



Spiritual Light Center

Newsletter—January 2015

MESSAGE FROM ARTHUR

Spirituality Through the Ages

Happy New Year Everyone!

Last month, our focus was the evolution of Christianity, religion and spirituality. This month, we will look at spirituality and age/maturity – a more personal evolution.

Many of you heard my talk in December at the Mountain Light Network on Past Life Regression Therapy. Doing past life regression therapy for over thirty years has given me the opportunity to observe the course of many lives from beginning to end. It's like doing a longitudinal study in a very short time.

One of the things I have observed over the years is that souls seem to have three windows of opportunity during an embodiment to open more fully to their spiritual potential. I think they are actually three gateways for progressively greater spiritual opening. They occur first in the early teen years; second in the early thirties, and lastly in the early sixties. I think if you live long enough, there might be another gateway around ninety years old.

I believe the rites of Confirmation, Bar Mitzvah, and other post-pubertal rites of passage in many traditions reflect the awareness of the first gateway, and celebrate the hope that there will be a greater connection to God and spirituality at that time.

The other three gateways occur a short time after the Saturn Return in one's natal

astrological chart. Those happen approximately every twenty-nine years. I'm not sure that the Saturn Return triggers each of the spiritual gateways, but they might. Please intuit it for yourself.

Think of when Jeshua made his transformation – at the age of thirty-three. That age was significant in my lifetime as well. What was it for you?

The third gateway comes at the time of retirement. It also seems to be a last chance if we haven't taken other opportunities to open to our spiritual nature earlier in life. Retirement gives opportunity to reflect and contemplate that we lacked earlier in life. The following articles will give you more opportunity to explore the evolution of your spirituality as you mature.

**Wishing You a New Year of Health,
Prosperity and Wisdom.**

Arthur Cataldo, President

OUR VISION STATEMENT

The Spiritual Light Center is a peaceful and joyful fellowship of individuals, centered in love, dedicated to the God within, and honoring the many paths to truth.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

We seek to develop our highest selves by continuous sharing of spiritual ideas, in an environment of unconditional love and respect for others.



ONGOING EVENTS AT SLC

Every Tuesday at 5:15 p.m. - Join our group in the Hall as we watch a selected film of a spiritual nature, followed by discussion to develop our evolution. Afterward we choose a restaurant and go out to eat!

Every other Wednesday, Dec 31 (special New Year's TEA), Jan 14 & 28 from 4:30 to 6:30p.m. - Come to **The Sacred Circle/TEA**, an open group dedicated to spiritual sharing and growth, facilitated by Tina Wardell. Contact is 828-276-6557.

Every other Thursday, Jan 8 & 22, at 5:15 p.m. - Please join us for our meditation group in the Chapel led by Dr. Richard Kimball. We have an informative discussion followed by walking and sitting meditation. Call Richard at 371-3425 for further details.

Every Thursday at 6:30 p.m. - Come join us for our **book study**. We'll select the book we will begin in January at our Sunday service Dec. 28. Join us for some enlightening conversation.



New Year's Celebration at SLC Saturday Jan. 10th 4 to 6pm! Please join us in the Fellowship Hall for a spirited gathering to ring in the New Year! Do you have a traditional New Year's food from your heritage? If so, bring it in and share it with us. Arthur and Jadwiga will be doing a special unleavened bread-breaking ceremony to welcome in 2015.

OUR SLC METAPHYSICAL STORE WILL CLOSE UNTIL MARCH 1st

Sandy, our store manager, is working full steam getting our online store going. You can check it out by going to Facebook and typing "Spiritual Light Center Store". To give her more time to get the online store going and to complete inventory we're closing the physical store until March 1st. For information please call Sandy at 828-200-2451.

UPCOMING SPEAKERS

January 4, 11 a.m.

Lesley Reifert-Hughes, an ordained Spiritualist minister, healer, and author, and an excellent speaker, will speak on "Love and Forgiveness".

January 11, 11 a.m.

