

Conscious spirituality  in search of truth...

# Aging/Wisdom 2020

*"I have walked that long road to freedom. I have tried not to falter; I have made missteps along the way. But I have discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb. I have taken a moment here to rest, to steal a view of the glorious vista that surrounds me, to look back on the distance I have come. But I can only rest for a moment, for with freedom come responsibilities, and I dare not linger, for my long walk is not ended."* —Nelson Mandela



TOM PINKSON: "FRUITFUL AGING" FINDING A NEW PARADIGM

THE TAOS INSTITUTE: "PURPOSE AS LIFE SAVING"

RON PEVNY: CONSCIOUS LIVING-CONSCIOUS AGING THE NEUTRAL ZONE

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ROBERT C ATCHELY:HOW SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE AND DEVELOPMENT INTERACT WITH AGING

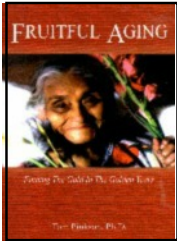
CATHY CARMODY:GROWING OLDER CONSCIOUSLY IS ABOUT-

CONSCIOUS ELDERS NETWORK: CEN—A REFERENCE FOR LIFE

WHY CREATIVE PEOPLE AGE BETTER!

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**TOM PINKSON: “FRUITFUL AGING” FINDING A NEW PARADIGM**

*In the 21st century, those of us over the age of sixty-five will now have a golden opportunity to experience new paradigms of consciously and progressively aging. From general previous misconceptions and stereotypical understanding of aging these new paradigms of thinking, practice, and greater empowerment for older persons are highlighted by people such as Tom Pinkson.*

*In “Fruitful Aging” Pinkson an aging pioneer leads the way for newer and more fulfilling ways to live as we age. Pinkson shares this new paradigm with other luminaries including, Ron Pevny, Ashton Applewhite, Harry R Moody, Carol Osborn, Bob Atchley and other progressives.*

*Pinkson makes this contribution as identified in the above through life experiences and a rich background of academic and hands-on practice including four decades of attitudinal healing, ritual and shamanic experiences, writing poetry and playing the guitar. On Pinkson’s website, an extensive supportive range of literature is featured. He approaches this new paradigm of aging with a clear no-nonsense, and yet completely practical, along with spiritual insight. Most impressively, Tom Pinkson is somebody who actually “walks-the-talk” and doesn’t rely on academic text to inform his readers. This book also impressed my wife with it’s practical spiritual approach to aging. An extract from “Fruitful Aging” follows.*

*—Philip Crouch, Tasmania, 2020*

**TOM PINKSON: BACKGROUND BRIEF**

**“Fruitful Aging: Finding the Gold in the Golden Years** leads the reader to creative approaches for harvesting the labor and lessons of a lifetime. Each chapter dives deeper into exploring the universe within and leads the way to re-visioning what it means to be not only mature in years - but Golden!

**Dr. Tom Pinkson Ph.D., serves as a bridge builder,** translating indigenous wisdom to bring forth the intelligence and creativity of Spiritual Awakening, Emotional Well Being, Healing, and Living In Sustainable Balance with Mother Earth and the Circle of Life. Pinkson is a psychologist, ceremonial retreat and vision-fast leader, sacred storyteller, and shaman.

For 32 years Tom worked with terminally ill children at the **Center for Attitudinal Healing in California**, successfully integrating the wisdom teachings of the Huichol and other medicine teachers into the world of the practicing psychologist. The founder of Wakan, a nonprofit organization committed to restoring the sacred in daily life, he lives in northern California.”



**TOM PINKSON: CREATING A FRUITFUL AGING PRACTICE**

**[PP:154-155] A NEW WAY OF SEEING**

‘A new way comes from trusting the presence and creative wisdom of this invisible reality that underlies physical manifestation, call it spirit, God, Goddess, call it sacred mystery or whatever works for you. The name isn’t so important.

**What is important is whether you are able to surrender into it peacefully letting go of attachment** to how you want people and things to be.

Surrendering to a mysterious invisible higher power is different from giving up. Giving up is quitting, usually with anger, frustration, blame, shame, feelings of failure. Surrender is accepting that you are not able to change this troublesome situation that is upsetting you. Surrendering is releasing your burdens with faith into bigger hands trusting that the sacred mystery wisdom will some how, in some way that can’t be seen or known at this time, deliver an outcome that is for the greatest good for all concerned. The challenge and the opportunity is to make faith an active verb by surrendering.

In the process of writing this book I set various deadlines for myself with specific time lines. By such and such a time I would complete the editing, etc. Yet when unexpected events beyond my control would occur, like the terminal illness of a close friend across the country, who asked me to come be there with him as he died, kept me from meeting my accomplishment goals on time I **was faced with a choice. Get upset or surrender** into what I call *bigger currents* of Divine Timing and Divine Order. For peace of mind I had to let go of my ego’s schedule and open to spirit’s schedule trusting that greatest good was working through it all.’

Surrender by itself however does not guarantee greatest good outcome. Greatest good outcomes require you to show up to do your part, which in turn can open the door for the greatest good to come through. **What might you be able to do in the situation that would *raise the sparks* lifting consciousness to a higher elevation.**



**SUGGESTED “FRUITFUL AGING” PRACTICES AND READING EXTRACTS:**

Tom Pinkson, Fruitful Aging, *A New Way of Seeing*—[PP:154-155]

Tom Pinkson, Fruitful Aging, *Spiritual Practices*— [P:192], he suggests:

1: Keeping a Gratitude Journal [Daily exercise]

2: Create an Ancestor Altar to Keep the Connection Alive

3: Create a Sacred Sanctuary in Your Home

4: Daily Mantras giving Thanks



**Suggested Resources:**

Fruitful Aging - Finding the Gold in The Golden Years, 2013,  
ISBN 13-9780-615-78541-7. USA.

<http://drtompinkson.com/work-with-dr-tom-pinkson/fruitful-aging-book/>

[www.nierica.com](http://www.nierica.com)

[www.spiritualmedicineteachings.com](http://www.spiritualmedicineteachings.com)

Centre for Attitudinal Healing, <https://cah-northbay.org/>

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**THE TAOS INSTITUTE: “PURPOSE AS LIFE SAVING.”**

*Purpose as 'lifesaving' reflects a statement of good intentions according to Taos Institute. The organisation's foundations revolve around a social constructionist theory. They state, "it is through the social and relational processes that we construct the world." If you are over the age of sixty-five this could resonate with you, and also you could include having a social, physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual purpose too.*

*Intentionally, having a purpose in life could be the reason which prompts us to 'get-out-of -bed' in the morning. Having a purpose could simply mean any one of the following activities— volunteering, belonging to a walking group, assisting migrants-refugees to learn English, participating in yoga, tai chi, music- drama, or with an environmental land care project. As a seventy-three-year-old person, there are many purposes in my life including volunteering, conscious spirituality projects, tai chi, meditation, walking and swimming. An article appearing in the November-December 2017 Tao Institute positive aging newsletter highlights the positive aspects of having a purpose-in-life. An extract follows.*

*—Philip Crouch, Tasmania, 2020*

**TAOS INST: POSITIVE AGING, ‘PURPOSE AS LIFE SAVING’**

‘According to a number of research studies, having a purpose in life is not only personally rewarding, it is also associated with good health. Having purpose is linked to a number of positive health outcomes, including better sleep, and fewer strokes and heart attacks. In addition, there is a lower risk of dementia and disability.

