

The hoped-for that did not happen: How to deal with life's unexpected turns

By Eleanor Craig

Recently Nancy Schlossberg, author, motivator and former professor of counseling, presented her work surrounding adult transitions at an [Edgewater Village](#) program, offered in partnership with [Living and Aging Well in Edgewater](#). Together with Jane Goodman, Nancy tackled the idea of “non-events,” something in your life that you might have expected or assumed would happen but did not.

This could range from something immediate and personal -- like not achieving the career you wanted -- to something resultant, that happened in the aftermath of an event such as a death. With these events, Nancy's message focused on hope, creativity, and resilience.

During the presentation, Nancy walked through the “dream reshaping experience” using examples from participants. This occurred in four steps:

1. Acknowledging and grieving the lost dream or expectation.
2. Shifting the focus to hope and trying to identify a piece of the dream you can work with.
3. Developing a ritual.
4. Remembering that you are never too old to dream a new dream.

Within her solutions, she placed special emphasis on talking about the non-event with those around you. When a traumatic event occurs, she explained, people around you know about this event and are able to grieve with you. Talking about a non-event allows those around you to grieve, or for a professional to help set up rituals and ways of thinking about it.

Sometimes, she mentioned, letting go of a big expectation can be freeing, as long as it is accompanied by establishing more hopes and dreams. Friendships and relationships, for example, change and grow, and while they are not always exactly the same, new friendships still can bring happiness and hope into your life.

More information about Nancy and her books are available at her website, www.transitionsthroughlife.com.

#

December 2023