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## PERSONAL NOTE FROM WINNIS

December 31, 2017 marked the transition into a new phase for our family. James' mom (age 95) was moved into her daughter's place. Thank God for my sister-in-law and her husband who remodeled and "senior proof" their basement apartment with an outside entrance. Now mom does not have to climb stairs to her 3rd-floor flat.

That transition allowed James and I the freedom to participate in a vision trip to South Korea with other ethnic ministry leaders from CRC North America in April.

One place we visited was in the DMZ (Demilitarized Zone) near the 38th parallel, the line dividing South Korea and North Korea. Imagine praying with a group from all nations for the then upcoming summit between the two Koreas and world peace.

As explored in the feature article, life goes through stages but we could still grow by getting out of our comfort zone at any age!



Here is a photo taken by Resonate Global Mission of the Christian Reformed Church of North America (CRCNA).

I'm grateful for both my mother-in-law and my own mother. Although my mommy passed away at age 48, she demonstrated a love that reconciles. Let's bless others with the love of Christ!

**母親節快樂! Happy Mother's Day!**

Joy and Peace to you,  
Winnis

## FEATURED ARTICLE

### Life Stages

In times past, we measured significant life events by the age most people experienced them. Graduation, first job, marriage, first child, empty nest, retirement, widowhood, and finally

death. All these milestones happened at fairly predictable ages from 18 through 65, or so. But times have changed drastically in the last quarter century, and using chronological age as markers for life stages may no longer seem relevant to everyone. How then shall we live?

- Many 40-year-old (and older) women are having their first child, and not always with a husband as the father.
- With the rapid changes in business—mergers, downsizing, and buyouts—it is not unusual for a person to be forced into early retirement at age 50.
- These days, some women are earning their first professional degrees at 65.
- Human growth hormones claim to help men at 70 to reverse aging by twenty years.
- Eighty-year-olds are moving in together to the surprise and sometimes chagrin of their 55-year-old children.

In this century, adolescence extends into the late twenties, middle age happens somewhere in the fifties and old age is more a state of mind than a physical reality.

Life's passages are not as predictable as they once were. Individuals have more choices and more freedom to make choices than ever before. But freedom may come with complications.

### The Twenties

While previous generations graduated from college (if they went), settled into careers, had children and bought their first home during their twenties, today this decade is a time of prolonged adolescence. Many in this age group still live with their parents and remain single. Prolonged adolescence ends, Gail Sheehy, author of *New Passages*, says, "when we are not afraid to disappoint our parents."

### The Thirties

The thirties mark the initiation to adulthood and 30-somethings are generally preoccupied with crafting a public self that will spotlight their talents and win approval and success. During this stage, what matters are external measurements—perks of the job, size of home and model of car, accomplishments of the children—which become showcases for proving worth. Difficulties may arise when these outward measurements don't jibe with the truth of who we are.

### The Forties

By this age, adults might be used to having two things: choice and control. Consequently, when things get rough, "people in their forties are likely to feel more out of control than ever."

Both men and women encounter complications that come with changing bodies. While women experience perimenopause and menopause, men may face their own version of physical breakdown; it's not unusual to experience a lapse in virility and vitality.

During this life stage, women may struggle with late child rearing or mourn their lack of children, and couples may be forced to renegotiate traditional relationships. Mortality is an issue to be reckoned with. This is the time when inevitable questions of values and lifestyle must be responded to.

For women on the other side of menopause, the call to adventure may not go unheeded. Many feel motivated to learn new skills, dive into new careers, and explore their creativity, while men over 45 are becoming the new at-risk population for significant problems with anxiety and depression.

### The Fifties

Sheehy's research indicated that the major influence on the sense of well-being for women in their fifties is not money or social class or marital status; the most decisive factor is age. "Older is happier."

The same is not true for men who experience more uncertainty in middle life than women. Studies at the University of California at Berkeley indicated that men and women who emerge psychologically healthiest at 50 are those who "shape a new self that calls upon qualities that were dormant earlier." In other words, the passage into the fifties and beyond can be made more positively by finding your passion and pursuing it.

### The Sixties

Now comes the time to make the choice between passive aging and what gerontologists call "successful" aging. Successful aging is to make a conscious commitment to continuing

self-education and developing a new set of strategies. Resilience and an ability to respond to life's accidents and conflicts without blaming or bitterness are qualities that serve those in this life stage.

