

10 Themes of Soul of Aging

Session One: Calling in the Ancestors: Visions of Aging

We begin with an introduction to how aging is a time of change and diminishment but also a rich time when our inner life calls; there are enormous opportunities for growth, learning, and discovery. We learn about the Circle of Trust approach and the Touchstones for the program, while looking at the questions and concerns we bring to this time in our lives. We examine our internalized prejudice towards the aged and invite our mentors who have gone before us to inform the visions of aging we would like to guide us in our journeys.

Session Two: Spiritual Formation Across the Lifecycle: Living Into the Soul's Calling

In our second session we explore our spiritual formation across the lifecycle. Knowing that our vision can be clearer looking back, we take time to reflect on some of the major lessons learned along the way and where God has been present on our journey. We also introduce the practice of asking open, honest questions and explore where life is calling us now.

Session Three: The Courage to Name and Claim Your Unlived Life

In our third session we explore the notion of “your unlived life” or the qualities and commitments you may not have found time for in your younger years that are calling out for attention and care now. This can be a time of new freedom and discovery as we find the courage let go of old ways and move into uncharted territories of self-expression.

Session Four: Pathways to Wholeness

In this session we work with an essay by Parker J. Palmer called “Fierce with Reality” that invites us to have the courage to face the darker side of our natures and the potential riches found through “shadow work.” We explore befriending our shadow as a path to wholeness and the value of letting go of perfection.

Session Five: Truth & Forgiveness: The Call to Completion

This session offers the opportunity to make peace with aspects of the past, including some of the people and situations where we hold regrets and resentments and where there is the need for forgiveness and healing.

Session Six: Enlightenment in Slow Motion

In this session we explore some of the spiritual gifts that come with aging like the emergence of greater compassion and gratitude, along with ways to nurture and support the natural deepening of the spiritual dimension of our lives. This is a time to let go into God's deep embrace.

Session Seven: Stories of Divestment: The Foreign Currency of Change

In this session we share our stories of loss, grief, and renewal as we lift up some of the inevitable changes and divestments that are a normal part of the currency of aging. We explore the paradox that it is because of the losses inherent in our aging that our deepest spiritual growth and liberation occur.

Session Eight: The Wisdom of Living In Deep Time

In this session we reflect on the power of our changing awareness of time as we age, and the different qualities of the ways we occupy time. We consider how our use of time reflects our needs and values and what in our life might be calling for more “deep time.”

Session Nine: The Final Stage of Growth

In this session we consider the importance of doing our “spiritual homework,” in preparation for our own deaths while we are still vital and able to do so, in the embrace of a trusting community. We delve into our thoughts about what a “good death” would look like and consider how our spiritual traditions might support us in this exploration.

Session Ten: Generativity, Legacy, and Harvesting Our Lives

In this, our final, session we look at the gifts, experiences, abilities, and wisdom gained over a lifetime and the opportunity to listen for where our deepest values and passions expressed themselves. Participants are invited to consider what they wish to bequeath from their lives to others and write a “legacy letter” that captures the imprint they want to leave behind.