**In part, these positive outcomes are linked to the way that people with a sense of purpose take care of themselves.** They are more likely to check in with preventive health services, and to get mammograms, colonoscopies and flu shots. It should come as no surprise, then, that having purpose may save your life.

A longitudinal study of more than 6,000 individuals - young and old - indicated that those with greater purpose were 15 percent less likely to die in a given year than those who were aimless. Having purpose was protective across the life span – for people in their 20's as well as those in their 70. **Having purpose is not a fixed trait, and one can develop (or lose) purpose at any time in life. Purposes can be great or small - from planting a little garden to putting together a new business.**



In our opening essay we talked about several ways in which people find new aims in life after retirement. Purpose can also emerge from our daily encounters with others, as we talk about what matters in our families, communities, or the world more generally. We were particularly struck by a program run by Experience Corps, an organization that trains older adults to tutor children in urban public schools.

Both children and the tutors drew nourishment from their relationship. Interestingly, however, the tutors showed marked improvements in mental and physical health. The improvements included higher self-esteem, more social connectedness, and better mobility and stamina. Perhaps this should not be surprising. **For most people helping others is especially meaningful. And it reduces the dangers of a me-centered life.**

### TAO INST: MENTAL FOCUS - TRICKS TO EVADE DISTRACTION

<sup>1</sup> The ability to stay in focus is sometimes difficult. Not only are there the distractions of every day life, but as well the storehouse of memories that pop into mind without invitation. To focus requires a certain discipline, and it is something that may be helped by engaging in certain activities and not others. According to various research studies, here are a few ways to promote focus:

**Read a good novel.** In a study done at Emory University, people who read at night increased connectivity in the part of the brain associated with language. This change lasted for five days after the participants in the study finished the book.

**Play an instrument, meditate, or write without interruptions for 30 minutes.** Being able to focus on one single, complex task improves one's ability to focus on other tasks.

**Work in the morning.** The brain is fresher in the morning. It is a shame to waste these hours on trivial matters. In one study, participants aged 60-82 performed better on cognitive tasks when tested in the morning, rather than the afternoon.

**Chew gum.** We have our misgivings, but in a study at Cardiff University in Wales, people chewing gum were able to respond more quickly and accurately to a test of recalling random numbers than those who did not.

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<sup>1</sup> *Keep Your Mental Focus by Ken Budd, AARP Bulletin. December, 2017, pages. 1, 22*



**Suggested resources:**

TAOS Positive Aging Newsletter—*"Purpose as Life Saving."*

<https://www.taosinstitute.net/2017-novemberdecember>

<https://www.taosinstitute.net/positive-aging-newsletter>

Sleep benefits,

<https://sleep.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s41606-017-0015-6>

Fewer strokes/heart attacks:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26630073>

Lower risk of dementia:

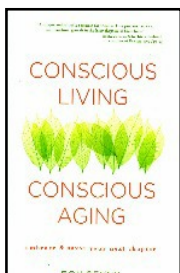
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2740716/>

<https://www.aarp.org/health/brain-health/info-2017/mental-focus-smartphone-use.htm>

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# Conscious spirituality in search of truth...



## **RON PEVNY: CONSCIOUS LIVING-CONSCIOUS AGING THE NEUTRAL ZONE**

Ron Pevny is a director for the 'Centre for Conscious Eldering' in America. The Centre offers Eldering workshops, consciousness meditation-spirituality retreats, aging resources and more. Purposefully, the Centre's activities focus on creating ritual pathways for older Americans wanting to transition in this new paradigm of aging. Pevny shares this evolving new paradigm of aging today with other luminaries including Ashton Applewhite, Carol Osborn, Tom Pinkson, Harry R Moody, Bob Atchley, Dr Bill Thomas-others.

*In Pevny's book "Conscious Living - Conscious Aging" published in 2014 he outlines clear, practical pathways towards meeting the many benefits to approaching an older age. Pevny's book outlines common experiences faced by many of us over the age of sixty-five, one area in particular that impressed me was the encounter with a "Neutral Zone." As Pevny suggests this neutral zone is a point in our respective lives where we experience a mental "space" between doing and waiting for something else to arise.' In my earlier home-based meditation discussion group[2015-18] we openly discussed at length, aspects of this neutral zone. I highly recommend the above book to all older [55+] persons, who are seekers of Truth. Conscious Eldering Centre also offers a free digital e-newsletter. An extract from Conscious Living-Conscious Aging's neutral zone follows.*

—Philip Crouch, Tasmania, 2020

## **RON PEVNY: BACKGROUND BRIEF**

"We financially plan for our retirement, but do we plan for our wellbeing? Here is an empowering guide with practical tools to help you live a passionate, fulfilling second half of life. If you're part of the Baby Boomer generation, then you belong to 26 percent of the US population that is retiring healthier than any generation before. And that means retirement is starting to look a whole lot different.

No longer satisfied with a quiet life of sitting on the porch or puttering around the house, retirees (or soon to be) are looking to create a passionate, active, fulfilled, and engaging later life.

Here's where Ron Pevny work shines, as an inspiring guide, that helps you do what he calls "conscious aging"--or making a reality the life of growth, purpose, service, and spiritual exploration you've always imagined for yourself. In addition to wisdom for navigating loss and grief, Pevny offers advice that helps you identify your goals, contribute to society, remain engaged and relevant, and spend your later years in profound personal development.





Today's seniors are reshaping what retirement is all about. It is a whole new opportunity to engage with family, community, and the world with vigor. Don't just grow older--age consciously.”

[Cited: *Book Depository, introduction to Conscious Living-Conscious Aging.*]

**RON PEVNY: PRACTICES FOR LIVING IN THE NEUTRAL ZONE”**

‘This is an article about Wintertime. Not the season of the year, but rather that season in our **life transitions that lies between the shedding of an old chapter in our inner Autumn and the emergence of a new stage in our Springtime.** It is about what I and others call the Neutral Zone. Most of you reading this are in at least one significant transition process. There is the transition between inner identification as a mid-life adult and that stage in the development of our inner lives called elderhood.

