



**Ned Hickson**

# Turning 49 doesn't matter when you don't act your age

Last night, a good friend suddenly — and without warning — offered a preemptive toast to my turning 49 next week. I call him a “good” friend because, until as recently as last night, I considered him a “great” friend. But I honestly can't remember his name now.

Haha! Just kidding! We were actually never very close. Ok, in all seriousness, until his good-natured ribbing about turning 49 (I still can't stop laughing!), I hadn't given it much thought. That's because I don't really think about myself relative to age.

Relative to the nearest strip of bacon, coffee shop and my wife? Sure.

But age? Not really. I still wear band shirts from Hot Topic; I have eight pairs of Marvel superhero Vans shoes; sometimes when I'm at a drive-thru, I'll order my food while talking like Elmer Fudd.

*I'd wike your deee-wishes*

*ba-weeto su-pweem, pweez...*

I still get excited when, like at dinner last night, I found a Star Wars poster in my box of Reese's peanut butter cereal! And yes, I had peanut butter cereal for dinner.

On the rare occasion I'm asked for my age, like when it's Senior Tuesday at Fred Meyer I order a glass of wine, I have to think about it and then count forward from 1977. I was 11 years old then. I remember that because “Star Wars” came out that year.

I realize a person could suggest the inability to remember my age is, in itself, a sign of my aging. However, as I've mentioned, that person's name escapes me.

It's no small irony that over the years some people have remarked, “You don't look your age!” while others have suggested “You need to start ACTING your age!”

I don't think this is a coincidence.

In fact, I'd say one is the direct result of the other. Keeping a lighthearted perspective on the world and maintaining a sense of wonderment about its possibilities

— whether plausible or fanciful — helps avoid that downward spiral into living life in an uninspired rut. Kids instinctively avoid this rut because they know their mission is to explore, push the boundaries and question the rules — of the house, the laws of physics, human anatomy, the proper use of utensils — in order to define themselves.

They approach life with their eyes wide open because they haven't started second-guessing the world yet.

Then somewhere along the way we're told being an adult

means having all the answers. So we stop questioning. Stop wondering.

Stop trying to move objects with our mind while sitting in traffic. And stop believing in the possibility — however remote — we might be the vessel of an undiscovered super power.

I've worked hard to keep my youthful perspective.

Does that mean I spend every moment being a goofball trying to shoot lasers out of my eyes or throw a stapler at my editor using my mind?

Ok, fine. But how about when I'm not at work?

No, I recognize when it's time take things seriously and the responsibilities I have as a father, husband and human being. I'm reminded of this whenever my fire department pager goes off — and how knowing when to embrace rational understanding over youthful wonderment can mean the difference between life and death.

Yet the same can be said about everyday life: knowing when to embrace wonderment over rationality can also mean the difference between life and death, albeit a slow from the inside.

So as I approach 49, I plan on keeping a balance between the two. For example, when I responded to this morning's tap-out for a car accident I put youthful wonderment aside and dialed-in my serious mode.

I also wore Marvel superhero underwear from my kids.

Because constantly living your life “age-appropriately” can be like Kryptonite.

*Ned is a syndicated columnist with News Media Corporation. His book, “Humor at the Speed of Life,” is available online at Port Hole Publications.*

Community Chorus of Florence Oregon  
will present  
*An Appalachian Winter*  
December 13th, at Florence Events Center  
DO YOU LIKE TO SING?  
**COME SING WITH US!**

Registration is Monday, August 24th,  
6:30-7:30 pm. First rehearsal follows, 7:30-8:30 pm.  
Cross Road Church (10th & Maple). \$60 membership  
541-902-7671; www.communitychorusflorenceor.org

**Burns's Riverside Chapel**  
— Florence Funeral Home —

*Your Community Friend-  
Compassionate Care  
for you and your loved ones.*

2765 Kingwood St. 24 Hours  
Florence, OR 541-997-3416  
burnsriversidechapel.com

# FOOD & DINING



## How to keep things light when dining out this summer

Dining out is a great way to experience new cuisine and enjoy a meal with family and friends. But dining out often leads to overeating, a problem that's unhealthy year-round but especially inconvenient when warm air makes it more uncomfortable to deal with the side effects of overeating.

Though some restaurants offer large portions that can make it difficult to lighten things up when dining out in the summer, the following are a handful of ways diners can keep things light but still enjoy their favorite restaurants even when the mercury has risen.

