

Lessons For Your Elder Years

eldermuse.net wishes to focus on the things you do well, rather than on the things you need to improve. When you truly honor yourself for all the myriad things you do well, you then comprehend that doing one thing well cascades into doing a host of things well. See this, and honor it.

She wishes that you are able to reach a point in your life, wherein you can feel your heart rising in your being to sing a love song of loving your self. Of honoring who you are; your being in and part of the world. The Divine Mystery.

Face The Music

Dying creates a clear distillation
of what life truly means.
What it boils down to; its essence.....
which is Love.

Aging also distills. It makes clear
the reality of change.
Especially the change in our body, and
heart.

After 59 or so, her body becomes the
witness of her lifelong care or neglect.
And there's only empathy for any neglect.
It always comes as a consequence of too much stress,
or pain.

For her heart, she accepts that it has and
will continue to be broken, with death or
heartache;
and she chooses to go on.

As we age, how much pain do we have; in our body,
in our soul.
How have we learned to deal with the pain, and
Is it working?

We get to face ourselves and figure out
How To Lessen The Pain.

"If you always do what you've always done,
you'll always get what you've always gotten."

What will it take to Forgive, Have Empathy,
Have Compassion for Yourself...
Then for Others.

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What you love, Who you love, Mirrors You

I am convinced that most people are not aware of the truth of this sentence. (And of course the converse is true: What you hate, Who you hate, Mirrors You.)

Set about the task of knowing what/who you Love; who you Honor; who you Respect; who you Trust. Reflect about this, give voice to your thoughts, write down what you discover.

Now ask yourself WHY you love, honor, respect, trust this or that or who. Write.

The list that you populate will contain, will show you, all of the qualities that are truly in yourself. The best that you admire in others, is also a part of you. Acknowledge these qualities in yourself, just as you are fully able to acknowledge them in others. These qualities are the very things we wish to pour out from us to grace the world.

I have had women tell me "I can't LOVE myself, I just can't." For you who also feel incapable of knowing your value, the inherent essence of your worth for the world; for you who believe that loving their very self is somehow wrong; then I ask you to come to a place of ACCEPTANCE. If not love, than fully accept the qualities which surround your eternal soul. Begin (baby steps... slowly ... with increasing wonder and joy...) to accept your divinity, your goodness. Your birthright of being part and parcel of this divine creation, this Divine Mystery.

Love yourself. With full humility; love your Self. Acknowledge that you are loveable, and discover why OTHERS love you! If you need to, start very, very small. Then build. Keep a steady progression, over months, even years, until you can look at yourself, look at your soul through your eyes, and love yourself exactly as you are. Wrinkles, double chin, hair on your chin, not perfect teeth, certainly not perfect body! You love and accept the here and now. You would want your child, your offspring, to love herself. Do no less.

If the person/persons you love are abusive to you, if your relationship evidences cruelty, then your task is to find help to gain the strength to stop this pain.

Invite love, power, ability, trust. acceptance in. Love always brings a manifestation of the Divine into your life. Welcome and embrace it. Have the same empathy and compassion for your own soul, as you have for others. The more you feel it for yourself, the easier it will be to lessen the pain.

Know What You Do Well

Notice what you do well. Notice what you have mastery of. By this mid-point in life, one is clear of her talents; the things that others respect, trust, and honor in you/about you.

Know what these are. If you truly do not know, then ask: yourself and others.

Writing down what you do well is one way to honor/acknowledge.

This is not an exercise in conceit; rather it is an exercise to allow you to begin the process of knowing yourself. It is not conceit, not vain ego to acknowledge your skills and power.

Rather, it is a way to name and accept who you are, what you offer to the world; in all humility.

Acknowledge What is Good in Your Life

With acknowledgement comes owning, trust, respect, honor, gratitude, healing.

When the deep pain of abuse, molest, torture, rape, murder, wars, evil and insanity are acknowledged then the healing can begin. Then the tormented are free to regain trust, self respect, honor their needs, claim their powerful and ever so slowly move on to gratitude.

You have spent years and years owning the pain, living with pain, displaying your pain to the world – as addiction (myriad), as binge eating, as self mutilation, as destructive compulsions, as hate for your body, your self. Your body tells those who look, your degree of pain.

It is now time, (ah, it's about time!) that you acknowledge the good, and deal with the pain. Create the necessary conditions to rid yourself of as much pain as you can. The best place to begin is by placing your Self, your needs into the equation of your life. Taking time, your precious time, for yourself. Routinely.

During the times you give to yourself, include gratitude for what works, what gives you comfort, what opens your heart. Acknowledge why your life is good. Squeeze out the reasons, find the good as best you can, and build on your answers. And feel what happens to your heart when you are doing this.

Know What Causes You Pain

Take heed of the chronic pain in your life. Pain is ALWAYS a signal to change. ALWAYS a signal that something is wrong, needs fixing, correction. Acknowledge what isn't working in your life.

Guilt. Shame. Depression. Constantly Disappointing Yourself. Self Hate. Self Abuse. My obese (truly, any addiction can substitute) clients would consider themselves the worst of the worst, the vilest, most contemptible people alive. They live with routine physical pain and almost daily feelings of self disappointment.

Self disappointment creates as much of a negative cellular cascade, as does the experience of others disappointing and hurting us.

There are enough disappointments in life. Don't disappoint yourself.

You've already suffered abuse, lies, deception. Don't do it to yourself.

