

# Definition of an Elder

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An Elder is a person who is still growing,  
still a learner, still with potential,  
and whose life continues to have within it  
promise for, and connection to the future.

An Elder is still in pursuit of  
happiness, joy and pleasure,  
and her or his birthright to these  
remains intact.

Moreover, an Elder is a person  
who deserves respect and honor and  
whose work it is to synthesize wisdom  
from long life experience and to  
formulate this into a legacy  
for future generations.

# The Essence of Spiritual Eldering

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When Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi z"l was asked  
“What is the essence of Spiritual Eldering?”  
He created this list, as a guide for this work, which he called:

## **The SINE QUA NON, THE ESSENCE OF SAGE-ING®**

- 1. To take hold of the willingness to deal with life completion**  
and overcome the desire to stay in denial of aging.
- 2. To come to terms with your mortality.**
- 3. To acquire the skills for working on the inside by:**
  - Journal Work
  - Meditation
  - Imaginal exercises
  - spiritual intimacy—creating safe space and sacred space in dyads.
- 4. To pay attention to body, feelings, mind, and spirit,**  
to be guided by them, and  
to maintain them in the right tone, mood, and attitude.
- 5. To give a real hearing to the inner voices**  
allowing the minorities within the whole person their witness.
- 6. To begin to do life repair,**  
in health and in practical matters with wills and with testaments,  
in relationships and between generations,  
reaching into the past and offering release and healing.  
doing the forgiveness work with release from vindictiveness and anger,  
finding the pearls in the anxious memories.
- 7. To do the philosophical homework,**  
raising questions about the purpose and the meaning of our lives, and  
answering the question, “Where do I fit in?”
- 8. To serve as an Elder to others**  
as a guide, mentor, and agent of healing and reconciliation  
on behalf of the planet, the nation, and the family  
being a wisdom keeper.
- 9. To prepare for a serene death and afterlife,**  
furnishing one’s solitude with one’s spirit and God.
- 10. To do this nobly in connectedness with the “Ancient of Days/Atik Yomeen**  
with the inner, actualized self already realized, individuated, and completed.

# The Essence of Sage-ing® (8 points)

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1. Nourishing ourselves mentally, physically, emotionally, spiritually, and
2. Acquiring the skills for working on the inside, and
3. Giving a real hearing to our inner voices, and
4. Engaging in life review and life repair, and
5. Synthesizing wisdom from long life experience, and
6. Dealing with life completion and coming to terms with one's mortality,  
and
7. Transmitting a legacy to future generations, and
8. Doing this nobly, in connection with our inner, actualized self.

Adapted from the Sine Qua Non (without which it isn't)  
Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, 1999

