



Spiritual Eldering

“I was approaching my sixtieth birthday, and a feeling of futility had invaded my soul, plunging me into a state of depression that no amount of busyness or diversion could dispel. [. . .] To deal with my unanswered questions, in 1984 I took a forty-day retreat at Lama Foundation, an ecumenical retreat center located near Taos, New Mexico. [. . .] After a few days, when the surface noise of my mind died down, I realized that I was sloughing off an old phase of life that I had outgrown. At the same time, to my great surprise and wonderment, I was being initiated as an elder, a sage who offers his experience, balanced judgment, and wisdom for the welfare of society. [. . .] spiritual eldery “envisioned the elder as an agent of evolution, attracted as much by the future of humanity’s expanded brain-mind potential as by the wisdom of the past.”

Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, *From Age-ing to Sage-ing*

“We [elders] can use our leisure for trivial pursuits, or we can progress to second maturity using the contemplative tools of spiritual eldery. Only by growing beyond our first maturity’s tasks of ego development, career, and parenting can we sufficiently answer the questions.

‘Why am I still here? What more is expected of me?’

Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, *From Age-ing to Sage-ing*