



The Developmental Rainbow: Ready to be filled in...

<u>A Kid's Guide to Growing Up</u>	Color/Stage 1 Red Years	Color/Stage 2 Orange Years	Color/Stage 3 Yellow Years
STARTS (approximate years)			
FOCUS			
MATURES			
SAYS			
UNDERSTANDS THROUGH			
WEAKNESS			
UNHEALTHY IMAGE			
DISCIPLINE MAKES MOST SENSE			
IMAGE TEST			
MOOD			
IMAGE OF MATURITY			

There she was coming at me: The grandmother of a former student of mine who had invited me to his graduation. The problem was that Nick only had four tickets to the ceremony: one for his mom and dad, his sister, and, well, I got the ticket that granny was supposed to have.

Grandmother's furor was tempered by how I "had saved her grandson's life".

She embraced me with gratitudes and humorous insults.

You can imagine the honor I felt that Nick wanted me, seven years after my class. There was hearty laughter throughout the evening.

Nick relayed how he had learned from my lessons in Big Philosophy for Little Kids that when the "three-headed dragon of adolescence" would start to overtake him, he would recognize it and not be broken by doubt, depression, or dilemma.

Over the decades, my (writing) lessons on growing up, and particularly the Three-headed Dragon are the most common appreciation I receive from students-turned-adults. (The lessons on Midas and True Happiness and the investigations of Narcissus that I received from Adi Da are the other most appreciated lessons my former students praise.)

Normalized within the real struggle of the adolescent passage, the images promote the recognition whereby we need not be crushed by the monster of separateness, with furies of abstraction, the alienation of mentality, and the aloneness of Narcissus.

When demons are recognized, the possibility for relationship, true peace, and integrity becomes clear. Imagine a different world where alienation and separateness are understood; imagine children who are given a vision of what growing up can really mean. If they can see it, they'll know and grow.

I join many who cry into the wilderness:

A new vision is needed for a regeneration of culture.

The fulcrum of new generations will leverage the change.

Enjoy this developmental understanding for children and these foundational lessons. And let me again be clear:

I harvested this wisdom from my Beloved Adi Da.

My prayer is single: May I sing of Joy in His Company.

What Is It To Really Grow Up?

Adult Preface (Children can skip this.)

What Is It To Really Grow Up? is a six-week writing ‘unit’ (via a series of talks, prompts, and responses) I have had with children over the last twenty five years. As the name reveals, this kid-accessable dialogue addresses both the developmental process and developing new strengths. Both objectively and subjectively, it portrays a fully evolving spectrum, with detailed, affective-emphasis on understanding childhood and human responsibility.

Keeping it simple and connected to the natural world, the colors of the rainbow are correlated to the stages of life — and this spectrum is felt personally as “growing up” through the colors, hues, and stages of maturation.

After the participant records their responses to multiple facets of developmental challenges and abilities (filling in the chart below), they are challenged to weave the horizontal, parallel threads in maturing progressions. By this understanding and by example, there is an easy weaving of multiple threads. One naturally exercises the writing technique of parallelism into a fabric of understanding. [The full lesson is in *Big Philosophy for Little Kids*.]

Both children and adults need to have a full-spectrum understanding about what growing up could be. Such a vision naturally inspires us to grow up from our earthen roots and rise into real adulthood.

My son, Salem, helped me in clarifying this collection while in the fifth grades, and my second grade daughter, Ella, loved hearing it read. My fourth and fifth grade students in inner-city Richmond and Pinole (California) gave me reflections, suggestions, and praises.

My thanks goes out to the many, many kids over the last quarter-century who took these lessons to heart, and to the adults who listened and commented as well.

For emphasis, I repeat: More than the conglomeration of the good things I have heard, tried, and repeated because of impact or efficacy, these talks are a reflection of pedagogical features I learned in the ashram schools of Adidam, where I was both a growing student and a teacher of children. I shout aloud my eternal gratitude to my beloved master-teacher, Avatara Adi Da, Samraj—from whom I learned the fullness of love and education.

