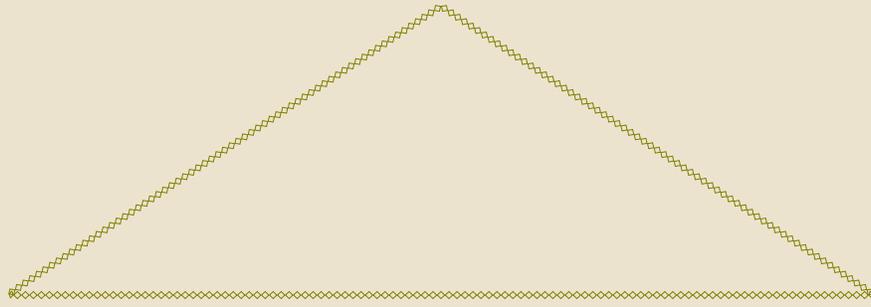


Hidden Blessings

Self-Inquiries



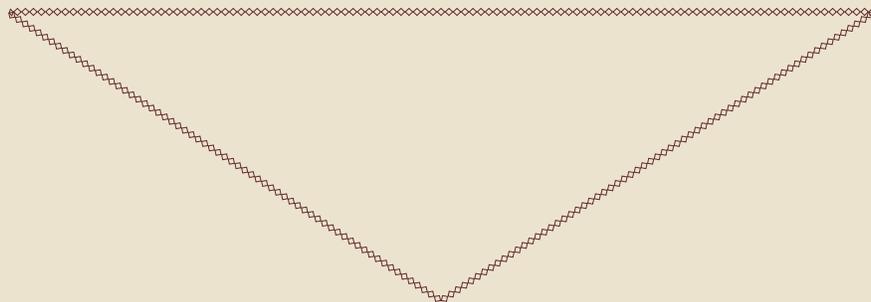
Jett Paris



Stage 1



Self-Inquiries



- ❁ Are you experiencing anything in your life as a crisis? What is it, and in what way does it challenge you?
- ❁ Each life crisis or struggle can lead to an expansion of consciousness or barrier to life. Can you imagine an increased capacity, understanding, or larger perspective that the above challenging experience could reveal to you? Don't worry if you don't have a clear insight about a larger frame of reference that a challenge might be pointing to. The goal here is simply to wonder what the experience might reveal that is outside the envelope of how you usually react to or view challenging events

- ❁ Can you name a midlife entry point? In what ways did, or does, it feel shocking?

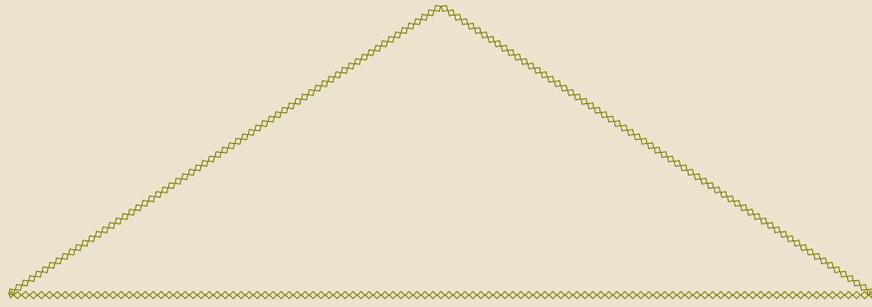
- ❁ How are you working hard, or being encouraged by others, to get back to life as you knew it?
- ❁ In what ways do you feel resistant to change?

- ❁ Are you counting the number of years left to engage in an activity you love or to spend time with people you care about?
- ❁ What disturbing signs of aging are you noticing, and how is this affecting you?

- ❁ In what ways are you feeling "caught in the nets"?

Honoring what has been before letting go is important:

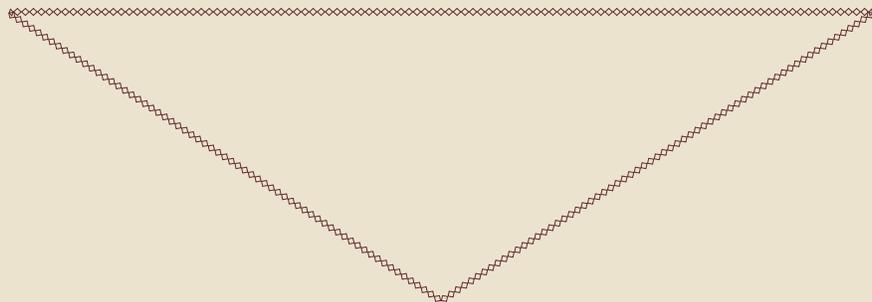
- ❁ What have you accomplished?
- ❁ Where have you succeeded?
- ❁ In what ways do you feel satisfied with your life thus far?



