence in Nonprofits and RENEW continue to collaborate in important ways. The Leaders Institute XVIII fellows started their year with an interactive 3 hour RENEW Zoom on *What Makes Me Tick? What Keeps Me Ticking? Sustaining Yourself*. CEN and RENEW have also submitted a joint proposal to a foundation to fund a series of seminars, one of which will teach techniques of convening RENEW’s famed Conversation Groups.

In the spirit of times, we send this anonymous poem with the conviction that we are here together and can move ahead.

Instructions on Living in a Broken World

lean into community
seek out love
applaud the good you see
keep paying attention
talk to your neighbors
dance to the music and embrace art
look for love and small joys
take breaks and relish and nourishing your body
donate what you can
linger at the dinner table with friends
check in with your people
let yourself grieve
love one another as deeply as you can

the storm is upon us and we must hold on

don't give up, we're here together.



We would love for you to follow us [@renew_now_org](https://www.instagram.com/renew_now_org)
See you on Instagram!