

aging as a spiritual practice

Aging as a Spiritual Practice: A Critical Analysis of Current Trends

Author: Dr. Eleanor Vance, PhD, Geriatric Psychologist and Professor of Spiritual Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. Dr. Vance has published extensively on the intersection of aging, psychology, and spirituality, and is a leading voice in the field of positive aging.

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Abstract: This article critically analyzes the burgeoning concept of "aging as a spiritual practice," exploring its impact on contemporary trends in gerontology, healthcare, and spiritual communities. It examines the philosophical underpinnings, practical applications, and challenges associated with this perspective, considering both its potential benefits and limitations. The article further investigates how this framework is reshaping societal attitudes towards aging and influencing the development of supportive interventions.

1. Introduction: Embracing Aging as a Spiritual Journey

The concept of "aging as a spiritual practice" is gaining significant traction. No longer viewed solely as a period of decline and loss, aging is increasingly framed as an opportunity for profound spiritual growth, self-discovery, and connection to something larger than oneself. This shift reflects a growing dissatisfaction with societal narratives that emphasize youthfulness and productivity as the ultimate markers of value. Instead, "aging as a spiritual practice" encourages individuals to embrace the unique challenges and opportunities presented by later life as a catalyst for spiritual deepening. This paradigm shift has significant implications for how we approach healthcare, social support, and the overall experience of aging.

2. Philosophical Underpinnings of Aging as a Spiritual Practice

Several philosophical traditions support the idea of "aging as a spiritual practice." Many Eastern philosophies, such as Buddhism and Taoism, emphasize the acceptance of impermanence and the cultivation of wisdom that comes with age. Similarly, various Western spiritual traditions highlight the importance of reflection, contemplation, and letting go as essential aspects of spiritual maturation.

The concept aligns with existentialist thought, which emphasizes the importance of finding meaning and purpose in the face of mortality. This shared emphasis on accepting life's transitions and focusing on inner growth underpins the growing popularity of "aging as a spiritual practice."

3. Practical Applications and Interventions

The conceptualization of "aging as a spiritual practice" is not merely theoretical; it translates into practical applications across various settings. Spiritual care programs in hospitals and nursing homes are increasingly incorporating practices like mindfulness, meditation, and contemplative prayer to enhance the well-being of older adults. Support groups centered around the theme of "aging as a spiritual practice" offer a sense of community and shared experience, fostering resilience and emotional support during this life stage. Furthermore, the integration of spiritual practices into physical therapies and wellness programs is demonstrating positive impacts on overall health and quality of life among older individuals.

4. Challenges and Criticisms of the "Aging as a Spiritual Practice" Framework

Despite its growing popularity, the concept of "aging as a spiritual practice" is not without its challenges and criticisms. One concern is the potential for spiritual bypassing, where spiritual practices are used to avoid confronting difficult emotions or unresolved traumas. Furthermore, the emphasis on individual spiritual growth can inadvertently marginalize those facing significant physical or cognitive challenges associated with aging, potentially leading to feelings of inadequacy or shame. Cultural and religious diversity also needs to be considered; the approach must be inclusive and avoid imposing specific belief systems.

5. Impact on Current Trends: Redefining Aging in Society

The growing acceptance of "aging as a spiritual practice" is significantly impacting current trends in several ways. Firstly, it is challenging ageist attitudes and promoting a more positive and holistic view of aging. Secondly, it is driving the development of more person-centered and spiritually sensitive healthcare and social services. Thirdly, it is fostering the creation of supportive communities that value the wisdom and experience of older adults. Finally, it is prompting a broader societal conversation about death, dying, and the meaning of a life well-lived.

6. Future Directions and Research Needs

Further research is needed to fully understand the long-term benefits and potential limitations of "aging as a spiritual practice." Studies examining the effectiveness of different spiritual interventions for older adults with diverse backgrounds and health conditions are crucial. Moreover, research should explore the ethical considerations and potential pitfalls of integrating spirituality into healthcare settings. Understanding how socioeconomic factors influence access to and engagement with "aging as a spiritual practice" is also essential.

7. Conclusion

The concept of "aging as a spiritual practice" represents a significant shift in how we understand and approach aging. By reframing aging as a journey of spiritual growth and self-discovery, this perspective offers a powerful antidote to ageism and promotes a more holistic and compassionate approach to the later stages of life. While challenges remain, the potential benefits for individual well-being and societal attitudes towards aging are considerable. Further research and thoughtful implementation are crucial to ensuring that this promising framework is accessible, inclusive, and ethically sound.

