

Summoning Genius: A Midlife Guide to Discovering Identity, Purpose, and Meaning

Pages: 206

Format: pdf, epub

Language: English

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SUMMONING GENIUS:

A MIDLIFE GUIDE TO DISCOVERING

IDENTITY, MEANING AND PURPOSE

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Cover design by Nick Zelinger, [NZ Graphics](#)

eBook formatting by Veronica Yager, [YellowStudios](#)

SYNOPSIS

Summoning Genius: A Midlife Guide to Discovering Identity, Purpose, and Meaning is a book that can be read again and again as a companion to anyone's midlife challenges. This book offers practical guidance, helpful exercises and inspirational support for people who are struggling to

find value, meaning, and purpose in the second half of life, and explores the questions and issues that arise in the process.

Each section offers clear and practical insights pertaining to the trials and pitfalls that may appear at different stages of anyone's midlife transition. Its pages can gently support or courageously provoke life-changing actions and decisions that may need to be made by the reader in order to continue to grow, change, and develop as an individual.

To my sweet soul partner whose

loving presence fills my heart with smiles.

I love you.

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With or without their knowing, the following people have helped me write this book. I wish to thank and honor them for the difference they have made in my life.

Laura Rose for her loving support and encouragement (and book title!).

Brennan Anderson, my son, for allowing me to encourage his genius callings.

Dr. Lorell Frysh, my Murshida and friend, for the depth of her patience and wisdom.

Beverly McLaughlin, my sister, for never giving up on me.

Sasha Edwards for her true friendship.

Colibri Montalvo, my soul daughter, for her strength and love.

Tamar Gellar for helping me to remember my strength.

Marlo Dalby for our soul friendship.

Lila Harding for sharing her genius muse.

Suzanne Mark for her great kindness.

Will Allen for sharing his creative energy and example.

Dr. Dan Sternberg for his gentle and loving advice.

Sanaya Roman for her friendship and guidance.

FOREWORD

The purpose of this book is to provoke a response in readers. It is a call to action. It is intended to stir the pot and create new possibilities and opportunities in lives that may have become stagnant. Its message to readers is to challenge the personal status quo at midlife by uncovering the talents and abilities that they, as individuals, have been born to express.

This book presents ideas, exercises, and encouragement for the second half of life, where many of us have dropped off the map creatively and expressively. Its task is to help the reader uncover the wealth of his or her character, which, by midlife, has been deepened through lived experience and which, I propose, has value greater than gold, regardless of what form or shape it has taken.

Using an ancient idea regarding the source of our greatest qualities, namely the *Genius spirit* with which each of us were born, this book serves as a mirror, provocateur, companion, and guide to the discovery process.

The midlife period is a crucial time to become reinvigorated through a reconnection with your creative possibilities, because, by this time, you may have become disenchanted by your successes as well as your failures and have a need to find something genuinely yours that brings a fresh breeze of possibility to your life experience going forward. This book proposes that that something already exists as an underutilized part of you that can be uncovered and engaged, and that this largely forgotten part can provide rich and fertile ground for growing into more of what you are to become here, in this life.

Midlife is not a time to roll over and play dead. Much of life has yet to be lived, and if you're reading this, you know that this is true; you can feel it in your marrow, perhaps as a faint calling, or perhaps as a loud and insistent voice of urgency.

As you move through the ideas on these pages, some may resonate with you more than others, but my sincere hope is that this book will serve as a much-needed wake up call to those of you who are currently sensing the genuine inherent human need for continued life growth and expansion of expression.

While we are still here, the more that we can uncover our natural and unique callings, the more we can offer to those whom we love as well as to people we may never meet who may benefit from the gifts we have brought to this life to develop and share.

May you use this book in that spirit and, in turn, allow what you uncover in yourself to become an

encouragement for others to answer their deepest callings.

What Is Genius, Really?

