

Is that all there is? (Song title, sung by Peggy Lee).

The Quest...is the search for meaning for our lives. At a deep level we know—particularly as the years go by—that something is missing—we crave wholeness, completeness and individuation. We experience an “awakening to this deep need”. Some of us may embrace this time of awakening. It is the stimulus for us to “become”...to self-actualize.

Jung defined this point in life (usually about mid-life, but for some it occurs much sooner) as a time of strong spiritual concerns. As the biological orientation toward procreation fades, as a career and /or family-building no longer consumes us, as the ego becomes more firmly established, the psyche turns toward concerns about the meaning of life. And, it is true that with aging bodies we glimpse our mortality. With death in the field of vision, comes a clarifying of our purpose, our relationships, our life-path. We want our lives to count for something.

Interestingly, some who are confronting this confusing transition-time-of-life experience a loss of identity, a broken marriage, anxiety, depression, boredom, hopelessness, emptiness. They ask, “Is that all there is?” Some enter this period of life through a sudden dramatic crisis. Others simply notice subtle shifts in their feelings and needs, their choices, their goals. Others sleepwalk. For some, the deepest inner strivings of the soul press for expression, even if that expression threatens a well-structured world and sense of identity. Can one navigate through this inner confusion and upheaval? Yes!

**At the heart of the transition is the letting go of who we are in order to become who we are supposed to be. We tune in to our intuitive nature; we listen for guidance. We seek. We face our courage issues. We transform. We become....like the butterfly ...
...emergent...open to change...open to new opportunities. This awakening time provides a unique opportunity for growth and change. We have the opportunity to integrate the knowledge gained during this transition to deeply enrich the next segments of our lives. We become empowered.**

This is a time when the un-lived parts of the self come to the forefront. It is a time when we know that we are more than the mask we show to others. The poet Robert Bly notes that we spend half our lives putting parts of ourselves into the shadow and the other half trying to take them out again. It is a time when “our intuitive knowing” is keen. (Lights On!)

Much has been written about the spiritual and psychological journey of self-actualization: Maslow’s Theory, for example. Joseph Campbell has popularized the notion of the Hero’s Journey—including the call to adventure, separation, questing and a return—always returning transformed. Similar archetypal examples of this awakening and transformation exist in stories from the Navajo, and in lessons from Tao; this is repeated in cultures (universally).

Awakening at Midlife, by Kathleen Brehony, Ph.D. is an important “read” for one’s journey. This book is the primary source for this article. I highly recommend it!

**Lights On! is about path-finding—
(mid-life, before and after!)
Call 716-731-2993**

For your New Year’s Contemplation:

May the doors that need to be shut be closed behind you, and may the doors that need to be opened, per your readiness for new opportunities, be opened to you. *Become consciously aware*—Live your Life with Purpose, Integrity, and Intention.