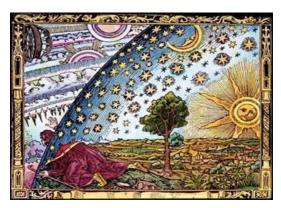
Casual Alchemy 2021

As Creative Aging

We are being lived by powers we pretend to understand. W. H. Auden



SYMPTOMS of Transition:

There's been a SHIFT. an Imbalance In Sleep, Friends, memory, hearing, seeing Interests, Health, Strength, Responsibility, Centrality, Visibility, Standing.

You are Out of adjustment, There's Unexpected Turbulence. Things May have Shifted during Flight Listen Carefully as Menu has changed Third Eye is blinking Top Chakra is opening

"Who am I when I am no longer doing, no longer productive, no longer indispensable to so many others? No longer wearing the masks? Where does my attention go? Am I shedding objects, clothes, books, body? Am I grumpy, angry, annoyed, foggy, sad?"

WHY do this? We Must.

"Search for the entwined and dramatic life of matter."

Mircea Eliade

The Five Remembrances

- 1. I am subject to aging. no way to avoid aging.
- 2. I am subject to ill health. no way to avoid illness.
- 3. I am going to die. no way to avoid death
- 4. Everyone/everything I love will change, and be separated from me.
- 5. Only true possessions are my actions, I cannot escape their consequences. not suppress knowledge of our frailty and impermanence. fears that lie in the depths of our consciousness, to be free of these fears invite the Remembrances into our consciousness and stop seeing them as enemies. Thich Nhat Hanh, Understanding Our Mind

Casual Alchemy is about finding new ways to be with the Incessant Friction of Living;

increasing sensitivity to the connectedness of everything; kindling access to the Creative Unconscious.

WHAT TO DO? There's been a loss, yes, but what's opened up, awakened? There's a Spiritual Hunger. It can be fed, adjusted. You Can Do It.

SIMPLE Steps:

Trust Curiosity. Trust the Body. Be with Children. Be with Nature. Distrust Discourse Make Things Take Small Risks Make Order Make Time for The Holy.

Creativity is not about "art" but about finding ways to keep making our lives meaningful. In what ways can we become regenerative for ourselves, our families and our community? Practicing creativity eases the difficulty of the many, tidal transitions of being human from birth through growing up, aging and the bumps of jobs, war, physical and spiritual wounds

Try this Four-Fold Approach Start Anywhere!

Be Quiet: patient. Remember meditative activity. It's Body a form of Mindfulness.

Be Active: intuitive. introspective, interior, expressive. Find things to make, fix, build, care for. dreams. This is private, Learn a new skill. Use your

Re Public:

Work and Play with others; Mentor,

Volunteer. Share a skill Keep a record. This is a you know.

Be Digestive:

engaging, explorative; reflective, incorporative; Revisit these other activities. How did they work and feel? "Grimoire" Look it up.

Find Activities that feed you: ASK, if what you are doing or who you are with: Stimulates Joy, Wonder, Awe? Makes you feel Competent, Playful? Connects you to *Nature and Community?*

1. Quiet Musings via curiosity, memory,

imagination, patience, solitude, hunches, accidents...

Do a Profile of Yourself: 50 words or less

Be with Nature Wander Bare Feet?

Stay casual This is an Exploration, not a debate or sales pitch.

Recall Stories of your experiences in Nature: with animals, insects, weather...

The gods are in the diseases Your Symptoms? What Spectrum are you on?

Follow Present Threads: What's presenting? What lingers, vexes, haunts, peeves, annoys? **Welcome Them** as Directionals Clues, Puzzle Pieces to your Unconscious. They are not "Problems". They are Your Familiars.

Survey Needs: for Story, Awe, Feral, Making, Consider New Ways, Models for Thinking: The Mosaic, The Kaleidoscope, The Loom, The Tapestry, Organic Thinking, Browsing, Cooking, The Ellipse, Tides Review your Lineages: Who are your people? Ethnic, family, spiritual, karmic, archetypal, clan. What tasks were you born with? What do you know about your Birth Experience?