FAQs:

1. What are some examples of spiritual practices suitable for older adults? Mindfulness meditation, prayer, journaling, spending time in nature, engaging in creative arts, and connecting with loved ones are all beneficial practices.
1. How can I find a supportive community focused on aging as a spiritual practice? Search online for local groups or organizations focused on spiritual growth and aging, or inquire at your place of worship or community center.
1. Is aging as a spiritual practice suitable for people of all faiths or no faith? Yes, the principles of self-reflection, acceptance, and finding meaning are applicable across diverse spiritual and non-spiritual beliefs.
1. Can aging as a spiritual practice help with the grief of losing loved ones? Yes, it can provide a framework for processing grief, finding meaning in loss, and fostering acceptance.
1. How can I integrate aging as a spiritual practice into my daily life? Start with small steps: dedicate time for reflection, practice gratitude, and engage in activities that bring you joy and purpose.
1. Does aging as a spiritual practice address physical limitations associated with aging? While it doesn't directly address physical limitations, it can help cultivate a sense of acceptance and resilience, improving overall well-being.

1. Is there a risk of spiritual bypassing with this approach? Yes, it's crucial to be mindful of avoiding using spirituality to escape difficult emotions. Seek professional support if needed.
1. How does this approach differ from other approaches to aging well? This approach emphasizes inner transformation and spiritual growth, complementing physical health and social engagement.
1. Where can I find more resources on aging as a spiritual practice? Search online for relevant books, articles, and organizations specializing in spirituality and aging.

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aging as a spiritual practice: Aging as a Spiritual Practice Lewis Richmond, 2012-12-31 Offers a Buddhist perspective on aging well, with anecdotes of the author's experiences with illness, aging, and transformation, and guided meditations.

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aging as a spiritual practice: Vesper Time Cunningham, Frank, 2017-02-16

aging as a spiritual practice: *Aging and Spirituality* David O. Moberg, 2012-10-12 Explore the spiritual dimensions of aging through science, theory, and practice! During the later years of life, many people devote energy to a process of spiritual awakening and self-discovery. Yet their family, friends, clergy, and the helping professionals who work with them are not always prepared to understand or deal with the spiritual concerns of their clients. *Aging and Spirituality* provides a unique, far-reaching overview of this long-neglected field. Divided into four independent but interwoven sections, this landmark book covers the spiritual realm with scientific rigor and deep human understanding. *Aging and Spirituality* comprehensively surveys the issues of spirituality, from the groundwork of basic definitions to detailed assessments of the role spirituality plays in the lives of the elderly and suggested directions for further research. This book's unique approach combines scholarly research and practical nuts-and-bolts suggestions for service delivery. By drawing from many disciplines and professions, it offers fresh perspectives to even those

practitioners already familiar with the most effective spiritual techniques their own field can offer. *Aging and Spirituality* answers such common questions as: What are the spiritual needs of people later in life? Is there any solid evidence that prayer changes things? How is spirituality related to physical and mental health? Does spirituality matter when people know they are dying? How can we measure spiritual wellness and assess the outcomes of activities intended to enhance it? Will attention to spirituality aggravate or alleviate the losses--of friends, family, health, youth--that so often occur during old age? *Aging and Spirituality* provides a much-needed resource for health care professionals, clergy, social workers, and counselors working with geriatric clients. By integrating spiritual issues into the theoretical framework of social gerontology, *Aging and Spirituality* will help you understand the scientific foundations, practical applications, and public policy implications of spirituality for older adults.

aging as a spiritual practice: Spirituality, Religion, and Aging Holly Nelson-Becker, 2017-02-01 *Spirituality, Religion, and Aging: Illuminations for Therapeutic Practice* by Holly Nelson-Becker is a highly integrative book written for students, professionals in aging, ministers, and older adults themselves. Readers will gain the knowledge and skills they need to assess, engage, and address the spiritual and religious needs of older persons. Taking a fresh approach that breaks new ground in the field, the author discusses eight major world religions and covers values and ethics, theories, interventions, health and caregiving, depression and anxiety, dementia, and the end of life. Meditations and exercises throughout the book allow readers to expand and explore their personal understanding of spirituality. Referencing the latest research, the book includes assessments and skill-based tools designed to help practitioners enhance the mental health of older people.

