



Midlife as Alchemy

By Kalpana (Rose) M. Kumar, M.D.

What is Midlife? What is Menopause? What is at stake?

What is our Conditioned-Self? What is our Authentic-Self? How do they differ?

In my 22 year history as a physician who has worked with thousands of brave and courageous men and women with stories of wounding, suffering and healing, I can say that I have been able to identify the differences between these selves and the intrinsic power that emerges when one leaves the Conditioned for the Authentic Self. The Conditioned-self is who you were told you SHOULD BE. The Authentic-Self is WHO YOU ARE. For the first half of our life, the Authentic-Self is buried beneath the Conditioned. In the second half, we must re-emerge Authentic.

There is a powerful shift that occurs in midlife when our physiology and soul intersect at this gateway to make room for the REAL to emerge. This creates a felt space between the Conditioned and Authentic selves. The traction of the conditioned one pulls at us, urging us to behave from familiarity based in FEAR. All the 'shoulds' fear us into staying stuck. Fear is the feeling that adapts us in the first half of our life. We adapt to be accepted. Adaptation conditions us. It creates a shell around our Authentic –self that waits patiently for us to awaken. We learn to withhold our truth; we say 'yes' when we want to say 'NO'. We over-ride our true feelings to be accepted and loved. For decades we live this way. We construct our lives from choices that emerge through our conditioning. We become part of society's 'herd'. We normalize this identity and close our eyes.

When we turn 40, something changes. A soft whisper fleets through our body and mind, suddenly with no warning. Sometimes we don't really hear it, sometimes we try not to. It beckons us to awaken, to bring LIGHT to our choices. It says, 'Who are you really?' This frightens us. If we don't listen, it moves in deeper, rises stronger – as fire, as density -anxiety, depression –in our bellies, pulling us in. We begin to sweat, to hot-flash; we awaken at 3 am with minds racing and fear coursing in this unknown place. In the middle of the dark rises a whisper of comfort, the voice of our Soul pulling us in – to connect, to open, to awaken and deliver us finally to our Voice and our Truth.

If we do not listen, it may call to us as cancer, divorce, tragedy, devastation, that forces us inward to evaluate, deconstruct and make us new.

All this sorting and sifting, transforming and reinventing – THIS is midlife.

This is menopause.

This is not a sickness or a deficiency. This is NOT a pathology.

This can NOT be medicated away.

This is HERE to stay and it will offer us the fire of alchemy into which we must step to make ourselves WHOLE.

The voice of the Authentic-Self will rise from ashes of the conditioned one as adaptations fall into the fire to be transformed. If we willingly lean into this, our voice will emerge – FINALLY- the TRUE voice we will use to heal the world.

We will spread our wings and fly out from this fire into life again with wisdom and an inner eye that can never be closed.

©January, 2014 Kalpana (Rose) M. Kumar M.D., CEO and Medical Director , The Ommani Center for Integrative Medicine, Pewaukee, WI. www.ommanicenter.com Author of **Becoming Real: Harnessing the Power of Menopause for Health and Success**, 2011, Medial Press. Schedule an appointment or contact Dr. Kumar at 262.695.5311.