2. Matterings:

A wordless language of *Material into Meaning* via pattern and re-pattern

to access **Stories from The Unconsciou**s, Allow for the power of the indistinct to emerge as tips, clues, hints.

It's cooperative participation, not control of the process. *This is MAGIC:*

ways to access playful, provocative, hidden energy *Make Marks* Use *Pounded Pigment* from stones, mud or flowers. Try *Rubbing* on various textures;

Try: mark-making with the smoke of a candle.

Make Tools (Wands/Talismans) Find 2-3 Things: *feathers, shells, leaves, sticks,*

Connect with yarn, dental floss, rubber bands; Add color,

Make Things to Wear Particularly Hats, Masks, Jewelry

Make <u>Gifts</u> for friends, family, enemies **Just**Leave Them Somewhere

Use Fragments and Empties: Blocks, Jars,

Envelopes. What can you put in them?

Simple Activities: Twist ties, Blocks, Rubbings,

Balancing, Make Piles, Bundles

3. Launchings: Public Ways to share

discoveries, Make The Story Visible;
Find Ways to Share Your Stories Vlog? Website?
Pinterest? Give Gifts to kindle Others.
Find others who share your sensibilities?
Find a Community Volunteer Project a mural or a deck of cards that many people contribute to?
Go Visit 3 Pines at the Community Center and see how you can engage

4. Review/Digest Often

What's Repeating/Appearing? Are familiar themes appearing? Do Family members/memories appear?

Remember, it's all about MAterial/PAttern

Light Touch! not full arguments, but allurements. **Take Small Risks**

Poetry often enters through the window of irrelevance. M.C Richards

Try Small Scale Objects: How little of something is needed to make meaning?

Find Your Surreal name an anagram of the letters in your name.

Start a Grimoire: your record, journal of your Casual Making. Your discoveries.

In what Ways are you a Legacy

Carrier? What Talents Emerging!

Earth is Element of Old Age from the North

"the time to <u>give yourself away</u>, to learn to <u>dwell in</u> <u>timelessness</u> and to <u>tend the youth</u>." (Andy Fisher).

The Time of Balance, Autumn/Winter, Body, Material Abundance, stability, health, hearth, home and Quietness.

Earth Energy *is Cool, Dry, Feminine:* Venus, Saturn, Earth, <u>onyx</u>, <u>jade</u>,, <u>amethyst</u>, lead: Dull, no sparkle, heavy

Evoked by any stone, dish of soil, salt, ochre, ivy. brown-black-green, darkness, thickness, bile, melancholy

Divinities Demeter, Ceres, the Horae, Persephone, Proserpina, Hades, Pluto.

Spirits: gnomes, Fauns, Goblins, Satyrs, Dryads

Animals: Owl, Cat, <u>sphinx</u>, <u>bull</u>, <u>stag</u>, <u>dragon</u>, <u>wolf</u>,

Plants: *earthy-smelling*, Grains grow near or in the soil: nourishing, hi-calorie, stored a long time

GUIDES/PRACTICES to the

powers of the Creative Unconscious to help "give yourself away, learn to dwell in timelessness and tend the youth." Andy Fisher

1. Keep Revisiting NEEDS (wonder/awe,

nature/feral, skill/making, story)

Use Ikigai

Ikigai: the source of value in one's life; the things that make one's life worthwhile see visual

Personal Inventory: YOUR earned history. Take responsibility. For better and worse

What Stories are appearing? Eliz reading Ch Bks

2. ASK "Do these People, this

Activity," Stimulate Joy. Wonder, Awe? Make you Feel Playful? Competent? Connected to Nature? Community?,

Recognize/Welcome Emerging CLAN Your Trickster, Greenman, Caretaker **Archetypes**

3.Be in Nature: "the enticing beauty and repellent brutality of nature" Francis Jammes

Explore Organic language (vs non-organic, heroic, egoic technical, binary)

Where Mysteries, confusions, anomalies, ambiguities not *Problems* but normal growth:

a Fruiting. Ripening, decaying, a dormancy,

Welcoming Experience with:

<u>The Chthonic</u> of the Earth, below, hidden, alive, decay/compost. Just outside Ego control

The Feral = Illicit, marginal, outsider, animal, off-center, out of comfort zone

CHAOS: rising/falling action, disorder, decay, through which the next form emerges.