For the kids:

Lots of people think that growing up stops when our body stops growing — when we're about 17 to 21 years of age. At 18, we are considered an “adult” for many things, like driving freely, voting, going to war or college, and making a lot of our own decisions. But just getting to be “big” or making our own decisions or even voting is not all that there is to being “grown-up”. It's a lot more than that, so it is very useful to have a clear idea of what really grown-up could be. What do you think ‘grown up’ means, or should mean? [Discussion and notes.]

There are many, many ways we could talk about the phases of growing up and all of these descriptions are helpful. Almost every culture, people, religion, and philosophy has a way of talking about growing up. It's like talking about the stages of a plant — like an apple tree: if we start with the seed, then it sprouts, it grows into a sapling, and when it's big enough for blossoms, it makes apples with seeds. The seeds fall to the ground, the apple part makes the soil rich for the seeds and the cycle starts all over — and the tree grows bigger with every cycle for a while and then passes. Now

humans are a lot more diverse, complicated, and developed than apple trees; even still, we can talk about our stages of growing up.

Have you ever seen how a prism breaks clear light into the colors? We could look very, very closely and say that there are a hundred million colors in the spectrum, or we could step back and say that there are seven. In the same way, we could look very closely and find a hundred different hues of people growing up, but to be simple, we're going to mimic the "seven colors" of the rainbow and just talk about seven general stages of growing up, focusing almost entirely on the first three stages of childhood.

Letting each stage be associated with a traditional color of the rainbow, we'll ask questions at every stage/color. Four examples are: In each color of childhood, what are the strengths, challenges, understanding, and enjoyments? Get your writing tool ready:

There are many phases in the first six years, just like there are many colors of red, but first let's talk about the red or first stage all together.

The first stage of growing up, likened unto the color red, starts with the first breath and goes to the loss of the baby teeth at about *6 or 7 years* of age. [Fill in those boxes on the chart.]

The red stage is *focused in the body* and being *autonomous* in the body. We learn to walk and talk and pee and poo all by ourselves. More than that though, we learn to *be* all by ourselves, to be rested, to go to sleep by ourself, and although we are dependent on "grown-ups" and need to feel safe, we can do a lot of things "all by myself". What do you remember doing "all by yourself"?

We don't just walk along, we jump over lines, we walk on lines, we skip, we play with trying new things and relearning old things. We delight in new experiences. We are focused in growing.

We learn about others, but the main focus is a healthy me. The first stager says, "*I can do it.*" Who remembers saying that? What was it about?

Because our body is the main focus, it is good if grown-ups don't talk too much when we mess up, but interact with us bodily: Hold us, move us away from bad situations. Some direct talk is good, but ideas are secondary to moving our bodies. *We understand with our body.*

In the first seven years, there is also an abundance of *magic*. From Fairy Tales to Santa Claus, from magic wands and spirits to fables, tales, and magical stories, we are enchanted by what we do not know and what we learn in the red years. We're learning, learning, learning. What were your favorite stories, parables, and myths when you were little? Why? If you had a new friend who had never heard of your favorite myth or story, what would you tell them?

Most first stagers really like sweets — foods are a big focus for the red body and mind. But red can be sticky. The unhealthy side of the body-focused person makes for sugared, couch potatoes and screen-entranced eyes. Our *challenge is to not get dull*. As we mature in the first years, we learn to *discipline unhealthy eating, and not watch too much screens*. Do you have limits on screens? We've got to move and play and look and see. Where do you go outside for natural surroundings? What do you like to do outside? What is it like for you in nature?

Starting about age four, a first stager can learn to take a big breath in hard times. We can always take a big breath to feel better, even if we're feeling pretty good. Try it now, take a long breath, feeling to natural happiness.

We learn to try hard in a new ways. You learn to use your breath to focus. For me, learning to tie my shoelaces was very hard. I remember the exact moment I tied my shoes (I never had to ask

mean Ronnie Carter again) and jumped high into the air. What do you remember trying very hard at when you were little?

As we complete and brighten the red years (about 6-7 years old), we run peacefully down the path and *don't always have to be looking back at Mom and Dad* to make sure we are OK. There is still a mood of being dependent on them, of course, but we can rest without them and we can do it.

