

## Resources

### The Philosophical Work of the Sage Module 10

#### Books

Baars, Jan. ***Aging and the Art of Living***. 2012. The John Hopkins University Press. Baltimore MD.

Cowan, Rachel and Thal, Linda. ***Wise Aging: Living with Joy, Resilience, and Spirit***. 2015. Behrman House, Inc: Springfield NJ.  
**Chapter 6: Cultivating Spiritual Qualities for Well-Being.**

Frankel, Viktor E. ***Man's Search for Meaning***. 1959....2006. Beacon Press, Boston MA.

Hollis, James. ***Living an Examined Life: Wisdom for the Second Half of the Journey***. 2018. Sounds True: Boulder CO.

Leider, Richard J. ***The Power of Purpose: Find Meaning, Live Longer, Better***. 2015 (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition). Berret-Koehler Publishers, Inc. Oakland CA.

Lieder, Richard and Shapiro. ***Claiming Your Place at the Fire: Living the Second Half of Your Life On Purpose***. 2004. Barrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc. San Francisco.

Luke, Helen. ***Old Age: Journey into Simplicity***. 2010. Lindisfarne Books. Barrington MA.

Moore, Thomas. ***Original Self: Living with Paradox and Originality***. 2007. Harper Collins. NY

Moore, Thomas. ***Care of the Soul, Twenty-fifth Anniversary Ed: A Guide for Cultivating Depth and Sacredness in Everyday Life***. 2016. Harper Collins. NY

Muller, Wayne. ***How, Then, Shall We Live?: Four Simple Questions that Reveal the Beauty and Meaning of Our Lives***. 1996. Bantam Books: NY.  
**Part One: Who Am I?**

Palmer, Parker J. ***Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation***. 2000: Josey-Bass, San Francisco.

Rohr, Richard. *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life*. 2011. Josey-Bass, San Francisco.

Rohr, Richard. *Immortal Diamond: the Search for Our True Self*. 2013. Josey-Bass, San Francisco.

## **Quotes**

### **Lao Tzu in the Tao Te Ching:**

“Knowing others is wisdom,  
Knowing the self is enlightenment.  
Mastering others requires force,  
Mastering the self requires strength.

“At the center of your being you have the answer;  
you know who you are and you know what you want.”

### **Bhagavad Gita:**

Self knowledge alone is the means to the highest Bliss.

### **Carl Jung:**

Who looks outside, dreams;  
Who looks inside, awakens.

### **Reb Zalman (p. 129)**

The most enlightened teacher may give you directions in getting from NYC to Boston, but only you can unlock the door to your house and enter it.

### **Proverbs 4: 6-9**

Love wisdom and she will guard you;  
Cherish her, and she will lift you high;  
If only you embrace her, she will bring  
You honor. She will set a garland of  
grace on your head and bestow on you  
a crown of glory.

**Lily Tomlin**

"I always wanted to be somebody. Now I see I should have been more specific."

**Deepak Chopra**

Why is our self-expression a gift to others? It is a gift in the same way that every voice in a choir is essential to the whole song.

Communicating your life and presence to the world is a gift, but it is also spiritually significant. No one else can be who you are. No one else can fulfill your role in life. Creation requires you to come forward to be and share your true self. When you do, you encourage everyone else to shine forth in their full glory as well.

Evolution is our life Purpose – to evolve in consciousness.

**John Green**

*"You are so busy being YOU that you have no idea how utterly unprecedented you are."*

**Mark Twain**

*"The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why."*

**William Shakespeare**

*"It is not the stars that hold our destiny, but within ourselves. "*

**Richard Lieder**

*"Find your passion(s)...your passion will lead to your purpose."*

**Krishnamurti**

"The only questions worth asking are the ones impossible to answer."

In an Hasidic story, Rabbi Zusya of Hanipol posed a question shortly before his death:

“In the coming world,” he said, “they will not ask me ‘Why were you not like Moses?’”

They will ask me, “Why were you not what YOU, Zusya, could have been?”