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aging as a spiritual practice: Wise Aging Rachel Cowan, Linda Thal, 2015 How can Aging be a Good thing? Aging all too often feels like drift, downhill to a place we don't want to go. But each year new doors open with opportunities, even while others close with loss. We have the power to prepare, to become stronger, more resilient, and navigate these challenges. Will we turn toward the opportunities, and find new joy and meaning in life? How can we make the most of this time, and develop into deeper, wiser people? With the same warmth, humor, and wisdom that draw thousands to their innovative workshops on aging, Rabbi Rachel Cowan and Dr. Linda Thai give us the tools we need, delivering practical, real-world suggestions. No subject is off-limits; Rabbi Cowan and Dr. Thai tackle a wide range of issues head-on, including: Relationships with adult children and spouses Romance and sexuality, Living with loss, Cultivating well-being, Shaping our legacy, Whether reading this alone, with a partner, or in a group, *Wise Aging* will inspire and inform, and show us ways to grow into wisdom with resilience and joy. Book jacket.

aging as a spiritual practice: Work as a Spiritual Practice Lewis Richmond, 2011-07-20 A guide to developing and maintaining a spiritual life on the job, drawn from the teachings and practices of Buddhist tradition. Most people associate Buddhism with developing calmness, kindness, and compassion through meditation. Lewis Richmond's *Work as a Spiritual Practice* shows us another aspect of Buddhism: the active, engaged side that allows us to find creativity, inspiration, and accomplishment in our work lives. With over forty spiritual exercises that can be practiced in the middle of a busy workday, *Work as a Spiritual Practice* is based on the principle that regardless of your rank and title at work, you are always the chief executive of your inner life. Drawn from the author's diverse professional experience—as a Buddhist meditation teacher, business executive, musician, and high-tech entrepreneur—*Work as a Spiritual Practice* addresses a wide variety of on-the-job problems. Here you'll learn how to: • perform spiritual practices while commuting to and from work • meditate while sitting, walking, or standing—a minute at a time • understand ambition,

money, and power from a spiritual perspective *Work as a Spiritual Practice* is an essential guide for anyone who wants to bring his or her spiritual life and work life together.

aging as a spiritual practice: *The Grace in Aging* Kathleen Dowling Singh, 2014-08-05 Learn to use your later years for awakening and spiritual growth. Encouraging, inspiring, and practical, *The Grace in Aging* invites all those who have ever experienced spiritual longing to awaken in their twilight years. Since aging, in and of itself, does not lead to spiritual maturity, *The Grace in Aging* suggests and explores causes and conditions that we can create in our lives, just as we are living them, to allow awakening to unfold -- transforming the predictable sufferings of aging into profound opportunities for growth in clarity, love, compassion, and peace. Kathleen Dowling Singh streamlines vast and complex teachings into skillful means and wise views. Straightforward language and piercing questions bring Singh's teachings into the sharp focus of our own lives; the contemplative nature of each chapter allows for an uncommon depth of inquiry. Examples from our lives and from the chatter in our own minds touch the reader personally, offering the chance to absorb the implications deeply and do the work of freeing his or her own mind. Ecumenical in spirit, tone, and language, Singh offers wisdom from teachers from a variety of spiritual backgrounds: Thich Nhat Hanh, the Apostles, Annie Dillard, and more. Lessening our attachments, decreasing our aversions, unbinding what binds us, we bear witness to the possibility of awakening for all beings. *The Grace in Aging* offers guidelines for older individuals of any wisdom tradition who wish to awaken before they die; no need for caves or seven-year retreats. This is spiritual practice for the lives we live.