And there are also the other life changes that thrust us into **transitions directly related to those endings, such as health challenges, the loss of loved ones, the ending of a career, moving out of a long-time home, etc. etc.** Our lives are not merely a series of unrelated events to which we respond as best we can. The more conscious we become of the outer events and our inner experiences that constitute our lives, the more we can see the truth of the mythic image of human life as a **hero’s journey.**

**On this archetypal journey each significant change and the inner transition it calls forth requires us to once again leave home --** that state where our lives are relatively stable, predictable and secure -- to enter the unknown, a neutral zone, an inner wintertime, to embark on a journey across a foreign land that we know little about. We are called to a journey whose duration cannot be predicted, in search of a new home that offers what we need to thrive.

What distinguishes this hero’s journey from other types of journeys is that, whether we know it or not, whether we intend it or not, the process is more about who we become as a result of this sojourn in a strange land than about the particulars of what we find at journey’s end.

**This journey is not primarily about us undergoing some trials and toughing it out until we see what’s next.** Rather, it’s purpose is to change us in some essential way; to help shape a new self; to broaden our vision of what is possible for us; to help us shed limiting beliefs, attitudes, and ways of living so that we can live larger lives that reflect a new stage of growth; and to help us access qualities and inner resources that we will need in our new life stage.



In the culture we live in, which tends to define us by what we do, how active we are, and how certain we are of our goals, there is little if any understanding of the value of the neutral zone. Most of us have a strong resistance to this part of the transition process. So, we try in vain to hold onto a past that is no longer alive or possible for us, and in the process we stagnate.

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#### **RON PEVNY: SILENCE AND SOLITUDE**

Or we rush to jump forward into some version of a new chapter when we are not yet in touch with the energies and vision for a truly new beginning, and our "new chapter" becomes merely a pale, lifeless imitation of the old one. **The neutral zone is a difficult place to be in. Not everyone is willing to embark on this hero's journey.** <sup>1</sup>

Many people spend their lives growing in age but never maturing and ripening inwardly. Or we rush to jump forward into some version of a new chapter when we are not yet in touch with the energies and vision for a truly new beginning, and our "new chapter" becomes merely a pale, lifeless imitation of the old one.

**The neutral zone is a difficult place to be in. Not everyone is willing to embark on this hero's journey.** Many people spend their lives growing in age but never maturing and ripening inwardly. For this reason, our minds -- our rational selves -- cannot play the lead role in moving us through significant transition. Yes, the mind is an important aspect of who we are.

But our mind primarily reflects what we already know, the paradigm that has been shaping our lives. The thinking mind, or what is often called left brain conceptual thinking, is not capable of creativity. All it can do is re-arrange our inner furniture. As our psyches seek to enter a new life stage, new furniture is needed for our inner home.



That is why it is so important when we are in transition, and especially engaged with the neutral zone, that we find ways of tapping those other aspects of ourselves that are the source of creative inspiration, intuition, vision, gut feelings, inner guidance. This is also why when we are in the neutral zone of transition, taking skills inventories or aptitude tests or the like to find what we might do next is not very helpful in showing us the direction our inner compass is pointing us toward.

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**There can be a big difference between choosing something we have an aptitude or skills for, and choosing to devote ourselves to something we have passion for -- something that will draw upon our gifts, respond to an inner calling, and give us a true sense of purpose. The neutral zone is the time to bring our whole selves, as best we can, to the process of gestation of a new stage and new self that is seeking to emerge. In this article, I'd like to share with you what I consider the most important practice for accessing the full potential of neutral zone time as seeds of vision for your future germinate in you, waiting until the time is right to emerge as new life, new beginnings.**

In the next newsletter, I will share several other important ways you can consciously support your journey through inner wintertime. For many, the most important practice is also the most difficult. This is building into our lives plenty of solitude and silence where we can hear and feel that voice within that is so easily drowned out by physical and emotional noise, and by constant activity. Spending time alone, and time in nature, without television or social media or electronic devices, perhaps with our journal or inspirational books or soothing music that take us within, can be such an important gift to ourselves.

Some of our neutral zone time of solitude and quiet can be approached with focus and clear intention, when we know how we want to direct our attention and what we want to accomplish. For example, we may feel the need to do more work to release or heal aspects of our past, or spend time journaling about recent or past experiences, or work on a dream that feels significant or try out in our mind some future possibilities. **However, I encourage you to approach some of this quiet time with no plan whatsoever—just be present and see what arises.**

Important messages come from within through mindless daydreaming. By just waiting and watching, you may become aware of some specific inner work that feels alive and important in that moment. Or seeds of future possibility may enter your awareness. **It is in silence that we hear the subtle voice and feel the prompting of our most authentic inner self, however we name it.**

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**Suggested resources:**

Conscious Living - Conscious Aging, Ron Pevny, 2014, Atria Paperback, New York, USA, ISBN:978-1-58270-438-8.

<https://www.centerforconsciouseldering.com/?s=Newsletter>

<https://www.centerforconsciouseldering.com/conscious-aging-resources/>

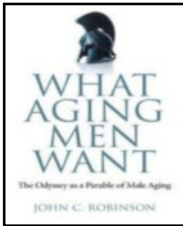
<https://www.bookdepository.com/Conscious-Living-Conscious-Aging-Embrace-Savor-Your-Next-Chapter-Ron-Pevny/9781582704388?ref=grid-view&qid=1574830969897&sr=1-1>

Heros Journey - Joseph Campbell, 'House of Ideas' PDF,

[http://www.houseofideas.com/mscornelius/assignments/mythology/research\\_paper/the\\_hero\\_packet.pdf](http://www.houseofideas.com/mscornelius/assignments/mythology/research_paper/the_hero_packet.pdf)

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### **JOHN C ROBINSON:WHAT AGING MEN WANT**

*Men facing retirement are often confronted with many new challenges, yet at the same time, there are new opportunities when transiting post-employment. Robinson is a psychologist, author, interfaith minister and human development practitioner who suggests there are practical no-nonsense approaches to these transitions.*

*In “What Aging Men Want,” Robinson draws on the work of Robert Bly’s “Iron John” on addressing male masculinity. Australian psychologist and author Steve Biddulph in his book “Men Raising Boys” addresses similar related masculinity issues. During the mid to late 1990’ in Launceston, Tasmania I facilitated a return to work program titled ‘Work Dynamics.’ Participants, (predominantly males) across the age range who attended with life issues other than simply finding employment. The program guidelines allowed informal opportunities to approach some masculinity issues. Later, whilst living in South Australia I became deeply immersed in volunteer activities relating to men’s health [MACHS]. Robinson’s, approach to male issues in “What Aging Men Want,” is from a conscious spiritual yet mystical approach and is a readable book. A book review from ‘readers on line’ by Richard Follett also follows.*

*—Philip Crouch, Tasmania, 2020*

### **JOHN ROBINSON: BACKGROUND BRIEF**

“John C. Robinson is a clinical psychologist with a second doctorate in ministry, an ordained interfaith minister, the author of nine books and numerous articles on the psychology, spiritualiuent speaker at Conscious Aging Conferences across the country. His major works include Death of the Hero, Birth of the Soul; But Where Is God:Psychotherapy and the Religious Search; Ordinary Enlightenment; Finding Heaven Here;The Three Secrets of Aging; Bedtime Stories for Elders; What Aging Men Want: Homer’s Odyssey as a Parable of Male Aging; his first novel, Breakthrough; and The Divine Human: The Final Transformation of Sacred Aging.”