We've started losing our "baby" teeth, and the second great stage of childhood begins to emerge. New *feelings* and energies run through you as orange blossoms from the red years. To the depth we have learned to rest, we *learn to let our feeling "fly"*. Music is great, beauty is great, and harmonies of all kinds are great to the energetic feelings and flying orange mind in the *second seven years* of life. What were you into when you were eight or nine or ten?

We still love food and are enchanted by the seasons, but in addition to simple pleasures, we are working with feelings, like how we seem to others and who likes us. More than anything, orange kids really *want to be included*.

In the orange years, we it is important not just to feel included, but to learn to *include* more and more people and things in our feelings. The best way to feel included is to practice including others. (It's not easy and we get our feelings hurt sometimes.) Do you remember a time when you were the new kid?

A main feeling that is present in the orange years is about *belonging*. (We belong where we can let our feelings go.) Friends and family and groups and village-community are so important; belonging is important.

We remain in a mood of dependence on others. In the second seven years, membership and being-included are very, very important. We need to feel a sense of belonging all of our life, but it is big in the orange years. Write down the names of one or two

friends, your family names, your neighborhood, city, state, country, continent, your planet, and the place where you learn about what is not-limited; this could be your church, mosque, class in school, or favorite park.

Learning about belonging is good, because we really are connected to others and the world around us, even when we're feeling alone. Did you know that humans are a single family? Do you have a cousin who is a bit weird, but you love them anyway? It's really true, we are a very big family. Hey cuz! Since everyone here is basically your cousin, what does that make you think?

In the orange feeling of connectedness, we can feel and see how everything is connected to everything else. The more we act and behave with the sense of connectedness (like with friends and family), the better we feel and the better we all are. What can you do better with others? Help? Share? Forgive? Laugh?

When a first stager says, "I can do it," *the second stager expresses, "I feel, I am."* Let your feeling go and say, "I am." Or "I am your friend."

In these learning-to-feel years, we experiment with feelings and ways of acting by remembering someone else and acting like them; it is good to have *role-models* we can look up to in the orange years. Who are some of your role models and what do you like about each one?

We exercise our new feeling-wings by *letting go* to music; by listening, playing, or dancing. Or we invest ourselves in performances, or letting the body go in all kinds of ways, like sports and arts. It helps to build your focus, for sure, but everyone also experiences 'letting-go' and being 'in the zone', at least for a little while. In ancient times, they called that "being taken by the muse". It's like focus and letting-go both together: like in Muse-ik... What

were you really into in the orange years that you did a lot? Who turned you on to it? Ever get ‘in the zone’, where everything went perfectly?

We are strong in the orange years when we are strong in our “letting go muscle”... we let go *of* bad feelings (aka “*forgiveness*” of ourselves and others), and we let go *to* good feelings (in music, the arts, sports, family, friends).

When we are strong in the orange ways, we can hold onto others in our feeling, and we can also let go. We learn to flow, dance, and soar. What do you like to do where you really let go and soar? Dance? Singing? Instruments? Drawing? Athletics?

But the exploration of feelings is not always pleasant in the orange years. Sometimes we feel weird or even bad for no reason at all, or we’ll think someone doesn’t like us when they really do. When a new feeling emerges, it can be very awkward and even a bit painful or scary, like *a baby bird cracking out of its shell*. Is it important to learn to recognize and talk about emotions, both in yourself and in others. Can you picture in your mind some new-feeling that was hard? (Alt.) Can you write about feelings that are sometimes hard to talk about?

It is good to remember that growing pains and weird feelings have a way of becoming wonderful pleasures and strengths later. We learn to let our feelings be or go in the second stage, or if we can’t, we work on strengthening our letting-go-wings. It is important to practice letting go in all kinds of ways. Can you remember a time when you felt really awkward around other people? Did you let it go later? Tell me.

Because membership is so important to the feelings of second stagers and society, there are many stories that share about the far-reaching effects of harmonious and disharmonious behavior. For example, there are many stories all around the world

about what Western people call “the golden rule” — treating others like you want to be treated, ‘what goes around, comes around’. In India, it is called “karma”. *Stories* really help the second stager to understand this relationship between how we act and what happens. In stories, it is often a bad guy that gets what he deserves, right? In ancient China it was said, “Your thoughts go out a thousand miles, how far do you think your actions go?” What is the first story that comes into your mind where what happens is connected with how someone felt and acted?