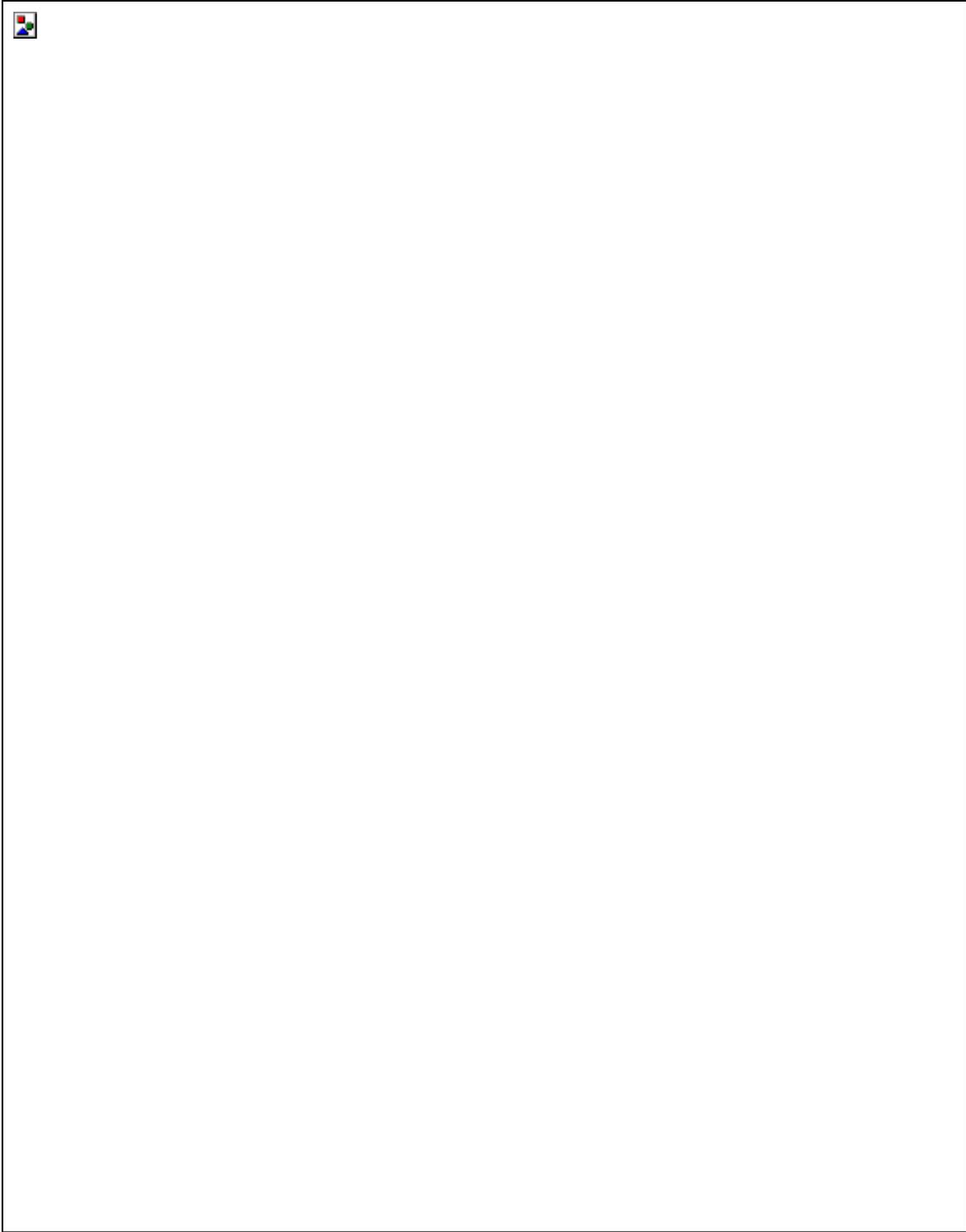
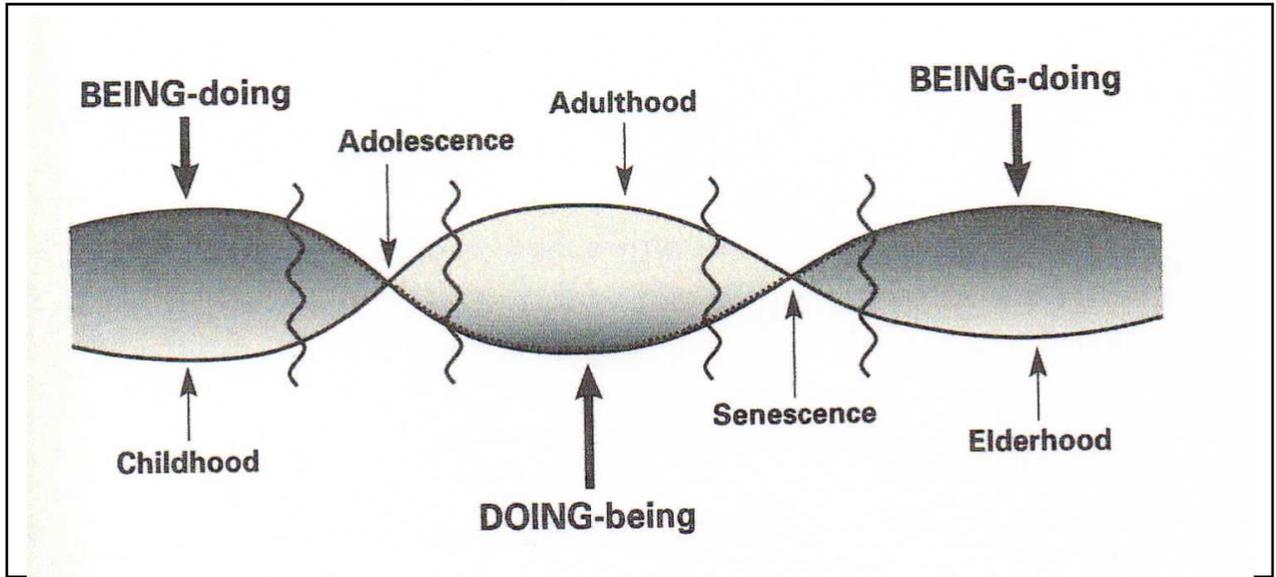