### **JOHN ROBINSON: WHAT AGING MEN WANT, EXTRACT**

**‘Two decades ago the poet Robert Bly published a book that stayed on the New York Times Bestseller list for sixty-two weeks and changed a generation of men. Based on an ancient fairy tale, Iron John became an allegory for midlife men in search of an authentic life. I was part of the men’s movement launched by this poet and the book I wrote at that time, Death of a Hero, Birth of the Soul, became one of its bibles.**



This same army of 38 million men is now marching into their retirement years largely unprepared for what aging really entails or what to do with the next twenty-five years of unprecedented longevity gifted them by science and medicine. Boomers, of course, believe that they will conquer this stage with exercise, attitude, and nutrition.

As their problems and defeats multiply, however, aging men - and I am one of them - now discover that they are lost once again in an unknown land longing for another great story to guide them home. I have found that story.

**RICH FOLLETT READERS ON LINE: "WHAT AGING MEN WANT" REVIEW**

'What Aging Men Want: The Odyssey as a Parable of Male Aging by John C. Robinson, Ph.D., D. Min. is a powerful, transformative guide to the inevitable personal odyssey all men must face: maintaining a sense of purpose and vitality while facing the effects of advancing years. What Aging Men Want dares to ask the question: "What if aging can be '...a radically new, fulfilling and joyful time saturated in love and generosity, quite literally the blossoming of your life?'"

It is a compelling question, approached with impeccable scholarship, sound psychology, a mythologist's eye for universal truth, and the kind of straight-talking personal point of view authentic only to those with a wealth of first-hand experience.

The premise of What Aging Men Want by John C. Robinson, Ph.D., D. Min. is that the universal stages of a man's aging process correspond to specific chapters of Odysseus' fabled return to Ithaca at the close of the Trojan War. While Robinson's approach is so methodical and precise as to be virtually incontrovertible, the narrative is pleasingly conversational in tone and never Patronizing.

It is clear that Dr. Robinson seeks not to assert his credentials among a jaded body of peers, but rather to extend a compassionate invitation for fellow men struggling with fear and doubt to drink freely from his font of hard-won and carefully considered knowledge. It is virtually impossible to imagine any man, regardless of wealth, privilege, level of education, or degree of life experience, for whom What Aging Men Want would not be a valuable asset.



Each chapter of *What Aging Men Want* by John C. Robinson, Ph.D., D. Min. is formatted identically, with an introduction outlining the focus, a segment reframing the story in modern context, the author's interpretation, points for discussion, and a closing challenge. **Robinson then ends each section of this exceedingly well-crafted guidebook with Growth Questions which challenge the reader to apply learned insights in practical and personal ways.**

This consistency of design allows the reader to relax into the experience and extract every possible benefit from the wisdom within its covers.

In much the same fashion as Odysseus of old, readers of "What Aging Men Want" by John C. Robinson, Ph.D., D. Min. will return to their former lives with a newfound sense of joy, purpose and self-worth. "What Aging Men Want" by John C. Robinson, Ph.D., D. Min. should be required reading for every man facing mid-life and struggling with impending mortality.'



**Suggested resources:**

What Aging Men Want - John Robinson, Ph.D., 2013, Published by John Hunt Publishing, USA, and Ropley Publishing UK. ISBN: 9781780999814

<https://www.bookdepository.com/What-Aging-Men-Want/9781780999814>

[http://www.johnrobinson.org/what\\_aging\\_men\\_want\\_117503.htm](http://www.johnrobinson.org/what_aging_men_want_117503.htm)

<http://www.johnrobinson.org/works.htm>

Richard Follett: Book review

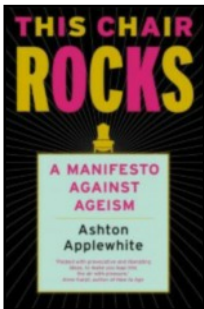
<https://readersfavorite.com/book-review/what-aging-men-want>

Robert Bly "Iron John" Men's Issues Advocate

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QdqrVylYyvs>

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**ASHTON APPLEWHITE: THIS CHAIR ROCKS & CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING**

*Ageism globally is a major societal problem that includes stereotyping of older people, racism, delivery of age service provisions, elder abuse, and similar which impacts on people aged sixty-five and over. In a new paradigm embracing conscious aging these attitudes are being challenged by various advocates. Ashton Applewhite is one of many leading pioneers and through her books, website presence, lecture tours, including a presentation at the United Nations, above aging issues are raised.*

*In her seminal book “This Chair Rocks” Applewhite, her ‘manifesto against ageism’ attempts to bring aging discrimination into a wider public forum. Applewhite suggests one strategy is to consider forming a local “Consciousness Raising Group.” Applewhite provides a set of proposed group guidelines that can be easily implemented in small local group gathering at private homes. These provide both facilitator and participants with potential questions, and suitable group format. In 2019 my wife and I attended a public lecture given by Applewhite at the UTAS Menzies Centre in Hobart Tasmania, as part of her Australian sponsored “Every Age Counts” nationwide tour. We were both delighted and inspired by the content. A “Manifesto” background brief from the above book along with details of how to form your own “Conscious Aging Group” follow.*

*—Philip Crouch, Tasmania, 2020*

**ASHTON APPLEWHITE: THIS CHAIR ROCKS “MANIFESTO” BACKGROUND**

“From childhood on, we’re barraged by messages that it’s sad to be old. That wrinkles are embarrassing, and old people useless. Author and activist Ashton Applewhite believed them too—until she realized where this prejudice comes from and the damage it does. Lively, funny, and deeply researched, This Chair Rocks traces Applewhite’s journey from apprehensive boomer to pro-aging radical, and in the process debunks myth after myth about late life.

**The book explains the roots of ageism—in history and in our own age denial—and how it divides and debases, examines how ageist myths and stereotypes cripple the way our brains and bodies function, looks at ageism in the workplace and the bedroom, exposes the cost of the all-American myth of independence, critiques the portrayal of elders as burdens to society, describes what an all-age-friendly world would look like, and concludes with a rousing call to action. Whether you’re older or hoping to get there, this book will shake you by the shoulders, cheer you up, make you mad, and change the way you see the rest of your life. Age pride!”**





The following information is drawn from “Who me Ageist?” How To Start your own Conscious Aging Group. **No one is born prejudiced, but attitudes about age—as well as race and gender—start to form in early childhood.** Over a lifetime they harden into a set of truths: “just the way it is.” Unless we challenge ageist stereotypes—*Old people are incompetent. Wrinkles are ugly. It’s sad to be old*—we feel shame and embarrassment instead of taking pride in the accomplishment of aging. That’s internalized ageism.

