

# Conscious Aging

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## Reading List

A very informally annotated, un-alphabetized, list of what I have read over time, particularly in the last few years especially

~John, June 2017

**Thomas, William, MD, What are Old People For (2004)**

Takes his shot at mid-life tyranny and has many good things to see and say about the older old and aging in general. Many powerful pages and much worth the read

**Cole, Thomas, The Oxford Book of Aging (1994)**

A masterful, quite literary compendium of millennia of reflections on aging across civilizations

**Cole, Thomas, The Journey of Life: a cultural history of aging in America (1992)**

A detailed account of 300 plus years of the cultural mindset and its shifts from spiritual journey in Presbyterian villages to science and wealth creation in cities. A fantastic introduction worth the book by itself and the mapping of the loss and potential current regaining of the spirituality of aging

**Chittister, Joan, The Gift of Years (2008)**

Delightful and wise, the activist nun with a spiritual and psychological wisdom and everyday insight

**Cohen, Gene, MD, The Mature Mind (2005)**

Good news on the neuroplasticity of the aging mind and emotional maturity

**Cohen, Gene, MD, The Creative Age Human Potential in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Half of Life (2000)**

Good news on the aging and creativity

**Murphy, Jack and Hudson, Frederic, The Joy of Old (1994)**

Accessible and deep and very positive with simple models but a profound point of view. Out of print

**Dowling Singh, Kathleen, The Grace in Aging, (2014)**

Perhaps the single most powerful for me, very spiritual and Eastern, profound meditation on spirituality and letting go

**Arrien, Angeles, The Second Half of Life, (2007)**

This wise teacher, cultural anthropologist and indigenous expert, writes about the gates or passages of the path of return to our wholeness

**Baker, Beth, With a Little Help from My Friends (2014)**

A fine survey of the exciting alternatives for living arrangements that are being tried and are spreading: co-housing, home adjustments, inter-generational arrangements and lots more going on

**Baker, Beth, Old Age in a New Age: the promise of transformative nursing homes (2007)**

A hopeful look at nursing homes and how they are being improved by pioneers that see autonomy and well-being for elders as a priority

**Greenleaf, Robert, Old Age: The Ultimate Test of Spirit (2003)**

The father of servant leadership presents a meaningful, down-to-earth pamphlet on aging

**Hillman, James, The Force of Character and the Lasting Life (2000)**

Brilliant in places, uneven, metaphoric view toward symptoms of aging, interestingly unique – with many wonderful insights, but not an easy read for most

**Moody, Harry, Aging: Concepts and Controversies (9<sup>th</sup> Edition 2017)**

Edited by an AARP expert. Sociology and fact based, but quite human and fun in some places – a text book listing issues individuals and society face

**Bianchi, Eugene, Aging as a Spiritual Journey (1984)**

From the earlier '80s, a bit ponderous but okay for calling out the shadow that we carry forward from earlier life

**Rabbi Schachter Zalman, From Aging to Saging, (many editions)**

Written in the '80s, his followers offer a certification in his work: good stuff, lots of very good exercises

**Sawain, Leslie, editor, Jung on Aging**

Book of essays presented at the Library of Congress in 2011. Uneven but five or so really rich essays

**Friedan, Betty, The Fountain of Age, (1991)**

A wandering and rich report on aging from the feminist who saw that age trapped people as much as sexual identity

**Klein, Daniel, Travels with Epicurus, (2014)**

Fun, light in places, deep in others, great passages on forever youngsters missing out on the deep virtues of aging naturally, slowing down. Brutal and spiritually-biased toward seeing no value in the suffering of old old age

**Carter, Jimmy, The Virtues of Aging**

His wise voice, as a 70 something, comes through on how he and Rosalind navigated the challenges that lead to their famously fruitful old age

**Luke, Helen, Old Age, (2010)**

Jungian, poetic, a series of essays on the spiritual impact of letting go as we age. Filled with myth and not straight forward but rich

**Applewhite, Ashton, This Chair Rocks: a Manifesto Against Ageism (2016)**  
Insightful sometimes powerful writing on age prejudice

**Freedman, Marc, The Big Shift: navigating the new stage beyond mid-life (2011)**  
A report for the 3<sup>rd</sup> fourth of life, before older old but after midlife. How we need to imagine work and more as we get a new stage of a few decades. Not deep but informative

### **On Dying**

Nowen, Henri, ***Our Greatest Gift***. (1994)  
Spiritual, Christian and service emphasis, getting old and caring for the old as privilege

**Dowling Singh, Kathleen, The Grace in Dying, (1998)**  
(Her earlier book by 20 years, see The Grace in Aging above) A former hospice worker sees and describes in rich detail the transformation that entering the death experience facilitates. Many inspiring, beautiful passages and worth the read

**Gawande, Atul, Being Mortal, (2014)**  
Recent best seller on medicalizing old age as a big mistake and how to start humanizing. Great for families with aging parents

Hundreds of pop titles on retirement and aging are coming out, as the Boomers want to write and give each other advice about how this stage of life goes.