“Food for the Soul”
Questions for Reflection
Adapted from The Second Half of Life: Opening the Eight Gates of Wisdom
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I - Facing new experiences and the unknown
- What is generating meaning, hope, inspiration, and curiosity for you?
- When do you experience symptoms of “soul loss” (inertia, apathy, emptiness, numbness, confusion, futility, discontent, anxiety)?
- What deep longings or callings have you repeatedly dismissed? What has kept you from heeding them?
- What contributions do you want to make that are aligned with what is most important to you?
- The “archetype of return” is to come back to known experiences and to harvest a different result. What do you want to return to that you have found meaningful?

II - Changing identities, discovering one’s “true face”
- Which of the aspects of the face of the ego do you still struggle with: fear, attachment, control, entitlement?
- Which of the following keep you from discovering and trusting your “true face” (a) abandoning your true nature for the sake of other’s acceptance and approval, or (b) performing, pretending, and hiding because of your ego’s preference to be seen in a desired way?
- What roles, masks, or identities are difficult for you to release at this time? What sense of security, false as it may be, do you wish not to disturb?
- How are you currently embodying these wisdom gifts: curiosity, flexibility, and self-acceptance?

III - Intimacy, sensuality, respect for the body
- In what ways do you honor the wisdom of your body as in appreciation of your senses, acceptance of your limits, and the importance of self-care?
- When have you felt most comfortable and free in your body?
- What experiences of beauty nourish your senses, your body, and your soul? How can you bring beauty into your daily living?
- Of the five qualities that are necessary to foster intimacy (honesty, trust, respect, openness, and vulnerability), which do you need to cultivate at this time?

IV - Relationships: The crucible of Love, Generosity, Betrayal, and Forgiveness
- What persons have graced your life with love and generosity?
- What calls for forgiveness, reparation, and reconciliation in your life?
- What harm have you done to others, and if possible, how can you rectify that harm?
- Whether or not it is appropriate and realistic to rectify that harm at this time, what forgiveness do you need to extend to yourself?
- What forgiveness have others requested from you?
V-Creativity, Service, and Generativity
- What or who affirms your creative and generative spirit?
- What contributions have you made during your life that have been meaningful and satisfying?
- Who are the people who have inspired you? What was it about them, or what did they do, that fostered your own creativity, service, and generativity?
- Where have you “retired” prematurely or settled for less in your life? What interests have you put aside? Are there any whose time has come?
- When and where, or with whom do experience yourself as generous?

VI-Authenticity, Character, and Wisdom
- Of the four essential “bones” – backbone (the quality of courage), wishbone (the quality of hope), funny bone (the quality of humor), and the hollow bone (the quality of trust) – which do you need to cultivate to more fully develop your character, dispel cynicism, and cultivate wisdom?
- What lies have you told yourself or colluded in with others for the sake of being included or being seen as special?
- How is cynicism present in your life?
- What actions can you take to break through the two big illusions of life: that someone else is responsible for your happiness, and that you have the ability to change others?
- What triggers your need to diminish or inflate your self-worth?
- What do you trust unshakably in yourself?
- When and with whom are you most fully yourself, without fabrication or pretense?

VII-The presence of grace, happiness, satisfaction, and peace
- What is your current relationship to nature? What experiences in nature bring you the most satisfaction and peace?
- Where and when do you find solace and comfort? What is your experience of silence, solitude, stillness, and simplicity?
- Who or what are the healing agents in your life?
- Where or when do you find joy in your life? Who or what are your current sources of happiness, satisfaction, contentment and peace?

VIII-Nonattachment, Surrender, and Letting Go
- Reflect on your life and notice the areas where you have unfinished business. What would you like to do to live out your final days in a full and complete way?
- How do you honor those who have gone before you? What about them would you like to emulate?
- What are you grateful for in your life? What have you learned from this journey?
- What are the most valuable blessings and opportunities you have experienced?
- How have you been positively affected and changed for the better over the course of your life journey?
- When and how have you been challenged, tested, and stretched beyond your perceived capabilities?
- What do you need to mend in your life? What do you need to do or say to feel complete?