**ASHTON APPLEWHITE: WHAT IS CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING AND WHAT IS IT FOR?**

**Consciousness-raising (CR) is a tool that uses the power of personal experiences to unpack unconscious prejudices and to call for social change.** Participants tell and compare their stories in order to understand concretely how they are oppressed and who’s doing the oppressing. This shows them that “personal problems”—such as not being able to get a job, being belittled, or feeling sidelined—are actually widely shared political problems.

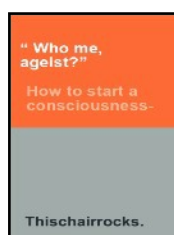
Because ageism is so pervasive and unchallenged, its effects can be difficult to pinpoint. **CR** groups allow participants to express feelings they may have dismissed as unimportant, and to recognize that feelings of inadequacy are actually a result of being discriminated against. By sharing truths, vulnerabilities, and experiences, participants become more aware of how they feel and what forces shape those feelings.

- **Explore our own internalized biases** about age and aging: the myths and stereotypes that each of us has internalized over a lifetime, often unconsciously. **CR** provides a safe space for this essential first step.
- **Discover how myths and stereotypes** about aging, both positive and negative, shape our lives, and what other opportunities and choices are available to us.
- **Break down barriers** and connect in ways that celebrate our shared humanity and the cycles of life. People often feel competitive with people much younger or older than they are, or isolated from them.
- **Get to the root of the social and economic forces** behind ageism: who benefits and who pays.



- **Acknowledge that we can't dismantle ageist thinking and behavior on our own**, because ending discrimination requires collective action. Part of the problem is thinking, “ This is only my problem.”
- **Swap shame and denial of aging for acceptance and age pride.**
- Take action**, using conclusions the group has arrived at as the basis for our theory and strategy.

**CONFRONTING AGEISM ISN'T JUST A MATTER OF PERSONAL WELL-BEING:  
...IT'S A SOCIAL JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE.**



For some people, consciousness-raising will only create internal change. This is completely valid. Ideally, the process will radicalize others to participate in whatever actions are necessary to end discrimination on the basis of age. Historically, when prejudice and discrimination go unchallenged, they stop being identified as oppression and become “normal” or “natural.”

Consciousness-raising exposes these ways of thinking as social constructs that we can change. **Consciousness-raising is the first step in a process of social change** that involves conversation, collaboration, activism, art, advocacy, and eventually legislation. When one group struggles for social equality, it helps other disempowered groups.

**The civil rights movement did more than work towards equal rights for people of color in the United States. It also spread the idea that discrimination based on anything other than the content of a person's character is unethical and unacceptable, and that no one should accept second-class citizenship.**

**The women's movement not only improved women's lives, it paved the way for more progressive views of the workplace, gender, and family. Now it's time to mobilize against discrimination on the basis of age.**

**ASHTON APPLEWHITE: SUGGESTED GROUP GROUND RULES**

- (1) Show up.** No group will work unless its members take it seriously and commit to attending.
- (2) Arrive on time.**



- (3) Listen actively.** Pay close attention to the person who is speaking—not only to the words they’re using but to the message they’re trying to convey. Defer judgment. Just listen carefully.
- (4) No cross-talking.** Wait for the person who is speaking to finish what she/he has to say. Don’t interrupt except to ask a specific informational question or to clarify a point. Take notes if you want to remember something you’d like to say when it’s your turn. *Everyone will get a chance to speak.*
- (5) What happens in the room stays in the room.**  
Consciousness raising discussions are confidential.
- (6) It is vitally important that each person speaks and that no one dominates the discussion.**  
One way to ensure this is to go around in a circle, which also helps the discussion stay on topic. Another is to supply each member with several poker chips, which get tossed in the middle each time they talk.
- (7) Speak personally and specifically from your own experiences.**  
Try not to generalize about others or to talk in abstractions. Use “I” instead of “they,” and “we” instead of “you.”
- (8) Don’t challenge someone else’s experience.**  
What another person says is true for him or her. Instead of invalidating a story that seems off base, share your own story. Watch for body language and nonverbal responses, which can be as disrespectful as words.
- (9) Don’t be afraid to disagree—respectfully.**  
The goal is not to agree, but to gain a deeper understanding. It’s important to communicate honestly and speak up if we perceive things differently. But assert your opinions respectfully and refrain from personal attacks. Focus on ideas.



**(10) Participate to the fullest of your ability.**

Progress and community depend on the inclusion of every individual voice. The more you put into the experience, the more you'll get out of it.

**(11) Try not to give advice.**

The purpose of consciousness-raising is not to help participants solve day-to-day problems, but to help us gain strength through the knowledge that other people share many of our feelings and experiences.

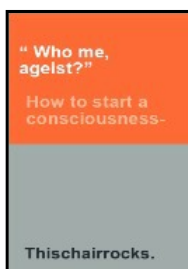
**(12) Sum up.**

After everyone has related their personal experience with the topic, the group works to find common threads and see what conclusions can be drawn. This is when we begin to discover the nature of the social forces that oppress us all.

**(13) These are suggested guidelines, not inflexible rules.**

Feel free to make—and break—your own. It's very important, however, for members not to cross-talk, even if it feels formal or artificial at first and even if people are interrupting out of enthusiasm. That's what enables people to go deeply into their experience, and to listen deeply. Try taking two breaths after each person has finished speaking instead of jumping in to fill the void.

**ASHTON APPLEWHITE: A SAMPLE OF AGEISM DISCUSSION STARTERS**



- How do you think aging differs for men and for women?
- How do you feel when someone says “ You look great for your age!”
- What, if anything, are you looking forward to in the next decade?
- How about the decade(s) after that?



- How do you think aging differs for men and for women?
- How do you feel when someone says “ You look great for your age!”
- What do you fear about growing older?
- What’s surprising about getting older?
- How do you feel about people offering you a seat on the bus?
- When and how should people offer assistance?
  
- What do you think about relationships with a big age difference?
- Do you think that younger people should have priority for organ transplants?
- How would you feel about using a cane? A walker? A wheelchair?
- Do you think there are certain clothes that older people shouldn’t wear?
- Should older people in physically demanding jobs, like firemen and doctors, have mandatory physical exams? What about older drivers?
- How do you relate to people significantly older or younger than you?
- Do you have friends of all ages or mostly peers? What’s the basis for your cross-generational friendships?
- Has getting older changed the way you feel about sex?
- What do you think of the term “ageless?” How about “anti-aging”?
- Do you see value in living to be very, very old?