In modern times, namely the last 100 years or so, the term *Genius* has been associated with the I.Q., or *intelligence quotient* of a person, which is the score someone gets on a standardized test originally developed by French psychologist Alfred Binet. He designed the test to predict how successfully any given student would perform in school. More recent and contemporary versions of this test propose that if someone scores above a 140, they fall into the genius range of intelligence, when compared to others who don't score as highly on the same test. Geniuses are considered to be more gifted or special than others, and therefore, a distance is placed between them and the lower IQed masses.

Historically, though, the word *Genius* had a different meaning and significance. Stemming from the Latin words *gignere* (to beget or produce) and *gigno* (the superior or divine nature in everything), a person's Genius was defined as a guiding spirit that accompanies the soul when each person is born. Everyone has one. This spirit is imbued with specific talents, attributes, and creative leanings that make it unique—one of a kind—and therefore precious and intrinsically valuable. All of these specific and unique qualities are seen as gifts that are brought to share with the world.

Each Genius is actually a Genius seed, containing all of the attributes of the mature plant *in potential*. Given the right circumstances, the seed can grow into its full expression, bearing the fruits and fragrances that it is meant to give outwardly to the world as gifts. The task of all of us human beings, then, is to allow our Genius to integrate into our everyday lives so that those gifts can be given, resulting in a felt sense of fulfillment for each of us. Conversely, the belief in Genius held that if those gifts aren't given, they may begin to stagnate within us, and this stagnation can manifest in both physical and psychological symptoms in our lives.

Psychologist James Hillman explains the terms used historically for the Genius in us:

For centuries we have searched for the right term for this "call." The Romans named it your *genius*; the Greeks, your *daimon*; and the Christians, your guardian angel. . . . The Neoplatonists referred to it as an imaginal body, the *ochema*, that carried you like a vehicle. It was your personal bearer or support.

According to Hillman's account, rather than being a one-in-a-million phenomenon, Genius is actually universal in nature. Everyone's makeup contains a Genius, which is to a greater or lesser extent recognized, realized, or given expression by the individual. Regardless of what type of uniqueness the Genius in you has carried here, its desire is to be brought out and to be allowed to express its own tones and flavors.

Genius is also seen as a guardian spirit or angel. But the traditional concept of a guardian angel evokes images of our physical protection against evil or dangerous circumstances, whereas Genius's role in our lives is to bear responsibility for keeping our uniqueness alive; it protects our innate qualities, talents, and gifts from becoming lost or diluted. It serves us by reminding us in various ways and throughout the entirety of our lives of our personal life callings and the things we were meant to do that will instill individual meaning and purpose. It provides us with both physical and psychological symptoms as indicators of how and when we are ignoring this essential part of ourselves, and where to look for and allow our Genius expression to emerge and manifest. From the time of our birth until our physical death, it continues to care for us in the form of keeping the fire of our creative potential alive by sheltering its flame against the elements of forgetfulness, opposition, and discouragement. Genius's protection thus extends to the depths of the inner blueprints of our life that were provided to us when we were born. Genius holds us to the universal mandate we are each given to discover and express what those blueprints hold. Some divine

architect has made a unique set of these plans for each of us, and the construction and expression of it can be carried out only by the individual who holds them in his or her existential marrow. Our genius knows this and, through a myriad of inner and outer experiences, consistently reminds us of what we individually came here to do.

We can reciprocate our Genius's care and protection by first acknowledging its presence and then by making time to see that we give it the opportunity to shine. As Hillman puts it, "once upon a time what took such good care of me was a guardian spirit, and I damn well knew how to pay it appropriate attention."

Throughout this book, I sometimes refer to Genius as the *Genius spirit*, or *our innate Genius*, or *our guardian spirit*, or simply *Genius*. You may want to take notice of how many times the word Genius will trigger a mental connotation of the contemporary "I.Q." definition of Genius and observe any accompanying feelings that may arise, ranging from the self-doubt that you even have Genius qualities, to feelings of superiority from singling yourself out as special because of your Genius traits. Remember that these qualities are unique in each of us; every human being who ever was and ever will be born has their own. Most things in the world are identified as being special and unique because of their rarity and limited quantity. So it is with our individual Genius. It expresses a particular flavor only once, and that is through a particular one of us as we are and as we grow and live. There is absolutely no need to compare or compete with anyone regarding Genius, because living our Genius has at its root a singular historical opportunity for expression.