\* Don't be bashful. Some restaurants alter their menus in warmer weather to accommodate those customers who prefer lighter fare on hot nights. But even those that don't make such alterations might be amenable to customers who request certain changes when dining out. For example, ask your waiter if you can substitute vegetables in lieu of a side of potatoes or french fries, which tend to be heavier and harder to digest. Don't be afraid to ask for such substitutions or even ask that vegetable servings be doubled.

\* Don't mistake “low-carb” for “low-calorie.” Just because a dish is heralded as “low-carb” does not necessarily mean it's low in calories. A low-carb dish might seem like the perfect option on a warm summer night, but not if it's laden with calories. Before ordering a low-carb dish, confirm if it's also low in calories and low in fat. If not, look for a lighter option to avoid feeling too full after dinner.

\* Think inside the box. When ordering a large entree, you can be creative by asking your waiter to box half of your meal before it even reaches the table. This prevents you from overeating and makes it more likely that you will eat a meal that's more in tune with a healthy serving size.

\* Don't pile on your salad. Salads are a summertime staple for many people, who prefer salads because they're delicious but not likely to produce any symptoms of overeating. But salads are only as light as their ingredients allow them to be. If you want to keep things light and healthy, avoid adding too many ingredients to your salad. Creamy dressings are often heavy, especially when paired with ingredients like bacon and cheese. When adding ingredients to your salad, opt for lighter and healthier items like raw vegetables or even some fresh fruit.

\* Forgo the freebies. While many people consider complimentary bread baskets one of the joys of dining out, such freebies also make meals more filling. If you anticipate your meal taking a long time to make it to your table, ask the waiter to bring a plate of fresh fruit or vegetables in lieu of a bread basket or a bowl of chips or nachos. This way you won't starve while waiting for your meal, but also you won't be filling up on heavy foods you might regret eating when you head back into the warm summer air.

\* Split dessert. Dessert might seem like the ideal way to cap off a delicious meal, but a decadent slice of chocolate cake or creamy helping of creme brulee only makes a meal more filling. If you must indulge in dessert, split your dessert with a fellow diner so your last few bites of the night don't make you feel uncomfortable when it's time to leave the restaurant.

Many people prefer to eat less when temperatures rise. And while restaurants tend to offer larger portions than you might eat at home, there are ways to enjoy a night out on the town without overdoing it at the dinner table.

# SAVOR THE Flavor

**CELEBRATE!**  
Surfside Restaurant

Get a photo to remember your day!

- Anniversary
- Birthday
- Proposing?

CALL 541-997-8263  
88416 1<sup>ST</sup> Ave. Florence, OR

**Mo's Restaurant**

Every Month Mo's has brought in special "Motivation for Kids" tables which raise money for local charities that are devoted to helping the wellbeing of local children. This month FLORENCE HEAD START is the local charity being honored.

By sitting at these tables you help a specific local charity each and every time. We thank you for that!

Mo's Old Town, Florence • Daily 11 am - 8 pm  
Serving Bowls of comfort for Over 50 Years

**MAPLE STREET GRILLE**

WE NOW HAVE CRAFT BEER ON TAP

FRIDAY Lemon Pepper Grilled Salmon with yukon mash and seasonal veggies

SATURDAY: Grilled Rib-eye served with three cajun prawns, yukon mash and seasonal veggies

Open for Lunch & Dinner • Lunch Specials Daily  
Reservations Suggested.  
165 MAPLE ST. • 541-997-9811 • WWW.MAPLESTREETGRILLE.COM

**Pizza & Italian Cuisine**

Enjoy casual family dining featuring old-world Italian recipes and fresh-tossed brick pizza.

Beer, Wine, Microbrews  
Dine-In or Take-Out Service | Catering & Private Parties

1285 Bay Street in Old Town Florence  
(541) 902-8338  
Hours: Monday-Sunday 11:00am to Close  
Happy Hour: Monday-Friday 3:00pm to 5:00pm

**THE GRILL & LOUNGE AT SANDPINES**

AUGUST FRIDAY NIGHT DINNER SPECIAL

8 OZ. AIRLINE CHICKEN BREAST SERVED WITH SAUTÉED VEGETABLES AND YUKON MASHED POTATOES  
ONLY \$13

1201 35th Street at Kingwood, Florence  
Highway 101 & 35 St. 541-997-4623