aging as a spiritual practice: *Social Forces and Aging* Robert C. Atchley, 1988

aging as a spiritual practice: *The Inner Work of Age* Connie Zweig, 2021-09-07 • Award Winner in the Health: Aging/50+ category of the 2021 Best Book Awards sponsored by American Book Fest • Award Winner in Non-Fiction: Aging and Gerontology category of the 2021 Best Indie Book Award • Offers shadow-work and many diverse spiritual practices to help you break through denial to awareness, move from self-rejection to self-acceptance, repair the past to be fully present, and allow mortality to be a teacher • Reveals how to use inner work to uncover and explore the unconscious denial and resistance that erupts around key thresholds of later life • Includes personal interviews with prominent Elders, including Ken Wilber, Krishna Das, Fr. Thomas Keating, Anna Douglas, James Hollis, Rabbi Rami Shapiro, Ashton Applewhite, Roshi Wendy Nakao, Roger Walsh, and Stanislav Grof With extended longevity comes the opportunity for extended personal growth and spiritual development. You now have the chance to become an Elder, to leave behind past roles, shift from work in the outer world to inner work with the soul, and become authentically who you are. This book is a guide to help get past the inner obstacles and embrace the hidden spiritual gifts of age. Offering a radical reimagining of age for all generations, psychotherapist and bestselling author Connie Zweig reveals how to use inner work to uncover and explore the unconscious denial and resistance that erupts around key thresholds of later life, attune to your soul's longing, and emerge renewed as an Elder filled with vitality and purpose. She explores the obstacles encountered in the transition to wise Elder and offers psychological shadow-work and diverse spiritual practices to help you break through denial to awareness, move from self-rejection to self-acceptance, repair the past to be fully present, reclaim your creativity, and allow mortality to be a teacher. Sharing contemplative practices for selfreflection, she also reveals how to discover ways to share your talents and wisdom to become a force for change in the lives of others. Woven throughout with wisdom from prominent Elders, including Ken Wilber, Krishna Das, Father Thomas Keating, Anna Douglas, James Hollis, Rabbi Rami Shapiro, Ashton Applewhite, Roshi Wendy Egyoku Nakao, Roger Walsh, and Stanislav Grof, this book offers tools and guidance to help you let go of past roles, expand your identity, deepen self-knowledge, and move through these life passages to a new stage of awareness, choosing to be fully real, transparent, and free to embrace a fulfilling late life.

aging as a spiritual practice: *Aging Faithfully* Alice Fryling, 2021-11 Would you like to grow in life-giving ways as you age? Do you have the courage to let go of former ways of thinking to receive God's love and life in new ways? As we age, we experience the loss of physical stamina,

independence, and career fulfillment. Yet within each of these losses is a holy invitation to grow. God calls us to let go of our need for accomplishment and embrace the gift of fruitfulness so that we might be transformed in this final season of our lives. In *Aging Faithfully*, spiritual director Alice Fryling explores how to navigate the journey of retirement, lifestyle changes, and new limitations. In this season of life, we are invited to hold both grief and hope, to acknowledge ways of thinking that no longer represent who we are, and to receive peace in the midst of our fears. We all age differently, and God calls each of us to new spiritual birth as we mature. When we embrace the aging process, we grow closer to God and experience his grace as he renews us from within. Whether you are approaching the beginning, middle, or end of your senior years, you are invited. Come and be transformed. *Aging Faithfully* includes questions for group discussion and suggestions for personal meditation.

aging as a spiritual practice: *Conscious Living, Conscious Aging* Ron Pevny, 2014-10-07 In this newly revised and updated edition of *Conscious Living, Conscious Aging*, you will find an empowering guide with practical tools to help live a passionate, fulfilling, growth-oriented life. The baby boomer generation is reaching retirement age with unprecedented good health and resources, and is no longer satisfied with their parents' approach to aging. Many older adults are seeking an empowering vision for their future but find that hard to come by in a world that glorifies youth and has largely forgotten the gifts that can accompany the life stage of elderhood. With this expanded and updated 10th anniversary edition of *Conscious Living, Conscious Aging*, you will find a contemporary manual filled with practices and tools to help you navigate your elder years with purpose and clarity. Ron Pevny's provocative model of "conscious eldering" opens the door to the rich possibilities of intentionally growing into elderhood, as contrasted with merely growing old. Through advice, practices, and personal stories, this book will help you distill wisdom from your many years of life experience, navigate loss and grief, identify new passions and goals, and remain engaged and relevant as you enter life's later chapters, creating a lasting legacy and a healthier world for the generations to follow. It's time to engage with family, community, your spiritual source, and the world, which needs your talents. Don't just grow old. Aim high and claim the gifts of elderhood.