For the sake of illustrating the Genius qualities appearing in an individual, let's turn to someone commonly seen by others as a Genius, namely Albert Einstein. The reason for using such a globally known figure who has obviously contributed a great deal to our scientific culture as an example is because of what Einstein had to say about his particular Genius and how he regarded creativity and calling in the lives of other individuals as well. The most remarkable things about his life aren't necessarily his scientific theories and discoveries but rather his innate character that valued, above all else, imagination, creativity, and intuition. It seems that in order for Einstein to conceive, develop, and present his theories, he first had to give the insatiable curiosity innate in his Genius a great amount of latitude and range to express itself.

An example such as Einstein is not meant to be idolized and imitated but to be seen as an individual who listened to his unique Genius and made more and more space for it to come to fruition in his life. The Importance of Finding Genius at Midlife

For those of us who, by midlife, haven't been actively living with Genius as a major contributor in our life expressions, the time is ripe to turn our attention to it. With the exception of childhood, there is no more important time to begin the effort than at this crucial stage when the deep existential questions appear, and the need for life meaning and purpose becomes a primary concern.

One thing to know is that it is a natural phenomenon to begin to question our life decisions and choices that have brought us to this point. The pendulum of life can only swing in one direction just so far before it needs to move in the exact opposite direction. The first half of life is about pushing to create a space for ourselves in a difficult world full of competition and scarcity. We are preoccupied with achievement and its shadowy twin: the fear of loss. Our identities are created by what we do and who we are in the eyes of others. We are living an outer life without the depth that comes from the integration of our Genius qualities. Even those who discover part of their Genius at an early age and have actively expressed it will still have other Genius qualities that are necessary to bring out at midlife, due to the pendulum nature of our psychological development. No one

escapes the need to engage consciously in this “return” to these innate qualities of Genius, but many live the second half of their lives suffering due to misunderstanding the call of their Genius spirit to once again engage in their childlike explorations and creative leanings. Something Is Missing

A common symptom at midlife is the incessant feeling that something is missing from our life experience. We may make numerous and often desperate attempts to fill this empty space by acquiring possessions, achievements, or lovers, but to no avail. This is normal, and the important thing is what happens after we try and fail to fill our inner void with these things.

The felt need for something more, or the feeling that we are missing something doesn't come from nowhere and isn't simply the whining of an entitled child. This feeling is actually set into motion by something very real that has dwelled within our existential identities from the time we were born: our inbuilt Genius qualities that have something genuine and important to express. When we have ignored this calling for a great deal of time, and because our Genius has its own agenda in our lives, it will make itself known through these feelings of discontent that arise in us. If our Genius wasn't there within us from the beginning, there would not be a problem with our life experiences as they are. They would be enough, and we wouldn't feel any need to change anything. Because we do feel this need, especially at midlife, we have a natural mandate to engage with the thing that is speaking to us through our symptoms and feelings of incompleteness.

As we go through different stages of physical and psychological development as children, the milestones can be detected fairly easily in the development of speech, locomotion, and cognitive acuity. Several well-known developmental theories are generally believed to be at least partially true by many professionals whose fields require them to study and observe human development. One such theory developed by psychologist Erik Erikson may be helpful as an illustration of finding our Genius at midlife. Erikson identified seven stages of human psychological development that generally occur at certain ages of physical growth. The stage that interests us here is the one that Erikson named Generativity vs. Stagnation, which takes place between the ages of 40 and 65.

Generativity vs. Stagnation is the stage when, according to Erikson, we settle down, raise families, contribute to our communities, and develop a sense of our individual role in larger society. When this stage is reached and its attributes are attained, says Erikson, the individual is generative and engaged in work, family, and community. This *generativity* brings a sense of identity and place, providing a person with an individual sense of life meaning and purpose. On the other hand, if one fails to be generative and all of the aspects of this stage aren't being experienced, one experiences *stagnation*, usually accompanied by feelings of worthlessness, confusion, dissatisfaction, and an emptiness in one's life.