Photo from Sounds True Catalogue (2001). Boulder CO: Sounds True, Incorporated.

## A Contemporary Human Life Cycle



*A contemporary human life cycle*

From: *What are old people for? How Elderhood Care the World by*  
Thomas, MD

## Poetry and Readings

### You

Author Unknown

You may not think the world needs you  
But it does  
for you are unique  
Like no one that has ever been before  
Or will come after.  
No one can speak with your voice  
Say your peace  
Smile your smile  
Or shine your light.  
No one can take your place  
For it is yours alone to fill.  
If you are not there to shine your light  
Who knows how many strangers will  
lose their way  
As they try to pass  
By your empty place in the darkness.

### Now is the Time

Now is the time to take off the mask and open your eyes,  
to look into the face of darkness,  
to step out of the muddy ruts and forge ahead.

Now is the time to shake the dust from your heart,  
to open the back door and let the gypsies in,  
to welcome home the cast of characters you left behind long ago.

Now is the time hear the sweet sound of solitude,  
to put on the coat you know you'll never outgrow,  
to move on firm ground and arrive at the place that is yours.

- Diane Janes-Tucker

~from *Steering by Starlight*, by Martha Beck

Live while you are alive...

Learn to be what you are in the seed of your spirit

Learn to free yourself from all things that have molded  
you

And which limit your secret and undiscovered road...

Never forget that love

Requires that you be

The greatest person you are capable of being

Self-generating and strong and gentle—

Your own hero and star...

Be grateful for life as you live it,

And may a wonderful light

Always guide you along the unfolding road.

#### **Advice**

Someone dancing inside us  
has learned only a few steps:  
the “Do-Your-Work” in 4/4 time,  
and the “What-Do-You-Expect” waltz.

He hasn't noticed yet the woman  
standing away from the lamp,  
the one with black eyes  
who knows the rumba  
and strange steps in jumpy  
rhythms from the mountains of Bulgaria.

If they dance together,  
something unexpected will happen.  
If they don't, the next world  
will be a lot like this one.

-Bill Holm

## **Crack Yourself Open**

Being a sage is not all unruffled calm.

It is also a time of freedom

to express and feel

the truth of our lives.

To explore the passions

buried for years

beneath acceptable masks.

It is time to serve a cause

with energy and compassion,

to fall madly in love

and dance into the night.

