

PARKER J. PALMER

Author of Let Your Life Speak

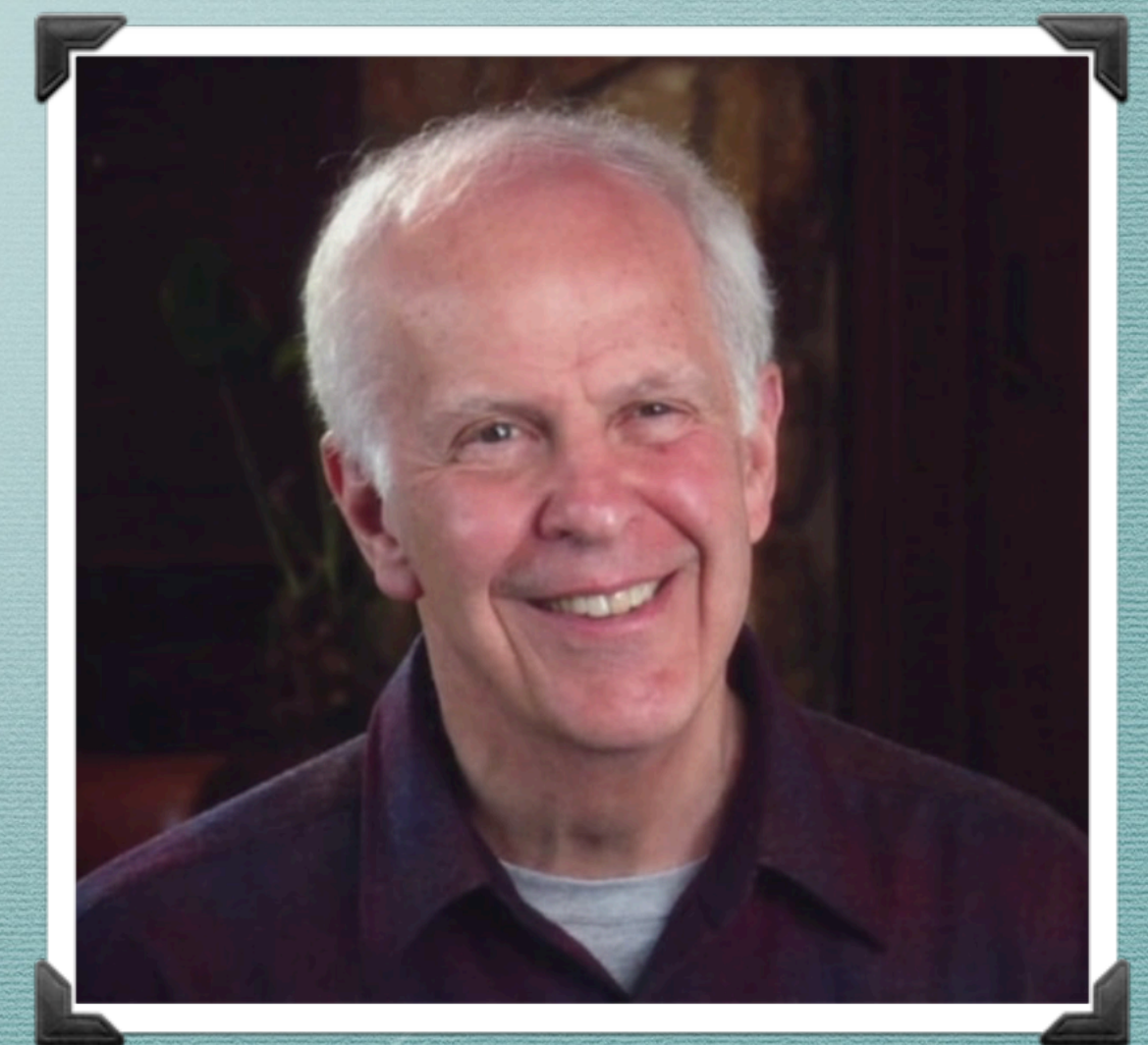
ON the BRINK
of EVERYTHING

Grace, Gravity & Getting Old

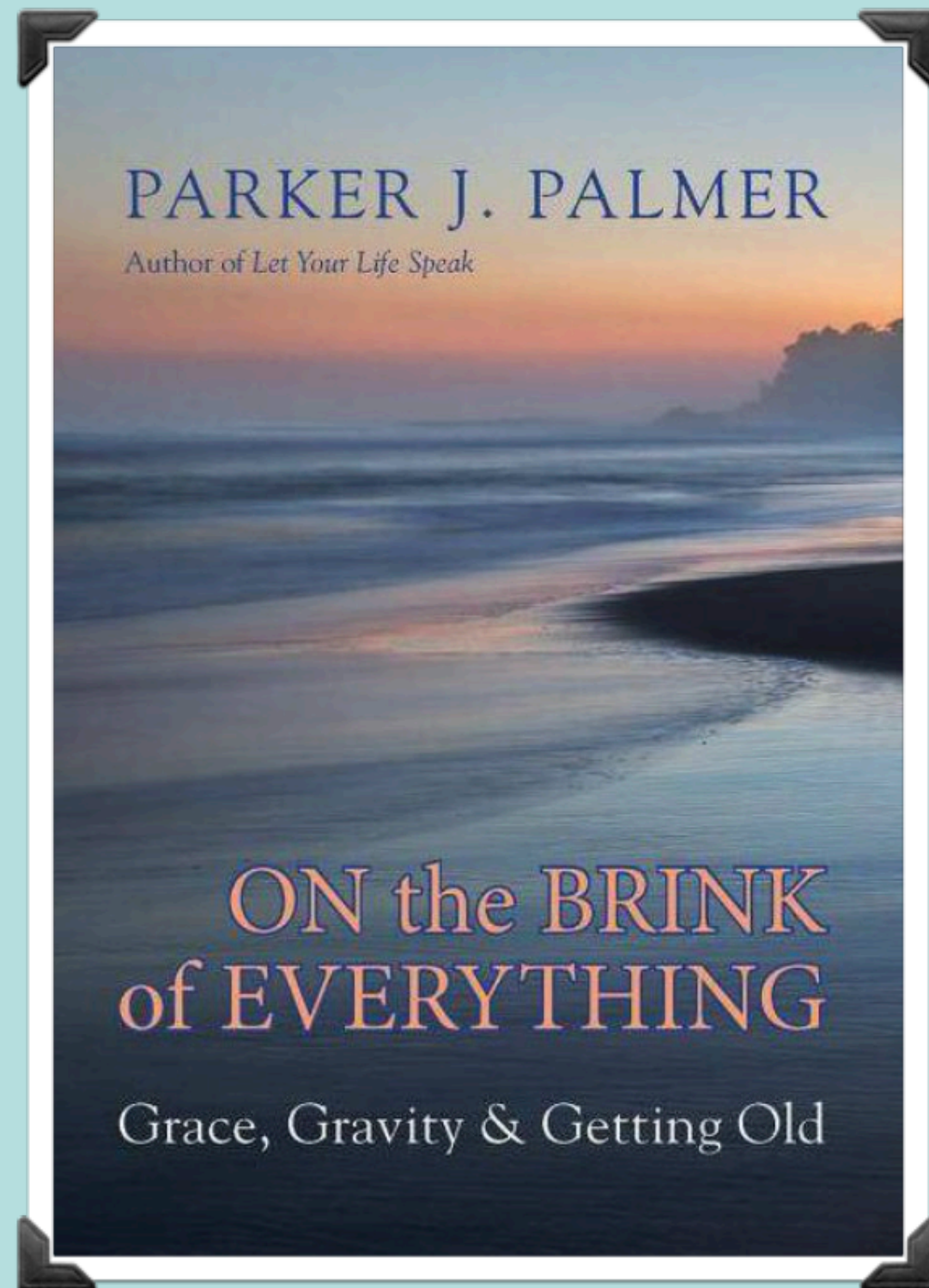
On the Brink of
Everything: Grace,
Gravity & Getting Old

Monday Night Book
Study at St. David's
United Church —

48 - 08



"We need to reframe aging as a passage of discovery and engagement. Not decline and inaction" (p.8)