Luckily for us humans, a felt sense of stagnation can be as good as an alarm clock, wake-up call, or call to action. And fortunately for us, stagnation itself goes against the basic nature of our innate Genius. Through these feelings of emptiness and lost purpose, our Genius begins to let us know that it's time for us to pay attention to its messages. Symptoms are part of the language of Genius. It speaks existentially in images, dreams, and inner experience. Some of its messages are translated as suffering and pain simply because we're misunderstanding their larger meaning. If there were no Genius in us desiring to be brought out into the world to be expressed, there would be no problem with stagnation. Stagnation would be just fine as an experience, and we wouldn't feel that anything else was needed.

As I am writing this, sitting in front of my fireplace in the early morning, I am having some trouble with my firewood. I have had to start my fire several times, repositioning the logs, adding kindling, and blowing on the embers in order to get the wood to catch. The fire has stagnated, and it has taken my effort and conscious attention to assist and allow the potentiality of the wood to provide

heat for me. The effort on my part makes me a deliberate participant in the transformation of a dead tree into a living source of light and heat. My sense and feeling of being physically cold is the motivation, and the calling is from the stagnated potential in the wood to do something about it. By listening and responding, using a combination of a developed skill and creativity, and after some trial and error, I have managed to help some dry wood express a transformation into living energy. The amount of light and heat it is giving is exponentially more than the effort I've made to let it happen. So it is with Genius. If we pay attention to its call, and respond with careful attention, giving it the proper conditions to express its uniqueness, it can release its energy that has been waiting in potential, which, in turn, will manifest as meaning and purpose in our lives. Our Changing Sense of Value

"Nature's first green is gold,

Her hardest hue to hold.

Her early leaf's a flower;

But only so an hour.

Then leaf subsides to leaf.

So Eden sank to grief,

So dawn goes down to day.

Nothing gold can stay."

—Robert Frost

Part of our psychological state when we reach midlife centers around the fact that our bodies are aging and around all of the challenges that come along with that aging process. No one is ready to get old. Psychologically, it is a rare person who moves from one stage of life to another completely prepared and accepting of the physical changes that take place over a lifetime. For most of us, reaching midlife comes as somewhat of a shock, and we may feel a legion of emotions when confronting the evidence before us that the first half of our life is over. Like being born naked and vulnerable as a baby, we now find ourselves in a similar position in that the illusion of immortality and invulnerability we felt as adolescents and young adults has given way to a newer reality that presents a glimpse of the finality of our lives. This is why midlife elicits existential anxiety and deeper questing. Being faced with a realization of our own mortality tends to make us think about larger, more universal issues that we may have neglected to face up until now.

Robert Frost's poem has a sense of wistful sadness regarding the nature of the "gold" in our lives leaving us. Just when we've come to appreciate it, the gold has gone, having turned into another color before our very eyes. There is a value placed on the symbol of gold for youth that is not replaced by a symbol of greater value by midlife, especially in modern cultures. This is why the idea of midlife, instead of being celebrated as a graduation from a state of inexperience into a state of maturity, is often experienced as a tragic loss of the only thing that is seen as valuable: the gold of our youth. The real tragedy however, is the lack of recognition of the transformation of that gold.

Energy is never lost; it just changes form and goes on. Our life energy is no exception. Although it may seem as if we have lost our youth and all of the entitlements that went along with it, our life energy remains as vital as ever. We just have to be able to recognize the new form it has taken as

we journey into midlife.

The tendency of wanting things to stay the same in our lives is something that everyone without exception will have to confront and challenge. Midlife is a particularly auspicious time to engage in this challenge. The illusion of having unlimited time has begun to erode, exposing the reality that we have no say in how much time we have left. This realization can lead to feelings of helplessness, anxiety, and depression. But if we can review our lives up until now in terms of the changes that have already occurred and what they have produced, we can see that midlife is simply the next place and time for something different to take place on the stage of our life experience.

The changing nature of things is indeed a universally shared predicament. If we understand that transformations of all kinds are part of the human experience, we will be able to welcome the physical and psychological seasons as they come and go, accepting their gifts as they appear in the current of time. The extent to which we have learned to accept and even embrace change is the key to being able to navigate our midlife journey successfully.