aging as a spiritual practice: *From Age-Ing to Sage-Ing* Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, Ronald S. Miller, 2014-06-03 Over two decades ago, beloved and respected rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi felt an uneasiness. He was growing older, and fears about death and infirmity were haunting him. So he decided to embark on mission to get to the bottom of his fears. Through a series of events that included a vision quest in a secluded cabin and studying with Sufi masters, Buddhist teachers and Native-American shamans, Reb Zalman found a way to turn aging into the most meaningful and joyous time in his life. In this inspiring and informative guide, Reb Zalman shares his wisdom and experience with readers. He shows readers how to create an aging process for themselves that is full of adventure, passion, mystery, and fulfillment, rather than anxiety. Using scientific research--both neurological and psychological-- Reb Zalman offers techniques that will expand horizons beyond the narrow view of the present into a grand and enduring eternity. By harnessing the power of the spirit, as well as explaining exactly how to become a sage in their own community, he gives readers a helpful and moving way to use their own experiences to nurture, heal, and perhaps even save a younger generation from the prison of how we typically regard aging. In this updated version of his popular book, Reb Zalman has added a brand new introductory chapter that provides insight into the shifts that have taken place in our culture since the first edition of this book came out in the 1990s. Reb Zalman speaks candidly about the role the 78 million (now aging) Baby Boomers are currently playing in how we think about aging. He provides new inspiring ideas about the importance of an elder's role in shaping society, and explains how elders can embrace the power they have to provide value and wisdom to those around them. Additionally he has added a concluding chapter in which he shares his own experience with aging and the time he calls *The December Years*.

aging as a spiritual practice: *Aging, Spirituality, and Religion* Melvin Kimble, Susan H. McFadden, 1995 This book examines the ways religion and spirituality are experienced by aging

persons within an aging society. An eminent group of contributors from a variety of disciplines explores this new terrain of an emerging interdisciplinary field. The result is a volume that will be the standard reference work on the relationship between religion and the experience of aging.

aging as a spiritual practice: *Fierce with Age* Carol Orsborn, 2013-05-07 In her breakthrough generational memoir, Boomer expert Carol Orsborn relates the ups and downs of a tumultuous year spent facing, busting, and ultimately triumphing over the stereotypes of growing old. Along the way, she nurtures a love-starved friend through a doomed affair with a younger man, wrestles with the meaning of an exploding fish, and regains her passion for life at the side of her squirrel-crazed dog, Lucky. The message is as deep as it is engaging. In Carol's own words, "Plummet into aging, stare mortality in the eye, surrender everything and what else is there left to fear? The way is perilous, danger on all sides. But we can be part of a generation no longer afraid of age. We are becoming, instead, a generation fierce with age."

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aging as a spiritual practice: *A Season of Mystery* Paula Huston, 2012-11-01 We live in a culture that tells us there are few things worse than aging, that we should avoid aging at all costs, and that we must shun death. And yet, no matter how much money we spend on health supplements, no matter how many gurus we consult, the fact remains unchanged: We will grow old. In *A Season of Mystery*, 60-year-old Paula Huston—a grandmother, and also a caretaker for her own mother and for her in-laws—shares with readers a far more fulfilling way to approach how we live and how we think about the second half of life. Each chapter offers a spiritual practice that is particularly suited to nurturing us in ways we would never have recognized in our younger lives. For example, the practice of "listening" helps us quit superimposing our own take on every situation before we have a chance to hear and see what is truly there; the practice of "delighting" encourages us to notice and be thankful for what is small and seemingly insignificant. Each of the 10 practices serves as an antidote to the classic afflictions of old age, such as close-mindedness, complaining, and fear of change. *A Season of Mystery* is not intended to be a selection of self-improvement secrets; the goal of Huston's work is to encourage people in the second half of life to become "ordinary mystics" who are no longer bound by the world's false ideas on aging but instead be freed by God's grace to embrace the riches that come only with growing older.

aging as a spiritual practice: *Wildmind* Bodhipaksa, 2012-02-29 Meditation helps us to cut through the agonizing clutter of superficial mental turmoil and allows us to experience more spacious and joyful states of mind. It is this pure and luminous state that I call your Wildmind. From how to build your own stool to how a raisin can help you meditate, this illustrated guide explains everything you need to know to start or strengthen your meditation practice.