**Suggested resources:**

<https://www.bookdepository.com/This-Chair-Rocks/9781911545262>

<https://thischairrocks.com/>

[https://www.ted.com/talks/ashton\\_applewhite\\_let\\_s\\_end\\_ageism](https://www.ted.com/talks/ashton_applewhite_let_s_end_ageism)

Consciousness Raising: Ashton Applewhite

<https://thischairrocks.com/resources/>

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# Conscious spirituality in search of truth...



## ROBERT C ATCHLEY:HOW SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE AND DEVELOPMENT INTERACT WITH AGING

*While many people may not associate spirituality and human development with aging Robert [Bob] Atchley a former professor of gerontology did. Atchley is another creative pioneer in this new paradigm of aging who advocated passionately for approaching aging beyond normal chronological perspectives. He shares this new paradigm of aging with other pioneer luminaries including Ashton Applewhite, Connie Goldwater, Carol Osborn, Ron Pevny, Harry R Moody, Tom Pinkson and others.*

*Beyond academically being a professor of gerontology Atchley's wisdom legacy included author of numerous publications, a poet, singer, guest speaker, and intentional interests in Transpersonal Psychology. In 2018, Robert C Atchley passed on to a better place—we wish him well on his spirit' journey. An extract from an article Atchley wrote on spiritual practices is identified in the Transpersonal Psychology Journal, 2011. An extract follows.*

*– Philip Crouch, Tasmania,2020*

## **BOB ATCHLEY: TRANSPERSONAL PSYCHOLOGY AND SPIRITUAL PRACTICES**

TRANSPERSONAL GERONTOLOGY FOCUSES ON FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH GROWTH IN-

- (A) *ability to perceive the spiritual elements of all types of human experiences,*
- (B) *capacity to perceive from a vantage point in higher levels of consciousness, and*
- (C) *openness to experiences of connection with all of being.*

'The term spirituality refers to an inner field of human experience. It is a capacity that can grow enormously over time. **Many of the most spiritually developed human beings are older men and women.** Most adults have had experiences they would label spiritual, and most see themselves as being on a spiritual journey. Spirituality has great potential as a vital region of continued psychological growth throughout adulthood but especially in old age. Successive personal narratives of the spiritual journey are excellent sources or studying these factors.'



**BOB C ATCHLEY: HERE ARE SOME RESPONSES FROM MY INTERVIEWS**

**[P:156] JOURNAL: TRANSPERSONAL PSYCHOLOGY**

First and foremost, spirituality is a region of experience. Without our own inner experience of the spiritual region of life, talk about spirituality is akin to science fiction. One can imagine what spiritual experience might be like, but by no means is it the same thing as having the experience.

As I thought about [what makes an experience spiritual], I began to wonder if any experiences are not spiritual. **If being spiritual is part of our nature, maybe even the central part**, which I believe it is, then as long as we are being, there is a spiritual element. Whether we are aware of them [this] is another thing.

**Man, age 92** Life is more and more spiritual all the time. I have an ongoing experience of being part of a network. It is the backdrop to everything. Sometimes it is faint, almost not there, when I deal with the logistics of everything that I am part of and that is part of me. This tuning in' has become easier since I moved out of the city.

**Woman, age 52** As a viewpoint or vantage point, spirituality can take three basic forms: intense awareness of the present, transcendence of the personal self, or a feeling of connection with the ground of being—variously conceived as all of life, the universe, a supreme being, a great web of being, and many other conceptions. Most people grow into these perspectives in a succession or upward spiral of increasing understanding we call spiritual development or spiritual growth. Some come to recognize that these vantage points are interrelated and can reside in awareness simultaneously.

**The concept of a spiritual journey refers to an individual's personal narrative about her or his spiritual life and development, including its ups and downs.** This narrative usually includes a history of experiences, actions, and insights connected with a search for spiritual meaning and understanding.

Underlying the spiritual journey is an intentional process of seeking spiritual experiences, using values and insights informed by spiritual experience to make life choices, and learning from experience with this process. Spiritual journeys also involve learning to persist and be content on a journey into imperfectly known territory, where insights are always limited, no matter how profound they seem at the time.



**People who have been on a spiritual journey for decades usually have developed a sense of humor** about the contradictions and paradoxes they encounter, even as they use these enigmas as food for contemplation. Most spiritual journeys involve elements of commitment, self-discipline, and regular spiritual practice. Some people believe that we become what we think, but there is evidence that we are more likely to become what we do (Walsh,1999). People usually learn not to force the issue. **Waiting is an important spiritual practice** among elders—not ‘waiting for’ but just waiting. In the space created by patient waiting or contemplation, direct connection with the ground of being may be more likely.

**BOB ATCHLEY: SPIRITUAL PRACTICE IN LATER LIFE**

**[P:158] JOURNAL: TRANSPERSONAL PSYCHOLOGY**

Returning to spiritual practice over and over again creates habits of mind, habits of body, and habits of being that come to seem natural. If these practices are part of an open context of spiritual seeking, these habits can become enlivening. To many advanced spiritual practitioners, every day appears as a new day. Spiritual practices are things done on a regular basis to celebrate, appreciate, invite, or act on experiences of presence, transcending the personal self, and connecting directly with the ground of being.

**Many types of meditation and prayer, devotional rituals and music, inspirational reading and reflection, and movement-oriented spiritual disciplines can be mixed and matched to support a contemplative, practice-oriented spirituality.**

Considerable evidence supports the idea that spiritual concerns, experience, and development become increasingly important for many people in middle and later life. This evidence is found in the narratives of individuals as well as in social science surveys (Atchley & Barusch, 2004). Beginning around age 35 or 40, as age increases, so does the proportion of people who are consciously involved in an inner exploration of the meaning of their existence and their relation to the universe.

**Albert Winseman (2003) reported that adults age 65 or older were more than twice as likely to see themselves as spiritually committed than were adults 45 to 54. Spiritually committed people are often engaged in spiritual practices that heighten the possibility of numinous, mystical experience.**





In addition, those who experience transcendent, non-personal levels of consciousness often feel called to serve, and spiritually rooted service takes many forms. **We usually experience spirituality not in an inner vacuum of pure existence but in the context of acting in some way, even if that action is deep contemplation while sitting relatively still.** Undoubtedly, pure being is present underneath everything we do. If we were not experiencing being, at least in the background of our awareness, then how could we experience anything else?

**The spiritual journey can be seen as a quest for balance between being and doing.** In the process of learning to function in the social worlds into which we are born—family, work, community, society, and so on— many people become overly focused on acting within the context of socially defined positions and roles, their attention is absorbed by this social world, and they lose sight of the liberating qualities of being that are there also. We learn to identify with our niches, actions, and lifestyles rather than with our more fundamental being.

**The spiritual journey is often about learning to bring being back into consciousness.** People are often motivated toward this sort of journey by their feeling that something is missing from their conventional role centered lives. For many people, learning to bring being back into consciousness introduces a healthy distance from, and perspective on, social roles and also a needed element of creativity and spontaneity to one's lived experience.

