

Introduction to The ELDERGARTEN: The Intentional Journey of a Lifetime



In Da Garden/dance by Amiri Geuka Farris, mixed media design for the mosaic mural in the Gullah Geechee Garden

**So learn from this and understand true values.
I who tell you have wintered into wisdom.**

-- Hrothgar in the Seamus Heaney translation of *Beowulf*

***A Kirkridge CyberCircle of Trust®
for Connecting Soul and Role
with Dr. Sally Z. Hare***

**Sundays: May 16 and 23, June 6, 2021
2-5 pm EDT**

**PREREQUISITES: A passion for being a learner for a lifetime
and to live life with intention. Age requirement: 24-104**

**We have more old people on the planet
than ever before, but fewer Elders.**

--Sally Z. Hare

Dr. Sally Z. Hare, lifelong teacherlearner and Circle of Trust® facilitator, invites you into this space to explore the idea of the lifelong journey towards becoming an Elder. We have more old people on the planet than ever before, but fewer Elders. **Elderhood is not an age or a stage; rather, elderhood is the work of naming and claiming the value of learning for a lifetime and living with attention and intention.**

Elders are defined differently in different cultures, but too often, in our dominant culture, it is a negative term. Join Sally to reclaim this word, this concept, as the most important time of life, the “last of life for which the first was made.”

**Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made**
--Robert Browning, *Rabbi Ben Ezra*



Elders are an endangered species. We must commit to creating space in which we can recover this imperiled treasure so necessary to the survival of the Planet. Connecting soul and role as Elder is integral to living life undivided, but we have to see Elders before we can be them.

**if only we're brave enough to see it.
If only we're brave enough to be it.**
--Amanda Gorman

You are invited to self-discern if this speaks to you at this time in your life. There is no particular age at which we become an Elder, but if we don't begin the journey early enough, we will find ourselves doing remedial work at the end. Ideally we would enter The Eldergarten as a young adult in intergenerational relationships with mentors who serve as role models.



As an early childhood educator, Sally loved the German educator Friedrich Froebel's (1782-1852) naming of the kindergarten as the children's garden: "Children are like tiny flowers: They are varied and need care, but each is beautiful alone and glorious when seen in the community of peers." Now she envisions **The ElderGarten**, a deliberate creation of space in our culture to nurture the development of elders and cultivate this endangered species. Elders, too, are flowers, moving through the life cycle of seed to plant to blossom in order to return to seed. She sees this introductory Circle of Trust as an opportunity to form a community of congruence for the work before the work of co-creating with The Eldergarten.

WHAT:

- **An introduction to the idea of The ElderGarten, an intentional creation of space in which participants have the unique opportunity to slow down and look at their lives, their experiences; to discern and create meaning; to connect soul and role as Elder.**
- **The opportunity to explore the possible journey that differentiates the experience of growing older each day from that of living with intention to become an Elder.**
- **A space in which to notice and name and begin to nurture those practices that form the foundation for lifelong learning.**
- **Time to hear your Self reflect on the seasons of your life and to live into the knowing of your life cycle that begins and ends as a seed.**
- **An invitation to name the Habits of the Heart you wish to nurture on the journey.**
- **A chance to be in a Circle of Trust® and embrace the paradox of the individual and community, knowing that only YOU can do your own work – and it is too hard to do alone.**

WHO: Persons who are open to the idea that aging brings opportunities for experiences – and that our work is to create meaning from those experiences.

We do not learn from experience... we learn from reflecting on experience.

--John Dewey

Persons who have some understanding of the power of reflection and inner work-- and who now want to go deeper in their own inner work as a way of exploring the path to Becoming an Elder. This retreat invites people into time for reflection, time to hear their own Inner Teachers; time to notice their life's experiences thus far and to find meaning; time to name how they want to live their lives as they winter into wisdom; time to pay attention in this unique thin time of the COVID19 Pandemic and to be intentional as we move forward into the unknown. This retreat also offers the space for some clearness about our hopes and next steps for The ElderGarten.



So learn from this and understand true values. I who tell you have wintered into wisdom.

-- Hrothgar in the Seamus Heaney translation of *Beowulf*, 1722-24

WHEN: This introductory 3-session **CYBERCircle of Trust** takes place in the Kirkridge Zoom Room on three Sundays in spring: May 16, May 23, and June 6. We will meet from 2-5 pm Kirkridge Time (also known as Eastern Daylight Time); participants are invited (not required) to give themselves additional time in retreat on each of those Sundays (or the following Monday) for solitude and, when possible, being in nature. Our online time will include time in the large group, time in small groups, and time in reflection; there will be suggestions and options for time in solitude (for some that will be morning time, for others that will be afternoon, depending on time zone). A space will be created that invites slowing down and quieting the inner and outer worlds.

FACILITATORS: Dr. Sally Z. Hare and various guest facilitators

Dr. Sally Z. Hare, Singleton Distinguished Professor Emerita at Coastal Carolina University, is president of still learning, inc. (www.stilllearning.org) and a lifelong

teacherlearner. She facilitated a pilot Courage to Teach group in Coastal Carolina in 1996-1998 – and she has continued to grow and learn as a Circle of Trust facilitator and founder of the Kirkridge Courage Fellowship. She lives in Surfside Beach, South Carolina, where she is happy to share her ocean with her husband Jim R. Rogers, and dog, TBO. She can be contacted through e-mail: couragetoteach@sc.rr.com

PROGRAM COSTS:

At Kirkridge, we want to live into a culture that is focused on gifts freely offered; to live beyond a transaction economy. We want you to bring your whole self to our program regardless of payment and we ask that you make the decision about the dollar amount that feels right to you.

If you need help determining that amount, this program would traditionally be offered at \$195 with a sliding scale starting at \$20.

TO REGISTER:

Visit <https://kirkridge.org/events/connecting-soul-and-role/>