

# Back to Strong

One man's journey to better health

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Reggie Smith stands and offers his hand in greeting. He asks if you feel the strength of his handshake.



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2007

"He used to have forearms like Popeye.  
*He was a mason and very strong.*"

— Son, Reggie, Jr.

### Open Heart Surgery: Tennessee

Recovery is slow and difficult.

8 years pass...

2015

*Weakness, fatigue, shortness of breath*

Cardiac valve disease? **Yes. And lung cancer...**

### Treating Reggie's Cancer: CMHVI, Sept. 2nd

Cancerous tumor removed from right lung.

**Reggie recovers.**

### Fixing Reggie's Heart: CMHVI, Oct. 27th

Minimally invasive valve surgery -  
transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR).

**Reggie goes home at 2 pm the next day.**

TODAY

"I feel wonderful like I'm on a natural high.  
*I feel strong. I'm breathing normally. I feel like  
I've got my life back. It's just awesome.*"

— Reggie Smith

# Dancing Around The Fire

WITH  
Christiane Northrup



This physician advises 'ageless living' with common sense...and tango lessons.

INTERVIEW BY CLAIRE Z. CRAMER

**D**r. Christiane Northrup, an outspoken authority on women's health, is the author of *Goddesses Don't Age* (Hay House, 2015) and other best-sellers including *The Wisdom of Menopause* and *Mother-Daughter Wisdom*.

The Dartmouth-trained physician began practicing medicine in Maine in 1981; she co-founded Women to Women, a practice based on both holistic and Western medicine, in Yarmouth in 1985; and she was an assistant clinical professor of OB/GYN at Maine Medical Center for 20 years.

Dr. Northrup left Women to Women in 1997, and conventional medical practice, to focus on writing, teaching, and speaking. Through her books, e-newsletter, radio show, television specials, and appearances on such TV programs as the *Today Show* and *Oprah*, she has been a leader in the discussion about what it means to grow older. Not that Northrup, who *W* magazine likens to a "platinum-blond pixie," seems to have any time for being "older." She advises

banishing the terms "aging" and "senior moment," urging us instead to dance with life rather than take it sitting down, to "take pleasure in ageless living."

**How can you tell an ageless Maine goddess from an ageless goddess from away?**

Ageless goddesses in Maine don't wear high-heeled fashion boots in the snow or in airports. We have our feet on the ground. And we love having a good stack of firewood at our disposal.

"Finally, I danced around the fire. I didn't hold back...I suspended all concern about 'what others would think.'"

—Dr. Christiane Northrup, from  
*12 Examples of Things  
I Am Too Wise For*

**We love your list of 12 things you're too wise for.**

**Can you make adjustments to it with some specific Maine examples?**

I'm too wise to worry about keeping up with the latest fashion. But I also know that function needn't be ugly. Example: the Aristelle lingerie store on Exchange Street.

I'm too wise to allow my chronological age to be a cage. I don't think about it. Or use it as an excuse. When asked how old I am, I tell them the truth: my biological age is 33. My wisdom age is 300.

I'm too wise to believe that the best years of my life are behind me. I keep getting better and better at dancing Argentine tango with my Portland community. We dance close, embrace with all ages and walks of life. Check us out at [porttango.com](http://porttango.com)

I'm too wise to think it's normal to get stiff and achy as I get older. I've prevented this by regular workouts with Hope Matthews at Sparhawk Pilates in Yarmouth, and I started [Pilates] with Nancy Etnier in Portland.

I'm too wise to curtail my creativity! I



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just took up process painting [therapeutic art] with Brady Nickerson in Edgecomb.

I'm too wise to think that "the grass is greener" somewhere else. Maine is special. It's the way life should be. I feel blessed to live here.

**You have a busy 2016, including your "I Can Do It" North American speaking tour. How do you find room for a balanced life?**

I decline over 90 percent of the invitations I get to travel and teach. And I look at my schedule a year in advance and make sure there is plenty of downtime.

**Do you have any upcoming speaking engagements scheduled in Maine?**

I will be meeting with a holistic study group at USM sometime this spring.

**How do you power down and relax after a hectic day, whether at home or in a distant hotel room?**

By taking a long bath while reading a good book!



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**Where are your favorite  
Maine places?**

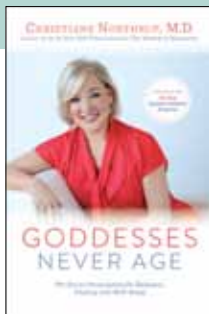
My backyard, the Spear Farm nature preserve in Yarmouth, and the view from the Eastern Prom. The cliff walk around Prout's Neck, Scarborough Beach, Portland Head Light, The Royal River, Casco Bay, the Kennebec River, and Penobscot Bay.

**In which restaurants here might we find you?**

The Royal River Grill House in Yarmouth, Peachy's Smoothie Cafe in Yarmouth; Dockside in Falmouth, The Green Elephant and Boda in Portland.

**When you've been away on tour, how do you know  
you're truly back home in Maine when you return?**

The feeling I get at the Jetport when the jet bridge with the lobsters says, "Welcome Home." Or when I cross the bridge in Portsmouth on the way into Maine. My bones settle in. And I breathe a sigh of relief. ■



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