The essence of fully developed spirituality is an intense aliveness and deep understanding that one intuitively comprehends as coming from a direct, internal link with that mysterious principle that connects all aspects of the universe. As fully awakened spiritual beings, people feel their interconnectedness with everything. In most spiritual traditions, mysticism lies at the heart of spirituality. Mysticism refers to transcendent, contemplative experiences that enhance spiritual understanding ...



**Suggested resources:**

<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/e89b/165cc2cac3d59372003a8fe64b11e8d4f3d4.pdf>

[https://legacyofwisdom.org/legacy-of-wisdom/en/library/interviewees/bob\\_atchley.html](https://legacyofwisdom.org/legacy-of-wisdom/en/library/interviewees/bob_atchley.html)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uhcLQo6HZUw>

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**CATHY CARMODY: GROWING OLDER CONSCIOUSLY IS ABOUT-**

*Cathy Carmody was a pioneer in this new paradigm of consciously aging. Along with contemporaries like Connie Goldman, Carol Osborn, Ashton Applewhite, Bob Atchley, Ron Pevny, Tom Pinkson, Harry R Moody and others have changed the narrative of aging in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Carmody was attending a “Choosing Conscious Elderhood” retreat led by Ron Pevny in 2012 when she wrote the poem “Becoming an Elder.” In 2017 Cathy left this earth, we wish her spirit’ journey well. She also expressed her own experiences and thoughts on growing older consciously, both the poem and her thoughts follow.*

*–Philip Crouch, Tasmania, 2020*

**CATHY CARMODY: “BECOMING AN ELDER”**

Leaving behind my journey of struggling and racing through  
the white water of many rivers, I become the river,  
creating my own unique way.

Leaving behind my self-imposed role as a tree upon  
which others have leaned, I now become the wind,  
with the freedom to blow whenever and wherever I choose.

Leaving behind the boxes I’ve created in my life, crammed with  
roles, responsibilities, rules and fears,  
I become the wild and unpredictable space  
within which flowers sprout and grow.

Leaving behind the years of yearning for others  
to see me as somebody,  
I soften into becoming my future,  
with permission from SELF to  
continually unfold as I choose, without concern  
for how others may see me.

Leaving behind years of telling and teaching,  
I become instead a mirror  
into which others can peer and  
view reflections of themselves to consider.

Leaving behind the urge to provide answers for others,  
I become - in the silence of this forest retreat  
- the question.

Leaving behind the rigor of my intellect,  
I become a single candle in the  
darkness, offering myself as a beacon for others  
to create their own path.  
I become an elder.



**CATHY CARMODY: FROM MY EXPERIENCE GROWING OLDER CONSCIOUSLY IS ABOUT...**

- Being willing to open up and be curious about one’s future possibilities, regardless of age!
- Being willing to set aside old limiting beliefs, and ask myself ‘who do I have the potential to become’, as I leave my mid life work behind me and invite myself to grow and evolve over the coming years.
- Being willing to acknowledge that living my life with an identity that remains tied to the work I used to do, would keep me stuck, looking backwards, and would not serve me.
- Being willing to begin a regular process of reflection, of looking inward for answers, rather than always focusing on what’s going on or being said outside of me.
- Being willing to discover and continually grow my inner awareness so that my outward thoughts and behaviours become reflections of my inner intentions.
- Becoming aware of the coma of habituated beliefs, behaviors and responses I have been living in, and being willing to ask myself is this what I want, and if not, what do I want instead?
- Being willing to search for and discover what holds meaning and purpose for me in my life.
- Focusing on what I want, rather than what I don’t want and learning how to focus on MY needs, particularly if I’ve spent a lifetime of focusing on the needs of others.
- Fully acknowledging that I cannot live the afternoon of my life the same way as I did the morning of my life, and willingly letting go of old beliefs and behaviors that no longer serve me at the same time as I move toward new possibilities that I have yet to discover.
- Choosing my own path, rather than following a path based on what others think is right for me.
- Listening to my body - paying attention to the aches, pains and discomforts, and allowing myself to be curious about what my body is attempting to tell me - always being aware that my body never lies!



**Suggested resources:**

Cathy Carmody-Wordpress: <https://cathycarmody.wordpress.com/fear-of-aging-dying/>  
Becoming an Elder: <https://janebooth.wordpress.com/2017/04/06/becoming-an-elder/>

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# Conscious spirituality in search of truth...



## CONSCIOUS ELDERS NETWORK, CEN: A REFERENCE FOR LIFE

*Conscious Elders Network, CEN, is a progressive American grassroots community of older highly motivated persons. Their primary objective is to collectively advocate on a wide variety of issues impacting on American society today. These issues include racism, social justice, ageism, environmental issues, and especially climate change.*

*CEN members actively discuss, formulate policy, arrange strategies including democratic protests in response to above societal inequities. Meetings are held locally and nationally based on consensus of available resources to meet above actions.*

*Of significant importance to CEN members are the contributions towards formulating a values based organisation. CEN is a perfect example for many positive and productive older persons of what can be achieved when passion, spirit of commitment is available. In CENs “Meta Values-Reference For Life” document these values are expressed, and extract follows below.*

*–Philip Crouch, Tasmania, 2020*

## CONSCIOUS ELDERS NETWORK META VALUE: REFERENCE FOR LIFE

‘As conscious elders, we acknowledge our own fundamental wholeness, in relationship with all living beings joined in the web of life. This understanding and experience allows conflict to be resolved, non-violence to be practiced, reconciliation to succeed, and peace to be restored. **These organizational values and principles guide our living and hold us accountable:**’

- (1). **INCLUSIVITY** We include and welcome authentic relationships with diverse individuals in all generations, learning from and integrating a full variety of leadership capacities to collaboratively address the urgent issues we face in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- (2). **COMMUNITY** Embracing the genius of community and the rich potential for inspired co-creation, we value the way right relationships can provide guidance beyond what any one individual can access.
- (3). **INTEGRITY** We model integrity, committing ourselves to speak and act in alignment with our values and principles, in order to bring our best selves forward.
- (4). **PRESENCE** We strive to be present and responsive in the moment, to approach life with flexible minds and whole hearts, and to become increasingly able to navigate uncertainty, ambiguity, and paradox with contentment.