The hardest test in the orange years is to *not reject others, even when we feel rejected*. We fail at this a lot, but we keep forgiving and trying — and get stronger. We learn to forgive others and know our apologies help. We want to be forgiven too. We do it already, but forgiveness is a llike a muscle we need to exercise. Can you remember a time when you were forgiven, and also when you forgave someone?

Teasing (within the feeling of inclusion) can be fun and happy, but teasing can be mean in the orange years, because it feels like we are being threatened with exclusion. Do you remember a time when someone was mean to you? Do you know how teasing *can be* fun and loving? Can you think of examples of the two kinds of teasing?

It’s hard to remember, but people who are weak in letting go and don’t feel good inside, they feel bad and small, and sometimes they put other people down, just so that they can feel big. They are just unhappy and don’t know how to get happy. This happens to everybody: we feel bad and then we act poorly and make matters worse. Have you ever seen anybody teased in a mean way? Has it ever happened to you?

But as we grow strong in the orange years, our powers of letting go and of inclusion grow. Intelligently including-others relieves us of feeling rejected in a very positive way. Even our teasing feels loving and friendly. We learn to include others more and more and we are likewise included. Can you recall a time when someone made you feel included? Can you also recall a time when you reached out to someone? Ever eat lunch with the new kid?

In the orange time, we feel how we are a unique energy or person or spirit. And because we are sensitive to energy and feelings, we learn to see the energy or spirit or person in others, rather than their clothes or skin color (and even beyond their hurts). I like to say, “It is way more important how you see than how you look.”

Have you ever heard the expression “the eyes are windows to the soul”? Can you tell me a time when you looked at the soul of someone instead of their clothes or facial features?

Like everyone, we don't want to be measured by our skin color or hair shape or disabilities, but by our presence or spirit, and by our trustability. Can you remember a time when you were misjudged because of the way you looked? Tell me the whole story.

Back in the red years, a little kid could run naked on the beach and nobody cared. But in the elementary years, naked is more private, and boyhood and girlhood take on a new depth and complexion. It is often confusing, feeling weird and new things, right?, and there are many roles that we can play out. For example, when boys are learning to be boys and girls are learning to be girls, some go through a phase where, in order to define their own gender feeling, they reject the other gender as some form of “yuk-ee”. Did you ever think boys or girls (or anything in-between) were yukky? Or if we do like someone, we may keep it a secret. Did you ever like someone and keep it a secret?

Agreements are important to the orange mind of the second stager. Orange kids like *agreements*: agreements about games, expectations, promises, and all sorts of energy exchanges. Agreements are a form of feeling-energy, which is the main focus for the elementary years. For 'orange kids', it is easier for them to keep an agreement than just do what they are told. Agreements make sense to the second stager. What kind of agreements do you have at home?

We need to be passionate and daydream especially in the orange years, but the challenge is working to stay in harmony with those around us. Especially in orange, we often feel passionate about many things, or one thing, and sometimes we are so over-focused in our passion that we exclude others in an un-feeling way. Or instead of passionate action, we may give ourselves up to dreaminess, and likewise forget about others. Learning to keep others in our feelings is the challenge of the second stager. Do you remember a time where you were completely forgetting others by dreaminess? Or being too into something?

Instead of forgetting others, we exercise the flower of feeling: we may reach out to another, or trust quietly. We notice how our breath focuses our feelings. Focusing, we take a breath; Riding our breath, we are inspired; we hold to our focus, we soar with confidence; we breathe the wind of the Earth's breath, or we blow and burn with feeling — especially in music or dance, or any of the arts, or in the excellence of athletics. We must remember to use our breath both in times of fullness (in-spired) and stress (in-voking help). Can you remember a couple of times where your breath was useful to your feeling?

We no longer believe in Santa Claus the way a four year old would, but we really love stories and *understand that myths*

have meaning. In the maturation of the second stage, we can listen to a myth “as if” it were true. A kid once commented to me, “Myths are false on the outside, but true on the inside.” That’s it. What did the story make you think of? Why did someone repeat that story? What was a lesson you understood from a story?