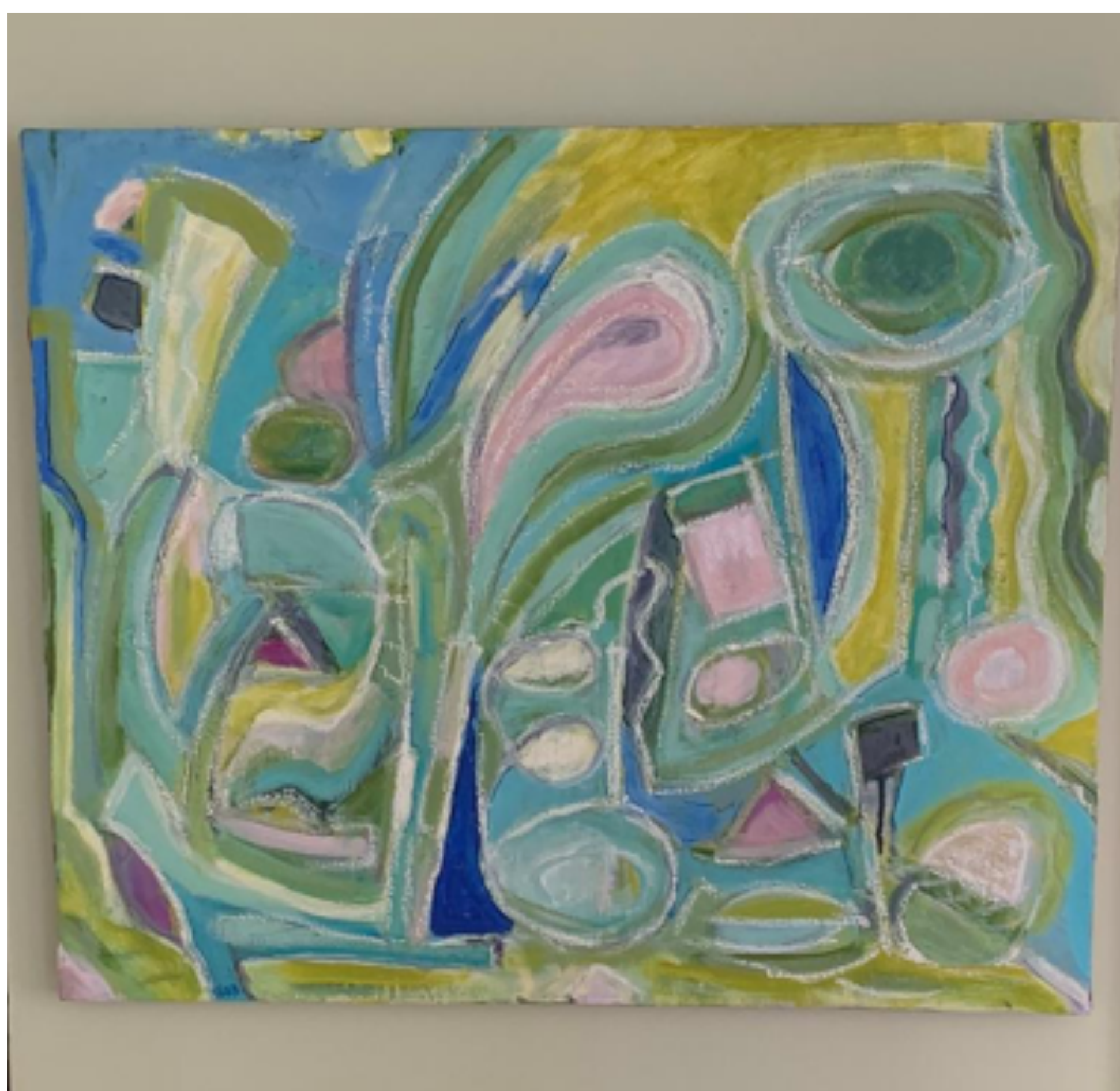
Monday Night Book Study

with

WAYNE, JOAN & BRENDA

ST. DAVID'S BOOK STUDY TEAM
ACTS WINTER 2022

BEFORE WE BEGIN



OPENING
with Michael

Reading Guide for Monday Nights

- * **Session Nine: Chapter VII & Postlude March 21**
- * **Session Ten: Conclusions and 'Where to from here' March 28**

housekeeping





The Inner Journey

**Reflection on the
meanings of “Keep
Reaching In:
Staying Engaged
with Your Soul”**



**Thomas Merton challenges us
to visit the illicit thoughts and
actions of our life experience.
(150-151)**



Setting the tone for Ch.6

- What is the inner life? - a largely silent solitary process of reflection that helps us reclaim the 'ground of our being'
- Wayne's personal experience during COVID

Fourteen Discoveries from Chapter Six

1. "When we go
inward, we are forced
to meet our demons
face to face."