Crack yourself open!

What use is it to continue to hide

behind your facades and roles?

Why waste your energy playing games?

Isn't it time to cry your tears;

to shout your passion'

to dance like Zorba;

and to let your soul touch

the Soul of the world?

*The Sage's Tao Te Ching: Ancient Advice for the Second Half of Life*  
By William Martin

**T.S. Elliott**

**LITTLE GIDDING**

**No. 4 of 'Four Quartets**

What we call the beginning is often the end  
And to make an end is to make a beginning.  
The end is where we start from. And every phrase  
And sentence that is right (where every word is at home,  
Taking its place to support the others,  
The word neither diffident nor ostentatious,  
An easy commerce of the old and the new,  
The common word exact without vulgarity,  
The formal word precise but not pedantic,  
The complete consort dancing together)  
Every phrase and every sentence is an end and a beginning,  
Every poem an epitaph. And any action  
Is a step to the block, to the fire, down the sea's throat  
Or to an illegible stone: and that is where we start.  
We die with the dying:  
See, they depart, and we go with them.  
We are born with the dead:  
See, they return, and bring us with them.  
The moment of the rose and the moment of the yew-tree  
Are of equal duration. A people without history  
Is not redeemed from time, for history is a pattern  
Of timeless moments. So, while the light fails  
On a winter's afternoon, in a secluded chapel  
History is now and England.

With the drawing of this Love and the voice of this  
Calling

We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time.

dear heart, come home

the persistent voice of midlife wooed and wailed, wept and whined  
nagged like an endless toothache, seduced like an insistent lover,  
promised a guide to protect me as I turned intently toward my soul.

as I stood at the door of "Go Deeper" I heard the ego's howl of resistance,  
felt the shivers of my false security but knew there could be no other way.  
Inward I traveled, down, down, drawn further into the truth than I ever intended to  
go.

as I moved far and deep and long eerie things long lain hidden jeered at me with  
shadowy voices, while love I'd never envisioned wrapped compassionate ribbons  
'round my fearful, anxious heart.

further in I sank, to the depths, past all my arrogance and confusion, through all  
my questions and doubts,  
beyond all I held to be fact.

finally I stood before a new door;  
The Hall of Oneness and Freedom.

uncertain and wary, I slowly opened, discovering a space of welcoming light.  
I entered the sacred inner room where everything sings of Mystery.

no longer could I deny or resist the decay of clenching control and the silent  
gasps of surrender.

there in that sacred place of my Self Love of a lasting kind came forth, embracing  
me like a long beloved one come home for the first time.

much that I thought to be "me" crept to the corners and died.  
In its place a Being named Peace slipped beside and softly spoke my name:

"Welcome home, True Self, I've been waiting for you."

**--Joyce Rupp  
from the Preface of  
*Dear Heart Come Home***

**Always We Hope Someone Else Has the Answer  
Lao Tzu**

Always we hope  
Someone else has the answer,  
Some other place will be better,  
Some other time it will all turn out.

This is it.  
No one else has the answer,  
No other place will be better,  
And it has already turned out.

At the center of your being  
You have the answer;  
You know who you are  
And you know what you want.

There is no need  
To run outside  
For better seeing.

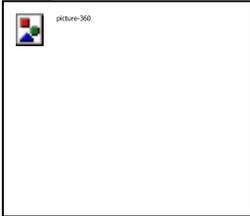
Nor to peer from a window.

Rather abide at the center of your being;  
For the more you leave it, the less you learn.

Search your heart  
And see  
The way to do  
Is to be.

# Joseph Campbell: The Goal and the Meaning of Life

BY EXCELLENCE REPORTER ON JULY 21, 2015



The goal of life is to make your heartbeat match the beat of the universe, to match your nature with Nature.<sup>1</sup>

Life has no meaning. Each of us has meaning and we bring it to life. It is a waste to be asking the question when you are the answer.<sup>2</sup>

People say that what we're all seeking is a meaning for life. I don't think that's what we're really seeking. I think that what we're seeking is an experience of being alive, so that our life experiences on the purely physical plane will have resonances with our own innermost being and reality, so that we actually feel the rapture of being alive.<sup>3</sup>