Change Tolerance Inventory
Has anything changed in your life recently? Name your first reaction to this change. Have you reacted to previous life changes in a similar way? Did this reaction keep the change from happening? What did you lose as a result of the change? Name something that you have gained because of this change happening. Has this change brought any unsuspected insights about yourself and your life? What advice would you give to someone else if they were experiencing this same life change?

Write down your answers to these questions and see if you can recognize a pattern to how you have learned to deal with life changes. Consider whether if this pattern actually serves the purpose of helping you to accept and move through your life changes or if there is something about it that isn't working. You can then use these insights to do something different when you are faced with future changes that may come along.

The Potency of a Symbol

If we wish for success in inviting the tremendous personal growth that can occur at midlife, we will need to embrace a new paradigm for living the second half of our lives—one that has as its symbol something more precious than gold. As we become more comfortable with the knowledge that all of physical life is ephemeral and that we can use the time we still have to create a more meaningful existence, we begin to value things that invigorate, energize, and mobilize us. We have no time to waste in inertia; there is still much of our Genius to express and explore while we are still here.

It is important to have a symbol that represents the totality of our experience. A symbol for a quest or journey should embody a distillation or concentration of the qualities we see as valuable and want to bring out in ourselves. This symbol is a focal point or mandala to return to again and again in order to center our focus and intent. It serves as inspiration us to keep going when our enthusiasm has waned and as an energy source from which to recharge and invigorate our existential batteries.

For your midlife journey, I invite you to choose any symbol that deeply resonates with you and your life experience. For my personal journey, I have chosen the symbol of the Dragonfly as the embodiment of the evolution of our lost gold. In many cultures, the Dragonfly stands for increased self-realization and greater maturity. Its habit of flying over the surface of water symbolizes the quality of looking past outward appearances into the deeper aspects hidden beneath the surface of things. Dragonflies are born in water but then rise as they mature and instead use the air to navigate their world. They represent the evolution of consciousness through transformation and rebirth. The Dragonfly is able to fly in all six directions effortlessly and change direction in an instant. This is the agility and elegance that can only come from maturity and experience. In the second half of our lives, we can approach our challenges with an agile awareness that has ripened through years of trial, error, and experiment. The dragonfly's body is iridescent; it can show

literally all colors of the spectrum, depending on the angle of the light that falls upon it. As we uncover and express our Genius qualities at midlife, we can use the unique colors we discover in ourselves to respond creatively to whatever situation comes our way. We now possess a large vocabulary of experience with which to address whatever self-created illusions attempt to block our progress on the road of individuation.

The dragonfly has another important quality, in that it can see a 360-degree circumference around itself because of the way its eyes are formed. This characteristic symbolizes the wisdom inherent in midlife Genius expression and the ability to use our vision from our vantage point as mature individuals to see farther than the limits of our self-involvement in a still-forming identity. If we take advantage of how the lessons of experience have “opened our eyes,” we can use our Dragonfly quality of seeing ourselves more deeply and clearly.

Perhaps the most valuable quality that the dragonfly symbolizes is the ability to see through self-made illusions. The process of what we experience at midlife, and certainly our task of uncovering our Genius qualities, requires that we exercise our ability to see ourselves clearly—the good, the bad, the dark and light—all at once, without judgment or fear. Self-made illusions are the most difficult of all to see, because the previous versions of our identities are wrapped up in them. This previous identity is like a house of cards, which for many of us, by midlife, has been blown into an unrecognizable heap by the winds of time. Remember that the Dragonfly lives in the water as a nymph for the first part of its life before it takes to the air as its natural habitat. The dragonfly symbolizes the strength, wisdom, creativity, and flexibility to allow a newer and more genuine identity to emerge—one that is based on an experiential reality through which we have already lived, rather than the uninformed, blind quest for an illusory and idealistic version of ourselves that we embarked upon in our youth.

