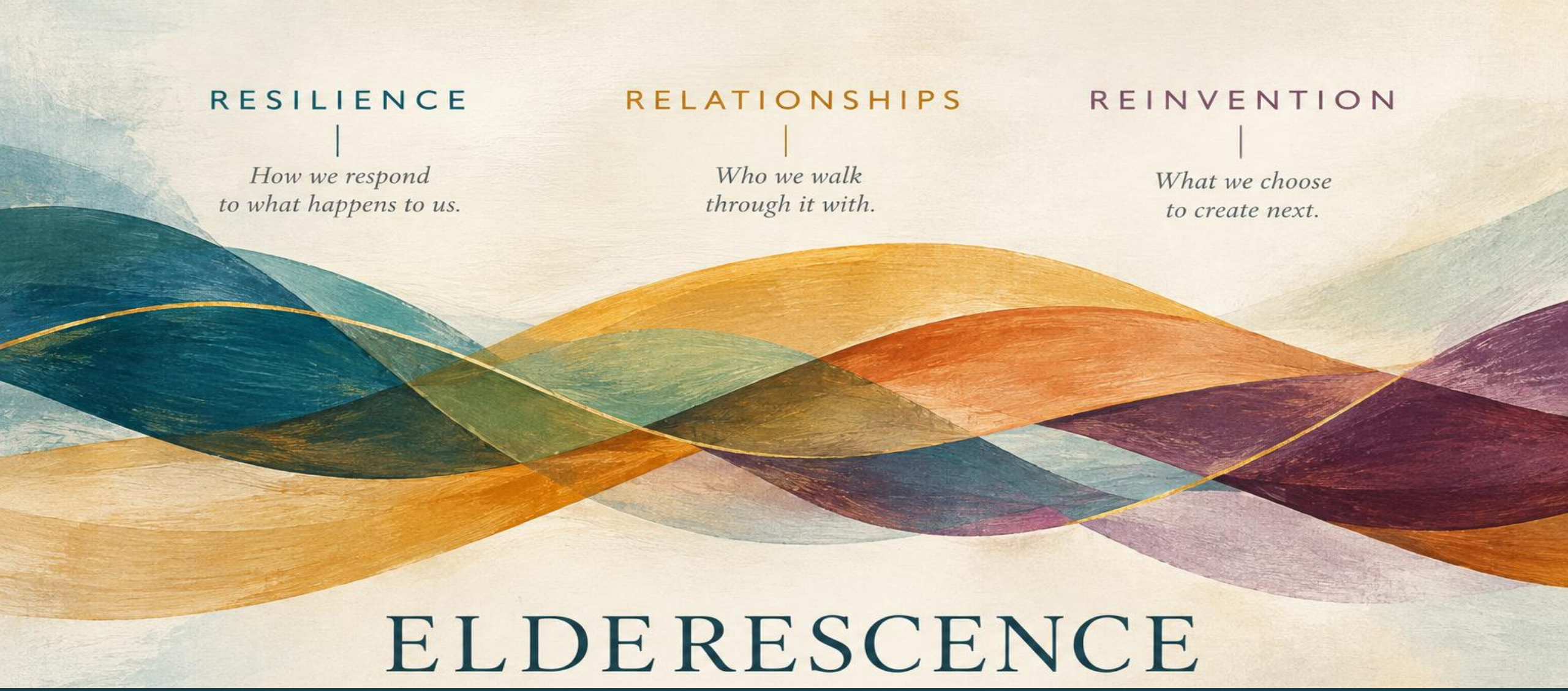


ELDERESCENCE

Three Threads; One Tapestry: Resilience, Relationships, and Reinvention

Elderescence: a new way of thinking about later life

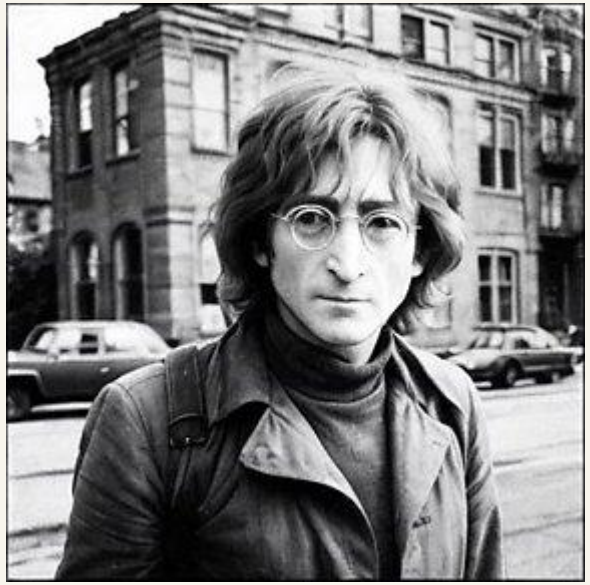
Childhood: growing

Adolescence: becoming

Adulthood: building

Elderescence: becoming again (*An opportunity for continued adult development, agency, connection, and possibility) (Who knew!)*

“Life is what happens to you while you’re busy making other plans.”



John Lennon
“Beautiful Boy”

Life changes the questions ...

- Retirement and changing identity
- Loss of people we love
- Changes in health or independence
- Caregiving and new responsibilities
- Moving, downsizing, or starting over

The real question we should ask:
What can I create from here?

Our FRAMEWORK for today....

Three threads. One tapestry.

RESILIENCE — how we respond to what happens to us

RELATIONSHIPS — who we walk through it with

REINVENTION — what we choose to create next

01 RESILIENCE

We don't always get to choose what happens. We can influence what happens next.

Resilience is Adapting When Life Changes

A Stressor → A Response → Skills for Adapting

- Dynamic process rather than a fixed trait
- It can change
- It can be strengthened



Testimony to Resilience

Resilience is Bigger than “Mindset”

Resilience lives in a system

Me ⟷ *People* ⟷ *Community* ⟷ *Environment*

RESILIENCE











Resilience isn’t:

- Never struggling
- Never feeling sad
- Doing everything yourself
- “Staying positive”
- Going back to exactly who you were before life threw a curve ball

The 5 Things Resilient People Do

- ADAPT — change expectations without abandoning values
