

Choice is Key

by Kamla K. Kapur

We are our choices.

- Jean Paul Sartre

To empower ourselves in the new, unknown country of aging, which each of us navigates without a map, we need only begin with one assumption, one psychological/spiritual fact: the way we look at something transforms it. Psychology has long known what Quantum Physics makes evident: "Whatever it is that we are observing can have a determinable momentum, and it can have a determinable position, but of these two properties we must choose, for any given moment, which one we wish to bring into focus. This means, in reference to moving particles that we can never see the way they really are, but only the way we choose to see them."

When we make a choice, the chosen comes into focus and everything else drops away. The energies of the universe, too, come to our aid to help us fulfill our intentions. Making choices, putting our goals and intentions in focus, has a lot of power. By choosing we create our truth and our destiny. The sages of all times, especially from the East, have known this for millennia. Rumi said, "You held the blue glass before your eye: for that reason, the world seemed blue to you. Don't be blind; know this blueness comes from you."

There are ways of thinking and living that reframe our experiences of aging. We can either think "old age sucks and then we die," or trust we can and must reinvent ourselves with our choices in the time we have left. I am optimistic about our ability to choose to create a more positive experience of aging; that even and especially now, when we have been given the boon of slowing down, we can engage

with the deep psychic work which is the purpose of our lives, and which we have long postponed due to youthful busyness. We can now introspect, self-examine, become mindful and aware, turn from habitual unhappiness to a healthier and happier way of being. For this we must plumb our psychic resources, know and trust we have them, discover new ways of being, and trust, in Robert Browning's phrase, "the best is yet to be."

Several years ago I was deeply unhappy about aging, my diminished stamina, about nearing the end without having fulfilled many of my dreams. As I sat at rock bottom one day, I asked myself what I wanted, and the answer came clear as a bell: "I want to be happy!" The answer led to the resolution: "I want to do what it takes to be happy." I had made my choice. Each of us is blessed with an innate sense of what it takes to be happy, if we would but clear away the psychic baggage, the perspective errors that obscures it, listen to the subtle messages sent to us in our waking and sleeping life by our bodies, hearts, minds, souls, and to the many guides of this planet who tell us over and over, the methods and angles of perception to employ to ease our travails. They remind us, forgetful as we are, of that miniscule gesture of turning towards the light as we progress on our darkling journey to old age ✨

Kamla K. Kapur was born and raised in India and studied in the United States. An award-winning playwright, poet, and author of several books including her latest, *The Privilege of Aging: Savoring the Fullness of Life* (July 2024, Park Street Press), her writing has been featured in anthologies and journals such as *Parabola* and *The Sun*. A former literature professor at Grossmont College, she and her husband divide their time between the remote Indian Himalayas and San Diego, California. More at www.kamlakkapur.com.

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