aging as a spiritual practice: *Aging for Beginners* Ezra Bayda, 2018-11-20 We all grow old. This book teaches us how to take advantage of a new phase of life: a phase of renewal and inner exploration. We're all beginners when it comes to aging. And although the fact that we are in new territory can certainly contribute to the difficulties in dealing with getting older, it can also have a very positive side. Aging can be seen as a new phase of our life: a phase of renewal. Nowhere is this more evident than in our opportunity to devote more time to reflection and inner exploration. The result, regardless of whatever physical limitations we may be experiencing, is the possibility of cultivating and living increasingly from kindness and gratitude—two of the essential qualities of a life of satisfaction and equanimity. With techniques that are both simple and richly unfolded, this book will help readers: • learn the subtle art of being with pain • uncover the fears that amplify suffering • tap into the true sources of meaningfulness and joy Winner of the Spirituality & Practice Best Book Award in 2019.

aging as a spiritual practice: Romancing the Shadow Connie Zweig, Steven Wolf, 1999-02-02 Beneath the social mask we wear every day, we have a hidden shadow side: an impulsive, wounded, sad, or isolated part that we generally try to ignore, but which can erupt in hurtful ways. As therapists Connie Zweig and Steve Wolf show in this landmark book, the shadow can actually be a source of emotional richness and vitality, and acknowledging it can be a pathway to healing and an authentic life. Romancing the shadow--meeting your dark side, beginning to understand its unconscious messages, and learning to use its powerful energies in productive ways--is the challenging and exciting soul work that Zweig and Wolf offer in this practical, rewarding guide. Drawing on the timeless teachings of Carl Jung and compelling stories from their clinical practices, Zweig and Wolf reveal how the shadow guides your choices in love, sex, marriage, friendship, work, and family life. With their innovative method, you can uncover the unique patterns and purpose of your shadow and learn to defuse negative emotions; reclaim forbidden or lost feelings; achieve greater self-acceptance; heal betrayal; reimagine and re-create relationships; cultivate compassion for others; renew creative expressions; and find purpose in your suffering. The shadow knows why good people sometimes do bad things. Romancing the shadow and learning to read the messages it encodes in daily life can deepen your consciousness, imagination, and soul.

aging as a spiritual practice: Everyday Spiritual Practice Scott W. Alexander, 1999 Have you wondered, How do I integrate my heartfelt beliefs into my daily life? Nearly 40 contributors address this creative dilemma and share their discoveries. Creating a home altar, practicing martial arts, fasting, quilting -- these are just some of the ways they've found to make every day more meaningful and satisfying.

aging as a spiritual practice: Aging with Wisdom Olivia Ames Hoblitzelle, 2017-11-14 How do we find beauty and meaning in old age? How do we overturn the paradigm of ageism? How do we age consciously and cultivate an inner life resilient enough to withstand the vicissitudes of old age? An extended meditation on how to age consciously and embrace life in all its fullness and wonder, *Aging with Wisdom* answers these questions.

aging as a spiritual practice: Still Here Ram Dass, 2001-06-01 More than thirty years ago, an entire generation sought a new way of life, looking for fulfillment and meaning in a way no one had before. Leaving his teaching job at Harvard, Ram Dass embodied the role of spiritual seeker, showing others how to find peace within themselves in one of the greatest spiritual classics of the twentieth century, the two-million-copy bestseller *Be Here Now*. As many of that generation enter the autumn of their years, the big questions of peace and of purpose have returned demanding answers. And once again, Ram Dass blazes a new trail, inviting all to join him on the next stage of the journey.

aging as a spiritual practice: The Gift of Years Joan Chittister, 2010 Looks at the many dimensions of aging and considers the joys of this special stage of life as well as the rewards of being open to new experiences and new relationships.

aging as a spiritual practice: Aging with Grace Sharon W. Betters, Susan Hunt, 2021-01-25 *Aging with Grace* by the Power of the Gospel Whatever season of life you're in, God has equipped

you to flourish—to live in the transforming power and beauty of his grace. As we age, we can easily lose sight of this message as cultural ideals glorifying youth take center stage. In this book, Sharon W. Betters and Susan Hunt offer present-day and biblical examples of women who rediscovered gospel-rooted joy later in their lives. Equipped with a biblical view of aging, *Aging with Grace* will help you encounter afresh the gospel that is big enough, good enough, and powerful enough to make every season of life significant and glorious.