- HAVE PERSPECTIVE — use experience to see the larger story
- AGENCY — identify what remains within your influence
- CONNECT --- Developing and maintaining relationships and asking for help
- MEANING — know what makes tomorrow worth getting up for

The gift of perspective

Remember:

You have survived things you once thought you couldn't.
You have adapted to changing circumstances.
You don't have to do it alone.

02 RELATIONSHIPS

Connection is not a luxury of aging well.
It is part of the infrastructure.

Social Connection Protects Health Across the Lifespan

- According to the CDC…

  “social connection protects you against chronic disease and other serious illness”

- According to The World Health Organization Global Report …

  “social connection can reduce inflammation, lower the risk of serious health problems and prevent early death”

Being surrounded isn't the same as being connected

Who knows you deeply?

Who makes you laugh, think, or grow?

Who needs you?

Who can you call when life gets hard?



Build a social ecosystem

Family – spouses, children and grandchildren own our hearts

Intimate — the people who know us deeply

Tribe – the people we can count on “no matter what”

Housemates – don’t rule them out!

Companion(s) — the people we enjoy life with

Intergenerational — people younger and older than ourselves

Community — people connected through shared purpose



Serendipitous – the unexpected relationships that keep life intereresting.

My unexpected Iowa gift ....

A 60-SECOND REFLECTION

The relationship audit

PEOPLE WHO ENERGIZE ME

PEOPLE WHO NEED ME

PEOPLE I NEED

What relationships need more attention? What new connections might I make?