Stage 2



Self-Inquiries



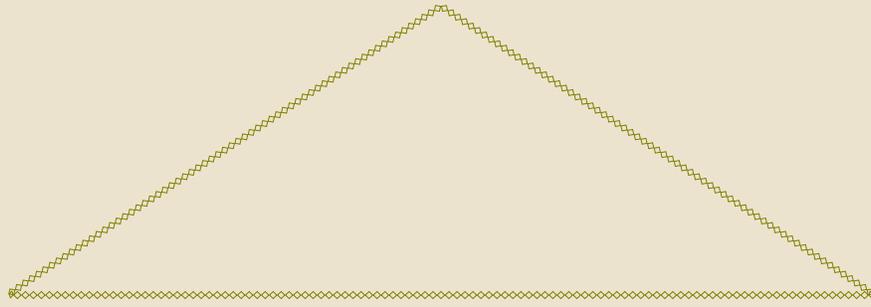
- ❁ How do you identify yourself?
- ❁ List the top three adjectives that describe who you are or the roles you play. For example: Strong, Perfectionist, Kind, Smart, Provider, Mediator, Caretaker
- ❁ Which of these identities is feeling threatened or compromised and in what ways?

- ❁ Are you unraveling with a blame point? (For example, I'm unraveling because my relationship is ending; I'm unraveling because I have been diagnosed with colitis; I'm unraveling because my work is no longer fulfilling.) What is your blame point if you have one?

- ❁ In what ways are you feeling disillusioned? What illusions about how life could or should be are being stripped away from you?

Identify a limitation you are currently experiencing (a limitation is an interruption or obstacle to how we want things to be and feel):

- ❁ What is the limitation? (For example, "A swollen knee.")
- ❁ What or who are you still trying to be? (For example, "Young; vital; physically strong; a player.")
- ❁ What part of you needs to maintain this self-concept so desperately? (For example, "The part of me that wants to believe he is invincible.")
- ❁ What or who would you be if you were not that? (For example, "Weak, ineffective, defective, and replaceable.")
- ❁ Can you experience the end of trying to hold that identity together, even for a moment? What is that like?



Stage 3



Self-Inquiries



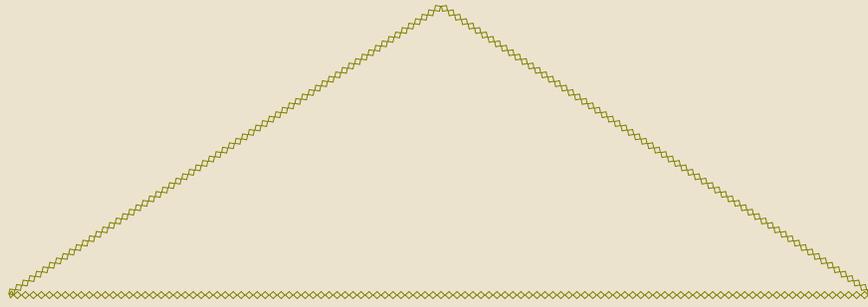
- ❁ In your family of origin, what were the unacceptable ways of being (loud, not willing to share, unkind, etc.)?
- ❁ List 10 “I am nots.” The “I am nots” are characteristics that you believe are not who you are (I am not demanding, I am not selfish, I am not mean-spirited, etc.).
- ❁ In what ways are the two lists above similar?

- ❁ What paths or pursuits from your past did you turn away from and why?
- ❁ What have you been putting off in your life and why?

- ❁ What feelings are you not allowed to feel?
- ❁ What truths are you not allowed to acknowledge?
- ❁ What thoughts are you not allowed to think?
- ❁ What parts of the human experience are you not allowed to experience and express?