Dr. Faye Corbett, doctor of Naturopathic Medicine and expert in Ayurvedic Medicine and herbology will speak on "Living Fearlessly in a Fierce World".

January 18, 11 a.m.

Judy Stepp, a DreamBuilder Life Coach who helps people transform dreams into reality, will cheer in 2015 with "Gimme an **A** for Abundance!"

January 25, 11 a.m.

Deborah Burris, ordained minister and Touch for Health and Kinesiology Instructor, will bless us with Singing Bowls and speak on "God Is, I Am, You Are".



SPIRITUAL LIGHT CENTER INFORMATION

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OUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Thoughts on Graceful Aging

 *Guerrilla Aging: Faith and Spirituality* from lifeintheboomerlane.com

In the deepest places of our being, we tend to look at meaning beyond ourselves. We may know that our life expectancy is a finite number of years, but this doesn't answer why we were put on this earth to begin with.

Whether we identify with a religion, believe in the sanctity of nature, karma, reincarnation, or simply that we are all connected, we are all inclined to be spiritual beings. We look at the heavens and wonder at the majesty of it all, or wonder at a plant beginning to bud, or marvel each year at the first snowfall.

As many of us age, we cling more tightly to our faith, or discover it in a new way. We come to relish the journey of the soul with as much or more anticipation than we used to relish the accumulation of material goods or our hard-won professional progress.

In addition to listening to people's words, we learn to hear the silence. In addition to taking in the knowledge of others, we learn to listen to the wisdom within. We come to understand that our world is only as rich as we believe it to be. We, who have been given the gift of experiencing life at midlife and beyond, become daily more humbled and awed by a universe that reveals itself in the grandest way possible, and in the smallest.

 *Beautiful young people are accidents of nature, but beautiful old people are works of art.* ~Eleanor Roosevelt

☞ *Invitations into the Paradoxes of Aging*

By Carol Scott-Kassner

Living the paradox of doing and being is one of our most important invitations as we age. The first half of our lives is driven by the energy of eros – the “doing and producing” energy. We prove ourselves in the world. We create families. We are productive members of society. We create our to-do lists. In fact, our doing helps in significant ways to form our identity. We live in a culture that emphasizes doing. It emphasizes it to the extent that a regular way of establishing ourselves with each other is to ask the question, “What do you do?” or “What have you been doing?”

As we move into the second half of life, the “being” phase of our lives, we are often struck dumb when faced with the question “What do you do?” We fear that we may be deemed unworthy members of society if we can’t answer that question according to some external standard of what are considered valuable acts of “doing.” What would people think of us if we answered “nothing” – or “simply being?”

In the second half of life, our energy shifts. We enter the energy of *thanatos*. This is a quieter energy. It is a moving-inward energy, a reflective energy. It invites us to go deeper into ourselves - to integrate all of who we are – to become whole and to prepare for our passing. It is an energy that we have not always allowed ourselves to experience. Certainly we are invited to be present to this sense of being during times of spiritual ceremony, but we rarely give ourselves permission to dedicate entire days to being. As we age, however, our bodies as well as our spirits cooperate with us in saying, “I need to slow down. I need to be quiet. I need to listen deeply and reflect on the meaning of my life. I need to do this to form a new sense of identity.”

James Henry says, “Being is a lot more complicated than doing. Being involves coming into a relationship with that which is invisible, that which we cannot see or touch and cannot fully know.” It is a time of senescence or “ripening.”

As we move into the quiet, we prepare ourselves to give out of the core of our being. In Buddhist philosophy where meditation is a principal practice, they say, “My doing moves out of my being.”

William Thomas defines elderhood “as a way of living beyond adulthood, a way of being in the world that puts receptivity, quality, feelings, relationships and meaningfulness ahead of doing.” Elders are more concerned about relationships than things.