Comments



**2. Aging and dying well requires
practice (p.147)**

3. “The older we get, the more our lives are enriched by lessons we weren't ready to learn when we were young.” (147)



4. Merton's "epiphany experience" in downtown Louisville. (151-2)



Our special spiritual experiences shared?

5. “If I want to help heal the world, I must heal myself.” (147)



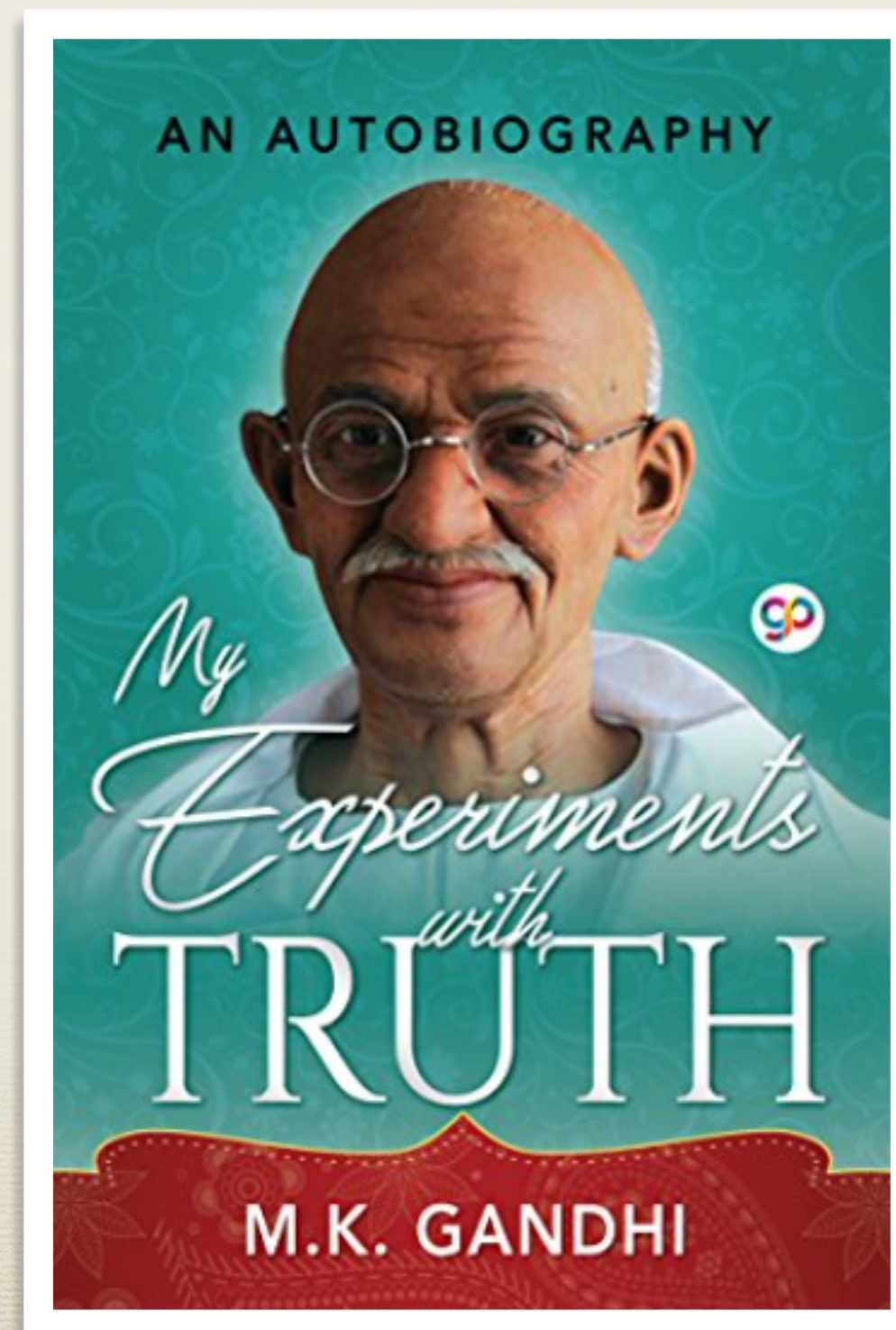
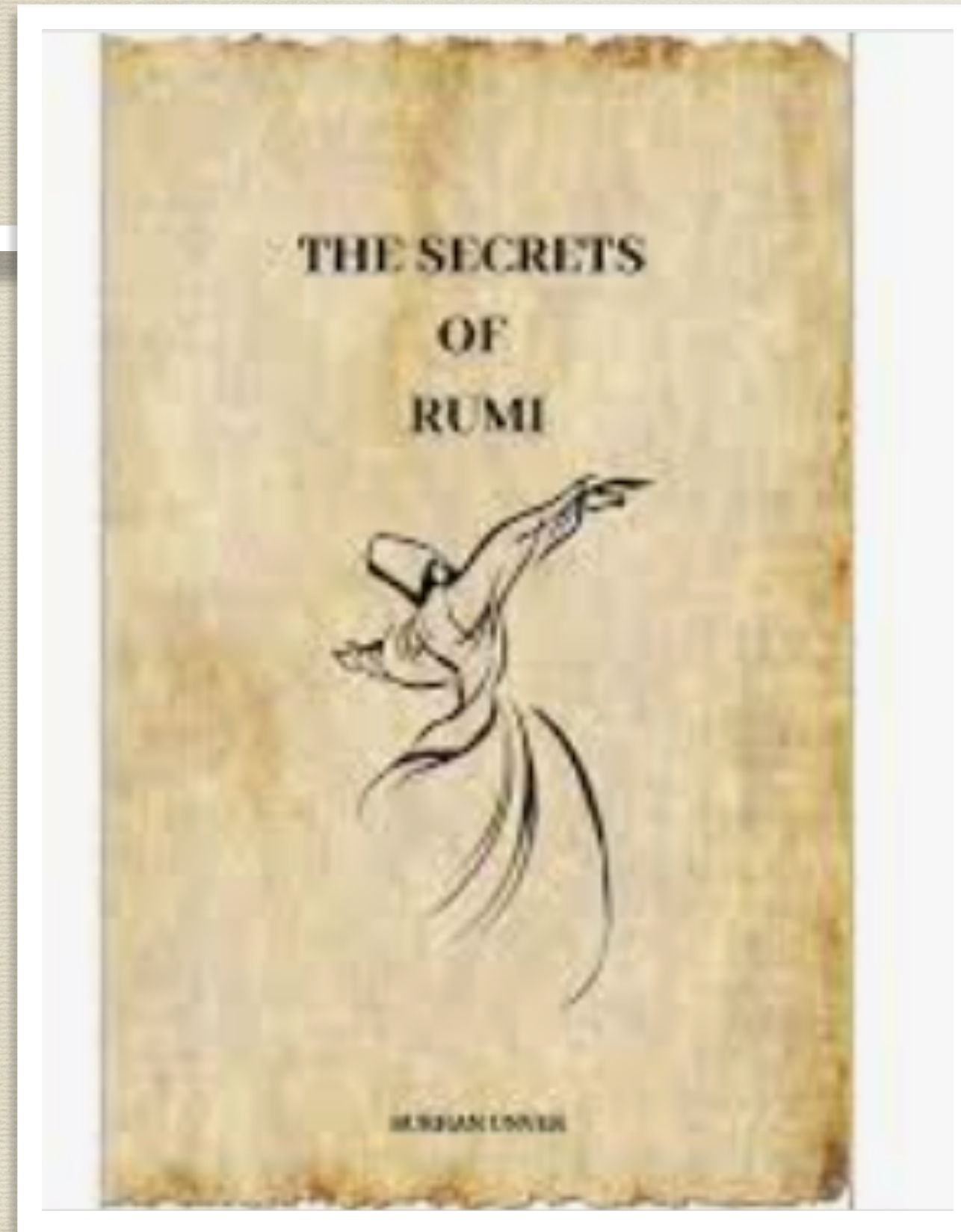