The experience of eternity right here and now is the function of life. Eternity isn't some later time. Eternity isn't even a long time. Eternity has nothing to do with time. Eternity is that dimension of here and now that all thinking in temporal terms cuts off.... the experience of eternity right here and now, in all things, whether thought of as good or as evil. Heaven is not the place to have the experience; here is the place to have the experience. When you realize that eternity is right here now, that it is within your possibility to experience the eternity of your own truth and being, then you grasp the following: That which you are was never born and will never die.<sup>2</sup>

1. Excerpt from *Joseph Campbell, A Joseph Campbell Companion: Reflections on the Art of Living*.
2. Excerpt from *Joseph Campbell, The Power of Myth*.
3. Excerpt from *Joseph Campbell, Pathways to Bliss: Mythology and Personal Transformation*.

**Follow your bliss and don't be afraid, and doors will open where you didn't know they were going to be.**

**- Joseph Campbell -**

## **Music**

What's it all about, Alfie?  
Is it just for the moment we live?  
What's it all about when you sort it out, Alfie?  
Are we meant to take more than we give

Or are we meant to be kind?  
And if only fools are kind, Alfie  
Then I guess it is wise to be cruel  
And if life belongs only to the strong, Alfie

What will you lend on an old golden rule?  
As sure as I believe there's a heaven above, Alfie  
I know there's something much more  
Something even non-believers can believe in

I believe in love, Alfie  
Without true love we just exist, Alfie

Until you find the love you've missed you're nothing, Alfie  
When you walk let your heart lead the way  
And you'll find love any day, Alfie  
Alfie

Burt Bacarach

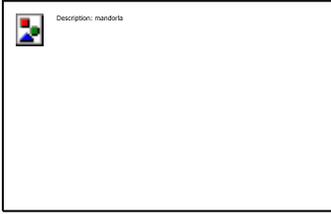
## **People**

People, people who need people  
Are the luckiest people in the world  
We're children needing other children  
And yet letting our grown-up pride  
Hide all the need inside  
Acting more like children than children  
Lovers are very special people  
They're the luckiest people in the world  
With one person, one very special person  
A feeling deep in your soul  
Says you WERE half now you're whole  
No more hunger and thirst  
But first be a person who needs people  
People, people who need people  
Are the luckiest people in the world.

No more hunger and thirst  
But first be a person who needs people  
People, people who need people  
Are the luckiest people in the world.

source: <https://www.lyricsondemand.com/b/barbrastreisandlyrics/peoplelyrics.html>

# Mandorla...working with opposites



## **Purpose:**

To offer a unique process for exploring opposites, polarities in life, or for working toward a resolution of inner conflict. In Sage-ing: “Images of Aging,” positive on one side, negative on other; “Forgiveness” on one side, lack of forgiveness on the other; Philosophical Homework, being on one side, doing on the other, or my professed values on one side and the values I live on the other.

## **Supplies:**

Paper with 2 overlapping circles and art supplies of choice for drawing/painting. Choose paper based on medium you offer. Trace a plate or cd and overlap as above.

## **Directions/Language of Invitation**

When participant is working with two opposites in his/her life, offer the mandorla. Suggest making a mandala for each opposite and then in the overlapping space, make art of where they meet, the union of the opposites, the “liminal” space of transformation where they meet. (Mandorla comes from the Italian word for almond, the shape of the overlap in the circles.)

## **Variations/Special precautions/Lessons learned**

Colored pencils or watercolor with a fine brush give control for details but any art materials can be used. The drawing above illustrates the liminal space but offer 2 complete overlapping circles, without the line breaks.

## **Processing:**

Ask the participant to tell you about the art. Offer an opportunity to journal about insights arising from the art.

Adapted from: Riley, JB, *Art in small spaces: Art at the bedside*, CSP, 2012.  
[julia@constantsource.com](mailto:julia@constantsource.com) Available as an e-book, pdf, or in hard copy: a guidebook with 35 processes for self-discovery and wellness.



