THE PASSING OF A FRIEND

This past month saw the passing of one of my oldest and dearest friends, Charles Campbell, age 89. During the last weeks of his life, I was directly involved in care-giving, along with others, including the wonderful work of Hospice of Boulder, Colorado.

A couple of weeks ago, Charles was bedbound while we had an unexpected Boulder snowstorm, covering the world in white. He looked out his window and said, "What a beautiful day to be disabled!" It reminded me of George Vaillant's work on lifespan development. Years ago, before I ever met George Vaillant in person, I read an interview with him in an airline magazine. He was quoted as saying that successful aging doesn't depend on health or wealth, but rather on forgiveness and gratitude. Forgiveness and gratitude is what Charles Campbell displayed in the last weeks of his life.

In recent days when I visited Charles he wondered why it took
so long to die. I replied that maybe it was needed to give time for all the people he had helped in his life to call and visit him to give him thanks. He smiled and said that was a point of view he hadn't thought about.

It reminded me of the Sufi proverb: "Those whom God wishes to bless, God puts in their hands the means of helping others."

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PUTTING ON A RED HAT

"When I am an old woman I shall wear purple
With a red hat which doesn't go, and doesn't suit me..."

Those are the famous opening lines of Jenny Joseph's poem "Warning: When I Am An Old Woman." In that poem Joseph offers her image of later life. But she wrote the poem in 1961, when she was only 31 years old. Today Jenny Joseph is 81. How has growing older worked out for her?

For some answers, see "Visioning Elderhood" at the Changing Aging website at: http://changingaging.org/blog/visioning-elderhood/

For the full poem, "Warning," visit: http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/warning/

For more on Jenny Joseph, see: http://www.wheniamanoldwoman.com/pages/348545/index.htm

For the Red Hat Society inspired by the poem visit: http://www.redhatsociety.com/

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THE SECRET IS WITHIN YOU

"The Patriarch said, 'Think neither good nor evil. At this very moment, what is the original self of the monk Myo?' At these words, Myo was directly illuminated. His whole body was covered with sweat. He wept and bowed, saying, 'Besides the secret words and secret meaning you have just now revealed to me, is there anything else, deeper still?"
The Patriarch said, 'What I have told you is no secret at all. When you look into your own true self, whatever is deeper is found right there.'

(Katsuk Sekida, TWO ZEN CLASSICS: Mumonkan and Hekiganroku)

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POSITIVE AGING ON YouTube

"The Art of Aging: Celebrating the Authentic Aging Self" at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PizJjpNkJULI

"Rabbi Zalman-Schachter: Age-ing and Sage-ing" at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i7L_7UboCPA

"Aging As Spiritual Practice with Lewis Richmond" at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jOINtk7oqo4

For films about positive aging, visit: http://www.terranova.org/

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VIRTUES OF FINITUDE

"Unlimited possibilities are not suited to man; if they existed, his life would only dissolve in the boundless. To become strong, a man's life needs the limitations contained by duty and voluntarily accepted. The individual attains significance as a free spirit only by surrounding himself with these limitations and by determining for himself what his duty is."

-(I Ching, Hexagram 40, "Limitation")

Read more about "The Tao of Longevity" at: http://www.secondjourney.org/itin/09_Fall/Leder_09Fall.htm

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STAGES OF LIFE

The conference-wide theme for the 2013 Pacific and Ancient
and Modern Language Association conference is "Stages of Life: Age, Identity, and Culture." The theme is intended to allow special sessions dealing with all aspects of the intersection of Age, Identity, and Culture, from Childhood Studies to Aging Studies.

The Conference will be in San Diego, Nov. 1-3, 2013. Conference planners are seeking papers on all aspects of autobiography, memoir, diary, and life-writing for the standing session on autobiography at the Conference. Possible topics may include, but are not limited to: autobiographic self-representation in new social media; multi-ethnic life-writing; autobiography in the graphic novel; discovery of archive diary; multi-genre forms of narrative life-writing; and the relationship between autobiography and gender, sexual, ethnic, racial, and national identities. Proposals should be submitted online before April 15 at: http://www.pamla.org/2013/topics/autobiography.

