

MANIFESTED SOUL AGE

By Shepherd Hoodwin

There are five main soul ages on the physical plane—*infant, baby, young, mature,* and *old*—each with seven levels. Each level can take several lifetimes to complete. Our soul age defines the focus of our lessons: either *survival, structure, achievement, relationship, or context*, respectively. Our true soul age denotes our inner focus and the highest level we have experienced in any lifetime. Our manifested soul age suggests our outer focus, what our current day-to-day lessons are about.

There's a concept in biology called "recapitulation," which is "the repetition of an evolutionary process during development." That happens in the womb, as fetuses retrace earlier stages of human evolution. Something similar happens with soul age.

In every lifetime, one might say that we manifest first-level infant at birth, since our body is not yet capable of sustaining a larger perspective—we have to focus on infant-soul-like lessons such as survival. Our true soul age may be evident, but it is not engaged. Our body's maturity, not our soul's, largely determines our perspective and lessons. In a sense, a toddler can manifest no higher than baby soul, and a youngster can manifest no older than young, but the concept of manifesting doesn't quite fit, since before adolescence, we're just kids. That's why the children's Michael Reading charts I channel usually say "Manifesting: Not applicable until around age 14." In adolescence, the journey toward adulthood begins. Intellectual and emotional flexibility increase, enlarging our capacity for choice. That makes it possible to manifest our true soul age or to move in the direction of doing so.

Age fourteen is a little arbitrary, but by then, most adolescents have begun to settle into their maturing body. For some, it might not be until fifteen or even sixteen; for others, manifested age could be channeled at thirteen. In some traditions, thirteen marks the beginning of adulthood.

Of course, the brain and body continue to develop after adolescence. It is now thought that the brain isn't fully mature until around age thirty, but once the

body is in the beginning stages of maturity, at least hormonally, its ability to manifest older ages expands.

For example, the mature cycle focuses a lot on relationships, including sexual ones. We are all sexual beings, including children to some degree, but they are obviously not physically or emotionally equipped to have sexual relationships. Therefore, a mature soul who is ten years old cannot manifest mature in that way, although there may be hints of what is to come, such as crushes.

It is possible to begin manifesting our true soul age anytime during adulthood, including quite late in life. Commonly, old souls don't manifest until their thirties or later, since they have more steps to retrace than younger souls do. However, especially when the soul is strongly asserting itself, there are cases in which old souls manifest much younger

Manifesting our soul age is not the same as manifesting our essence. If we were imprinted to try to be someone we're not, releasing that imprinting allows our genuine role, overleaves, and life path to emerge. We will still sometimes be in the negative poles, but at least they are *our* negative poles. Manifesting our true age has a narrower meaning, referring to focusing on our soul's new lessons rather than reviewing earlier ones. However, manifesting our essence can make that easier.

We don't necessarily manifest the same age in all aspects of our life. When dictating manifested age, Michael could specify that someone is manifesting, for example, third-level young in career, fifth-level mature in relationships, and old in most other areas. The energies that these perspectives generate combine to form a composite manifested age of, say, seventh-level mature. On my charts, Michael just dictates this—the average level of the personality's perspective at a given time. Since it's an average, it may not seem to entirely fit.

If Michael dictates "Same," manifested and true soul ages match. We are not necessarily manifesting our age in every area of life, but in general, we have "caught up" with ourselves; Michael may be rounding up.

Moving up a level in our true age can take several lifetimes, but we can move through a level of our manifested age quite quickly, even in a matter of months, if it doesn't hold any "snags" for us.

Manifested age can become stuck at a certain level, at least in some area of our life. For example, mature souls may manifest young in relationships because they don't want to face some difficult relationship issues—perhaps they're more comfortable focusing on success. Old souls may manifest mature because they are unwilling to give up some attachments. It is parallel to adults who are unwilling to face childhood traumas and who therefore stay emotionally stuck at the age the trauma occurred.

We also might deliberately manifest at a particular level longer than would otherwise be necessary in order to review or complete some lessons. Old souls manifesting mature may have developed well relative to romantic relationships while still a mature soul but may still need some work with friendships (or vice versa), so now they're filling in some gaps in their experience. Mature souls manifesting young may need a brush-up on lessons regarding success and money, and may spend the first half of their life focused on business endeavors. That is not to say that everyone working in the business world is manifesting young—it is more individual than that. Our manifested age is our dominant focus, no matter what we are doing. Those manifesting mature in business are likely to be most interested in its relationship aspect, even if they spend a lot of time working with its success aspect.

The majority of people don't manifest their age. Sometimes people are distressed to learn that they aren't—they see it as a sign that they are behind in their spiritual growth. That is not necessarily the case. This idea stems in part from the mistaken belief that older is better when it comes to soul age. It's true that we may feel more integrated when we manifest our age, since our inner and outer perspectives are aligned. Also, not manifesting our age can make it harder (but not impossible) to advance to the next level if we're ready. However, a more accurate indication of where we are spiritually is how much we are in our positive poles. Furthermore, a gap of a level or two is generally not significant. A big gap in an older person is more likely to suggest a problem, but in any case, if we "bloom where we're planted," we'll take advantage of the lessons offered by where we are and gracefully move forward.

[My book *Journey of Your Soul* goes into manifested soul age in more detail on pages 319–323 of the current edition.]