

Terry Newkirk

In the fall of 1986, a great day in my life, I met the wonderful woman with whom I celebrated 36 years of marriage. Denise and I indeed have a thing of beauty. We both love animals, physical activity, the beauty of the outdoors and being kind to others. I am an 87-year-old disabled veteran, having experienced a devastating back injury during service in the US Army in 1959. After a somewhat horrifying history of failed surgeries, opioid dependence, career disruption and the like, in the spring of 1979, I attended the inpatient program of the Northwest Pain Center Associates in Portland, Oregon. I struggle for words as to the impact the program would have upon my life, still impacting same today.

Rehabilitative exercise has thus been a major factor in my life for nearly 48 years, realizing gains almost impossible to document.; And, to my utter amazement (as well as was the case of countless others), my health issues were a major factor in the creation of a career, which became a calling, of 40 years in the field of Behavioral Medicine. I was added to the staff of the Northwest Pain Center in 1980, subsequently was a director of several other pain units, all of which employed behavioral approaches - education, therapeutic exercising, psychotherapy - to pain issues. I stress that these were NOT the type of pain clinics of which we have read such horrible stuff in recent years.

In 2001, I stepped into a new role in the field, as a self-employed Medical Case Manager, specializing in directing catastrophic cases within the Workers' Compensation system, a role which until my retirement in 2021, was the most rewarding portion of my career.

Exercise remains a major focus in my life, although I had to forfeit my beloved bicycling after more than 100,000 miles in a 25-year period, due to protests from my leg, damaged by my original injury. I am now in my third year of swimming religiously every other day. I am painfully aware that at 87 years of age, I have lost a tremendous number of friends in recent years, a loss I feel very keenly.

The idea of meeting men my age (or thereabouts) is very attractive.