



AGING

as a spiritual practice

We each face our decline and our death differently. Many avoid worrying about it by filling the later years with as much activity as we can handle. Many of us, however, face the gradual debilitation of terminal illness — dementia, mobility issues, cancer. None of this is pleasant, so we would rather not think about these things, and live as much as possible as if we were going to live forever. We simply let the processes of diminishment gradually limit our world.

“Conscious aging” is the spiritual practice whereby we take our decline as an opportunity for further deepening of our spiritual life and of our connection with God Recent spiritual literature, especially that influenced by Carl Jung ... talks of two halves of life: a first half is dominated by our ego — that part of ourselves that judges, plans, selects, decides, orders, competes, and succeeds (or not). The second half builds on the first, but is a break from it; it moves from “ego” to “self,” (or, as some would say, from “false self” to “true self.”) It is characterized by non-dualistic thinking, forgiveness, compassion, and inner depth and meaning-making.

There are some key tasks we should undertake in order to make our ageing a spiritual practice:

- embark on the “inner journey”
- accept the inevitability of “passivities of diminishment” as we become less mobile, more racked with pain and illness, and other forms of debility
- find ways to transform these passivities of diminishment into **possibilities for growth**.
- learn to **let go** of attachments, planfulness, ambitions of our ego
- **give ourselves to what is beyond us**, bigger than us
- “**individuate**” — discover our inner richness & uniqueness
- visit: <https://spiritualpractice.ca/welcome/how-can-my-ageing-become-a-spiritual-practice/>

Simeon took him in his arms & praised God, saying,

“God, you can now release your servant;
release me in peace as you promised.

With my own eyes I’ve seen your salvation;
it’s now out in the open for everyone to see:

A God-revealing light to the non-Jewish nations,
and of glory for your people Israel.”

Anna never left the temple but worshipped there with fasting & prayer night and day.



*How might your own signs of aging
become a spiritual practice
that deepens your connection with God?*