Transformative All are affected. There are no sidelines

4. Allow PLAY! Seek Children as Guides But Aging is not a return to being a child.

Loose parts Materials that can be moved, combined, taken apart, put back together in multiple ways. No defined or directed use, Loose parts allow personal, idiosyncratic critical thinking.

Take Small Risks/new competencies: the *other* way home Coming to this group?

Changing Pattern-Material Meaning

Be Curious: "What If I..."

Let Go of Words try **Maps, Images**, What's on your **cellphone? Instagram**,

Explore new "skills" or How To's in Practical and Spiritual matters

Try Haiku Now-mood-contrast- with Objects Pinterest

MORE:

The Five Remembrances

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The Three Occult Principles:

- 1. The universe is a single living substance.
- 2. The universe is comprised of <u>interactive opposites</u>. Mind and matter are a unified entity. Everything that exists corresponds in universal analogy –man/woman is a microcosm of the universe.
- 3. <u>Imagination</u> is a real motivating force that can act upon matter in a subtle way

<u>Nepantla</u>

At some point, on our way to a new consciousness, we will have to leave the opposite bank, the split between the two mortal combatants somehow healed so that we are on both shores at once and, at once, see through serpent and eagle

eyes. Or perhaps we will decide to disengage from the dominant culture, write it off all together as a lost cause, and cross the

border into a wholly new and separate territory. Or we might go another route. The possibilities are numerous once we decide to act and not react. La Conciencia de la Mestiza: Towards a New Consciousness Bridges are thresholds to other realities,

archetypal, primal symbols of shifting consciousness. They are passageways, conduits, connectors that

connote transitioning,

crossing borders, and changing perspectives. Bridges span liminal(threshold) spaces between worlds, spaces I call *nepantla*,

a Nahuatl word meaning tierra entre medio.

Transformations occur in this in-between space, an unstable, unpredictable,

precarious, always-in-transition space lacking clear boundaries. *Nepantla es tierra desconocida*, and living in this liminal

zone means being in a constant state of displacementan uncomfortable, even alarming feeling. Most of us dwell in nepantla

so much of the time it's become a sort of "home." Though this state links us to other ideas, people, and worlds, we feel

threatened by these new connections and the change they engender

https://thescene.com/watch/thenewyorker/leonard-cohen-the-last-interview

<u>hikeintohistory</u> <u>MakingMeditations.</u> <u>CreativeAging</u> *Grimoire*

David Brooks, The Second

Mountain <u>aarp.org/health/dementia</u>

Suggestions for play/work at Home

www.thecasualalchemist.com Hillman, The Force of Character

James

Donald Hall, The Third

Thing Robert Frost, The Road not

Taken

Robert Atchley, Everyday

Mysticism Andy

Fisher, https://andyfisher.ca/

HOW to Begin? There are many ways.

Try this Four-Fold Approach:

Be Quiet, Be Active, Be Public, Be Digestive & Reflective

Be Quiet I only went out for a walk, and went in. John Muir

Begin Within: OWN the Process, Dig deeper into biography. This is private, meditative activity. Be alone, introspective, interior. Remember dreams. Birth Experience. Consider your Ancestral Karma. This is the beginning of the ancient process of creating a **Grimoire**, a record book of the results of your encounters with the Creative Unconscious.

Thumnail NOW: Concerns of the Day? What Cords Bind? Stuck song? Dreams? Face/Name from long ago Consider your life with OBJECTS, Your cycles and Repeating Motifs? Your Totems? What natural objects or animal do you recognize and honor for spiritual significance?

Your Signature Gifts you now can share?

Your ways to enchant? New Bottles for your Old Wine **Ikigai**: the source of value in one's life; the things that make one's life worthwhile <u>see visual</u>

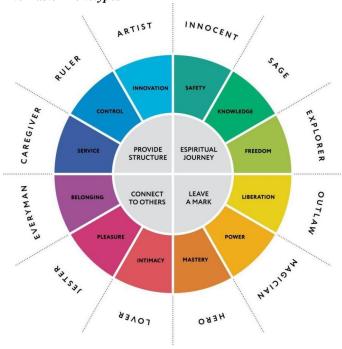
Legacy Carrier Are Other Talents Emerging!