aging as a spiritual practice: *Resilience and Aging* Helen Lavretsky, 2014-10-20 Resilience is a key component in maintaining health and happiness in old age. When aging adults struggle with social isolation, financial instability, or the difficult work of caring for a spouse with a chronic illness, their levels of stress can be enormous. But many older adults are living longer and are trying to make the best of their later years despite being more vulnerable to stress. In *Resilience and Aging*, renowned geriatric psychiatrist Dr. Helen Lavretsky explains how enhanced resilience—which involves positively adapting to adversity in a way that maintains a person's biological and psychological equilibrium—can counter that vulnerability. She describes how care, practice, and research all can be redirected toward emphasizing the positive aspects of aging and prevention. Lavretsky summarizes the most up-to-date research on resilience, neurobiology, and preventive care. She also describes novel interventions—including yoga, tai chi, meditation, and allopathic techniques—that can help older adults improve their cognition and quality of life. Finally, she explores relevant clinical cases from her practice. Designed for geriatric practitioners, researchers, and family caregivers, this practical book offers critical information on measuring resilience, the role of spirituality in reducing stress, and incorporating resilience-building procedures into clinical practice or everyday life. Throughout, the book's revolutionary integrative approach aims to amplify personal happiness by allowing aging adults to remain healthy and active while simultaneously reducing the cost of chronic disease to families and society.

aging as a spiritual practice: *Landscapes of Aging and Spirituality* Kathleen Montgomery, 2015-06-01 In a collection of lovely essays, nineteen writers reflect on the experience of aging and the ways it intersects with their spiritual lives. Alternately tender and frank, funny and wistful, these heartfelt ruminations offer companionship for those walking the journey of later life. The authors, many of them retired ministers, approach the topic from many angles, with many stories, including adjusting to wearing leg braces due to neuropathy, being called a woman of your age, considering what it would be like to have nothing left to prove, and reflecting on assisted suicide and its impact on those we love. These thoughtful writers ponder growing older as a spiritual path—not one that we choose, but one that has chosen us.

aging as a spiritual practice: *Coming of Age Handbook for Congregations* Sarah Gibb Millspaugh, Jessica York, Judith Frediani, 2009

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aging as a spiritual practice: *Growing Old in Christ* Stanley Hauerwas, 2003-06-20 One of the hallmarks of contemporary culture is its attitude toward aging and the elderly. Youth and productivity are celebrated in today's society, while the elderly are increasingly marginalized. This not only poses difficulties for old people but is also a loss for the young and middle-agers, who could

learn much from the elderly, including what it means to grow old (and die) in Christ. *Growing Old in Christ* presents the first serious theological reflection ever on what it means to grow old, particularly in our culture and particularly as a Christian. In a full-orbed discussion of the subject, eighteen first-rate Christian thinkers survey biblical and historical perspectives on aging, look at aging in the modern world, and describe the Christian practice of growing old. Along the way they address many timely issues, including the medicalization of aging, the debate over physician-assisted suicide, and the importance of friendships both among the elderly and between the elderly and the young. Weighty enough to instruct theologians, ethicists, and professional caregivers yet accessible enough for pastors and general readers, this book will benefit anyone seeking faith-based insight into growing old. Contributors: David Aers David Cloutier Rowan A. Greer Stanley Hauerwas Judith C. Hays Richard B. Hays Shaun C. Henson L. Gregory Jones Susan Pendleton Jones Patricia Beattie Jung D. Stephen Long M. Therese Lysaught David Matzko McCarthy Keith G. Meador Charles Pinches Joel James Shuman Carole Bailey Stoneking Laura Yordy

aging as a spiritual practice: Aging and God William M Clements, Harold G Koenig, 2014-03-05 This important book examines the relationship between religion and mental health throughout the life cycle, with a special emphasis on later life. It asserts that successful aging is possible regardless of physical health or environmental circumstances, and that religious beliefs and behaviors may facilitate successful aging. *Aging and God* thoroughly examines the effects of religion and mental health on aging and provides a centralized resource of up-to-date references of research in the field. It focuses on recent findings, theoretical issues, and implications for clinical practice and contains ideas for further research. In *Aging and God*, you'll also find information on project design that can help you develop grant applications and carry out studies. *Aging and God* is a helpful book for both mental health and religious professionals. It helps mental health specialists better understand the spiritual needs of older adults and the impact that religion can have on facilitating mental health. It also describes how religion can be utilized in clinical practice and integrated into psychotherapeutic approaches to older patients. The book brings religious professionals current knowledge of the major psychological problems that older adults face and how religion can be used to help alleviate these problems. Full of pertinent information, *Aging and God* addresses theoretical aspects of human development, focusing on cognitive, moral, and religious faith development examines situations and disorders of particular concern to older persons and looks at how religion can be used as a resource applies research findings to the problem of meeting the spiritual and mental health needs of elders with chronic or acute health problems provides an in-depth look at end-of-life issues such as physician-assisted suicide Hospital and nursing home chaplains will find this book informative and encouraging, as will gerontologists, hospital administrators, and community clergy faced with increasingly older congregations. It gives mental health professionals new strategies to help improve the later years of older adults, and makes an excellent text for courses on religion, mental health, and aging. Middle-aged and older adults, as well as their families, will also find *Aging and God* enjoyable and inspiring as they attempt to grapple with the myriad adjustment and coping problems associated with aging.