Biological signs of puberty may appear before the fullness of the orange years because the stages overlap. In the fullness of orange, yellow can be seen. Sometime after puberty starts and the feeling years blossom, the last stage of childhood begins. At first gender and sex-talk can be embarrassing for many people, but “growing up” is the topic here.

In the yellow years, puberty supercharges our growth and things change. In their bodies, boys make seed and girls make the eggs (they already had since birth) regularly available — and a great force for making kids emerges. We are attracted to others in a new way. Puberty prepares the body for sexual intercourse, and the evolutionary urge to continue the species makes sexuality grow shinier and shinier, and some people are suddenly way more attractive to us. Sexuality is a big, growing force and learning possibility. Who has seen how sexiness is used get your attention to sell stuff?

Yellow blossoms brightly from the orange patterns of energy-feeling, and we are a person in a new and deeper way. No longer is the focus only in body or feelings, in red and orange, but we come to our bright yellow mind in a new and powerful stance. Now, in addition to the body’s sexy “shine” of reproductive possibility, the focus of brain development moves to the higher brain and the mind grows in power for ideas. In addition to tales and a storied understanding, there is a compelling logic. We understand the moral of the story. We get concepts, we are focused in conceiving patterns and relations in the forms and energies we experience.

Craftiness erupts from the belief-mind of the elementary years, as cunning/principles emerge from mythic feelings and simple pleasures. Concept grasps a pattern in our perceptions. You understand more deeply and can talk about the meaning of the story or the principle amongst the many. Who remembers suddenly “getting it”, like when a old name suddenly had new meaning or you understood something deeper? (Alt. Consider the birth of Athena, the cunning one, as she bursts forth already mature from the *forebrain* of Zeus.)

Growing in yellow, we are based on our own rational assessment. By understanding, our capacity for intention is forged. Where the first stager says, “I can do it”, and the second stage says, “I feel, I am”, the third stager says, “*I know, I will.*” Now we begin to be a young man or a young woman —and the teen years of “*trial adulthood*” begin.

A teen doesn’t do well with just doing what they’re told, as if they were a first stager or red kid. And agreements are good only if they make sense to the teen. The yellow mind needs to be involved; the teen needs to understand and co-create his or her personal parameters of freedom and responsibility. If they understand a responsibility, it is much easier to exercise it. Just doing it because they’re told to or because “it’s good for you” doesn’t cut it. What responsibilities do you have that you understand, and what freedoms do you appreciate?

As the third stage erupts, the feeling of dependence that dominated the first two stages fades, and independence becomes strong. But independence alone is not the solution to life and so the third stager oscillates between independence and dependence in a mood not-of-dependence but of dilemma. Can you see the dilemma of wanting to go out on your own but having to ask for

the car keys or money or help? Back and forth between dependence and independence forms the sensation of dilemma.

Dilemma and doubt riddle the conceptual mind of the adolescent. There's a whole lot of thinking going on! Sometimes doubt and dilemma are too strong and our spirit is depressed. Doubt, dilemma, and depression make up *a three-headed dragon* of the yellow-mind years. *Everybody* has to deal with at least one set of monster teeth on the three-headed dragon: dilemma, doubt, depression. It is necessary to recognize the dragon when it comes upon you. Who has heard of teen suicide?

The hero's journey begins. Our sword must be sharpened. And all the time, a forest of thinking, thinking, thinking. Does thinking ever drive you crazy?

The teen years can be the most difficult in life. Not only are we more distinct and individual than ever, we feel more separate from everyone and most things. Suddenly one day, we are as if behind our eyes in a chatterbox prison, looking out, thinking constantly and feeling strange and alone.

It is good to know that this is normal, most people experience this. (And just like in the second stage, it's good to have faith and remember that what seems to be weak eventually becomes a power.) Isn't it great when you find out someone else is crazy just like you are? Write a diary entry about why you think it is important to know this inside-the-head possession is a common experience.

This constant thinking is not quieted by a great thought! The chatterbox of mentality is slowly silenced by a power in the harmony of good living. The harmonic strength of good living makes a resonance in reality, and the overtones lead to a quietness. Every religion has a list of ways to live they consider harmonic.