**6. “The
transformative
power of the
heart broken
open, not
apart.” (147)**



**7. “We experience, in the autumn of our lives, preparation for the ‘big death’ that emerges when we go over the brink.”
(p. 148)**

8. Spiritual guides to help us - Rumi, Gandhi



9. "White supremacy" vs. "revolutionary love"

- true love is more than good feelings; it is also a force in the face of injustice (p.157)
- it is embodied, courageous, demanding (158)



10. The heart can break in two very different ways:

- the brittle heart (breaks into shards)
- the supple heart (grows into a greater capacity for many forms of love) (161)



11. Turning suffering to new life

“ Only the
supple heart
can open us to
new life.” (164)



- The image of the crucifix

12. “Autumn in my part of the world is a season of bounty and beauty.” (165)

“All the “falling” that’s going on out there is full of promise – seeds planted, composed leaves.” (166)

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13.

- Say "yes" to both darkness and light
- Join the paradoxical dance
- The two conspire to make us healthy and whole (167)

I want to learn how to hold the paradoxical poles of my identity together, to embrace the profoundly opposite truths that my sense of self is deeply dependent on others dancing with me and that I still have a sense of self when no one wants to dance.

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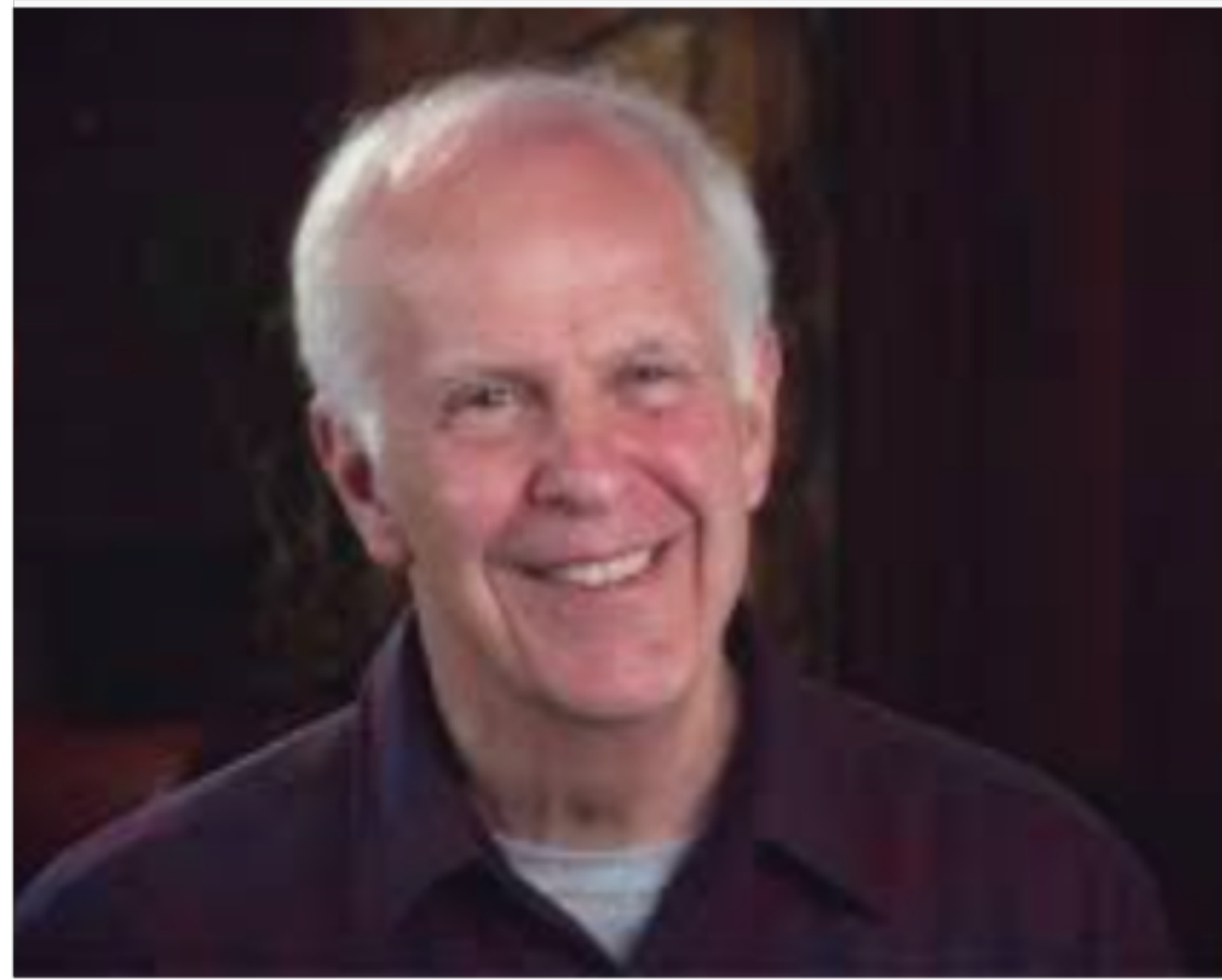