## Richard Rohr Daily Meditations

### Who Am I?

Monday, May 28, 2018

*Don't ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive, and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.* —Dr. Howard Thurman (1899-1981), theologian and civil rights leader [1]

*As conscious human beings, our life purpose is to be a visible expression of both the image and the likeness of God. Each of us reveals a unique facet of the divine, what Franciscan John Duns Scotus called haecceity or thisness.* [2]Parker Palmer says it well in his book *Let Your Life Speak*:

[My newborn granddaughter] did not show up as raw material to be shaped into whatever image the world might want her to take. She arrived with her own gifted form, with the shape of her own sacred soul. . . . Thomas Merton calls it true self. Quakers call it the inner light, or “that of God” in every person. The humanist tradition calls it identity and integrity. No matter what you call it, it is a pearl of great price. . . .

The deepest vocational question is not “What ought I to do with my life?” It is the more elemental and demanding “Who am I? What is my nature?” . . . [I believe we’ve got to get our own *who* right before we can begin to address the question of *what* am I to do.]

Our deepest calling is to grow into our own authentic selfhood, whether or not it conforms to some image of who we *ought* to be. As we do so, we will not only find the joy that every human being seeks—we will also find our path of authentic service in the world. True vocation joins self and service, as Frederick Buechner asserts when he defines vocation as “the place where your deep gladness meets the world’s deep need.” [3] . . .

Contrary to the conventions of our thinly moralistic culture, this emphasis on gladness and selfhood is not selfish. The Quaker teacher Douglas Steere was fond of saying that the ancient human question “Who am I?” leads inevitably to

the equally important question “Whose am I”—for there is no selfhood outside of relationship. . . .

As I learn more about the seed of true self that was planted when I was born, I also learn more about the ecosystem in which I was planted—the network of communal relations in which I am called to live responsively, accountably, and joyfully with beings of every sort. Only when I know both seed and system, self and community, can I embody the great commandment to love both my neighbor and myself. . . .

The world still waits for the truth that will set us free—my truth, your truth, our truth—the truth that was seeded in the earth when each of us arrived here formed in the image of God. Cultivating that truth, I believe, is the authentic vocation of every human being. [4]

### **Gateway to Presence:**

*If you want to go deeper with today’s meditation, take note of what word or phrase stands out to you. Come back to that word or phrase throughout the day, being present to its impact and invitation.*

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[1] Howard Thurman, occasion unidentified. This often-used quotation is attributed to Reverend Thurman on the history page of the Howard Thurman Center for Common Ground at Boston University, <https://www.bu.edu/thurman/about/history/>.

[2] See Richard Rohr’s previous meditations on “Thisness,” <https://cac.org/thisness-weekly-summary-2018-03-24/>.

[3] Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking: A Seeker’s ABC* (HarperSanFrancisco: 1993), 119.

[4] Parker J. Palmer, *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation* (Jossey-Bass: 2000), 11, 15,16-17, 36.

## **Socialized Meditation: Who Am I?**

Please pair up with another (not your spouse).  
Decide which one of you will be "A" and who will be "B"

Ask "B" to begin by asking "Who are you?"  
"A" responds. "B" nods or says thank you and asks the question again, "Who are you?" "A" responds.

Continue doing this with the same person asking the same question. I will stop you after 3 minutes. (e.g. "Who are you?" "Who are you?" "Who are you?")

When asking the question, do not discuss the answer or comment verbally or non-verbally. Just listen and observe. Pause, then ask again.

After 3 minutes, Stop and discuss the answers, letting "A" say as much or little as he or she wishes. Then reverse the roles.

This time "A" will ask the question, "Who are you?" and "B" will respond. At the end of the time period, discuss the answers, letting "B" say as much or little as he or she wishes.

Ask for a few members of the group to share.

Discuss briefly.

**What we do is not who we are. Before we were any of these we were our true self.**

How many of you shared only the roles you played during your life?

Or, what it is that you do or have done?

## **ROADS TAKEN AND NOT TAKEN**

**An exercise that looks at the unlived possibilities of our lives.**

### **Purpose of the Exercise:**

To explore the potential of old interests; to live again in a new way in our present life.

As we look back over our lives, noting the movements of our life as we move from stage to stage, we recognize that we all made certain important decisions that changed our life directions—some big changes, some not so big. We all identify some of those decisions as we identify our Turning Points.

