A stretch of the imagination

Don Quayle once said, "A mind is a terrible thing to lose."
The former vice president's gaffe elicited immediate howls of laughter
and derision because he had unwittingly substituted lose when he meant to say waste. In
retrospect, maybe the former vice president had it right all along.

Sadly, various forms of dementia, usually considered a problem related to aging, strike
some unfortunate people earlier through no fault of their own. It's those among us who in-
vite this dreaded visitor into our minds with reluctance that I want to encourage.

In the 1990s, "use it or lose it" became a popular cliche. Although it's most often ap-
piled to another aspect of the human experi-
ence, where better to use it as an apt slogan
than for our minds?

For instance, consider this paradox:
Thronges of people voluntarily challenge them-
selves to a regular regimen of physical exer-
cise yet willingly submit to a self-induced com-
a every evening with a two- to three-hour
diet of mindless television situation co-
medies.

Computer programmers used to say, "junk
in, junk out." They knew that results were
only as good as the data entered. It's the same way with the greatest
computer of them all — the one
between our ears.

May I humbly offer a sugges-
tion that will give your mind the
workout it needs as desperately as
your body?

Whatever your age, go back to
school. It's the gymnasium for
your brain.

You can't say you don't have the
opportunity. We are blessed with
the University of Central Florida,
Rollins College, nearby communi-
ty colleges, business and vocational schools,

senior-citizen centers and adult-education pro-
grams at numerous high schools.

I've just completed a course in the Maya
Studies program offered by the anthropology
department at the University of Central Flor-
dia. The professors, Diane and Arlen Chase,
are highly respected archeologists. This class
was so challenging and stimulating, and my
return to a college campus was very reward-
ing.

I plan to continue taking classes until I can
no longer find the Expressway E-pass lane. My

May I humbly offer a suggestion that will
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workout it needs as
desperately as your
body?

inspiration is a great lady who is
75 years young and who not only
was a key contributor in our evening course,
but she also took another class during the day.

Oliver Wendell Holmes said, "One's mind,
one stretched with a new idea, never regains
its original dimensions."

If you're serious about taking care of your
body, consider giving your mind a good work-
out at least one night a week. Enroll in a class
somewhere.

Think of it as stretching exercise.

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