Pay Heed To Your Body

Some have never, or only recently begun to pay heed to this part of themselves which they have historically ignored. You have gone on with your highly stressful life, as mother, daughter, caregiver, spouse, partner, friend, worker, entrepreneur, professional, student whatever the daily, highly stressful demands of your day insist of your time. And you do this with chronic lack of sleep, and eating food which is slowly, surely creating obesity and disease. The oh so very convenient food which is ubiquitous, cheap, and served in too large portions for a world which has decreased its calorie needs by half in the past 100 years. Worst of all is the cold hard reality that this food and its interwoven production, sales and delivery system is the very cause of our current obesity, diabetes, and cancer epidemics. This may sound sensational, radical, whatever you tend to dismiss as over the top, but it's not. See the movie **Food Inc. by Robert Kenner**. This film connects the dots together to show us a broken system which is too big to control, and certainly "too big to fail." But just as our "too big to fail" financial system did in fact fail; the food system is failing; our body; our planet. (For eldermuse.net's take on SOLUTIONS to reverse a system which is creating disease and environmental hazard, please see [my blog](#) entry dated July 2th, 2009: **Food Inc.**)

Thus we had BEST pay heed to our body. Our current world has NOT conceived or structured "public safety" to include our health and well being. It's enough to keep us

alive (we pay dearly with the many airport indignities in the name of our “Safety”); but the HEALTH of our lives, and our environment is irrelevant.

If you are at all in an economic space above homelessness, and have even a semblance of routine in your life; if you are past the chaos of your early years, and are getting clear about your responsibilities in the world (because to do otherwise has become all too painful) then you must comprehend the responsibility you have towards your body.

You are as much involved with the creation of your health as is the mix of genes given you by your parents. As is the confluence of actions which may lead to the fall, the slip, the accident, the event which can irrevocably change your life. Just as the health of the environment in which you live in intimately affects you, Food, Water, Soil, Air; so too, what you think, believe, do, on a routine basis intimately affects your life. Trust your ability to control your health.

As we age, we must pay heed to our posture while walking (do we still walk?), the back support from our chairs, the way we lift, move and bend. If we currently have chronic back pain, then what are we doing to change this? Any pain pills will slowly wear their destruction in our body, unless carefully titrated to our weight and needs. What are you doing to strengthen your abdominal muscles which support the back?

And our weight. How many years have you told yourself “When so and so happens, then I’ll lose the weight.” And the so and so events have come and gone and you continue to suffer from a body too large for your skeletal frame. We can handle, with health, say thirty, maybe even fifty pounds overweight, max. After this, the strain of excess weight takes its toll in early chronic disease and enslavement to a broken medical and pharmaceutical system. Please see my piece on [Nutrition](#).

In paying heed to your body, you MUST LOOK at yourself.

How many women have told me: “I put on my makeup, but I don’t look at the rest of me. I never really look in the mirror.”

If this is you, then you’ve not wanted to look....but you must. SEE yourself fully, completely, with total love and compassion. Dare to look deeply into the seat of your soul, your eyes. Begin to SEE your real self. The part of you which is timeless, ageless, full of laughter and joy. The piece of you that will live forever in people’s hearts. Dare to see this in yourself.

Stretch, Move, Exercise. Daily.

At this point you may be shaking your head and saying: “But I don’t have enough TIME to do everything there is to do right now in my day! I can’t fit in anything more. I don’t have time to take care of myself, much less exercise!” I know. I have been there. But here’s the Secret: You do have time to get up from your desk even once every two hours and STRETCH. You do have time to adjust your posture, shake your hands, make circles with your feet. When using the bathroom, take time to do pushups against the sink. You do have time to take the stairs instead of the elevator, etc., etc. You know the litany by rote. You’ve heard it over and over for years from some well meaning “health nut.” And if it’s gone in one ear and out the other, then WHEN will you create time for YOUR NEEDS? The “exercise” can be as simple as a twenty minute walk, which hopefully increases to thirty minutes, more, daily.

Would you give this time to someone else in your life? Yes, of course you would. This is our socialization as women, to care for others, and to always put ourselves last. We even believe that caring for ourselves is somehow wrong. Somehow “selfish”.

Yet in our deepest heart, we know that the ones we love and care for now, will suffer if we don't take care of ourselves. We are bone weary, and CRAVE some precious time for ourselves. But why in the world would we want to exercise! Read a book, talk with friends, watch a movie, hell, even get to our emails, instead! Certainly not exercise.

I have written a piece about Movement and Muscle Mass which will respond to the WHY you want to stretch, move, exercise, daily. For now, I include the need for daily movement in the Lessons for Your Elder Years because it is something to add into your life. And when you allow yourself to know, you acknowledge the truth of this.

What Do You Need To Resolve Before You Die?

2008, the year I turned sixty, was the first year in my life that I began to think in terms of living hum.....how many more years? Twenty-five, maybe thirty more? I always wanted to live to be 100, just to achieve that goal. But the reality of a hip injury, chronic back pain that I deal with (which HAS significantly improved), and the loss of very close loved ones has convinced me that WHENEVER I go, it will be the perfect time. But the turning sixty also allowed me to begin to ponder what I still need to resolve before I die. I am knowing what these things are, and I wish that you also begin to figure this out. There are the obvious things such as Wills, Advance Health Care Directives, attending to whatever photos, papers, memory items you wish to preserve, etc., etc. These are the "easy to do things" that just require some thought, effort and time to complete. Of course I don't mean these "mundane" things when I ask you to get clear about what you need to resolve before you die.

I mean the things that have eaten at your heart and soul for years. Maybe family questions that only an aging uncle or aunt can answer. Or a longing to go somewhere or do something you've wanted to do for years. Finally writing the letter to the person who molested you, or forgiving the one who hurt you deeply. Writing your novel, doing your art, gardening, unleashing your creative being. Coming to terms with deep regret or loss. These are the things which require resolution before you die.

Discover what yours are, and begin what you must do to allow your soul peace.