14. “Autumn reminds me to celebrate the primal power that is forever making all things new in me, in us, and in the natural world .”(168)

10. Key theme of this study -

“We need to reframe aging as a passage of discovery and engagement, not decline and inaction.”





[https://
www.newcomerpalmer.com/
home](https://www.newcomerpalmer.com/home)


<https://onbeing.org>

The Growing Edge Podcasts

[https://www.facebook.com/
parkerjpalmer](https://www.facebook.com/parkerjpalmer)

The Guest House

by Rumi



This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.
A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.
Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they are a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.
The dark thought, the shame, the
malice,
meet them at the door laughing and
invite them in.
Be grateful for whatever comes.
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.

Open Your Depths – July 31, 2020



Rainer Maria Rilke's
Love Poems to God

You see, I want a lot.
Maybe I want it all:
the darkness of each endless fall,
the shimmering light of each ascent.
So many are alive who don't seem to care.
Casual, easy, they move in the world
as though untouched.
But you take pleasure in the faces
of those who know they thirst.
You cherish those
who grip you for survival.
You are not dead yet, it's not too late
to open your depths by plunging into them
and drink in the life
that reveals itself quietly there.

–Rainer Maria Rilke, *Book of ...*

Three Essays and a Poem

Embracing the Human Frailty: “The older we get the more our lives are enriched by lessons we weren’t ready to learn when we were young.”

Confessing My Complicity: “No disease ... is more in need of a cure than racism – which breeds irrational fears that, in turn, breed the worst of political evil.”