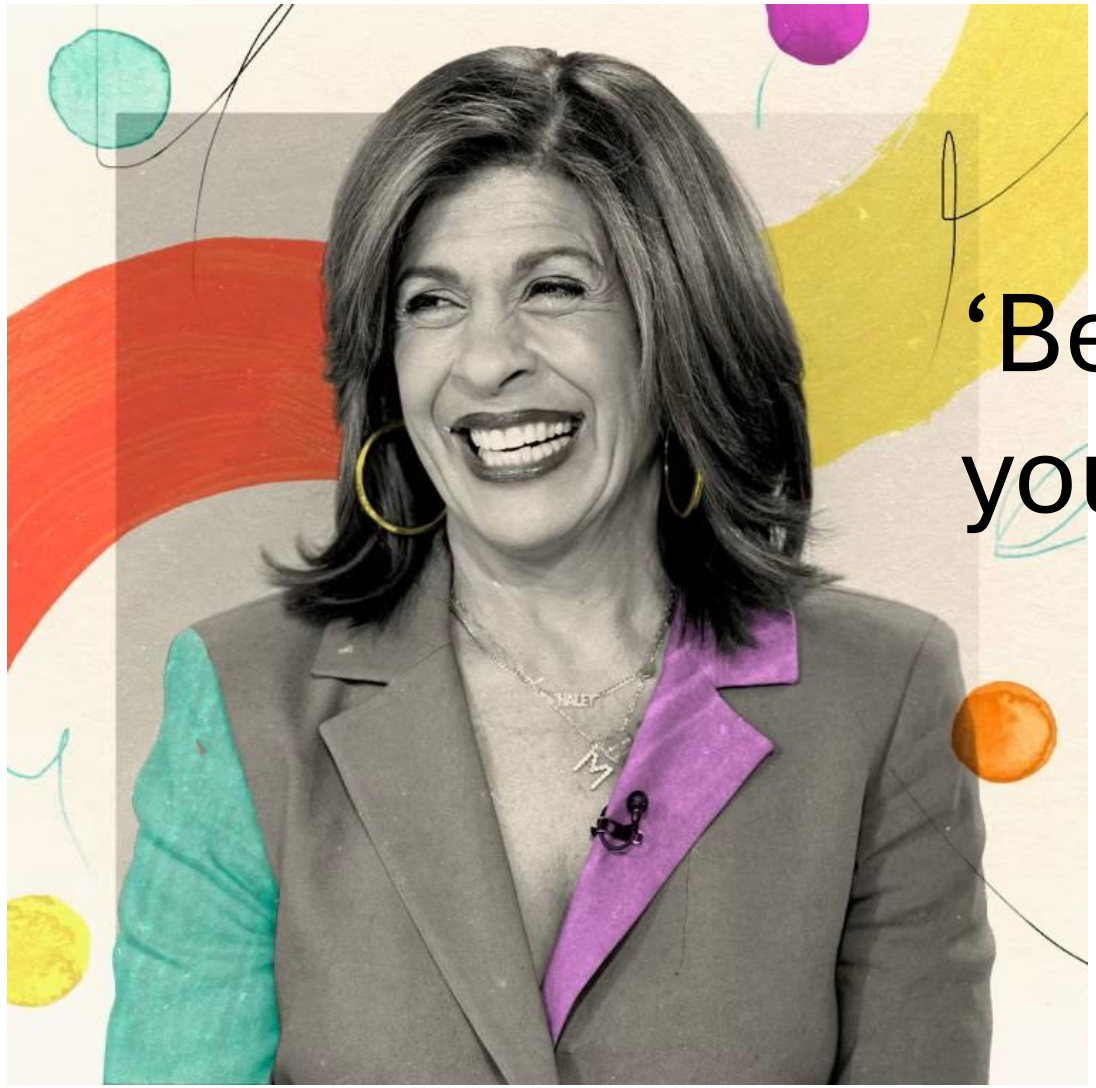
Connection creates courage

“We are more willing to imagine what's next when we don't have to imagine it alone.”



03 REINVENTION

The next chapter doesn't have to look like the last.



‘Be real, man. You're on your own ride’

Maybe we don't have one 'Third Act’; maybe we just keep evolving.

- Explore
- Contribute
- Create
- Learn
- Mentor
- Serve
- Start something new
- Then do it again

Reinvention can be radical—or quiet

- A new role, career, or venture
- A creative practice
- A new community
- A different way of using your experience
- A relationship rebuilt
- A familiar life approached with new intention

A SIMPLE FRAMEWORK

The reinvention formula

REIMAGINE — challenge assumptions about aging

RECONNECT — identify what and who gives life energy

REINVENT — create, learn, explore, or contribute in a new way

Permission to become someone new

“Who would you become if you stopped worrying about whether it was too late?”