<u>What are your Stories</u> languaged and not. What themes, characters seem to cycle through and repeat? Oh, you again!"

Recognize/Welcome Emerging CLAN

Who are The Others we carry with us? How are you Hestia, Hermes, Shapeshifter, Greenman, Caretaker, Shadow. Spellcaster, Trickster, At Once: Puella, Femme Fatale/Witch, Crone, Sophia

The Basic Archetypes



MORE
conorneill.com/und=-12-jungian-archetypes/Bolen
Setting-Up-An-Ancestor-Altar Leonardo's 7 Virtues 7 Souls Egyptian

Allow/Explore/Consider Earlier Ways, Other ways, Lenses, Pathways

http://www.danielmack.com/wayward/waystoseeanew.html

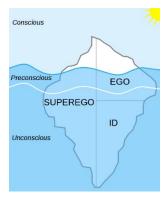
Organic/Vegetable thinking (vs non-organic, heroic, egoic, technical, binary,)Where Mysteries, confusions, anomalies, ambiguities are not Problems but normal growth: Organic Language includes Fruiting. Ripening, decaying, dormancy, rust, ferment, cook, stew. Changing weather fronts There are seasons, cycles, territories, ranges. It includes Lyme Disease and the BioBloom! It is so unlike the Technical Language we are used to.

<u>Kaliedoscopic Thinking</u> Not a Logic, a program, but *Tidal*. Same stuff, jumbled up in new relations bringing in different meaning. Ongoing Alt Organization of Same Materials

Celtic Geometries: Things changing SHAPE, but not ending.

<u>Spiral</u> Helical <u>Thinking</u> always re-forming; gaseous, not solid; Always in transition/more or less visible, palpable. described by Surrealist Kurt Seligmann: as a helical changing spin of the perceived (present), the remembered(past) and the imagined (future)

The Iceberg So Much Submerged!



Life as a Bulls Eye

There was once a general of war who had spent his entire perfecting his skill in all the arts of war, but he was weary and had but one wish: to spend the rest of his days studying archery, the one art of war he had not mastered. He had heard of Master archers, living in distant monasteries, who spend a lifetime doing nothing else but perfecting their skill. He entered the monastery and begged to join them and pass the remainder of his days on this earth studying archery. For 10 years that is what he did. Then, when he had perfected his skill as an archer, the abbot of the monastery came to the general and said, "It is time to leave." The general was shocked and protested, saying that his life in the world outside the monastery was over. The abbot insisted that the general must leave. To advance his skill, it was necessary for the general to go out into the world and teach what he had learned.

And so he left the monastery and returned to the village of his birth. As he neared his old village, he noticed a bull's-eye on a tree, with an arrow in the exact center. The general was surprised by this and even more so when he noticed more trees with bull's-eyes and arrows in the center. Soon he saw many barns and homes with bull's-eyes and arrows dead center. And even in the village center, on every wall of every building was a bull's-eye with an arrow right in the center.

The peace he had gained from his years of monastic life was gone. He was indignant to find that after 10 years of study and reflection there lived an archer more skilled that he. He went to the town elders and demanded that the archer responsible for this perfection meet him at the edge of town by the mill, in one hour.

He waited but as the hour approached no one came. There was, however, a young girl playing by the river. The girl noticed him and came over. "Are you waiting for someone?" she asked, looking up at the general. "Go away," he said, irritated.

"No, no," said the girl, " I was told to come and meet someone here." The general looked unbelievingly at the little girl and said, "I'm waiting for the Master archer responsible for the hundreds of perfect shots I have seen." "Well, that's me then," said the girl.

The general, still indignant looked skeptically at the girl, "If you are telling the truth, then explain to me how you can get a perfect shot every single time you shoot your arrow."

"That's easy," said the girl, brightening. "I take my arrow and I draw it back very tight in the bow. Then I point it very, very straight and let it go. Wherever it lands I draw a bull's-eye.

