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## Marianne Williamson: Is Midlife a Crisis or a Gift?

by Judith Campanaro

"When am I going to know what I'm supposed to do with my life?" some people ask. Noted author and teacher Marianne Williamson says "The secret dream you've carried forever, denying its reality even to yourself, has refused to go away and is ready to be born at last." She says this is what midlife is all about. It's not a time of endings but a time of beginnings.

In her new book, *The Age of Miracles, Embracing the New Midlife*, best-selling author Marianne Williamson spiritually reframes the transition to midlife.

In terms of spirit, she says, nothing dies or changes. In terms of the personal self, though, it's a whole different thing. At some point during midlife, you realize youth is over; in this lifetime anyway. You enter a new phase, something as radical as puberty.

Williamson says "You cannot experience the fullest opportunity of anything unless you honor it. You have to feel the grief of what has passed before you can welcome the birth of another. Nothing dies without something else being born. We know what it feels like to be young and when you're not young anymore it doesn't have to be worse, it is just different. If you are a conscious person, you

experience the fullness of your life. At midlife that means some grief and some deep processing to get to something new that is absolutely quite fabulous."

What about those regrets that many people have? "My career didn't work out; my marriage ended in divorce; life just isn't what I expected." Williamson reminds us that there is no spiritual progress and no psychological or emotional progress without emotional discipline. She says if a person goes around saying, "It is too late for me," their experience will be just that.

Our opportunity is to experience something different. We accept the limits of age but we accept the limitlessness of God, she says. If God is in all things, in God all things are possible. Just because we reach a certain age doesn't mean God leaves us.

Williamson doesn't claim that the transition to midlife is easy, but what she does say is that maybe in this 11th hour of our lives we can carry out what we haven't done so far. And, says Williamson, "We may think we are running out of time but the truth is that time expands when consciousness does. Spirituality is not a how-to. It is a deepening conversation between your mind and your heart. You learn through years of accumulated experience how you have

hurt yourself by not being authentic, by allowing a false presentation of yourself.

**"One of the gifts of age is to know how to take care of yourself. The value of age is that your personal authenticity takes over. It's your consciousness that determines where your life goes now."**

"If I know that the purpose of my life is to be better than I was yesterday, where I was hard yesterday, may I be gentle today. Those are the things that determine what will happen now."

"Societal pressure of 'if I'm older I'm not good enough' is no longer valid. We've all heard '50 is the new 40.' Well, the 60s, 70s and 80s are just as exciting.

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## Create Haven at home that reflects life's blessings

by Consy Malasoma

Home has many definitions, primary among them the idea of shelter as sanctuary. But home can also be seen as a metaphor for the body, mind, and emotions, and finding sanctuary within, as well as without, can be a painful journey for many of us. Our purpose in life is to grow, psychologically and spiritually.

A healing environment has to give people emotional support on the deepest level so they can find courage and grace. It's not enough to slap some pretty pastels on the wall. You need to convey that you are valuable, and your life is treasured and honored.

Sometimes an environment is like a labyrinth. There are certain pivotal points in the journey: at the entrances and exits, and in hallways and transitional spaces. Here are several suggestions on creating a haven in your home from "A Light in the Mist, A Journal of Hope."

• **Start with intention.** What are you seeking to accomplish? Do you hope to express your innermost self, honor a significant relationship, accommodate children, or comfort

one who is suffering?

• **Eliminate clutter.** To create a sense of tranquility, limit the sensory input to a comfortable level.

• **Surround yourself with things you love,** including things with age, cultural artifacts, objects crafted by hand and heart, and symbols of significance.

• **Honor your past.** Sift through old letters and photographs to document your life. Frame a love letter. Surround a missing loved one's photo with flowers.

• **Revere your dreams.** Consider creating an "altar" on which to place a symbolic representation of what you wish in your life. Use photos and add crystals.

• **Create a ritual.** Frame your day. Monks in monasteries bless each time of day with prayer. Ritual can be used to transcend both time and distance.

• **Strive for transcendence.** With whatever means possible, try to imbue your home with a physical representation of a higher or deeper level of reality.

• **Include music.** Find the music that best speaks to you and make it the background of your life. Include spiritual music on your iPod along with favorites so when you travel

by air you can "chill out."

• **Incorporate nature,** whether it's the serenity of a beautiful orchid, the joy of a canary's song, the lush growth of a fern or the purring of a cat. Nature, plants, or animals soothe us by placing us in the larger context of the natural world.

• **Make your art healing art.** Select art that speaks to you and affirms your deepest longings.

• **Bless your home.** Bless yourself. Your life is sacred and deserves to be framed lovingly and with intention. You deserve a healing environment, a healing home, and a haven. Give thanks.

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