One way to look at our life choices is that they have taken us down particular roads. You decided to follow one career and thus chose not to pursue another direction you had been considering. You decided to live in one community instead of another. You chose to connect with one group of friends instead of another. You played out a special passion for one non-vocational investment of yourself instead of another. Every one of us took the roads we did instead of the ones we did not take. We all have in our lives some roads taken and some roads not taken, some intersections that offered a choice—“and that has made all the difference,” as Robert Frost expressed it.

Some of those roads taken/not taken were voluntary choices—what Joseph Campbell calls “following your bliss.” Others were decisions made by others or forced upon us by circumstances.

***Roads Taken and Not Taken*** is a journaling exercise that gives us a chance to work with the transition points in our lives. Ira Progoff, who developed this exercise, raises the question, “What would happen if later in our lives we were to return to the intersection where we took one road instead of another, and if we were to look down the road we did not take and ask whether there may be something on that road that wants to come alive for us today. Now that we are at a different place in our lives, does that old passion want to live in a new way—not to try to redo the past, not to say that the way we chose was wrong, but to ask whether something is there that needs to breathe again in a new way in our later years.”

Sage-ing Leader, Larry Hickie writes:

“When I was a child and through much of my adolescence, I intended to pursue a music career. But as my teen years unfolded, my spiritual life and my musical life came into competition, and I eventually had to choose whether I would apply to seminary or to music school. So for about 30 years I didn’t play in any music groups. Oh, I played in the marching band in our neighborhood Memorial Day parade, and did occasional things with the bell choir or the chancel choir at church, but I was not a serious musician. When I was 53 years old, a friend

invited me, no pestered me, to join a community orchestra—rehearsals on Friday mornings worked with my schedule. Suddenly, I discovered that my music life was coming alive! Not in the sense that it would have had I gone to music school—I don't have the skills or the music understanding of those who do. But playing the trumpet has again become a vital part of my life."

**CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:**

What did you choose **not** to do at some point?

What may happen for you if you look down one of those roads not taken?

What are the unlived possibilities that are longing to be realized?

What unlived potential, maybe from an earlier time in your life, awaits you in these later years?

One line in the medieval mystical writings known as *The Cloud of Unknowing* says: "We grow by delays."

**CONSIDER:**

Are there directions you may need to explore at this time, suggested by old interests, that could be important at this stage in your life?

Get comfortable and allow yourself to relax. Take a blank sheet of notebook paper, write at the top, "**Roads Taken and Not Taken**" and identify one of those intersections. Begin to write about the choice you made then, raising the question of what latent energies from that old interest may want to come alive for you today.

## Values Clarification

Your values are the beliefs that define what is most important to you. They guide each of your choices in life. For example, someone who values family might try to spend extra time at home, while someone who values success in their career may do just the opposite. Understanding your values will help you recognize areas of your life need more attention, and what to prioritize in the future.

Select the 10 most important items from the following list. Rank them from 1-10 with "1" being the most important item.

- |               |                  |                    |
|---------------|------------------|--------------------|
| ___ Love      | ___ Wealth       | ___ Family         |
| ___ Morals    | ___ Success      | ___ Knowledge      |
| ___ Power     | ___ Friends      | ___ Free Time      |
| ___ Adventure | ___ Variety      | ___ Calmness       |
| ___ Freedom   | ___ Fun          | ___ Recognition    |
| ___ Nature    | ___ Popularity   | ___ Responsibility |
| ___ Honesty   | ___ Humor        | ___ Loyalty        |
| ___ Reason    | ___ Independence | ___ Achievement    |
| ___ Beauty    | ___ Spirituality | ___ Respect        |
| ___ Peace     | ___ Stability    | ___ Wisdom         |
| ___ Fairness  | ___ Creativity   | ___ Relaxation     |
| ___ Safety    | ___ _____        | ___ _____          |

## Exploring Values

Your values are the beliefs that define what is most important to you. They act as a guide for your decisions. Oftentimes, our values are greatly influenced by important people in our life, and our society.

Fill in the four most important values for each topic below:

My mother's values:

1.

2.

3.

4.

My father's values:

1.

2.

3.

4.

An important person to me values:

1.

2.

3.

4.

Society's values:

1.

2.

3.

4.

The values I would like to live by:

1.

2.

3.

4.

The values I actually live by:

1.

2.

3.

4.





Updated January 2022