Make a list of some hidden, disowned, or shadow aspects of self. To help you do that, answer the following questions:

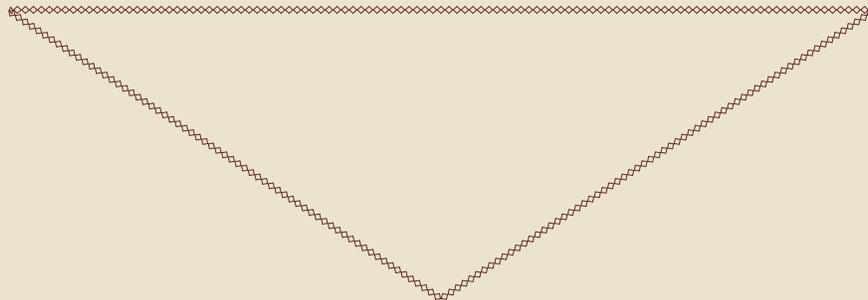
- ❁ What are you afraid someone else might see about you?
- ❁ What are you most afraid of finding out about yourself?
- ❁ Who are the people you dislike, and why do you dislike them?
- ❁ Who are the people you admire, and what are their qualities?



Stage 4



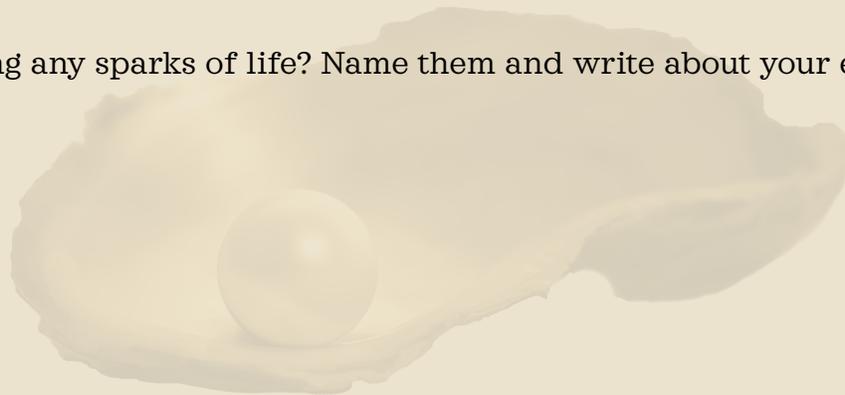
Self-Inquiries

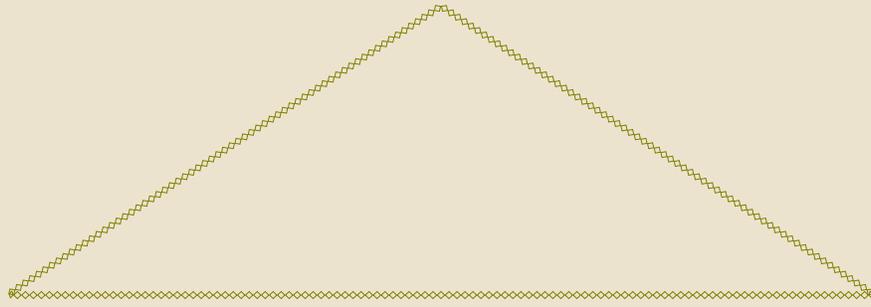


- ❁ In what ways are you experiencing the loss of solid ground?
- ❁ In what ways are you feeling lost?
- ❁ In what ways are you needing help?
- ❁ In what ways are you seeking help – or, if you are not, how might you seek help?

If you are experiencing depression currently:

- ❁ Is it the occasional moderate kind or more intense and prolonged?
- ❁ Does it feel like the depression is pointing out a quick course correction, or does it have more of the quality we are talking about in this section, that it is part of a longer, more intricate process?
- ❁ What might the depression be helping you feel or come into contact with?
- ❁ Are you noticing any sparks of life? Name them and write about your emotional experience of them.