As elders, we are best at many things. We can become:

- **Teachers of being.** Helping people to see how to put things together rather than taking them apart.
- **Givers of wisdom.** Drawing from Sophia energy, we give out of our life experiences to help impart insights and common sense. We can become as the elders in some Native American traditions who gather their collective wisdom to advise younger members of the tribe with a vision that reaches into the seventh generation.
- **People who relate with quality and feeling.** We may elect to have fewer relationships but connect with more depth and intimacy. Elders are often more emotionally astute and balanced and accept and express a broader range of feelings than younger people.
- **Spiritual Guides.** Elders have an expanded consciousness of the connectedness of everything and exploring interrelationships. We can become guides helping others to gain these understandings, so important in a world that seems increasingly polarized.
- **Peacemakers.** Our awareness as elders of the mystery of life, our openness to paradox and appreciation of multiple perspectives puts us in a wonderful place to become peacemakers – within ourselves, with our families and friends, and with the world.
- **Quality workers.** If we are among those fortunate to no longer have to work for a living, our work can take on new meaning. We can work in ways that serve the communities of which we are a part. We can use our hands and our imaginations to create beauty.
- **Librarians of Stories and Legacies.** We can use our stories to uncover lost parts of ourselves, to discover hidden wellsprings of healing. We can use our stories to reveal the deepest parts of ourselves and build bridges.



This season of entering the dark fully and celebrating the return of the light is a wonderful time for each of us to enter the paradox of doing and being and to discover where we are on that spectrum. It is a time to notice how much of our doing is externally motivated and how much comes from the interior of our being. May each of you find time for quiet and reflection in the midst of the busyness and celebration.

☯ Blessed shall be that day when mankind shall revere the aged and the aged shall revere themselves for having passed through the seasons of life and gleaned from this passage what it had to offer. ~Julie Redstone

☯ We grow neither better nor worse as we get old...but more like ourselves. ~M. Becker

A few months ago, Ezekiel Emanuel had an essay in *The Atlantic* saying that, all things considered, he'd prefer to die around age 75. He argued that he'd rather clock out with all his powers intact than endure a sad, feeble decline.

The problem is that if Zeke dies at 75, he'll likely be missing his happiest years. When researchers ask people to assess their own well-being, people in their 20s rate themselves highly. Then there's a decline as people get sadder in middle age, bottoming out around age 50. But then happiness levels shoot up, so that old people are happier than young people. The people who rate themselves most highly are those ages 82 to 85.

Psychologists who study this now famous U-Curve tend to point out that old people are happier because of changes in the brain. For example, when you show people a crowd of faces, young people unconsciously tend to look at the threatening faces but older people's attention gravitates toward the happy ones.

Older people are more relaxed, on average. They are spared some of the burden of thinking about the future. As a result, they get more pleasure out of present, ordinary activities.



My problem with a lot of the research on happiness in old age is that it is so deterministic. It treats the aging of the emotional life the way you might treat the aging of the body: as this biological, chemical and evolutionary process that happens to people.

I'd rather think that elder happiness is an accomplishment, not a condition, that people get better at living through effort, by mastering specific skills. I'd like to think that people get steadily better at handling life's challenges. In middle age, they are confronted by stressful challenges they can't control, like having teenage children. But, in old age, they have more control over the challenges they will tackle and they get even better at addressing them.

Aristotle teaches us that being a good person is not mainly about learning moral rules and following them. It is about performing social roles well — being a good parent or teacher or lawyer or friend.

It's easy to think of some of the skills that some people get better at over time.

First, there's bifocalism, the ability to see the same situation from multiple perspectives. Anthony Kronman of Yale Law School once wrote, "Anyone who has worn bifocal lenses knows that it takes time to learn to shift smoothly between perspectives and to

combine them in a single field of vision. The same is true of deliberation. It is difficult to be compassionate, and often just as difficult to be detached, but what is most difficult of all is to be both at once.” Only with experience can a person learn to see a fraught situation both close up, with emotional intensity, and far away, with detached perspective.

