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LIVING LONGER

By Laura Gallop

ERICA MILLER: I Choose To. And I Can.

How does a young girl who spent four years of her childhood in a Nazi holding camp end up as an accomplished woman with a doctorate in Psychology, a founder of a chain of mental health clinics, overseer of a family real estate management company, the author of three books, an in-demand motivational speaker, and a beloved mother and grandmother of two children and five grandchildren? The answer can be found in the title of Dr. Erica Miller's second book: "Don't Tell Me I Can't Do It!"

Erica lived in a Nazi holding camp with her parents and sister in the Ukraine from ages seven to 11. Shortly after they were liberated, they immigrated to Israel where Erica served in the Israeli Defense Force. Eventually she moved to the United States where she married Jerry Miller and raised a son and a daughter while earning her Ph.D. in Psychology – no small feat in an era where women were more often home raising children than pursuing advanced degrees. She operated a chain of mental health clinics for many years. At the same time, she and her husband bought multiple properties in Austin, Texas and after Jerry's death several years ago, Erica took over management of the family real estate business while at the same time writing books, speaking to groups throughout the country, and traveling whenever and wherever she can worldwide. Oh, and did we mention she's 83 years young?

Anyone who has met Erica will tell you she has the energy and vitality of a woman half her age. Whether it's pursuing higher education, speaking to groups about her extraordinary life, spending time with her family, or traveling the world, Erica approaches every day with energy and curiosity. Her home office walls are adorned with artwork, interesting pieces from her exotic travels and framed photos. A bookcase is loaded with titles that pique her interest. In the center of her large polished wood desk lies a book titled "Complete Guide to Brain Health." She is fascinated by the brain and is adamant that a healthy brain is essential to long life. She is genuinely excited about the advancement in medical understanding and the future of personalized medicine that is linked to a person's genetic make up.

Erica asserts that while she may be in the last quarter of her life, she is certain that she will easily live another 20, maybe even 30 years. At 83, she is in excellent health and has more energy and joie de vivre than most people half her age. She is determined to live her best life for as

long as she can. She has learned to let go when she needs to and not to let stress interfere with her life. "Stress is a killer," she believes. She eats well and goes to the gym everyday, arriving 30 minutes before her dance aerobics class to "do the stairs." She started one day by going up and down the 20-step staircase once, then gradually built up her endurance. At this point, she's up to 120 stairs.

"I'm in training," she says, as she looks forward to her 2017 excursion to Tibet, Nepal, the Himalayas, and Mt. Everest. Her message to the world is, "If I can do it, so can you!" She likes to say that she is "aging with gusto," and as the title of her third book indicates, "chronologically gifted."

It is her life's passion to teach and empower people. She loves her life, saying it has been an amazing journey, "even with its imperfections." She insists that it's never too late to start, citing stories of men and women in their 60s or 70s who become passionate about fitness or begin a new business or find a new life partner. Having just returned from a trip to Israel with her daughter, Erica mentions a 112-year old Israeli man, who still works at his shop everyday, engages with people, and has an active brain. It is essential, she believes, to be open to new people and experiences, be curious about life and learning, and be grateful for the life you have. To learn more about this inspiring and seemingly ageless woman, visit: ericamiller.com

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live in the moment, and plan
for the future."