Re Active

<u>Develop</u> multiple entry points to your Creative Unconscious, We are using the familiar to encounter the sacred

PAUSE OFTEN <u>See What Emerges!</u> Allow for messaging, Be With The Shift, Hunger, Loss, Interest, Symptoms, Clues as ways to <u>depth</u>, not just growth

Find a Surreal name... It's an anagram of the letters in your regular name

Find things to make, fix, build, care for. Learn a new skill. Use your Body. Take Small Risks Learn Something New; Play, not work new competencies

<u>Assume competency:</u> that you are capable of appropriate self-care. <u>Be Positive</u> Resist self-demeaning Celebrate Your Half-Full Glass!

Trust Patience, waiting; Resist control, Wander, Trust the Indirect, The chthonic, the hidden, the unseen. It's Happening, whether you can see it or not. Pay attention to Glimpses, Coincidences, Accidents, Spills, See what emerges, not how well planned thins are. Rebalance Your Magic/Logic Trust Intuition, The Casual, The Unplanned

<u>Find/Share Thin Places</u> All places and locations have their own power and potency. We respond to this. It includes history, mystery and the geo-cosmic forces of gravity, light, magnetism,

solstices, equinoxes, lunar cycles, the plants, animals, climate.. I've been writing and sharing about this for several years.

Allow PLAY! Seek Children as Guides Be Curious

Loose parts Materials that can be moved, combined, taken apart, put back together in multiple ways. They have no inherent defined or directed use,. Loose parts allow personal, idiosyncratic critical thinking. Simon Nicholson 1971

Violate Change Pattern-Material-Meaning and Explore Disorder

Be with Matter

Matter is spirit moving slowly enough to be seen.
Teilhard de Chardin

See, Find, Collect Add, Subtract Violate, Restore

Experiments in how meaning happens from simple common objects, tools and activities:

Making is all about Family: MATER and PATER!

It's being drawn to certain MAterials and discovering ways to work with them that have meaning for you. Finding your PAtterns of Meaning. Both are needed: MAterial and PAttern

COMMON OBJECTS/TOOLS

Everyday mysticism: Using the familiar to highlight the sacred: Karl Rahner

penknife	sandpaper	paper cutter	needle
clippers	string-yarn	drill	glue(s)
band aids	dental floss	markers	saw
hammer	wire	camera	paper
sticks	rasp	tape	penci
stapler	pins	stirrers	clamps
flower frogs	paper clips	feathers	cards
driftwood	butcher paper	buttons	bones
thumbprint	bark	charcoal	wax
ash	rusted objects	Black dirt	stones
envelope corners	black sand	old stamps	lint

road kill	spills/stains	skeletal leaves	shells
fingernails	leaves	mesh bags	dust
flowers	egg cartons	rubber bands	sticks
window sill bugs	small containers	bits of mirror	stickers
fruit	more?		

ACTIONS of MATTERING

Wandering	Noticing	Playing	Finding
Gleaning	Collecting	Arranging	Stacking
Storing	Sharing	Altering	Editing
Violating	Cutting	Heating	Coloring
Shedding	Marking	Boiling	Dyeing
Scratching	Piercing	Carving	Charring
Pounding	Shaping	Breaking	Sewing
Knitting	Defacing	Joining	Hiding
Binding	Bundling	Weaving	Drilling
Repairing	Fixing	Recycling	Gifting
Collage	Assemblage	Re-Purposing	Tearing
Emptying	Remembering	Filling	more??

A Few Specific Prompts:

<u>Try Marking</u> on 2'x 3" cards: with dirt, ink, the Smoke of a Candle, spilled coffee, fingerprint or bandaid Try a <u>Rubbing</u> <u>Carry a 2 x 3 Card</u> and see what you put on it

<u>Try Making</u>: Put something in empty jar/cup, box, tin Just <u>Bundle</u> a few objects with a twist tie orstring, <u>How little of Matter</u> do you need to Make Meaning?

I often painted fragments of things because it seemed to make my statement as well as or better than the whole could." Georgia O'Keeffe

<u>Try Haiku with Objects</u> Choose something of the moment, something of nature, something of personal importance and combine in a way that reveals a contrast.

