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Soul Age

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This is one of the most useful concepts I've ever come across, because it offers a possible answer to the questions, Why do some people seem so wise, while others are such fools? If we all start out the same at birth, how do we get to be so different? And why is it so hard to get someone to change their mind?

I learned about soul age as part of the Michael Teachings. I would guess the same concept also exists in other teachings, although I haven't seen it.

The concept starts from the premise that we live many lives in succession. Our soul continues on from life to life, and it remembers what it has learned in past lives and starts out each new life with that knowledge, even though it does not remember the last life, per se. So, if in our last life we killed someone and discovered that it wasn't such a great idea, we are born into this life with that understanding, even though we don't recall how we got it.

Just as a person goes through a series of developmental stages as they grow up from being an infant into being an adult, our souls grow up by gradually going through a series of stages. And amazingly enough, the stages our souls go through in their long journey are very similar to the ones an individual person goes through in each life. Just as a person starts out as an infant, then becomes a child, then a teenager, then an adult, and finally an elder, so a soul goes through a very similar series of stages. In order to keep things simple, I have kept the names for the various soul ages that are used in the Michael Teachings

We start out as **infant souls**. We are in our first few lives, we don't know how our body or anything on the physical plane works, so we're pretty helpless and dependent for our whole lives. Often these people spend their entire lives in some sort of institution that takes care of them.

After we get the hang of things a little bit, we graduate to being a **baby soul**. We want to explore and grow, but only within the container of some bigger authority. We want to be told what is right and what is wrong. We want a clear set of rules to guide us, and we want the reassurance of seeing the rules enforced by rewards and punishments. We see ourselves as 'children of God' (not adults of God). People who are attracted to the fundamentalist wings of any religion are typically in this stage. They are attracted because the clear rules and structures make them feel safe.

The next step is leaving home and the parent's rules and trying to make it on your own, the **young soul** stage. The focus here is on independence and individual success, not on others. You can see this played out in how competitive and self-centered some teens and young adults tend to be. It's a kind of 'law of the jungle, survival of the fittest' attitude. The goal is personal success at any price. These attitudes are prevalent in the Libertarian and Republican parties, so people who are in this

stage tend to be attracted to those parties.

Next comes the **mature soul** stage. Here, the person begins to notice that they have stepped on a lot of people's faces in their scramble to the top. They still want to succeed, but they start to think more about how their actions affect others. Gradually, relationship and community become more important than financial success. Their sense of self is expanding to include people beyond their immediate family or tribe. In pushing for equal rights, social security, medicare and welfare programs, the Democratic party demonstrates these attitudes.

Eventually, a person starts to see the larger map of the developmental stages. They realize that, just as a 15 year old is not inherently better than a 5 year old, a person with an adult soul is not inherently better than a person with a child soul. Even though they do have different capacities and perspectives, those two people are just in different developmental stages and working on mastering different developmental tasks. Seeing the larger process and valuing all of it is the perspective of the **old soul**. Whereas younger souls tend to fight and crusade for their particular point of view, an old soul is more likely to trust the process and just let things be. They know that it is all part of a larger, perfect process, so they are content to just let it unfold. They are more into love and acceptance than activism.

Each time you are born, your body starts again at the beginning of the developmental stages, but your soul has been through this all many times before and already knows some of the journey. It brings with it all the wisdom it has accumulated from your past lives. That makes moving through the stages that your soul has already mastered fairly easy, and you move pretty quickly through that territory. When you get to the new territory, the part your soul hasn't learned yet, your growth slows down and you start doing the real work of this lifetime, wrestling with the developmental tasks of that stage. So a person might be born with a mature soul, move fairly rapidly through the infant, baby, and young soul stages, and then spend the rest of their life making just a little more headway in the mature soul stage. Another person might be born with a baby soul, move rapidly through the infant soul stage, and then spend the rest of their life mastering baby soul tasks.

For me, the gift of this perspective has been the idea that it is okay for people to be in different stages than I'm in. Before I learned about soul ages, I was baffled by the wide variation in people's views about life, religion, politics, etc. I saw how judgmental some people were, and I tried out being judgmental, too. For a while, I thought I was supposed to jump in and start fighting to save the world. It has been a real relief to entertain the idea that maybe we're all learning what we came here to learn, and I can relax and just do my part.