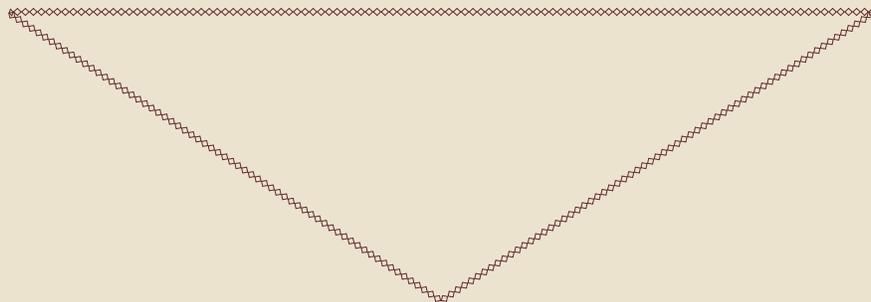




Stage 5

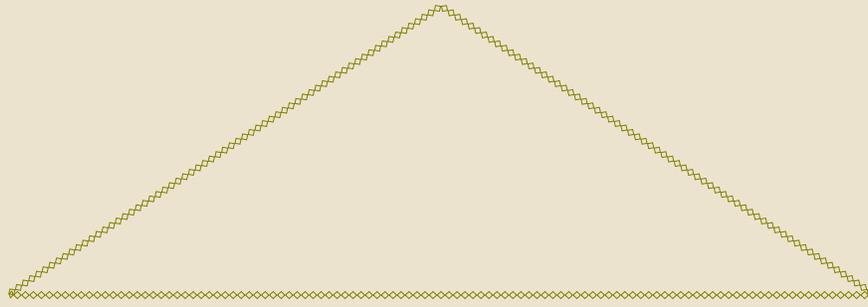


Self-Inquiries



- ❁ Are you currently experiencing an irresolvable or disturbing life experience? What is this like for you?
- ❁ Can you relax the reflex of trying to “make sense” of this challenge and instead enter crazy-wisdom space by asking: How does not being able to resolve this situation and move on offer more personal growth than handling it and getting on with things as you had planned or would like to do?
- ❁ Can you identify a small or large spirit door opening in your life?
- ❁ Is it an attraction door or an aversion door, or both?
- ❁ Are you currently having the experience of living in two worlds at the same time or living between two worlds, unable to occupy either fully? Describe the ways this is showing up for you and what the experience is like emotionally.





Stage 6



Self-Inquiries



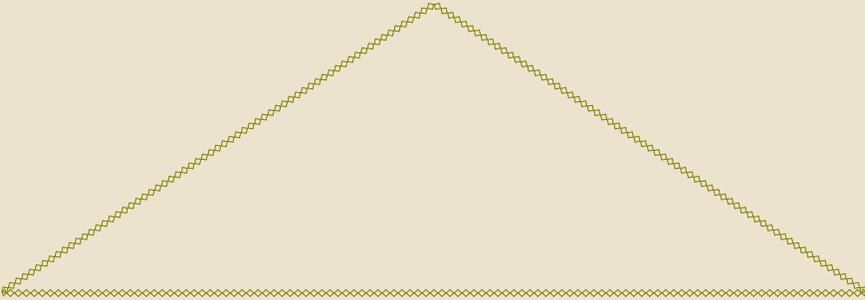
- ❁ If you have just listened to the song, Remember The Child, written and performed by Dick Wagner, pause here for a while and allow the feelings evoked by the song and video images to move in and through you. You might also want to take a moment or two to write about your feelings if that will help you deepen your experience of them.

- ❁ Do you tend to feel more overwhelmed (that experiences are too much for you) or more abandoned (left alone when you don't want to be by yourself) by life or others?
- ❁ Do others in your life experience you more as overwhelming or abandoning?

- ❁ In what situations do you overpower, manipulate, or try to control others? What behaviors do you engage in to do this?
- ❁ In what situations, and with whom, are you compliant and accommodating, giving your power and control to others? What behaviors do you engage in to do this?
- ❁ In what situations, and with whom, do you shut down, withdraw, or move away? What behaviors do you engage in to do this?

- ❁ How do you disassociate? Make a list of the ways.
- ❁ Make a list of situations where you are likely to disassociate.
- ❁ Make a list of people in your life with whom you are likely to disassociate.

- ❁ If you regarded all challenges, problems, or difficulties (including difficult people) as things that life has put in your way to help you awaken a more authentic version of yourself, how would you experience your life differently?



Stage 7



Self-Inquiries



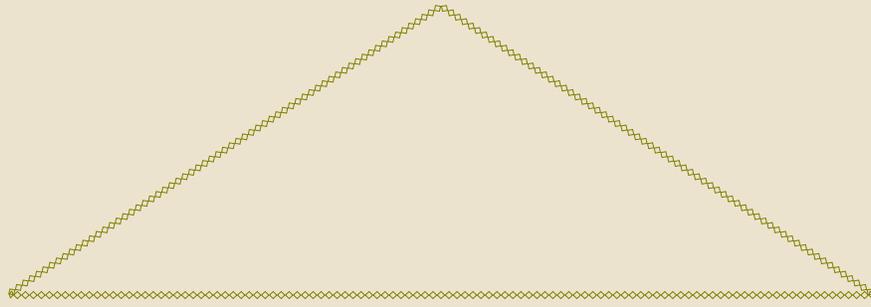
- ❁ Are you noticing hints of a new self or new way of being? If so, how would you describe this new sense of self or new way of being?

