

# As You Write It

A COLUMN FOR RESIDENTS

## *Growing Older, Growing Clearer at Rossmoor*

By Prakash Patel

When I was younger, I thought aging would mostly change my body. I did not expect it would also clarify my life.

Living at Rossmoor has made that shift very clear.

Over the years – through career, raising one daughter Monica, immigrating to this country, 55 years of marriage, and now walking beside my wife Marci through Alzheimer's – life has simplified itself for me. Not dramatically but deeply.

### **What has become more important**

1. Health – the humble version.

Health used to mean stamina and achievement. Now it means being able to walk to the clubhouse without my knee filing a formal complaint. It means waking up steady enough to meet the day. I no longer take “feeling normal” for granted. It feels like a quiet daily blessing.

2. Patience – especially in caregiving.

One morning near Dollar Clubhouse, my wife and I were walking when she asked, “Where are we?”

“We’re at Rossmoor,” I said.

A few steps later, she asked again. And then again.

In that moment, I realized she wasn’t asking for information. She was asking for reassurance. So each time I answered gently, “We’re at Rossmoor. We’re home. I’m with you.”

In that moment, I understood that love sometimes sounds like repetition.

That short walk changed something in me. Patience stopped being something I tried to practice. It became something I chose to offer. Those repeated questions became opportunities to love again.

3. Community.

One of Rossmoor's quiet gifts is understanding. In a men's group meeting, a listening group meeting, at the gym or in passing conversation, there is an unspoken awareness that everyone here is navigating something – health challenges, caregiving, loss or adjustment.

We do not need to explain this stage of life. We recognize it in each other – and we live it together.

4. Time.

When I was working, my calendar ruled my days. Now I value unscheduled time – a slow conversation, a peaceful cup of coffee, a walk without rushing.

Time feels shorter than it once did but richer.

5. Peace of mind.

At this stage, protecting inner calm feels important. When something irritates me, I ask, “Will this matter in five years?” Usually, the answer is no.

Unless it involves my glasses. That seems to matter immediately.

### **What has become less important**

1. Being impressive.

At Rossmoor, no one asks for your résumé. Titles have become stories. What matters now is kindness.

2. Winning arguments.

Harmony is more comfortable than victory.

3. Accumulating more.

After downsizing, I discovered I do not miss most of what I once thought was essential. Simplicity feels lighter.

4. Small irritations.

Traffic at the gate. Waiting in line. Minor inconveniences. They no longer deserve the energy they once received.

If I were to summarize what aging – and life at Rossmoor – has taught me, it would be this:

I care about fewer things now – but I care about them more deeply.

Health. Love. Patience. Community. Peace.

Aging has not made life smaller. It has made it clearer.