

LEGACY OF WISDOM

www.legacyofwisdom.org
wisdom@legacyofwisdom.org

Project Directors:

Jay Goldfarb
Mostackerstrasse 11
4051 Basel, Switzerland
Tel/fax +41- 61-361 5375

Tom Valente
7350 S. Tamiami Trail, Suite 214
Sarasota, FL 34231, USA
Tel. +1-941 927 5907 Fax 923-3205

Team & Sponsors: Ram Dass, Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, Roshi Joan Halifax, Harry Moody, Dr. Sarita Bhalotra, Dr. Rodolfo Musco, Mickey Lemle, Judy Goggin

Wisdom Area: End of Life Preparations

The current generation has been quite pro-active in facing what is often seen as a taboo subject. Death has been challenged to be recognized as a more normal process of life. Nevertheless, it remains a topic fraught with anxiety, denial and drama.

Question: What is conscious awareness as we approach this important process?

YouTube Video Title: Legacy of Wisdom - Al Kaszniak - What is Wisdom in Aging
YouTube URL: www.youtube.com/watch?v=agu_SZBp6JQ
Length: 4:15



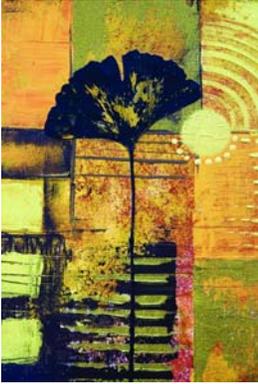
Interviewee: ALFRED W. KASZNIAK, Ph.D.

Head, Department of Psychology, University of Arizona since 2002.

Al Kaszniak, received his Ph.D. in clinical and developmental psychology from the University of Illinois at Chicago in 1976, and completed an internship in clinical neuropsychology at Rush-Presbyterian-St. Luke's Medical Center in Chicago. He is currently Head of the Department of Psychology, Director of Clinical Neuropsychology, Director of the Arizona Alzheimer's Consortium Education Core, and a professor in the departments of psychology, neurology, and psychiatry at The University of Arizona.

His research, published in over 150 journal articles, chapters and books (including edited volumes on consciousness and science), has been supported by grants from the NIH, NIMH, and several private foundations. His work has focused on the neuropsychology of Alzheimer's disease and other age-related neurological disorders, memory self-monitoring, the biological bases of emotion, and emotion response and regulation in long-term Zen and mindfulness meditators.

He has received more than a dozen awards for his scholarship, teaching, and professional service in the field of aging.



LEGACY OF WISDOM

www.legacyofwisdom.org
wisdom@legacyofwisdom.org

Project Directors:

Jay Goldfarb
Mostackerstrasse 11
4051 Basel, Switzerland
Tel/fax +41- 61-361 5375

Tom Valente
7350 S. Tamiami Trail, Suite 214
Sarasota, FL 34231, USA
Tel. +1-941 927 5907 Fax 923-3205

Team & Sponsors: Ram Dass, Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, Roshi Joan Halifax, Harry Moody, Dr. Sarita Bhalotra, Dr. Rodolfo Musco, Mickey Lemle, Judy Goggin

Question: What is conscious awareness as we approach this important process?

Transcript:

AL KASZNIAK: I think we have made some progress in at least being able to talk about death within the culture; at least being able to engage in conversations that enable us to make some plans for end of life. What I think we have been less successful at, however, is both the personal attending to, as well as the interpersonal conversations and interactions, about what it is that seems so frightening about death.

Because it isn't an abstract conceptual issue. We can talk about how death is a part of life and I accept that fact. But my body may not be accepting it. It may still be extraordinarily fearful to confront the possibility that ALL of what seems to comprise ME is not going to be there. And we know from another body of research that often goes by the term "terror management" theory and experimentation, that this fear of death drives an enormous amount of decision making in ways that have not been so positive for either any of us personally or for the culture.

And I think this gets back to what extent is it possible to carve the time and space in one's life just to quiet down and watch the stream of our conscious experience, because within that what gets revealed I think, is that there is NOT this solid ME that's there. There isn't something that is you know, going to come to an end, because it never existed, really, in the first place. And I think THAT provides a source of ways of approaching the end of life.

Now I think it is also worth saying that we've maybe done some disservice by the kinds of approaches that conceive of there being a "good death" – that somehow there is a "right way" to do it. And I don't think experience bears that out. I think there is enormous variety in how people come to terms with death and they typically do so in character in the ways in which they have lived their lives. And so I think there is an equal responsibility for those of us who are around and are the support for those who are dying to be very open to that range of possibility, to let people do it as they will.