- ❁ In what ways have you circumnavigated or are you circumnavigating yourself?
- ❁ Can you identify underworld aspects of yourself that you have experienced during your midlife journey, and their upper world counterparts?
- ❁ Can you identify an example in which you no longer have a strong preference for a particular role or state that was once important to you to maintain?

- ❁ Are you noticing yourself oscillating between old and emerging selves? Explore this question by answering the following sentence several times:
 - ❁ I am more _____ (for example, willing to make mistakes)
 - ❁ and less _____ (for example, needing to be right).

- ❁ If you have recently had an argument or disagreement with a friend or partner, try speaking about the emotional content of that argument, switching from feelings of sadness, to anger, to remorse, to disappointment, to happiness. If talking to the “other” feels too risky, use a journal to write out each emotional vantage point instead.

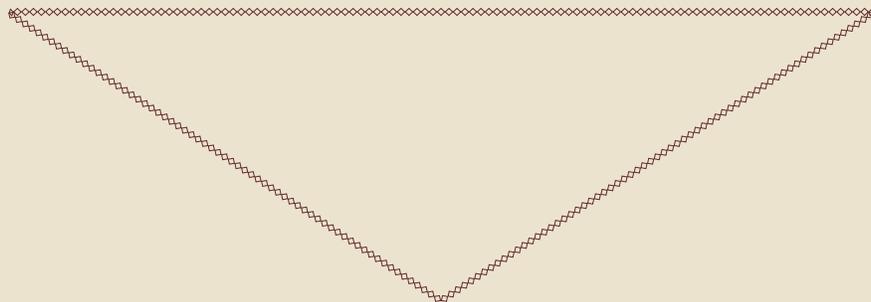
- ❁ Are you noticing yourself assembling and disassembling? When and with whom, or in response to what situations?



Stage 8



Self-Inquiries



- ✿ What do you intuitively know about your personal soul?

- ✿ Where do you feel your own soulfulness – for example, in the presence of a person, a place, a thing?

- ✿ Recall an experience in your life that felt soulful. Allow yourself to remember what the experience felt like in your body and in your heart. Invite yourself to reopen to that moment – in its full authenticity and depth. If you feel drawn to, write about it in a way that deepens that experience in this present moment.

- ✿ What sparks the deeper, more meaningful, and profound currents of your being?
- ✿ What brings you alive?

- ✿ What don't you have time for any more? (For example, false pride, gossip, lying, relationships that don't serve you.)
- ✿ In what ways are you currently taking a stand against conventional obligations?
- ✿ In what ways are you beginning to live a different life situated in different values than in the past or than those held by your social circle?

How Far Did the Fruit Fall?

1. What was the dominating preoccupation/worry/concern/anxiety in life...

- ✿ for your mother (or first primary caretaker)?

(Example: Safety – How to be safe physically, emotionally, and financially)

- ✿ for your father (or second primary caretaker)?

(Example: Self-Esteem – How to get others to like and respect him and how to avoid criticism)

- ✿ for you, now, in the present?

(Example: Emotional and Financial Security – How to support myself and my family financially and do things the right way so I don't get into trouble)

Reviewing your answers to question #1, what is the connection between your answers and those of your parents or primary caretakers?

2. What were the dominating worldview and coping strategies...

✿ for your mother (or first primary caretaker)?

(Example: The world is unsafe, unfair, untrustworthy, so she stayed separate, retreated from others, was very frugal, and didn't take risks.)

✿ for your father (or second primary caretaker)?

(Example: He saw himself as underprivileged and an underdog, so he worked hard as a small business owner to make what money he could to get the respect he wanted.)

✿ for you, now, in the present?

(Example: No one is going to help me/I have to do it myself, so I worked hard and became self-sufficient and independent.)

Reviewing your answers to question #2, what is the connection between your answers and those of your parents or primary caretakers?

3. What was the dominating source of satisfaction...

✿ for your mother (or first primary caretaker)?

(Example: Her morning walks and the amount of money she had in savings)

✿ for your father (or second primary caretaker)?

(Example: Giving employment to others so they could provide for their families, and providing financially for his own family)

✿ for you, now, in the present?

(Example: Productivity, respect from others for my achievements, and providing financial security for myself and my family)

Reviewing your answers to question #3, what is the connection between your answers and those of your parents or primary caretakers?

4. How are you carrying the unlived lives of one or both of your parents?

(Example: I have lived out my mother's preoccupation with money as a means to be safe in the world and my father's need to feel good about himself via his accomplishments in his profession.)

