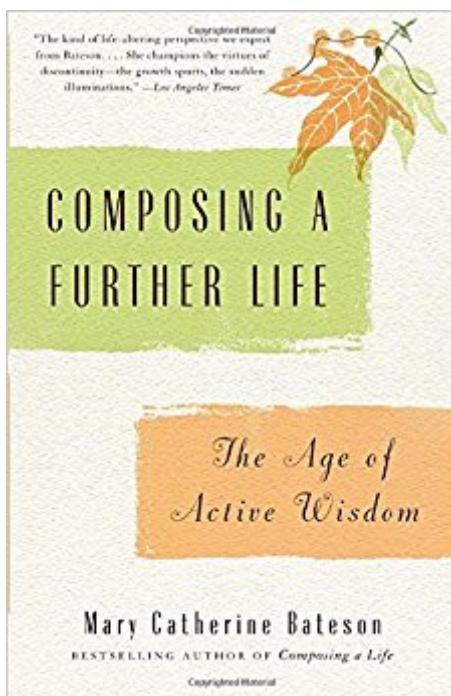


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# Composing A Further Life: The Age Of Active Wisdom



## Synopsis

Mary Catherine Bateson—author of the landmark bestseller *Composing a Life*—gives us an inspiring exploration of a new life stage that she calls Adulthood II, a result of the longer life spans and greater resources we now enjoy. In *Composing a Further Life*, Bateson redefines old age as an opportunity to reinvent ourselves and challenges us to use it to pursue new sources of meaning and ways to contribute to society. Bateson shares the stories of men and women who are flourishing examples of this “age of active wisdom”—from a retired boatyard worker turned silversmith to a famous actress to a former foundation president exploring the crucial role of grandparents in our society. Retiring no longer means withdrawing from life, but engaging with it more deeply, and *Composing a Further Life* points the way.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Picking up where she left off in *Composing a Life* (1991), anthropologist Bateson interviews six older individuals, from a retired Maine boatyard worker to Jane Fonda, who have accomplished most of their life goals but actively seek new and satisfying ways to live robust lives. Adulthood II, as Bateson calls this period, is characterized by the wisdom culled from long lives and rich experience combined with freedom from the day-to-day responsibilities of work and raising children. Life in this stage is an “improvisational art form calling for imagination and the willingness to learn.” Bateson follows Hank Lawson, a former boatyard metalworker, and his wife, Jane, from Maine to their retirement in Tucson, Ariz. There Hank turned his knowledge of tools and metal to making jewelry

from precious metals and semiprecious stones. Liberated by the move from the ocean to the mountains, the Lawsons are flourishing, continually learning new things and refashioning their lives in a new place. Because Bateson lets various people retell their own stories of grappling with the challenges and the freedom of Adulthood II, her book is a deep meditation on the value of longevity and an inspiring testimony to the power and possibilities that come with growing older. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Bateson, a anthropology professor, visiting scholar at the Center on Aging and Work/Workplace Flexibility at Boston College, and author of the best-selling *Composing a Life* (1991), here elucidates her concept of an emerging second stage of adulthood that precedes old age that she labels Adulthood II. Today, as grandparents, she says, are increasingly able to combine continuing mobility with their depth of experience, hence, the age of active wisdom. This model has been a work-in-progress for Bateson, its genesis the time she spent as a teaching assistant for the psychologist Erik Erikson's course on the human life cycles, or eight ages of man. She looked to his theories as she passed through stages of her own life, and now, in her seventies, she interviews others who are doing similar research on this enriched stage of adulthood, including such individuals as Jane Fonda, and who are searching for the relationship between spirituality and age. Especially in light of 9/11, Bateson considers herself an activist for peace and justice and stresses the importance, in our years of unanticipated longevity, to continue to be willing to learn. --Deborah Donovan --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Timely received. Excellent condition. Very fine! No problems. No critical comments. Very satisfied. No problems. I don't have anything more to say, thank you!

This book could bring an important topic of conversation and action to the table. This story is an individual story with an important theme. While the conversation is important across many ages, cultures, and beliefs, the book does not necessarily prompt a dynamic and wise response. It is reflective and personal.

It was ok, but there was a lot telling of personal stories that did not really seem to provide a lot of "meat" to the point of composing a further life. I would not read it if I had it to do over again.

I was bored with the length of the interviews though Jane Fonda came through clearer than the others. The whole book was summed up in the last chapter...just read the last couple of chapters and you got the message.

too many name droppings. Liked her first book better

I felt as if the author tried too hard to do something that would be worthy to stand up to her mother, Margaret Mead. And, I don't think she made as worthy a contribution.

Content is a 5, organization is a 4. Bateson is the daughter of cultural anthropologist Margaret Meade and philosopher Gregory Bateson. She points out that in the last century, 30 years have been added to the expected life span, a special developmental period that has never existed before. She calls it Adulthood II, a period when those of us who have reached these years are "composing a further life." She urges us to use our wisdom to shape a meaningful future for our grandchildren and great grandchildren. She uses the life stories of people with differing educational, racial, sexual, career and religious perspectives to explore this new life stage.

I enjoyed Composing A Life, but this book is even better. Particularly interesting is the section about people in their 60s returning to an earlier interest and, from the perspective of their adult experience and background, weaving it into the tapestry of the "active wisdom" stage of life. This has happened with several of my friends, colleagues and clients; they found it was perfect timing in their 60s to pursue a specific interest which improved their work or fulfilled them in a way unique to them. I also liked the part about foundations achieving their mission and passing out of existence. The author was involved for 30 years with a foundation that furthered her parents' work (Gregory Bateson's and Margaret Mead's) but decided it was time to let it go and move on: "mission accomplished." Bateson's "three affirmations" for the active wisdom stage are noteworthy. Though we might have phrased it differently, the concept will resonate for many of us. Kathleen Burt, Archetypes of the Zodiac;[[ASIN:0981393934 Beyond the Mask: The Rising Sign - Part I: Aries - Virgo] Part II Libra-Pisces.

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