Seeing through our own illusions is really the single most valuable quality to develop at midlife, because without it, we are consigned to running on the proverbial hamster wheel, repeating the same actions over and over and being confused as to why we experience the same unrewarding outcomes. The dragonfly, with its color, speed, and grace, exemplifies the creative resourcefulness that is needed to make the journey past the version of ourselves that we have outgrown. Its quest is deliberate and purposeful. It has no more time to waste dwelling in the past. It recognizes that life is happening right now. Midlife Growth

One of the last realizations of those experiencing a midlife transitional period is that something natural is occurring in them. One of the aims of this book is to normalize the growth process in midlife in order to help those experiencing it to cooperate with what is happening within them instead of fighting with it.

It is natural for anyone in midlife to want to resist any changes that seem to be occurring. Changes are happening in our bodies, manifesting as more limited ranges of motion in our movements, various illnesses that may show up, the mental and emotional realization that there is a limited amount of time left to live our lives, and the ultimate confrontation on a soul level with the reality of eventual physical death. At one point in our lives, we need to be confronted with these new feelings and symptoms that are intended to motivate us once again to move, change, and grow. Physical changes and limitations remind us to take care of the physical body-houses we've been given to live in while on this earthly adventure. Mental and emotional changes take place in order to motivate us to change old and outdated modes of perception that no longer serve our new stage of growth at midlife. The realization of the certainty of physical death serves to help us to enjoy and use each day we are given to enrich our own lives with the things that bring us meaning and purpose, in turn affecting the lives of others that we touch along the way.

Most people are aware of the word *crisis* associated with the word midlife. This pairing of words

was first used in a paper by the Canadian psychoanalyst Elliot Jaques, who was 48 at the time of its publication. The two words are rarely seen without one another these days and are associated with a time of confusion, struggle, and corresponding feelings of being lost in the world. It is important to note that after this publication, Jaques went on to write 12 books, marry, form a consulting company with his wife, and contribute to the field of psychology for the next 38 years! This “second life” lived by the person describing a crisis points to the fact that *crisis* must have had a different meaning for him—one that contained not only danger, difficulty, and trouble but also possibility and promise.

The word *crisis* has at its root two Greek words: *krisis*, meaning decision, judgment, choice, and *krino*, to choose or decide. So, as with any turning point in our lives, one aspect of life is ending while another begins. This new beginning, heralded by *krisis* or *krino*, is thus a time for a decision and a choice. Free will is deeply involved in this decision, and it is at this point when we can call on our latent Genius qualities to come to our aid and inform this very important choice we are compelled to make. This choice or decision is actually the choice to live or to die, metaphorically. We may either dwell and stagnate in our previously lived version of life that has brought us this far or move in pace with life itself into the next chapter and incarnation where fresh possibility exists.

Although a crisis can signal danger and the need to make a decision, it is important to recognize this crossroads as a naturally occurring phenomenon in a time of growth and development. The changes happening in the time period between our mid-30s and mid-60s is therefore referred to here as *midlife growth*, a term that sheds a more accurate light on what is actually taking place. The commonly held idea of a crisis is only one side of the equation. Crisis in the advent of midlife is merely the motivation provided to us to make the changes that will ultimately lead to a greater sense and expression of our individual and innate life purpose.

There is a teaching story which depicts a teacher and a student standing inside a building with high windows. They observe that a pigeon has become trapped inside the building and is confused as to how to get out. The pigeon has become exhausted from its attempts to find its way to freedom and is despondently perched on a shelf on the wall. The teacher approaches the bird and quite suddenly and loudly claps his hands. The bird, responding to what it perceives as a threat to its life, instinctually flies away through an open window into the welcoming sunlight.

The student remarks, “See how quickly the bird found his way out with your intervention!” To which the teacher replies, “Yes, and see how the bird thought that this was an act that meant to do him harm. The motivation for it to free itself had come from experiencing something that felt contrary to his freedom and possibly even life threatening. Until of course, he flew out of an open window into the limitless freedom of the sky.”