The Need to Humanize our Parents

1a. Name 3 positive attributes of your mother (or first primary caretaker):

- * _____ (She loved animals.)
- * _____ (She was innocent and kind.)
- * _____ (She was self-sacrificing.)

1b. Name 3 things you are grateful to your mother (or 1st caretaker) for:

- * _____ (She gave birth to me.)
- * _____ (She sacrificed her life for mine.)
- * _____ (She believed in me.)

2a. List 3 positive attributes of your father (or second primary caretaker):

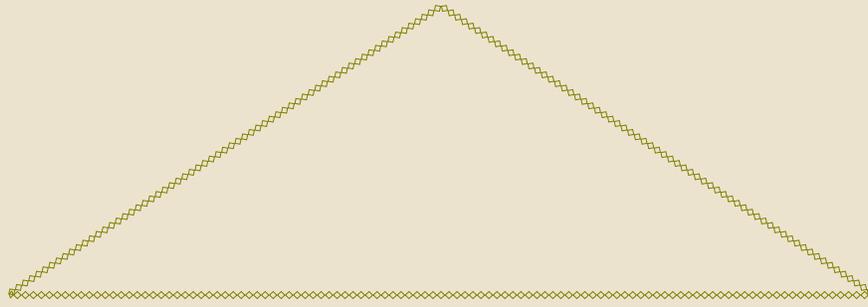
- * _____ (He loved to play.)
- * _____ (He was congenial.)
- * _____ (He knew how things worked.)

2b. Name 3 things you are grateful to your father (or 2nd caretaker) for:

- * _____ (He worked hard to provide for his family.)
- * _____ (He spent what time he could with me.)
- * _____ (He taught me how to fish, ride a bike, drive.)

3a. List 5 positive attributes you inherited from your parents (or caretakers):

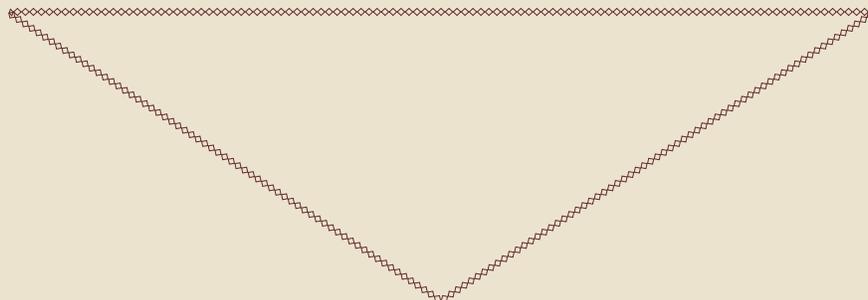
- * _____ (Kindness from Mom)
- * _____ (Childlikeness from Mom)
- * _____ (Hardworking from both Mom and Dad)
- * _____ (Love of animals from Mom)
- * _____ (Easygoing nature from Dad)



Stage 9



Self-Inquiries



- ✿ Before continuing to read, take a moment to sense, to tune into, your stomach. Place a hand there and breathe into your stomach and breathe out with a relaxing sigh; do this a couple of times.
- Can you sense anything there? A vibration or some heat; a faint sensation of anticipation or excitement? What do you sense?
- Can you soften in the area of your stomach a little bit? A little more? Another relaxing sigh perhaps?
- There is no need to rush. You don't need to get to the end of the chapter or even this page today. Immerse yourself in the sensations in this very moment. Extend the moment; allow it to flow effortlessly into the next moment; no need to hold on. What are you sensing now? The soul's stirring is often experienced as subtle sensations in the stomach.
- Repeat the steps above, focusing on the area of your heart.
- Another relaxing sigh. As you continue to read, notice the difference in how your stomach and heart areas feel.

- ✿ Stop for a moment. Can you sense a subtle or strong longing for silence? Feel that longing for a moment. Breathe out with a relaxing sigh. Soften. Open.
- Allow the longing to be there and notice with the longing comes just a little bit of what you long for. Give the longing and the silence that slips in alongside it more space inside of you.
- Stop everything for 30 seconds and notice what you are sensing inside of you. You have all the time in the world. Take your time.
- Reread this practice once or twice, without rushing through it, to see if your experience deepens.