/2



- (5). **DEEP DIALOGUE** Through deep dialogue, including non-judgmental listening, we willingly open to the unknown and the unexpected, inviting our minds and hearts to explore subtle meaning and to gain new depths of understanding.
- (6). **INNOVATION** Using our imaginations and creativity to broaden perspective and replace outdated paradigms with new ones, we innovate freely, weaving ancient wisdom and modern knowledge together.
- (7). **JUSTICE** We choose holistic justice as our priority, pledging to uphold the rights of all without discrimination, to help foster a social and natural environment that supports fairness and dignity for all living beings.
- (8). **SUSTAINABILITY** The challenge of developing a sustainable world calls us to discover and to live the best possible legacy to serve current needs without violating the welfare of future generations.
- (9). **COMPASSIONATE CARING** Our choice to be compassionately caring means that we cultivate empathy for all beings and strive to relieve suffering with loving kindness, forgiveness and reconciliation, honoring all of us unconditionally in the web of life



**Suggested resources:**

Conscious Elders Network resources, action plans, developments and more -

<https://eldersaction.org/events>

<https://eldersaction.org/history/>

**CEN Turning Point Journal.**

<https://eldersaction.org/turning-point-journal/>

Earth Charter Values:

<http://earthcharter.org/discover/the-earth-charter/>

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# Conscious spirituality in search of truth...

## WHY CREATIVE PEOPLE AGE BETTER!



*Creativity is an essential component of human development regardless of age. For older people in particular creative experiences can result in not remaining isolated, meeting new friends, contributing to community, adapting to changes, and finding hidden talents never before realised. Scientists, clinical practitioners, professional health services are now recognising the significant benefits to older persons provided by 'the Arts.' Scientists have identified that creative pursuits may also contribute to the development of new neural pathways in our brains as we age.*

*Vast opportunities exist today for most older people to pursue. These new experiences range from volunteering, making furniture, hobby-crafts, to learning a new language, restoring an old bike or car, joining a yoga class, participating in a singing or drama group. Locally joining your environmental land care style group. Creatively all of the above provide social interconnectedness, reduces isolation or loneliness, and provide a purpose for getting up in the morning. In 2003, my wife and I joined a local singing-drama group. Later, I formed two separate senior drama-performance groups consisting of persons often without theatrical experience. To highlight creative aging an article appearing in the Huffington Post titled "Why Creative People Age Better" written by Timi Gustafson describes why creativity is important to older people, an extract follows.*

*—Philip Crouch, Tasmania, 2020*

### **TIMI GUSTAFSON: HUFFINGTON POST "WHY CREATIVE PEOPLE AGE BETTER"**

*'Do creative and artistically inclined people have advantages over the rest of us mere mortals who can barely draw a stick figure or whistle a simple tune? There are indications that individuals who are able to use their talents also tend to fare better in other ways, including their physical and mental health, compared to others whose existence mainly consists of repetitiveness and routine. Still, scientists have never been able to prove that creativity is indeed a contributing factor to humans' well-being.*

*Picasso was undoubtedly one of the most creative persons one can think of, and he maintained a zest for life and work well into his 90's. But so was Mozart, who tragically died at 35 years of age.*



Hemingway, perhaps the greatest writer of his generation, couldn't pen a single word for long periods of time -- mostly because of drunkenness. Some famous artists have looked upon their gift as a curse rather than a blessing. So, should we assume any connection between creativity and well-being at all?

One study <sup>1</sup> [ABSTRACT Openness to Experience and Mortality in Men: Analysis of Trait and Facets Nicholas A. Turiano, MS, Avron Spiro, III, PhD, Daniel K. Mroczek, PhD] that looked into the health status and life expectancy of creative people found that creativity may indeed be associated with delayed decline in cognitive and physical health at an advanced age.

While it remains unclear whether engaging in creative activities or the use of creative energies actually contribute to the slowing of the natural aging process, **it is conceivable, according to the researchers, that creative people find better ways of coping with their diminishing capabilities than their less resourceful counterparts.**

On the other hand, there are highly creative persons who only function superbly in a specific area of interest and are not better-equipped for problem-solving beyond their expertise, for example when it comes to their health needs. Prior research, including a landmark study from Seattle on the [ABSTRACT]<sup>2</sup> "Relationship Between Personality and Cognition," K. Warner Schaie, Sherry L. Willis, and Grace I.L. Caskie] has shown that attitude and outlook on life were important components for maintaining the mental health of seniors in their '70's and '80's.

**Experimentation, openness to new ideas and flexibility in dealing with changes are the essence of creativity, and they are also crucial ingredients for healthy cognitive aging, the researchers say.**

Thankfully, you don't have to be a genius or maestro yourself to stay healthy and vital. Even just loving to read, attending art performances, and keeping stimulating social ties can yield enormous benefits throughout life, according to a study on creativity and aging, which was sponsored by the *National Endowment for the Arts*.

Seniors between the ages of 63 and 103 who participated in a variety of weekly art programs were found to be in better health, had fewer doctor visits, and **used less medication** in comparison to a control group that attended no such activities. They also showed better results in mental health tests, and were overall more involved in their communities.



**Creativity can find fertile ground anywhere. But it takes a personal decision and commitment to openness to change as well as acceptance of risk, including risk of failure. Conservatism, hunkering down in the hope that things will remain the same, is not helpful and hampers any creative process.**

That doesn't mean everything from the past has to be overthrown and redone from scratch. But it can require rethinking some old traits that may no longer serve us well. Or, what has been overlooked for some time may regain relevance when seen in a different light. **The beauty of aging is that there is room for new perspectives based on hindsight and greater appreciation for the preciousness of time.** ‘

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- 1 [ABSTRACT Openness to Experience and Mortality in Men: Analysis of Trait and Facets Nicholas A. Turiano, MS, Avron Spiro, III, PhD, Daniel K. Mroczek, PhD]
  - 2 ABSTRACT "The Seattle Longitudinal Study: Relationship Between Personality and Cognition, K. Warner Schaie, Sherry L. Willis, and Grace I.L. Caskie



#### **Suggested resources:**

Why creative people age better, Huffington Post article, Timi Gustafson, R.D. Registered Dietician, Health Counsellor.

[https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/timi-gustafson/creative-people-aging\\_b\\_5622062.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/timi-gustafson/creative-people-aging_b_5622062.html)

#### **Abstract 1:**

Openness to Experience and Mortality in Men: Analysis of Trait and Facets Nicholas A. Turiano, MS, Avron Spiro, III, PhD, Daniel K. Mroczek, PhD]

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0898264311431303>

#### **Abstract 2:**

"The Seattle Longitudinal Study: Relationship Between Personality and Cognition, K. Warner Schaie, Sherry L. Willis, and Grace I.L. Caskie

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1474018/>

Five big benefits of creative expression for seniors

<https://www.agedcareonline.com.au/2019/05/5-Big-Benefits-of-Creative-Expression-for-Seniors>

<https://www.americansforthearts.org/by-program/reports-and-data/legislation-policy/naappd/new-theories-and-research-findings-on-the-positive-influence-of-music-and-art-on-health-with-aging>

<https://www.agedcareguide.com.au/talking-aged-care/creative-ideas-to-fight-social-isolation-among-older-people>

<https://www.woodlakebooks.com/art/inventory/All-Products/Spirituality-in-the-Arts/Creative-Aging>

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/open-mind-longer-life/#>

[www.philipcrouch.org](http://www.philipcrouch.org)

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*Conscious spirituality*  *in search of truth...*

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