Then there’s lightness, the ability to be at ease with the downsides of life. In their book, “Lighter as We Go,” Jimmie Holland and Mindy Greenstein (who is a friend from college) argue that while older people lose memory they also learn that most setbacks are not the end of the world. Anxiety is the biggest waste in life. If you know that you’ll recover, you can save time and get on with it sooner.

“The ability to grow lighter as we go is a form of wisdom that entails learning how not to sweat the small stuff,” Holland and Greenstein write, “learning how not to be too invested in particular outcomes.”

Then there is the ability to balance tensions. In “Practical Wisdom,” Barry Schwartz and Kenneth Sharpe argue that performing many social roles means balancing competing demands. A doctor has to be honest but also kind. A teacher has to instruct but also inspire. You can’t find the right balance in each context by memorizing a rule book. This form of wisdom can only be earned by acquiring a repertoire of similar experiences.

Finally, experienced heads have intuitive awareness of the landscape of reality, a feel for what other people are thinking and feeling, an instinct for how events will flow. In “The Wisdom Paradox,” Elkhonon Goldberg details the many ways the brain deteriorates with age: brain cells die, mental operations slow. But a lifetime of intellectual effort can lead to empathy and pattern awareness. “What I have lost with age in my capacity for hard mental work,” Goldberg writes, “I seem to have gained in my capacity for instantaneous, almost unfairly easy insight.”

It’s comforting to know that, for many, life gets happier with age. But it’s more useful to know how individuals get better at doing the things they do. The point of culture is to spread that wisdom from old to young; to put that wiser heart in a still young body.

5 *Spiritual Practices for Aging Well*

by Lewis Richmond

Gratitude. When I ask people what they like about being older, they often answer “Gratitude,” and then say what they are grateful for: grandchildren, good health, free time, wearing what they want, the chance to travel, giving back to the community. I have an exercise I call the “thank you” prayer. People repeat the words “thank you” silently to themselves and watch what comes up. It’s amazing how readily images of gratitude come to mind.



Generosity. One happiness study reported that if giving weren't free, drug companies could market a great new drug called "give back" instead of Prozac. It's scientifically proven: giving back and helping others makes us feel happier and more content. Giving is a universal spiritual value taught by every religion, and the desire to give back naturally increases as we age. It is part of our emerging role as community elders -- something we can do into our sixties, seventies, eighties and beyond. Giving is truly a spiritual practice, and it naturally lifts our spirits.

Reframing. Aging includes its share of reverses, losses and sorrows. What makes the difference is our attitude about them. If a bad knee means we can't jog anymore, we needn't despair; we can take up swimming. If we lost money in the recession, we can use wisely what we still have. Focus on the positive aspects of the present, rather than regrets of the past and worries about the future.

Curiosity. Curiosity is an important attitude to cultivate as we age. There's a tendency to hunker down in our old familiar routines. It's good to resist that temptation. Physical exercise grows new muscle, mental activity grows new brain cells, and emotional engagement lifts the spirit. Curiosity keeps us young; we need to cherish it. If you see an interesting ad for a wildlife class, consider taking it. If you go into a bookstore, try browsing in sections you don't usually visit. If you haven't seen a friend in many years, reach out. Children are naturally curious, and we can be too.

Flexibility. Things change as we age, and some of the changes are irrevocable. Our youthful stamina is gone in this lifetime; a dying friend does not return. In the face of these changes, it's important that we not become rigid and stuck in our ways. With every change comes new opportunity. No matter what the issue, no matter how big the problem, there is always something constructive that you can do. Never give up; never let aging get the better of you. This is how the "extraordinary elderly" do it -- the ones who have beaten the odds to enjoy their old age to the very end.

The Spiritual Life. A spiritual perspective on aging is not just for personal transformation; it is a medicine for longevity and health. Research shows that people with an active involvement in a spiritual community live on average seven years longer than those who don't.

These five practices for aging well really work; science says so, common sense says so, and every religion says so. Aging as a spiritual practice builds on these truths to treat the process of aging as an opportunity for inner transformation. We deserve to enjoy our aging; it is our reward in the continuing adventure of living.