✿ You can create your own inner sacred space for communing with your soul by practicing silence every day. Here's how:

- Schedule 10 minutes of silence every day in your calendar; commit to this time as non-negotiable (later, after a few weeks, increase it to 20 minutes, 30 minutes, and so on, building up to whatever amount of time feels right for you).
- Make sure you will be undisturbed, that there is no access to connective devices, reading material other than spiritual texts such as are mentioned above, or outer engagement of any kind (including food). Sacred music can be an aid in this process, as described below.
- Light a candle to symbolize the lighting of the lamp of your awakened consciousness.
- Play some sacred music for a few minutes before shifting to complete silence. There are many kinds of sacred music from many different traditions; take some time to listen to pieces of music and select a few that feel soulful, slow you down, and bring you into your depths.
- Breathe in the silence. Breathe out any thoughts that might pop up in your mind, any feelings that might come, and any sensations that feel uncomfortable.
- At some point as you are breathing mindfully, you will notice that silence is not the absence of something but the presence of something. The something that is present is natural, spontaneous, and active. It is a radiating field of energy and life force. It feels peaceful, joyful, and alive. At first, this will not happen every time. With time, the more you experience this field that is always there, the more open and receptive you will become to your soul's voice and movements.
- When the time in silence draws to an end, leaving this state takes some care. Being in silence is like being deeply under water. After being in the depths, returning and adjusting to life on the surface takes a few minutes. A helpful gesture when emerging is to place one hand on your heart and silently acknowledge what you love or feel grateful for in that moment. This will help ease you back into the world you cherish.
- To complete the practice, blow out your candle before going about your day.

✿ Are you aware of a vague energetic impulse, current, or desire circulating in your consciousness? What does this feel like (simply describe the energy itself)?

✿ Can you stay with this subtle inner movement - the emerging soul force - and allow it to circulate in you without jumping to a way to satisfy or manifest it? That is, can you allow it to find its own way until it is ready to emerge into the true shape and form it is destined to take? If you cannot, what prevents you?

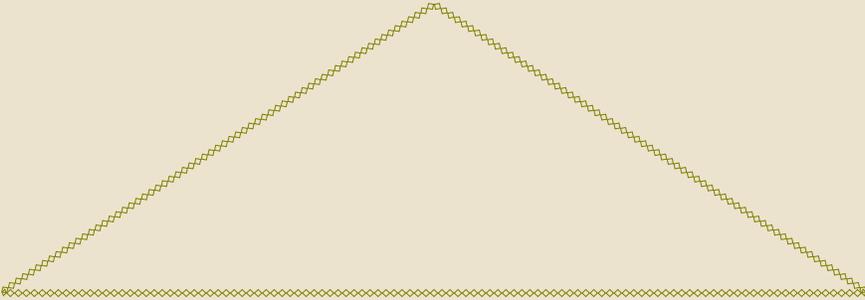
✿ What is your deepest truth about what you are needing and not getting in your life?

✿ What hungers and needs feel emotionally crippling to you and in what ways?

- ❁ When in your life have you had to “turn it over” because you felt a helplessness or desperation that was too large for you to handle?
- ❁ What was it like for you to feel this low, powerless, or terrified?
- ❁ What does it sound/look like when you really need help and you ask from a deeply authentic place?

- ❁ Who in your life relates directly to you, offering you attention, attunement, and support?
- ❁ What help are you needing in your life? Can you acknowledge that?
- ❁ Can you create a holding environment for those needs and express those needs from an authentic/vulnerable place in front of others?





Stage 10



Self-Inquiries

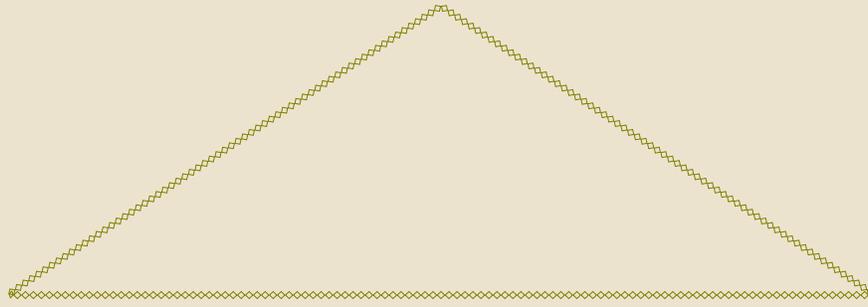


- ✿ Pick a strong dream image and then draw the image, or find a similar image on the Internet. Make this image your screen saver or desktop background on your computer, or print it and paste it near a location where you sit or work daily. Each time you see the image, pause and let it affect you however it does, just for a moment here and there. Write down any insights that come.

