

THE NEW & NOTEWORTHY

Joyspan | The Missing Metric in Aging Well

We measure lifespan. We measure healthspan. Now, a new term is joining the longevity conversation: joyspan, or the number of years you actually enjoy living. Coined by geriatric medicine expert Dr. Kerry Burnight in her forthcoming book *Joyspan: The Art and Science of Thriving in Life's Second Half*, the concept underscores a simple truth: a long life means little if it isn't also a good one.

BEHIND THE IDEA:

- **Grow** – Keep learning, exploring, and staying curious.
- **Adapt** – Meet life changes with flexibility and problem-solving.
- **Give** – Shift focus from “how can you help me” to “how can I help you.”
- **Connect** – Invest in meaningful relationships, even when it's uncomfortable.

THE IMPACT:

Joyspan reframes aging from a passive process into an active pursuit. It's not about avoiding challenges but more about meeting them in ways that preserve meaning, engagement, and purpose. Whether that's learning a new skill post-retirement, swapping activities to suit physical changes, or deepening community ties, these actions compound over time.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR LONGEVITY:

Physical health metrics alone can't capture the full picture of healthy aging. Joyspan recognizes that emotional vitality, social connection, and a sense of contribution are equally essential — and often, they're what make healthy habits sustainable. Building joyspan isn't just good for the soul; research links it to lower rates of chronic disease, greater resilience, and longer life.

[Read the full *New York Times* feature on Joyspan here.](#)