From the eight fold path to the ten commandments; from “nothing in excess” to Sokrates’ wisdom, we find this restraint. What is your favorite understanding of temperance?

The teen-age years should be honored as *a time of trial-adulthood* where the kids demonstrate they understand the correlation between sometimes *dangerous freedom and necessary responsibilities*. If teens want liberties (ha ha), then they must assign responsibilities to preface and ground their freedoms. These arrangements of responsibility are created by the teen (in concert with caretakers/mentors). What freedoms do you want, and what kinds of responsibilities do you think would show you can handle extra freedoms? This could be three long lists, including also appropriate consequences for irresponsibilities (stated by the teen).

The third stage is complete when the will of the understanding person brings the body and feeling (evidenced by behavior) to a growing harmony. We certainly do not have to be perfect, maybe not even pretty good, but if we merely try, “for real” and consistent, anyone can learn to slowly ‘tune’ their life to harmony. Merely by remaining oriented to growth in feeling and attuning ones actions to harmony, the mature teen slowly emerges as a healthy, respectful, open, sharp, strong, and peaceful character. How can you grow more in these areas?

In attending to a harmonious life, higher brain-functions develop easily. Teens need to know this: the more harmony they can develop in their bodies, feelings, and behaviors, the cooler and greater the brain (and social connections) can become. Sexual feelings should be freely felt, of course, yet our sexual behavior remains restrained (whatever that means to you). Discipline is good for the brain (as well as the mind). Feeling sexual energies and applying intelligent restraints as well is like sending awesome energy up to our own private genius. It’s called growing up for a

reason. This idea of temperance and sexual temperance will change over time, but what do they mean to you now?

What you take into your body is important to your mind. Can you see how the laws about intoxicants carry wisdom? — for drugs mess with the higher brain functions. Therefore, teens should avoid intoxicants (and eat well) in respect for the very best their own brains have to offer. Every kind of life-supporting habit helps the brain — this is especially important in the teen years when the mind is so central. If the brain is healthy, the mind is more easily coherent.

Experiment with how more fresh food and consistent exercise helps you see clearer. The mature teen understands all of this and then applies his or her will to slowly and firmly adapt to harmonious actions. This is intelligent living, where joy can grow beyond mere moments. Discuss what smart living means to you with a friend, then make notes of all the points that were covered. Then compare notes and revise.

At first, when the teen is trying on the mantle of self-direction, she and he often asserts their will and does what she and he wants! In the beginning of yellow's independence, the teen turns to mechanisms in the body and feeling in the pursuit of happiness. It is fun city, littered with occasional disasters. Have you ever gotten in trouble because you went too far?

But then comes the great moment in the yellow years when the person intentionally turns from merely exploiting the mechanisms of the nervous system to the happiness that is deeper than stimulation and self-satisfaction. We stretch our vision from superficial pleasures to long-term or deep happiness. We cut through the surface features of life and open up the depth of real living and true happiness. (Alt. Consider the story "Perseus, Medusa, and Pegasus" in *Core Stories*) Like Perseus, with adamant



A Kid's Guide to Growing Up	Color/Stage 1 Red Years	Color/Stage 2 Orange Years	Color/Stage 3 Yellow Years
STARTS (approximate years)	with the first breath (0-7)	with the first permanent teeth (6-12)	with puberty and a plethora of ideas (12-21)
FOCUS	Body	Feelings. Sensitive to energies	Mind, and the consequent Will
MATURES	simple autonomy: pee, poo, dress, go to sleep, etc., "all by myself"	flying feelings, really lets go; "don't underrate, appreciate"	by turning from too much self to greater happiness
SAYS	"I Can do it!"	"I feel, therefore I am."	"I understand, I Will."
UNDERSTANDS THROUGH	Magic, Fairy Tales, Stories	Myths, Parables, precepts	Ideas, patterns, concepts
WEAKNESS	dull, sticky, dark red, spoiled	excluding others (too into something/ excessive daydreaming)	lost in a forest of thinking, thinking
UNHEALTHY IMAGE	Couch potato	rejecting others because you feel rejected	3 Headed Dragon of Dilemma, Doubt and Depression
DISCIPLINE MAKES MOST SENSE	directly telling, moving their bodies	agreements/ deals	by understanding, co-creating responsibilities and freedoms
IMAGE TEST	don't get dull	too obsessed/ can't rest	WILL you come to harmony?
MOOD	dependence	dependence	Dilemma (between independence and dependence)
IMAGE OF MATURITY	running down the path confidently, without Mom & Dad	sensitive to others emotional fluency healthy role models	Response-able and Open

decisiveness, we build our energy and intention. Do you remember willfully choosing sharing or serving over selfishness?