For questions, please contact the Autobiography Presiding Officer at heflin@iup.edu

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WEB SITES TO SEE

SACRED POETRY. Want inspiration every day this April? Log on to "A Month of Sacred Poetry" for this month and be inspired at: http://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/blogs/maps.php?id=15386

GERO-PUNK. Ready to take "the road less traveled" when it comes to aging? Then give a look at "Gero-Punk" at: http://www.geropunkproject.org and also at: http://geropunkproject.org/gero-punk-manifesto/

AMOUR. Why does everyone wax enthusiastic about "Amour," a film that is an advertisement for involuntary euthanasia? For a commentary on this, visit: http://www.guardian.co.uk/film/filmblog/2013/feb/28/amour-advert-for-euthanasia

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BOOKS OF INTEREST

AGING OUR WAY: Lessons for Living from 85 and Beyond, by Meika Loe (Oxford Univ. Press, 2011).


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COMING EVENTS


For more on "Birthing the Crone" by Helen Redman, visit: http://www.birthingthecrone.com/


AGEISM: "This Chair Rocks: How Ageism Warps Our View of Long Lives" (Apr. 8, 2013, New York, NY). This monologue by Ashton Applewhite explores how we can wake up to the ageism all around us, cheer up, and push back. At Cooper Union, Rose Auditorium, Third Ave at 7th St, 6:30-8:30, Admission is free. For more on this event, visit: http://cooper.edu/events-and-exhibitions/events/chair-rocks-how-ageism-warp-our-view-long-life

COMMUNITY AND INTERDEPENDENCE (Apr. 11-14, 2013, Chapel Hill, NC).
A weekend experience of dialogue exploring growth in the second half of life, including caring models for community living. Sponsored by Second Journey. For details about this event, visit: http://www.SecondJourney.org/VC.htm

AWAKENED AGING: Cultivating a Wise Heart (Apr. 13, 2013,
Boulder, CO). Short presentations and experiential exercises to cultivate compassion and mindfulness as we age. Workshop led by David Chernikoff, meditation teacher and psychotherapist. 9-4:30 PM, East Boulder Senior Center, 5660 Sioux Drive, Boulder, CO. For information and registration call (303) 441-4388


SAGE-ING: "Joy of Sageing: Acquiring a Heart of Wisdom" (Apr. 14, 2013, Boulder, CO). The Conscious Learning Community sponsors this 6 week program based on the Spiritual Eldering work inspired by the teachings of Reb Zalman Schachter and his book, From Age-ing to Sage-ing. For registration call 303-440-1024 or e-mail ori@conscious-learning-community.org For details, visit: http://www.center-for-spiritual-friendship.org/sageing


HEALTHY AGING: Symposium (Apr. 20, 2013, Santa Barbara, CA). H.R. Moody presents "The 122 Year Old Man in the Year 2067" in a symposium with other sessions on conscious aging. For details, visit: http://www.antiochsb.edu/events/symposium-on-healthy-aging/


CONSCIOUS ELDERING: Aging With Intention and Passion
(June 7-9, Syracuse, New York) Experiential workshop led by Ron Pevny
of the Center for Conscious Eldering, this is an introduction to conscious
eldering, with its possibilities and inner work. For details see:
http://www.centerforconsciouseldering.com

CHOOSING CONSCIOUS ELDERHOOD (July 7-13, Stewart Mineral Springs
Retreat, Mt. Shasta, California) Retreat guided by Ron Pevny and Anne Wennhold.
A retreat for people who seek to deepen their experience of calling, passion
and service in the elder third of life. Structured as a rite of passage, it includes
sharing councils, conscious eldering practices such as legacy work and life review,
and a day of solitude. For more information, contact Ron Pevny at 970-247-7943
or visit http://www.centerforconsciouseldering.com

"The next message you need is always right
where you are."

— Ram Dass

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