In order to experience midlife as a growth process, we will need to see whatever is happening to us as an impetus for changing our life approach. Just as the pigeon in the story had exhausted itself trying to escape its imprisonment using its old methods, we try to employ methods of living that have worked before in our younger lives. That was a time for pushing forward, forging trails, and making a mark on the world by the exercise of sheer will. The time of Midlife Growth, however, is a time of responding to life’s cues cooperatively. Something inside of us wants us to grow and change in order to continue our journey. This is a time of seeing our limitations simply as boulders in the stream of our lives against which we initially crash but ultimately flow around in any way we can to continue down the stream. The boulders are not there to stop us but to engage us in a life-giving play of creativity that generates energy and opens up opportunities to see ourselves differently than before. If there is anything that is required for a fruitful period of Midlife Growth to take place, it is the willingness to see ourselves in a new way. This can be a frightening prospect when approached from the crisis side of the equation. But if we encounter the crisis

willingly, realizing the need to change our basic perceptions of ourselves for the sake of moving with the flow of life again, we are energized and excited at the prospect. We become explorers of our own consciousness, which engenders new experiences through which we learn about ourselves as individuals. Our growth and development continues until our physical death and, depending on our particular viewpoint, possibly even beyond that. Course Corrections

Mythologist and author Michael Meade, in discussing Genius, uses an analogy of a boat on the water to illustrate the conditions of our moving through life. He explains that a boat is never really on course, as it is consistently being blown off course by changing winds and sea currents, and that the helmsman is steering the boat by constantly correcting the course of the boat toward the direction he is heading.

This deliberate participation in the minutiae of the journey engages the helmsman to be consciously awake and alive in his task. The wind provides the needed energy for the journey, and the course corrections he makes always point in the direction of his destination.

Embracing the idea that our life, like a boat on the sea, is always off course and in need of consistent corrective steering can be a difficult proposition. As Aristotle postulated centuries ago, nature abhors a vacuum. In my experience, it seems as if nature also abhors a straight line. We would like to believe that we can set a course and continue straight ahead in one direction in order to meet our goals and aspirations. However, if we can look back at our lives and remember the different experiences we've had, we will see that almost without exception, the plans that we made invariably changed due to unforeseen events that took place. The fact is that the necessity of course corrections makes our lives deep and interesting. The processes that we must go through in order to make those corrections change and transform us into more authentic people.

By the time midlife rolls around, most of us are due for a significant course correction. Sometimes, when we get a moment of rest from running the daily operations of our life-ship and actually look up at the horizon, we say, "Where am I? How did I get here? Where am I heading?"

We've been sailing without steering for such a long while that it can actually be quite surprising and disturbing when we finally pick our heads up to look out at where we are. Many times, we find that we are living a life that we just sort of fell into out of necessity, convenience, or habit and that we're not actually living the life we want to live. We may find ourselves in a job we hate, experiencing health problems from lack of exercise or bad eating habits, having an addiction to alcohol or drugs, or going through a divorce or depression. All of these things are possibilities at midlife, and it is exactly at this point that we can become psychologically sober with the bracing realization that we are not where or who we want to be. With a type of existential sobriety, we can begin again to steer the ship of our life on a desirable course and consciously choose where we want to go. This time we will know that course corrections are normal, everyday occurrences and that what engages us to act keeps us vital and alive. Midlife Imagination

Everything we see around us made by humans was originally an image in someone's mind. As a craftsman who built furniture for more than 25 years, I was constantly amazed while looking at a dresser or cabinet I had completed because I knew that it was originally just an idea and a picture in my head! How did this object get here? Even though I had gone through the process of building the dresser or cabinet piece by piece, a disconnect occurred once the work was done and what had existed only in fantasy was sitting there completed in front of me. It always felt like some sort of magical occurrence.