WEAVING THE THREADS TOGETHER

Resilience helps us endure.

Relationships help us belong.

Reinvention helps us become.

Three threads. One life.

RESILIENCE + RELATIONSHIPS + REINVENTION

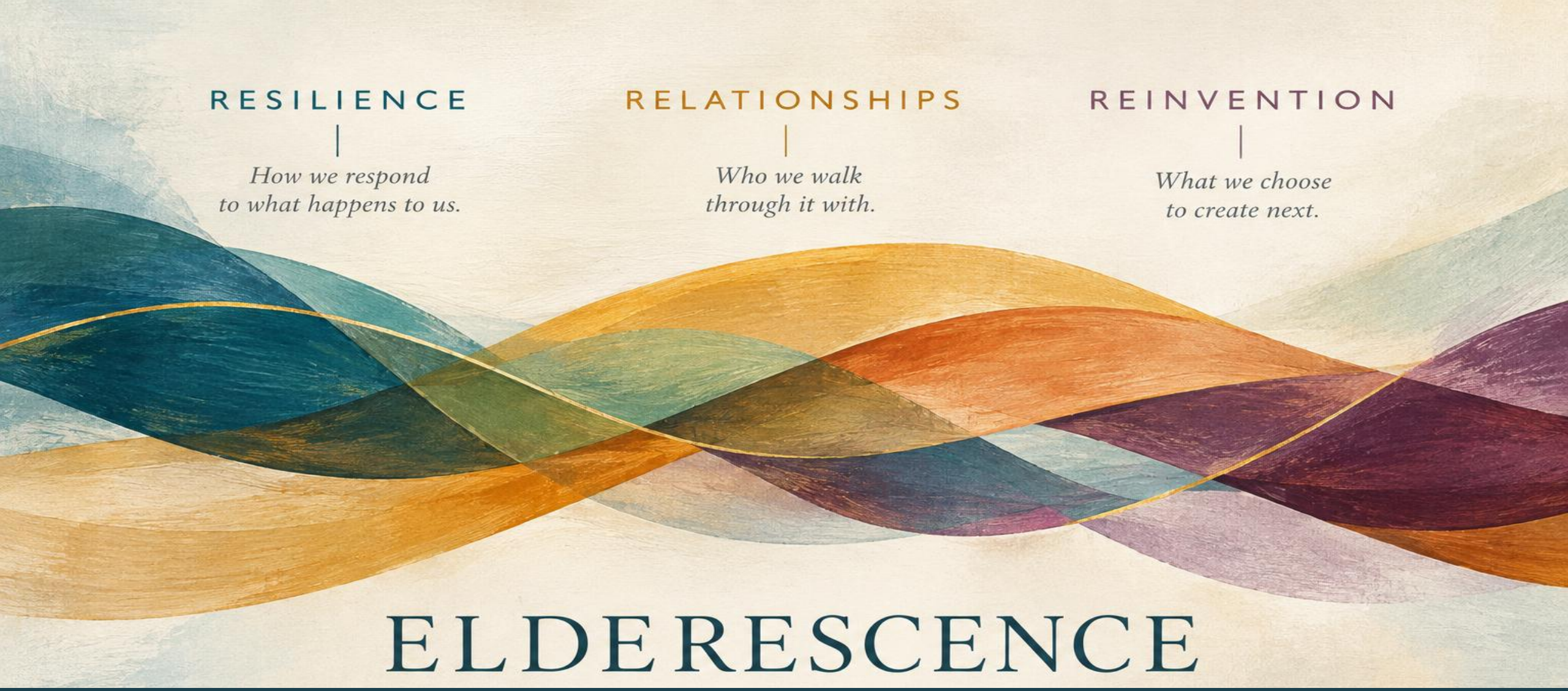
Together they create a life that can bend without breaking, connect without shrinking, and change without losing its meaning.

TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Your elderescence challenge

1. What do I need to let go of?
2. Who do I want beside me?
3. What's waiting to be reinvented?

Thoughts to share ...



ELDERESCENCE

Thank you!