This steady turn-about from short-term pleasures to long lasting happiness (from too-much self to the labor of relationship), is the sign of a great initiation into deeper self-understanding. Then the mature teen comes to understand Sokrates' dictum, "An unexamined life is not worth living". Growing in this commitment to self-understanding and willfully turning from self-concern to growing in love and service, we look beyond the superficial freedoms to include a deeper light, and responsible adolescence ripens. Instead of partying, we celebrate.

When we are strong in not re-acting like we did when we were littler *and* are usually able to respond instead of react, the transcendence of childhood grows sufficient, and the uncommon maturation of true adulthood begins.

Consider the difference between responding and re-acting, between response-ability and drama. Past or present?

What have you learned and want to remember?

Review chart. (Share the filled-out chart below.)

BRIEF NOTES on the upper colors:

Real adulthood begins as the mind gives way to love (and thinking slowly resolves in thanking). This gratitude and love is not mere sentiment, nor the feelings of soaring emotion, nor is it riddled with the sense of romance, the promise of fulfillment or poignant angst. Real love is more like self-giving than self-soaring, more trusting than knowing, more thankful than thinking, more wounded than hurt. To love with depth is to serve and give beyond self-position. It is not self-emptying, like we have no needs, but it is self-giving, since we are in touch with fullness. It is better to give

than to receive, explained the Master of the Christians. This phase of self-giving and service is not just another seven year cycle. It is a lifetime of work and pleasure. Blessed are those who can serve.

If we keep growing, we become better and better at giving — and giving ourself up — and in that heart-giving, a deep harmony is felt and seen in the interrelations with everything. In this “green” mind and light, all of life is felt and understood to be connected, interconnected, and integrated. The systems of everything are appreciated in a growing unity. Our mood of service naturally extends farther and farther.

There are colors above green, but few grow there. It takes a lifetime of harmonizing our life, strengthening our feeling, and practicing service to others. But if we persist in continual growth, wise decisions, committed service, and deepening self-knowledge, we may emerge in uncommon wonder.

We truly recognize a Sunlight Person, a sage, a savior, a prophet, an avatar, and see the Incarnation of Love. By this imprint, we grow rested in the harmony of everything and the disharmonies in life, we let our mind fall into the heart, breath after breath. In deep gratitude for immortal Sunlight and the Sunlight Person, raptures of joy begin the blue upper worlds. We are admitted to the chambers of the heart, following the footsteps of sacred heroes. Seeing and feeling the wonders of open secrets, we learn to let loose in grateful simplicity and purity of joy — as the sky of mind turns from blue to indigo.

Now we see everything from pain and urge to highest light and deepest joy. We go down to the red animal and rise with celestial wings, and bring both the dog and angel to the heart. Fallen in fullness, melted through intimacy, we rest in reality’s brightness, in the calm awareness of everything. Feeling-awareness

witnessing all, letting all, being lived and lighted. We see that reality itself is a form of conscious light and universal sentience, which shines out of every eye and dances in everything, as everything. All is consumed in a silent and thunderous I am.

In that deep violet sky, a star of clear light can readily be seen beyond the rainbow, the brilliant source of every color. $E=mc^2$ and everything from red dirt to solar cores and from sensation to sentience is made of conscious light.

We can grow out of childish disharmony and adolescent immaturity into deep happiness and stable loving. We can. We can turn from brief pleasures to longer lasting ones. We're a fool if we don't. It's not the hokey-pokey, it's turning yourself about. It's not about being right or winning or achieving, but growing and turning or yielding into the "light". The steady presence of lighted reality will always bless you.