

## SHELL SHOCKED

### Eight Things You Wish You had Known at Age Twenty-Five

By Art Stevens

Here's something to think about, you spry seniors. What eight things do you wish you had known at the age of twenty-five that you know now? Okay, clear those cobwebs. Surely, you remember something about your life at that age.

You might have been embarking on a career, or marriage, or motherhood, or military service, or your first house – or your first martini. Let's say that you were twenty-five years old in 1975. Can you remember that far back? And now think of yourself in the present tense.

Remember, we're not talking about loss of hair, added pounds or expanding waist lines. We're talking about eight things that would have changed your life had you know then what you know now.

Well then, I'll speak for myself and drag you along with me. Here are eight things I wish I knew back then.

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1. I wish I knew then how fast time flies. I believe I would have put my life on a faster track and done a lot more at the age of twenty-five than having to play catch up in later years. For example, why is it that most seniors save their world travels until late middle age or retirement? I

have more friends flying off to India, China, Turkey and Vietnam these days than they ever did. The only world traveling I did at the age of twenty-five was to Brooklyn.

2. I wish I realized then just how good looking I was. This may sound like supreme vanity but when I look at photos of myself when I was twenty-five years old I now begin to realize how much more of bachelorhood I could have enjoyed.
3. I wish I had started playing golf when I was twenty-five. It's a game I've only gotten into during the past five years. It's a difficult game, one that I wish I could get better at. But I do enjoy playing golf and often think about how much better I could be now had I started learning it at age twenty-five.
4. I wish now that I didn't worry as much about my future at twenty-five. I now realize that water does indeed seek its own level and that whatever skills and capabilities I had would have taken me in the very same direction – but without the worries and anxieties. In other words, I now know that I could have had a great deal more inner peace and still be able to accomplish what I did.
5. I am more aware of mortality now than I would ever have been at twenty-five. So if I knew then what I know now shouldn't I have appreciated the

joy of living so much more then? Wouldn't I have valued each and every day from sunrise to sunset more? It's an interesting premise but young people don't think the way they would forty or fifty years later. At our present age, it's all about regrets and what if's. At twenty-five, it's all about what to wear on that first date. All of us have lost loved ones along the way – family and friends who were both younger as well as older than we were when they were taken from us. If you're able to read this column you have survived whatever trials and tribulations have come your way in subsequent years. Here's a toast to you, my fellow survivors.

6. I wish I had learned that drop shot in tennis at the age of twenty-five. Whenever I played against opponents who were the age I am now they would make me run up and down the court chasing dinky little balls that curved and dropped in crazy, unpredictable ways. My game then was to just power away. It didn't work against these crafty seniors who had far greater court sense than I ever did at twenty-five. As I got older, I learned a trick or two from my elders.
7. I wish I had more patience and tolerance at age twenty-five than I did. I was always in a hurry and never got where I intended to go that quickly anyway. At twenty-five the road ahead was longer and I was in a hurry to

travel that road. Today, the road is shorter and time becomes a factor. There was much too much energy wasted in trying to make quicker time on a long road. Isn't it much more luxurious not to have to hustle as hard because there's less road now? Listen up, you twenty-five year olds – once you get to where I am today you can bask in the present and enjoy warm memories from the past.

8. And, finally --- love. Ah, love. At twenty-five, I was already awarded three Purple Hearts for a broken heart. There were several more to come until I found the “one.” And when I did, I would never be spurned or disappointed again in love. That's the joy of being older than twenty-five. A lasting lifetime with a partner is more joyous than the pick ups in bars along the way in my bachelor days. Searching and hunting can never be the same as giving and sharing.

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So would I want to be twenty-five again? No, thank you. Been there, done that.

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