



50+Living our best lives now and in the future!

A Life's Work

Author of several books, including bestselling



Meeting the Shadow, Dr. Connie Zweig's recently released book, *The Inner Work of Age: Shifting from Role to Soul*, is one she wrote to fill a gap in the current literature on aging. "As I approached my late sixties and inched my

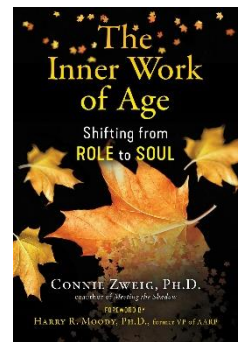
way toward seventy, I looked for books about how the unconscious mind affects the aging process. But I couldn't find any. I hadn't planned to write another book, but then I found research out of Yale University about how unconscious internalized ageism—which I now call "the inner ageist"—affects our physical, emotional, cognitive, and brain health as we age. In fact, our unconscious fears and beliefs about age actually shape how we age. I knew then that I had another contribution to make."

Reframing Aging

In an August 13, 2021 article for *Psychology Today*, ["Reframing Aging from Decline to a Spiritual Journey."](#) Zweig argues that "we need, as a culture and as individuals, to reframe aging from decline

and uselessness to an unprecedented stage of life full of possibilities." However, she notes, millions of people report "feeling disoriented, marginalized, invisible, and unimportant. They are aging without a map."

Zweig's latest book, *The Inner Work of Age*, serves as a map for journeying into unfamiliar territory. "It's about how to shift our identities from doing, from the roles in work and family to our deeper spiritual nature, and in this way become authentically who we really are. For people who want to extend their development alongside their extended longevity; for people who want to heal emotionally; for people who want to find a spiritual practice for this stage of life, my guidance is there for you."



A Personal Journey from Role to Soul

At one time, Zweig thought she'd had four separate careers. But upon reflection, she realized that each "shared a hidden mission: to transmit information about consciousness." In her 20's she "learned meditation and taught about 1,000 people how to meditate;" this experience led her "to a life of spiritual practice, which continues now 50 years

later.” Eventually, she met a woman who became her writing mentor. Zweig then developed a career as a journalist writing for newspapers and magazines. Her next mentor was a book publisher who taught her the business. She served as the executive editor for ten years. During this time, she began to study Carl Jung and depth psychology, exploring the unconscious. “I created a series of anthologies for the publishing house, including my own: *To be a Woman* and *Meeting the Shadow*. When my boss sold the business, I decided to go to grad school to study depth psychology and eventually opened a private practice.”

“I worked in private practice for more than 30 years and focused on helping people attune to their unconscious minds or shadows. The shadow has a bad rep containing ‘negative’ feelings and behaviors—anger, jealousy, laziness, addiction. But, when we are children, any thoughts, feelings, fantasies, or talents can be seen as unacceptable, shamed, and therefore banished into the unconscious shadow. So, if a parent values work and disapproves of a child’s artistic or musical talent, that too remains unexpressed in the shadow. I found it deeply rewarding to guide people where they feared to tread—into the dark recesses of their minds—to uncover lost feelings, dreams, and aspirations and to reclaim them now.”

Dr. Zweig has retired from private practice. However, her life’s work continues. She now teaches Elders how to shift from role to soul.

Becoming An Elder: An Intentional Process

As part of her ongoing work and journey, Zweig became a certified “sage-ing” leader. “When I was feeling disoriented about age in my late sixties, I found Sage-ing International, a community of Elders founded by Rabbi Zalman Schacter-Shalomi. It’s a non-denominational community that trains people to become sages or Elders in a beautiful one-year program, which inspired me to write *The Inner Work of Age*.”

“I see late-life as a rite of passage—letting go, stepping into the unknown, and emerging renewed as an Elder. Although we become seniors with a Medicare birthday, we do not automatically become Elders. This is an intentional process that requires the tools of inner work from psychology and contemplative traditions. But our culture does not offer this rite of passage, so my new book steps into that gap to provide guidance, practices, and a map to find the treasures of late life.”



Becoming a Climate Reality Leader

“I trained with Al Gore in the 1980s when I realized the reality of the climate crisis. Our Boomer generation has a lot of responsibility, as we were the first to know how our carbon emissions were destroying the environment. Then I trained with Citizens Climate Lobby and went to Congress to lobby for climate action. As we recently learned from the new UN report, our national and global actions have not done nearly enough to stave off two degrees of warming.” In her most recent book, Zweig discusses “the connection between our individual mortality awareness and this collective mortality awareness.”