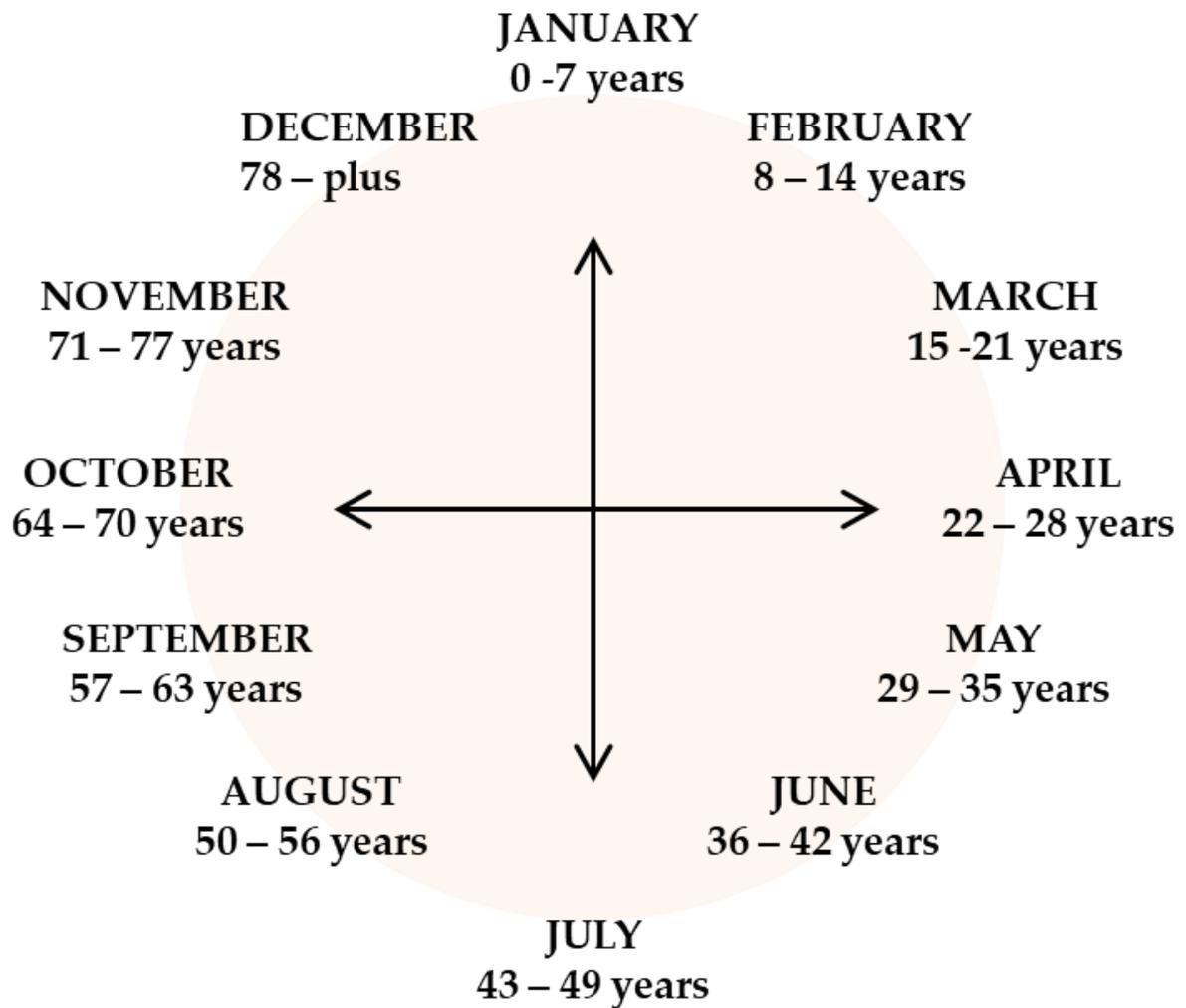
# The Cycles of My Life

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0 – 7 years	January	cutting the first teeth
8 – 14 years	February	childhood
15 – 21 years	March	adolescence, teenage years
22 – 28 years	April	young adulthood
29 – 35 years	May	saturn return – redefining self in the world, separate from family of origin
36 – 42 years	June	virile adult
43 – 49 years	July	mid-age redefining (crises)
50 – 56 years	August	height of summer, crone’s age
57 – 63 years	September	end of summer, beginning of the harvest
64 – 70 years	October	harvesting of one’s life
71 – 77 years	November	gathering the seeds
78 – plus years	December	completion of the cycle, looking towards the next season

# The Cycles of My Life

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# Who Are Elders

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- Elders are people demonstrating wisdom in its active state.
- Elders are a natural resource who liberate, heal and empower others.
- Elders access a balance of masculine and feminine energy in the psyche.
- Elders elicit extraordinary deference from their community.

## **Elder roles include:**

### **Celebrants**

- Elders celebrate life by maintaining a sense of humor, taking care of themselves and taking pride in their good health.
- Elders harvest what they have sown over a long lifetime.
- Elders are a source of blessing.
- Elders initiate others and affirm them through unconditional positive regard.

### **Wisdomkeepers**

- Elders are still learning, still growing.
- Elders have come to terms with their mortality.
- Elders share their long life experience by being accessible to the young.

# Who Are Elders

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## Conservationists

- Elders are stewards, caretakers of both man and the Earth.
- Elders view all life as interconnected, as one.

## Mentors

- Elders' work is to synthesize wisdom from long life experience and formulate this into a legacy for future generations.
- Elders believe the role of older people is to facilitate creativity in the young and make a decisive turn toward generative adulthood.
- Elders believe that the patterns of the past don't need to prevail, and so they listen to youth.
- Elders have loosened their grip without losing control by:
  - Recognizing they have a shadow side but not letting their weaknesses run their life;
  - Not hungering for power;
  - Being stirred by cooperation and consensus.

# Journal Writing

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## Reasons to keep a journal

- **To become better acquainted with the many parts of your Self.**  
To listen to the multitude of voices within:
  - Who is speaking?
  - Who makes your decisions?To hear the Inner Audience:
  - To whom do you play?
  - Who is your critic?
  - Who is your unconditional supporter?
- **To learn to be a Witness to your own experience.**  
To keep a record of how your life unfolds for yourself and for others  
To keep track of developments, patterns, cycles and trends of your life.  
To refer to later as a reminder of who you were and what you were and what you were doing.  
To provide a social and historical record for future generations of your family and of others.
- **To access information from your subconscious, unconscious, and archetypal minds.**  
To encourage the sometimes unnoticed parts of your mind to emerge.
- **To explore your dreams and develop your intuition.**  
To allow these parts of yourself to become more evident and present.
- **To uncover your creativity.**  
To nurture and develop your journal as an art without having to encounter other people as “the critic.”
- **To get in touch with your deepest feelings.**  
To explore your feelings, reactions, and relationships within the safety and privacy of your own journal method, pace, and in your own time
- **To heal your relationships.**  
To write letters, poetry, draw pictures that you may or may not send, expressing your hurt, anger, desires, and forgiveness

**Your journal can be your friend** when no one else is available.

**What are your reasons** for keeping a journal?

# Journal Writing

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## Suggestions for your Journal

**Journal in a composition book, sketch book or some type of notebook.** You may want to purchase a special book that inspires you to open your heart and to write or draw. Consider whether you are more comfortable with pages that are blank or those that have lines.