Genius at work in our lives operates in the same way. Our Genius spirit provides us with images, inclinations, and motivations for specific things that are uniquely ours to express. These things have their OWN desire to be manifested in the world regardless of whether we've listened to their

messages up until now. Think about that for a second. Our Genius has its OWN desire to manifest things. We, living as separate, ego-oriented people, especially in Western culture, operate under the assumption that we are on our own as individuals striving for some sort of success against all odds in a hostile world. Now, imagine that there is actually something very real inside of us, constantly calling and motivating us to express things that will bring us the fulfillment that we naturally crave. Something is already providing the imaginal images and impulses necessary to be creatively happy, and this thing is actually in complete congruence with the universe. Things *want* to happen through us. This Genius is actually pulling us toward these things as much as we are making the effort to go toward them. The Genius never stops sending its messages to us; it is operating under its organic functioning in doing so. Humans seem to lose connection to this instinct somewhere along the way. When we see someone following the messages of their Genius, it may appear that they are acting in an impractical or even foolish way, spending their time building an ark or studying an ancient, dead language that no one speaks any more. But following the breadcrumbs that have been left by our Genius is a true and intelligent way to participate with a part of ourselves that has been largely ignored by modern man. *

"What now?" is the great life question we ask ourselves in the second half of our lives. *Summoning Genius: A Midlife Guide to Discovering Identity, Purpose, and Meaning* offers practical guidance, helpful exercises and inspirational support for those who are struggling to find value, meaning and purpose at midlife, and explores the questions and issues that arise in the process.

Common problems that appear include breakups/divorce, career changes, health challenges, and issues around our new identities as "older people." Each section offers clear and practical insights about the trials and pitfalls that may appear at different stages of your midlife transition. Its pages can gently support or courageously provoke life-changing actions and decisions that may need to be made in order for you to grow, change, and develop as an individual.

Summoning Genius: A Midlife Guide to Discovering Identity, Purpose, and Meaning is a book to be read again and again as a companion to meeting your midlife challenges.

Thriving in Buiness and Life -- the Book - discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new. The Many-sided Mind of Da Vinciâ€™Importance of the the Subconsciousâ€™Genius and the Principle of Least... that guide our conduct and those ideals that give us our.. detailed elements of consciousness for the purpose of contrasting or. The Great Deflector - Los Angeles Review of Books - Are you chest-deep in the painful waters of a Midlife Crisis? It's about stretching beyond borders and boundaries of our small, ego-centric identities. This is a Self-Discovery and Self-Expansion; Life of Purpose and Meaning; Greater But the council that guides each must fully know the inner workings of that individual. Marcel Proust â€™ Combray [Chapter 2] - The book argues that media culture is now the dominant form of culture

which. to empower themselves and to invent their own meanings, identities, and forms of life... texts either advanced or inhibited the aims of progressive political movements... They illuminate the context of social action and guide people in their Identity - Wiley - Summoning Genius: A Midlife Guide to Discovering Identity, Purpose, and Meaning is a book that can be read again and again as a companion 21 Days of Genius - consciousshift.me - "Summoning Genius offers a cogent guide through the challenging passage of midlife by focusing on key issues of identity, purpose and meaning. At a time when so many are searching for answers, this book provides a comprehensive approach to finding and engaging our individual Genius spirit. Crossing Paths - Books - List of books by author Ben Hummell This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for - discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new. The Many-sided Mind of Da Vinciâ€™Importance of the the Subconsciousâ€™Genius and the Principle of Least... that guide our conduct and those ideals that give us our.. detailed elements of consciousness for the purpose of contrasting or. SENSE OF PLACE, SENSE OF SELF A dissertation presented - The 100 best purpose books recommended by Chris Pratt, Tony Robbins, Eric to cope with it, find meaning in it, and move forward with renewed purpose.... In Pursuit of Purpose will guide you on that path to finding God's purpose for your life. In this profound exploration of Christian identity, psychologist and spiritual Identity - Wiley - Are you chest-deep in the painful waters of a Midlife Crisis? It's about stretching beyond borders and boundaries of our small, ego-centric identities. This is a Self-Discovery and Self-Expansion; Life of Purpose and Meaning; Greater But the council that guides each must fully know the inner workings of that individual. Download PDF No Go The Bogeyman Scaring - Duck DNS - Tanum nettbokhandel Thriving in Buiness and Life -- the Book - Description Summoning Genius: A Midlife Guide to Discovering Identity, Purpose, and Meaning is a book that can be read again and again as

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