

Chatnam OPINION Line

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Expiration date unknown

By Jeff Davidson

As summer unfolds all around us and the days get longer still, a novel question arises: What would our lives be like if we knew early on the actual date of our death? Would we change how we approach our lives? Would our days be more precious after recognizing their finiteness? Or, would we live recklessly with the notion that “since I’m not going to die until” such and such a date, I might as well take this chance?

I think it is a blessing that we don’t know the day of our death. We have the opportunity living in such ignorant bliss to be as creative adventuresome as reason allows while taking necessary precautions.

On average, in this culture, we live until our late 70s or early 80s. Some people don’t have nearly that long, and some go well past it, but the average life span is both irrefutable and increasing. That should be more than enough. We can plan for it, gathering proverbial acorns from all over the ground and saving them for the winter, and future winters. We can act as if preserving health matters. We can proceed in our 30s, 40s, or 50s knowing that with decades

to go, adding another inch to the waistline matters, as does reducing an inch.

What about our furry friends? Do animals know when they are going to die? Surely they, too, sense old age. A writer in Men’s Health magazine poignantly discussed how his aging dog looked wistfully out over the field while a young dog chased a Frisbee that his owner kept tossing. The old dog knew that he no longer had those skills. He knew that his gait wasn’t as lively; his vision wasn’t as sharp, snout less sensitive. He knew exactly his place in the cycle of life.

Do animals know when their time is up? Probably not precisely, but certainly in the grand scheme of things they know. Oh to be a pet and to revel in the memory of those bygone days, frolicking in the sun with one’s owner.

*Jeff Davidson, MBA, CMC, works with organizations to enhance productivity and increase overall effectiveness through the adoption of work-life balance principles. He is the author of 59 books published in 25 countries, and 18 languages. His latest include *Simpler Living*, *The 60 Second Innovator*, and the revised edition of *Breathing Space*. Visit www.Breathingspace.com.*