The comfort of mature love and a continued excitement about life both factor into a sense of well-being. For those who compartmentalized their nurturing selves and achieving selves earlier in life, grandparenthood can offer a rich second chance to bring both into harmony.

### The Seventies

To fare well during this stage of life is to let go of that which doesn't matter and focus on a few fine-tuned priorities. Those who thrive live in the present but always have plans for the future.

Rather than focusing on time running out, this life stage says live the moment. Accept that which cannot be changed—loss is inevitable. But so is gain. The sixties, seventies and beyond are times of spiritual growth.

The map of adult life keeps changing as surely as the map of the world has continued to shift throughout the ages.

The Bible says, "Teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom." (Psalm 90:12)

Want to get help through challenging life transition and relationship? Schedule a free consultation at [parentingabctoday.com](http://parentingabctoday.com)

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## CHINESE ARTICLE

### 主動和解的愛

蔣吳蘊蘭原載於 2011 年 5 月《號角月報美西版》

1973 年八月底我離開香港的前一天，媽咪堅持親自熨燙我每一件襯衫。我在房間收拾行李，突然聽到她大叫：「噢，不好了！」

我衝出房門，一眼就看到黃襯衫尖領的燒痕，忍不住大聲吼叫：「媽咪！你為什麼這麼做？」但話一出口，我便匆匆跑回房間，逃離現場，掩飾挫敗和失望。

感覺上，我腦子好像快爆炸了。一方面，我為失去最喜歡的一件衣服而難過。那絲綢襯衫有尖尖的領子、嫩黃的底色、一隻隻可愛小白象的花紋，不但自己覺得好看，更常得到同學朋友的羨慕。現在一邊領子熨焦了，怎能再穿呢？另一方面，看到媽咪蒼白的臉，想到她愛我的心，我怎能在到美國留學前對她大發脾氣呢？

媽咪二十多歲就患上了風濕性心臟病，醫生不鼓勵她生孩子。我剛出生，祖母就告訴我爸爸：「一連生了兩個女兒，生男孩要到外面找！」爸爸很快就有了婚外情，並且在我才一歲的時候，生了個男孩。媽媽軟硬兼施，都不能叫他回心轉意，最終為了姐姐和我

的前途，無可奈何地接受爸爸納妾的事實。雖然經過九年多的努力，媽咪終於給爸爸生了一個兒子，但我從小就是她的知己，未來的希望。我越想越內疚，眼淚哇啦哇啦地流下來。衣服毀了，又傷了媽咪的心，「我為什麼要這樣做呢？」

正當我灰心沮喪發楞時，媽咪進房來，用溫柔的聲音對我說：「襯衣是好的，你來看看！」她笑瞇瞇地托起襯衫，經過她巧手的修補，尖領都變成圓領，天衣無縫，令我破涕為笑。

次日，我們擁抱告別，從此我就再沒有見過媽咪。兩年後，她心臟病發，在香港過世，年僅四十八歲。當時我還在大學唸書，剛與從台灣移民到美國的學長閃電結婚，不但沒有機會給她買個房子，帶她到各地旅遊，也遺憾她沒有親眼見過我的丈夫、兒子和孫兒女，更遺憾她(可能)沒有認識主耶穌。然而，我永遠不會忘記媽咪主動與我和解的場景。在這母親節，我再次衷心發出感謝。

「親愛的媽咪，謝謝您的了解接納和犧牲。您相信我、肯定我、鼓勵我離開家鄉尋求美好未來。您的愛讓我在多年後了解並接受耶穌基督那最浩大的愛。」(羅馬書 5:8)

## ABOUT WINNIS CHIANG

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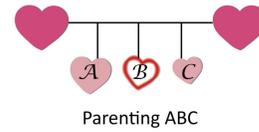


Winnis Chiang, founder of Parenting ABC, is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in California. She holds a BSc. in Electrical Engineering & Computer Science (EECS) from U.C.

Berkeley and a MA. in Marriage, Family and Child Counseling (MFCC) from Western Seminary.

蔣吳蘊蘭師母是 Parenting ABC 創辦人，持有加州婚姻家庭治療師執照、柏克萊加州大學電機電腦工程學士和西方神學院婚姻家庭及兒童輔導碩士學位。

美國孩子，中國爹娘



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