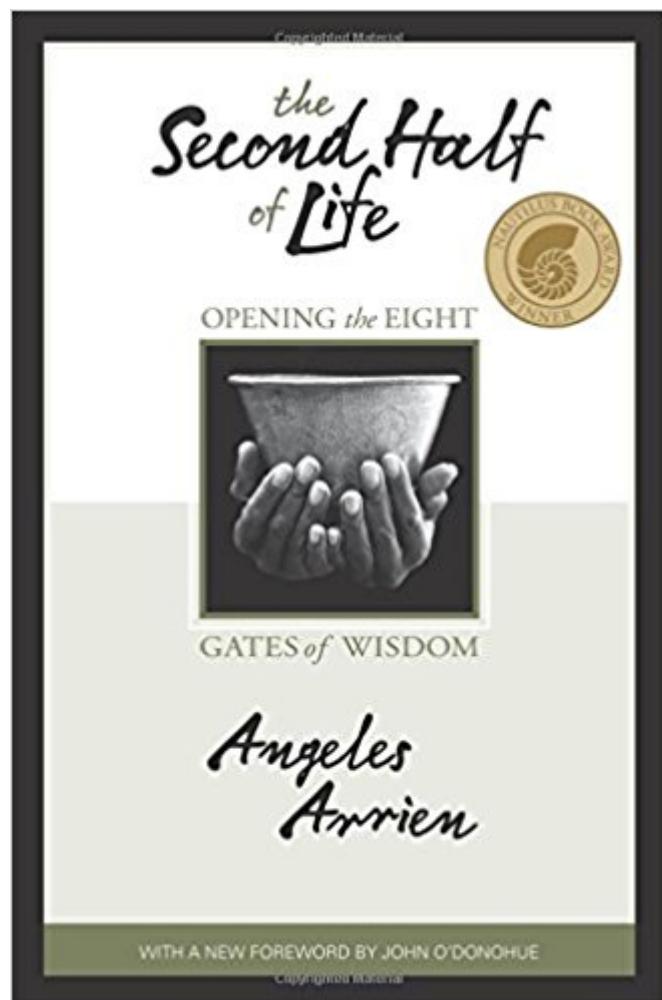


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# The Second Half Of Life: Opening The Eight Gates Of Wisdom



## Synopsis

"There is a grace in this book, an invitation to beautiful, deep wisdom, a banquet to refresh your spirit for the years ahead." •Jack Kornfield, PhD, author of *A Path with Heart*"The Second Half of Life is a wise, unique, and beautifully written guidebook for those who want to live every day of their lives. A book for everyone who plans to grow old." •Rachel Naomi Remen, MD, author of *Kitchen Table Wisdom* and *My Grandfather's Blessings*When you find the courage to change at midlife," Angeles Arrien teaches, a miracle happens. Your character is opened, deepened, strengthened, softened. You return to your soul's highest values. You are now prepared to create your legacy: an imprint of your dream for our world•a dream that can fully come true in *The Second Half of Life*.Working with images, poetry, metaphors, and other forms of symbolic language from diverse world cultures, Dr. Arrien introduces us to the Eight Gates of Initiation. By mastering their lessons and gifts, you harvest the meaning and purpose of your life, and come into spiritual maturity. With *The Second Half of Life*, she takes you step-by-step through each gate to deepen your most valuable relationships, reclaim your intended creative talents, and shift your focus from ambition to meaning to grow into the exceptional elder you've always imagined you would one day become.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

There is nothing new in Angeles Arrien's book about the second half of life. Indeed, there isn't meant to be. Our lives at midpoint are about putting aside newness and embracing the ancient, the everlasting, the always true. We live in an age that worships youth. Alongside this naive, if not indeed tragic pursuit to resist aging in all its aspects, we find ourselves as a society becoming ever

more superficial, ever more devoted to what is external only, short on endurance, shallow in meaning. Small wonder so many of us approach midlife in a state of "crisis." Yet there is no crisis. Arrien reminds us, by assembling in this collection of eight chapters named for eight gates, that this is not a time in our lives to resist or fear, but that it is, in fact, a time of wonder and beauty -- of the deeper and more meaningful kind. To pass through each of these "gates" is to be opened and enriched by the enlightenment of the second half of our lives. In each chapter, Arrien has brought together age-old quotes and wisdom from many different cultures, tested by time and place. Each chapter describes the gate through which we must pass, the task we must undertake to do so, the challenge, the gift we receive if we meet the challenge, reflections that help us to understand more fully this threshold, a list of practices to make this gateway a discipline. The gates: silver (facing the new and the unknown); white picket (discovering one's true face); clay (intimacy, sensuality, sexuality); black and white (relationships and the crucible of love); rustic (creativity and service); bone (authenticity, character, and wisdom); natural (happiness, satisfaction, and peace); gold (letting go).

I have been listening to many of these Sounds True and similar audiocassettes recently, looking for good meditation material. Fortunately, since the exploration is pretty hit-or-miss for me, the Seattle library has a lot of them (including this one), so I am able to preview them. For my taste, *The Second Half of Life* is better in its intention than its execution. Overall, for my money, a more successful work (also available both at [Amazon](#) and the Seattle library) is *A Woman's Spiritual Retreat: Teaching, Meditations, and Rituals to Celebrate Your Authentic Feminine Wisdom*, by Joan Borysenko. Although it focuses primarily on women's wisdom and growth, as opposed to second-half-of-life wisdom and growth, it hits a lot of the same notes and also draws on myth and ritual. (Another, much shorter work in a similar vein that I also found more successful is the meditation CD, *Celtic Spirit Meditations*, by Mara Freeman--also available at [Amazon](#) and reviewed by me [here](#).) Certainly, the intention of *The Second Half of Life* is to help people do some positive growth in their later years, drawing on wisdom of many cultures, and as the positive reviews attest, it does accomplish this very well for some people. However, for me, Ms. Arrien picks some good myths, tales and themes for her foundation, but then doesn't do enough substantive and rigorous work with them. The basic pattern (except for the Preferential Shapes exercise, see below) is to tell a tale or introduce a character or concept, give her interpretation (which often seems either too simplistic and schematic or too arbitrary, as other reviewers have noted), and then to say, "So where am I with \_\_\_\_\_ in my life?" [Fill in the blank with the theme or symbol just discussed.]

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