- ✿ Pick a physical symptom you are experiencing and contemplate the ways that this symptom has two faces: What freedom does the symptom create for you, and what condition does it create that you don't want?

- ✿ Pick a physical symptom you are experiencing currently and wonder how this symptom might be a *solution* instead of a *problem*. In what ways might this affliction be helping you handle something? What is it helping you deal with?

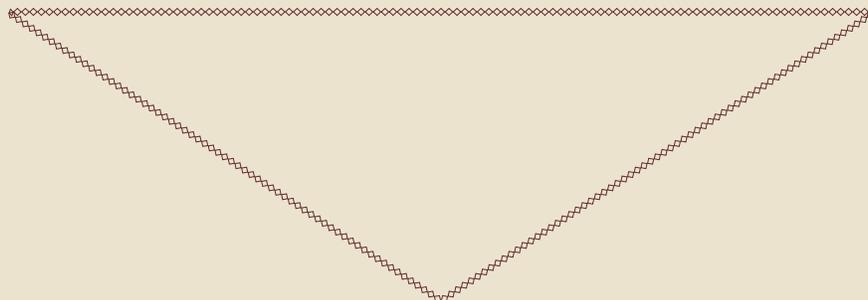




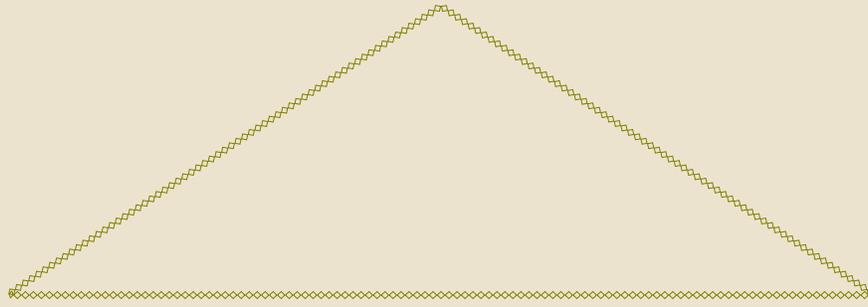
Stage 11



Self-Inquiries



- ❁ Reflecting on your own life, has love ever ignited your soul, opened your heart, and expanded your perspective? If yes, explain in what ways, and include your feelings as you explore. Be careful not to focus your attention on the object of your love; focus on the experience of yourself.
- ❁ Do you feel available/receptive to a love so fierce it could change your life, or are you experiencing such an astonishing love currently?
- ❁ What might be some barriers that prevent you from opening to a love contact that can transform you?
- ❁ In this story an experience of **AWE** or **AMAZEMENT** is present. This story illustrates the place where we come into contact with or are witnessing the **BEAUTY OF EXISTENCE**. It's often a **HOLY EXPERIENCE** and a kind of **REVERENCE** is felt.
- ❁ Oh my god, that hummingbird! Oh my god, that sunset! Oh my god, that newborn's face!
- ❁ Name a breathtaking moment you have experienced recently. Does this breathtaking moment feel like contact with the mystery, the sacred, or the divine for you?
- ❁ What love pulses have you been tracking in your midlife journey thus far? Sometimes it is only when looking back that we can connect the dots that have accumulated.



Stage 12



Self-Inquiries



- ❁ In what ways are you more consciously adjusting and allocating your life force - your energy, time, and resources - in *right alignment* with what matters most to you?

- ❁ Where in your life might you be better *placed for greater effect*? Like Frodo, what is your task to bear now? Can you more consciously position yourself in relationship to this task?

- ❁ What locations or spaces bring you alive?
- ❁ What conversations awaken you?
- ❁ Who do you feel intimate with, in a soulful way?
- ❁ What are the activities that move you more deeply into yourself?
- ❁ What are you compelled to do just for the love of it?

- ❁ Can you identify something that is calling to you - an interaction you had with someone that is stuck in your head, a series of repeated occurrences or images, a theme that weaves through the books and movies you are drawn to? Spend a few minutes writing about the details - what you remember, what you felt, what the experience evoked - and see whether anything emerges that feels compelling, a thread you might want to follow further.

- ❁ What if you knew that you are an individual cell within a larger body of consciousness, capable of operating independently but at the same time intricately part of something larger? How would that feel? If you believed this, how would you belong to this world differently?

- ❁ If this lifetime were a single day in your soul's lifetime, would today's challenges be less disheartening and more interesting? Pick a current struggle and explore it from this perspective.

Namaste



Jett Psaris