- **Begin by** sitting in a comfortable chair, closing your eyes and relaxing your body. You might take several deep breaths, emptying your lungs completely after each one. Remain in a meditative or “twilight” state, opening your eyes just enough to see the paper.
- **Date** and state the purpose of each entry.
- **Begin writing/drawing** quickly and naturally, allowing words, and thoughts, and images to flow. Allow the complete truth to emerge in the language that comes to you.
- **If you need some structure...**  
Consider the questions that you want to answer. You might prompt yourself with 3 or 4 questions each day. These may change and evolve over time and might include...
  - What happened in my day that was particularly good?
  - What happened that I would want to change? When I felt disconcerted, did I give myself the chance to “re-contextualize” this event and view it in a different light?
  - With whom was I particularly close? How did I listen to that person and reach out to them?
- **Respect your privacy.**

## Journal Projects

### Letters you may want to address

What have you always wanted to say and perhaps never will. Some may be sent and some never will.

### An autobiography

This may be a “special” journal for this occasion. It could be historical about your family, or another particular aspect of your life

### Ethical wills

Expressing your philosophy and wisdom learned from life’s experiences to those you love and care for.

# Why Keep a Journal? A Dozen Answers

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1. **Discover the writer within you.** Your journal does not care if you spell words correctly; put commas in the right places, or scribble in the margins. So if you've told yourself for years that writing is boring or that you're not good at it, give it one more shot.
2. **Keep a record for the future of how your life unfolds.** There's something very magical about going back into your life and observing it from the vantage point of one month, or one year, or ten years later.
3. **Get to know the different parts of yourself.** What some psychologists call our "sub-personalities" are like a wardrobe full of mental and emotional costumes; we "dress up" in one or another to fit the changing situations and circumstances of our lives. Your journal can help you befriend and integrate your various "parts."
4. **Take advantage of a friend in need.** Not only is your journal always there waiting for you, but it's a valuable tool in the therapeutic process. Most of the time when a journal is used in conjunction with a program of therapy, clients move through issues more quickly and integrate new learning more readily. And if you're not in therapy right now, you can learn to become your own counselor by really listening to yourself in the journal.
5. **Heal your relationships.** In your journal you can yell at your boss or scream at a friend to your heart's content. Your journal provides a safe forum in which to ventilate strong feelings that may not be appropriate for direct expression. This leaves you sane and sensible for an actual conversation in which you'll likely be able to speak assertively and listen attentively.
6. **Access information stored in your subconscious, unconscious and super conscious minds.** Your conscious mind is like the tip of an iceberg – it is what you are aware of, but it represents just a tiny fraction of what's actually there. Journal writing is an excellent way to access and draw information from the other levels of your mind.
7. **Explore your dreams.** Any journal technique that you would use for a situation or relationship in your waking life can be used for its dreaming counterpart. Let your journal serve as a map as you venture down "the royal road to the unconscious."

# Why Keep a Journal? A Dozen Answers

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8. **Develop your intuition.** Intuition, your “sixth sense,” does not communicate to you in the same way as your other five senses; rather, it communicates in symbols and insights. Logging and exploring these symbols and insights in your journal gives you a road map to your intuition.
9. **Maximize time and business efficiency.** Many of the most popular speakers on the motivational circuit tout journal writing as one of the best kept secrets of success. As a time and task management tool, the journal has few competitors!
10. **Explore your creativity.** Your journal is a forgiving canvas for expressions of creativity you thought was dead and buried. Write a poem, paint a picture, doodle a cartoon!
11. **Track the cycles, patterns and trends of your life.** No longer must you be subject to the mercy of your “moods” – with a little forethought and a commitment to chart yourself for a few weeks or months, you’ll likely find amazing information about your personal process.
12. **Get in touch with your feelings, develop spontaneity, develop self-discipline, safely ventilate strong emotions, try on new behaviors and beliefs, imagine your own possibilities, make your fantasies real, anchor in your affirmations.** The list goes on and on. But the *best* reason to write a journal is the one that appeals to you. . . right now!

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