For Relaxation

“We’ve traveled to 100 countries, but I think those days are behind us now. We downsized and are now closer to the grandkids. We’re swimming, kayaking, and walking by the harbor.”

Advice

“I really transmitted the knowledge of this lifetime in my new book – *The Inner Work of Age*.”

Ageism is Detrimental to Our Health

A Yale University [study](#) led by Becca Levy suggested that older people with more positive views of aging lived 7.5 years longer than those with less positive views.

Drawing on Levy's work, a global [study](#) published in 2020 revealed that the "detrimental impact of ageism on older persons' health has been occurring simultaneously at the structural and individual level in five continents."

One World, Different Realities

Pepper Winn, featured in our [June 2021 newsletter](#), just returned from another inter-continental trip. This time, Pepper and her husband, Chris, traveled to Africa and visited Kenya and Zanzibar.



Observations from Kenya

- At some animal reserves, ivory poachers are less of a concern than meat poachers. "A poached giraffe is a quarter of the price of other meat at a butcher shop."



- "A local tribe we visited still survives mainly on a meal of milk and blood."
- Gig workers who have lost jobs during COVID received no unemployment or food stamps.
- "Many people are still afraid of Covid shots, and availability is very limited."

- "The kids just went back to school for the first time since the pandemic started. The wealthy kids, mostly white or Indian, had some virtual learning options but not the vast majority."
- "Kenya takes their environment very seriously. Plastic bottles, straws, and bags do not exist."

Observations from Zanzibar

- "I rarely saw any masks, even in the most crowded areas."
- "Kids have stayed in school during the pandemic." These children are growing up in a country with malaria, starvation, and Dengue Fever.
- "My favorite experience was a private cooking class where we went to the market, bought the food, and cooked on charcoal burners at the village. The food was amazing and the best of the entire trip!"

Take-Aways

- "Most things are similar to other countries we have visited." During an earlier visit to Nicaragua, people hunted monkeys for food when there was an economic downturn.
- "At the end of the day, people are generally the same."
- "We are so fortunate to have been born where we are—yet we still complain so much when we have everything."

"Because we all share this planet earth, we have to learn to live in harmony and peace with each other and with nature. This is not just a dream, but a necessity."—The 14th Dalai Lama

“Aging itself isn’t the problem. It’s the images that we hold about it, our cultural expectations, that cause our problems.” –[Zalman Schachter-Shalomi](#)

Instant Shakespeare Company to Live-Stream Play on YouTube

Allen Huffstutter

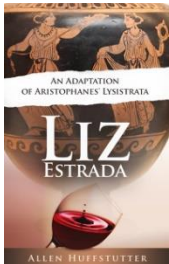


“I published a play, *Liz Estrada* – *An Adaptation of Aristophanes’ Lysistrata*, and the New York-based Instant Shakespeare Company (ISC) is going to do a reading of the play that will be

live-streamed on YouTube. ISC has been performing live readings, primarily of the Bard’s works, for over 20 years. They perform without costumes or sets, and they have adapted quite well to a Zoom-meeting format.



Liz Estrada is a retelling of Aristophanes’ 2,400-year-old ribald comedy that chronicles the efforts of a group of uppity women who set out to change to course of history in the middle of the 20- year Peloponnesian War by withholding sex. *Liz Estrada* carries the same theme but is now set in Washington DC in the era of Trump.



Like the original play, *Liz Estrada* contains adult themes and language.

ISC’s reading will take place on September 30th at 4:30 PST. Here is a link to the live-stream performance: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81757468237?>

In April, Allen’s recent novel, *Key Man*, was released. We highlighted Allen’s newest book in the [June 2021 newsletter](#).

Regular Stretching: No Longer Optional After Fifty

If your “younger self” was like mine, skipping what seemed like that unnecessary time to stretch before and after exercising was easy to justify: “I don’t have time to stretch, and I don’t really need to do it anyway.” But for those of us who are now over fifty (or well beyond fifty, like me), regular stretching is no longer an [option](#)—it’s a necessity. Good stretching routines can help reduce injuries that are more likely to occur with age. Regular stretching can also [decrease pain](#) and improve flexibility and balance.



Before working out, [warm-up exercises](#) can help prepare our muscles for activity. When our muscles are warm after workouts, that may be the [best time](#) to stretch all our major muscle groups—doing this at least two-three times per week.

A [WebMD](#) article noted that some discomfort while stretching is normal, but pain is not. Injuries can occur when stretching. It is important not to over-stretch.

Living our best lives now and in the future involves taking good care of ourselves.

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