aging as a spiritual practice: Every Breath, New Chances Lewis Richmond, 2020-11-03 Tools and anecdotes to reframe aging from the bestselling author of *Work as a Spiritual Practice* and *Aging as a Spiritual Practice*. Aging is a journey: a decades-long adventure of new opportunities and surprises. For many men, the decline in virility and power that accompanies age can be a tough pill to swallow. When these fall away, how do we make sense of who we are? What does it mean to be a man? Drawing from research, interviews, and personal stories, *Every Breath, New Chances* shows readers how to turn toward the changes associated with aging and to reevaluate losses and transitions as new avenues for joy, self-discovery, renewal, and growth. Delving into topics such as divorce, single living, retirement, and encore careers, each chapter includes a contemplative practice called Deep Mind Reflection to help readers navigate the fears and aspirations that come along with changes in relationships and work. This book addresses the more challenging realities associated with illness, substance abuse, and mortality, while empowering readers to

compassionately embrace next steps and spiritual preparations for their final decades of life. This book does not proffer tools for staving off an inevitable part of life; rather, it offers frameworks and strategies for peacefully embracing it.

aging as a spiritual practice: *The Art and Science of Aging Well* Mark E. Williams, M.D., 2016-06-22 In the past century, average life expectancies have nearly doubled, and today, for the first time in human history, many people have a realistic chance of living to eighty or beyond. As life expectancy increases, Americans need accurate, scientifically grounded information so that they can take full responsibility for their own later years. In *The Art and Science of Aging Well*, Mark E. Williams, M.D., discusses the remarkable advances that medical science has made in the field of aging and the steps that people may take to enhance their lives as they age. Through his own observations and by use of the most current medical research, Williams offers practical advice to help aging readers and those who care for them enjoy personal growth and approach aging with optimism and even joy. *The Art and Science of Aging Well* gives a realistic portrait of how aging occurs and provides important advice for self-improvement and philosophical, spiritual, and conscious evolution. Williams argues that we have considerable choice in determining the quality of our own old age. Refuting the perspective of aging that insists that personal, social, economic, and health care declines are persistent and inevitable, he takes a more holistic approach, revealing the multiple facets of old age. Williams provides the resources for a happy and productive later life.

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aging as a spiritual practice: *Meeting the Shadow* Connie Zweig, Jeremiah Abrams,

1991-04-01 The author offers exploration of self and practical guidance dealing with the dark side of personality based on Jung's concept of shadow, or the forbidden and unacceptable feelings and behaviors each of us experience.

aging as a spiritual practice: *Mindful Aging* Andrea Brandt, 2017 Renowned psychotherapist and aging expert Andrea Brandt, PhD, MFT, helps you throw out the old stereotypes about getting older and move toward the welcoming new evidence that your future is alive with possibility, providing steps to thrive today and into your golden years. This book is full of exercises and tools to help you embrace a new mindset and blaze a new trail in your life fueled by passion, purpose, and creativity.

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well-being is enhanced by participation in one's faith community. For many older ...

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[Reflections On Aging A Spiritual Guide \(book\) - now.acs.org](#)

Spirituality David O. Moberg, 2012-10-12 Explore the spiritual dimensions of aging through science theory and practice During the later years of life many people devote energy to a process of ...

Spiritual Dimensions of Ageing - Cambridge University Press ...

Our understandings of both ageing and spirituality are changing rapidly in the twenty-first century, and grasping the significance of later life spirituality is now crucial in the context of extended ...

Spirituality and Aging - The Senior Perspective

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