

yourself to invite and play with the creative Muse by trying new forms of expression—crafts, art or creative writing. When we tap this quality of energy within, we connect with the life force in us, and doing so keeps us feeling fully alive and even youthful.

Relationship practices: sharing, supporting, conversing, community-making through circles and various forms of group dialogue, leading, mentoring, nurturing intimacy and closeness with loved ones, communicating openly and sincerely, and so on.

At this time when the majority of our interactions occur through the phone or via e-mail, we need to make time for direct, human contact to nurture our friendships and relationships. Remaining in community with others is essential to keeping ourselves alive individually and collectively. Quite simply, our relationships provide essential meaning to our life, prevent us from becoming alienated from others and even help us to maintain our vitality. Moreover, our relationships help us to keep our hearts open which is essential to our continuity on Earth. As the eco-philosopher Joanna Macy said, “The closing of our hearts and minds is an even greater threat than global warming.”

Caring practices: embodying altruism in action, tapping generativity within, serving, giving, volunteering, undertaking philanthropic and humanistic endeavors of various types, providing support.

You have read many examples of different ways of giving and caring throughout this book. As previously stated, it is important that you follow the inner guidance of your heart as you consider engaging in various caring practices. You may also wish to seek information through friends, websites and other sources before deciding when and if you are to get involved in a particular cause. It is important to make a difference in a way that works best for you, according to your inner and outer resources. And remember that even just a sincere, loving smile and caring words offered at a particular time can make a difference in someone’s life.

Sustainability practices: recycling, purchasing fair-trade and organic products, minimizing your energy consumption, social and environmentally responsible investments, developing habits that reduce your ecological footprint and support the preservation of the natural world.

Countless organizations now offer information about what we can do to modify our lifestyle in order to live in a sustainable way. Some of these organizations are listed in the resources section. Living sustainably is our generational responsibility during this critical period on our planet. While we rise to the challenges, as overwhelming as they are, and make important changes, we can feel more at peace with ourselves knowing that we are doing our part for the future of our children and for the generations to come.

Moral excellence practices: displaying character strengths such as responsibility, “doing the right thing”—without righteousness, humility, compassion, fairness, forgiveness, courage, dignity, honor, respect, truthfulness, patience, equanimity, joy, and so on.

These are attitudes as well as virtues and character strengths that we can practice to feel more serene and to give our best as our gift to the world. During the wisdom years particularly, we can contribute equanimity as a counterweight to the reactivity that characterizes our present fear-driven culture. A concept often used in Buddhist philosophy, equanimity is a quality of energy that fosters temperance and a wisdom that can serve to inform our actions and intentions. This inner dynamic also helps us to embrace the difficult moments of life without being disrupted from our connectedness with the core of our being. Whether we are in midlife or early retirement, equanimity helps us to be anchored by our most honorable values and character strengths when facing challenges or adversity.

A few last words . . .

As you live forward from here on, may you see midlife and beyond as a source of fresh new beginnings. This freshness can arise “in the moment,” each time you choose to create something new or respond differently to a recurring situation. The spirit of renewal is further infused in your life when you tap wholeheartedly the opportunities you discover in the course of your personal evolution. And your vitality is enhanced when you embrace, in your own way, the practices that bring into daily reality the values and ideals you cherish: excellence, beauty, love, justice, truth, peace, community, and generativity, to name a few.

Remember that whether you are committed to improving your health,

overcoming adversity at work or taking on a philanthropic project, your focused intention and sincere engagement will help you achieve what you desire. And when you are purposefully engaged in a relationship, a project or an endeavor that is close to your heart, you do *live forward* because of the inspired momentum generated by the flow of love circulating through you.

As a generation, in this century, we now see that the future over the horizon is different than the one we dreamed of in the sixties or seventies. Most of us have grown in maturity, compassion and appreciation for the many paradoxes and dilemmas in our present culture and in our world. Grasping the sobering reality that the resources of the Earth are *finite*, we know that the next decades will be replete with challenges. But what is *not finite* is the resourcefulness and resilience of the human spirit that is the essence of who we are. And what is *not finite* is the extraordinary, creative power of our mind when used in loving synergy with the leading power of our heart. This is the miraculous, *infinite* power that has enabled, for example, a mother to lift a car to save her child. Each one of us can access more of this infinite resourcefulness as we keep lifting ourselves into the realm of consciousness where all possibilities exist.

More and more, in spite of our present social, economic and global ecological crises, we must hold our vision of a new world and harness these inner resources to weather the tumultuous sea ahead. In the spirit of humility, we can feel empowered by the visionary leaders of our past as we listen inward and to one another for answers to the difficult questions of our times. Let us rise to the honor of being the ancestors of the Future; let us do so for the sake of the beauty and innocence of our children, for the preservation of hope in the eyes of *their* children, for the precious magnificence of the natural world, and for every one of us now and into the Future.