<u>Fix Things</u> Accentuate the repair; The fix more precious <u>Make GIFTS for friends</u> <u>Unmake and Destroy</u>

Be Public

engaging, explorative; Work and Play with others; Mentor, Volunteer. Share a skill you know. experiments in Magic, Not Logic

Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world's grief. Do justly now, love mercy now, walk humbly now. You are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you free to abandon it. Talmud

Find/Gather/Share Leave Something for next visitor
Share/Volunteer Find/Work/Play/Kindle Others
Find a Collective Community Project
Be with Children Why? Elders share with them The
ELLIPSE of Life: Pre/Post Institutional Life
Where Does Your New CLAN gather?: PINTEREST/
Meet-Ups: Theme, Food, Share Obj,

BUT ALWAYS ASK "Do these People, this

Activity," Stimulate Joy. Wonder, Awe? Make you Feel Playful? Competent? Connected to Nature? Community?

Serving requires us to know that our humanity is more powerful than our expertise. Only service heals. Service is not an experience of strength or expertise; service is an experience of mystery, surrender and awe. Helpers and fixers feel causal. Servers may experience from time to time a sense of being used by larger unknown forces. Those who serve have traded a sense of mastery for an experience of mystery, and in doing so have transformed their work and their lives into practice ___/HelpingFixingServing.pdf

Be Digestive reflective, curious, incorporative; Revisit these other activities. How did they feel?

<u>Read Poets</u> Rumi Mary Oliver Robert Bly
Mason Williams Lucille Clifton

Gather/Share terms of interest, like these:

Spiritual Hunger Loss of Soul punctum Hungry Ghost suisecki Biobloom The Numinous Surrealism Ordinary magic Negative Capability Archetypes Ikigai mother-wound Nepantla Chthonic Archetypal Time Ancestral Karma hypnopomp Active Imagination psychosphere Ceremonial Time Helical Thinking Limerance bibliomancy Fluid/Crystalline Intelligence Golden Shadow Kintsugi: golden repair "winter fires" Black Dog Days Richard Louy's "nature deficit disorder." **Affinities**

Alchemy: practiced ability to transform Archetypes

Bricoleur more Creative Fitness

Foraging Economy: interdependent relationship, not too hierarchial; heterarchial; ebbing groups, gleaning

Holswege: a path through Forest that leads nowhere. *more* **Inherent Vice**. ~ The tendency of material to deteriorate due to the essential instability of the components or interaction among components.

Magical Thinking Melancholy Wabi Sabi

Protective Custodies: conscious and unconscious ways we behave to keep us out of harms way while transformations are happening.

Work on that GRIMOIRE

Your <u>private</u> record of encounters, inspirations, alterations, explorations, violations, exfoliation, sheddings, regrets, successes... There are Active/Passive, Conscious/Unconscious forces at play. They appear in random images, scraps of paper. Just Recognize, Note, List, Map these Clues to What Happening/Gathering Around You right now.

<u>Your Body-Now?</u> <u>DREAMS SYMPTOMS MEMORY</u> <u>your Foods/Drinks</u> <u>Sleep Rhythms</u>

<u>What Objects Collect around you-now?</u> Your Dresser Drawers? What are you Saving

Tasks on your To Do List?

<u>Chance Encounters?</u> Animals, Insects, Machines, People? From Memory, from here/Now

Encounters with the Unseen? emotions, memory?

Recent ahas? (quotes, books, insights, comforts, exchanges)

How do you OUTER/share?

What Places Do You Regularly Go?

Recent Successes, Experiences, Engagements?

How are you visible, celebrated?

What are you Shedding: Moving, Giving, Selling

Recent mistakes, regrets, accidents, losses?

What do you Make?

How/When/Why do you Exit, Check-Out

transform fear of death into blending w reminders of ancestry Aging is not a return to being a child,

Atlantic work-peak-decline/0/ Examine or nots STEAM MSM Roe Exp w Old People? _Still Saving?

Elders: to help "give yourself away, learn to dwell in timelessness and tend the youth." Andy Fisher