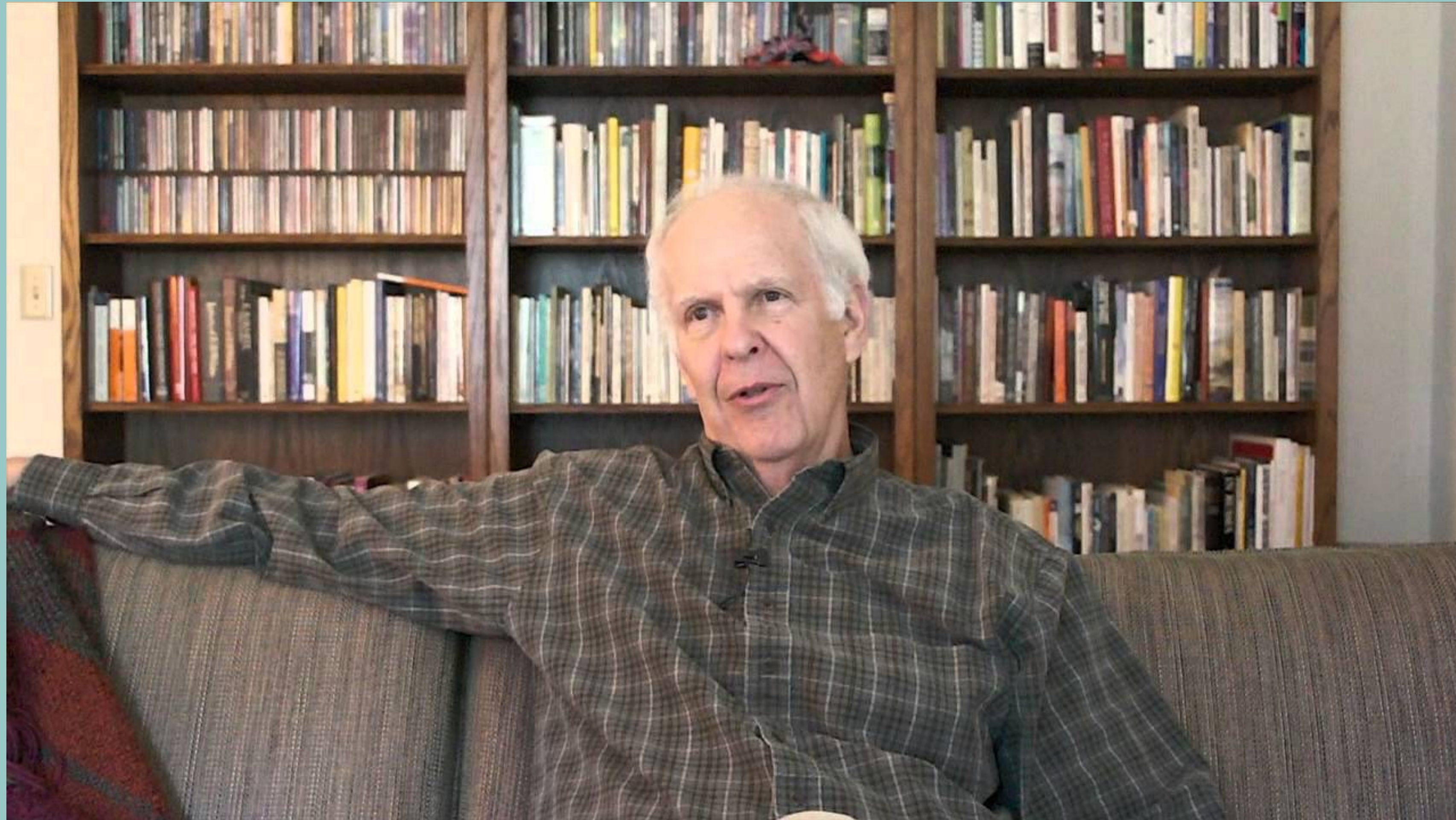
Heart Break and Hope for New Life: “”The broken open heart is a place of spiritual alchemy, where the dross of hard experience can be transformed into the gold of wisdom. All it takes is practice, practice, practice!

Appalachian Autumn

...The greens of spring and summer are long gone from the trees. Leaves of crimson, burnt umber and amber flare against the darkening sky, defying with beauty the soon-to-end cycle of one more round of life and love in this longtime landscape of suffering. The ancient earth takes it all in, compassionate and indifferent in the same breath. This is how I want to live, my failings and lost opportunities forgiven as they are under this sun — released in their triviality, resurrected as new life — enroute to dying with thanks and praise and no mind-begotten regrets.

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PORTRAITS OF FAITH WITH PARKER PALMER



**352014: SPIRITUAL INSIGHT— Holding Myself in the Light
(29:50 to 35:00)**

Grace, Gravity & Getting Old

Break out Rooms

2022: Some things to discuss

- *Human Frailty, Meeting our Demons Face to Face, Seasons of our Lives, Spiritual Guides**
- *Racism, White Supremacy and Radical Love**
- *“Holding Myself in the Light,” Epiphany Experiences, Aging and Dying well**
- *Paradox in our Lives/ Diversity in our Lives**

Feedback and Summary

**Great ideas and
stories that need to
be shared**

NEXT WEEK:

Session IX — March 21, 2022

**Read Chapter Seven & Postlude:
Over the Edge — Where We Go
When We Die**

Check out ‘Pause to Consider’

VOLUNTEER FOR OPENING

AND/OR CLOSING Next Week



Closing with Deb Charnuski



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