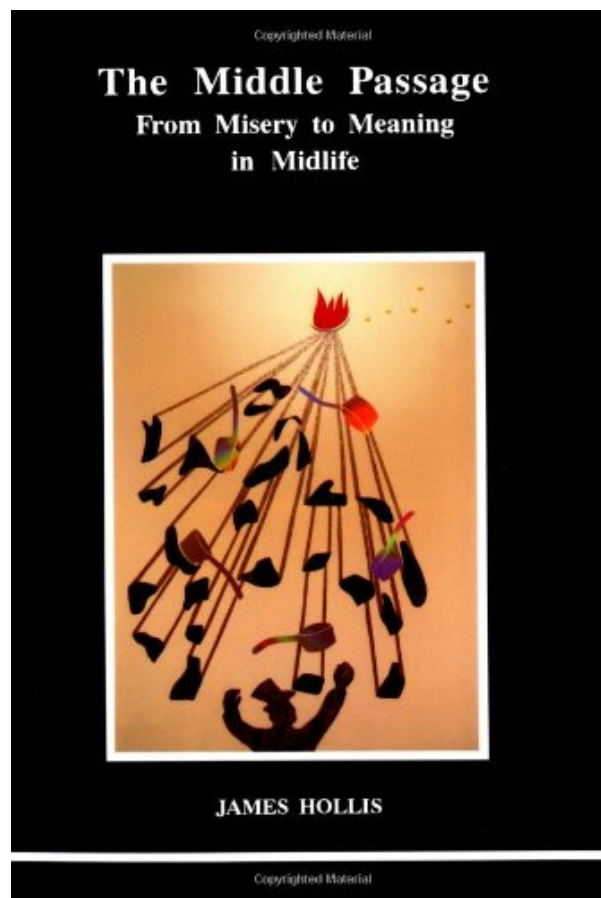


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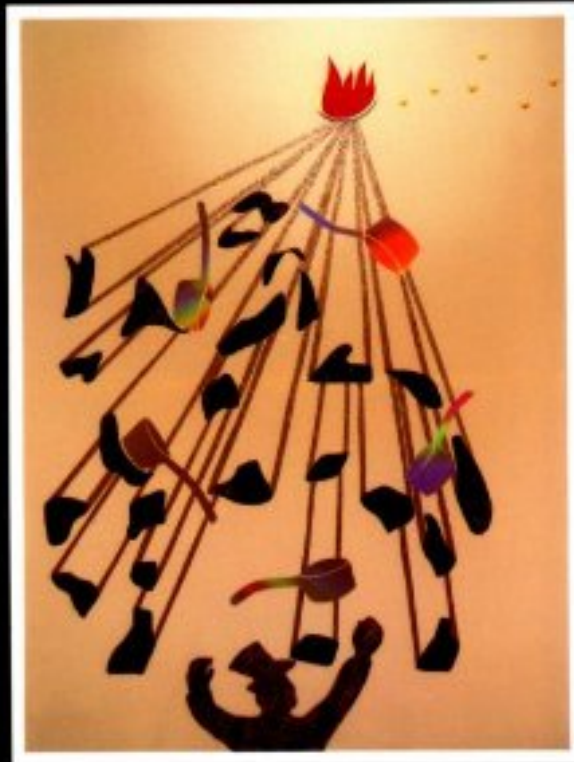
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The Middle Passage

From Misery to Meaning in Midlife



JAMES HOLLIS

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About the Author

James Hollis, Ph.D. is a Zurich-trained Jungian analyst. He is the acclaimed author of seven other books in this series. He lives in Houston, Texas, where he is director of the C.G. Jung Educational Center.

From AudioFile

Jungian analyst James Hollis looks at that point in life when people return to questioning who they are and where they're going. While it's often called a mid-life crisis, Hollis prefers to call it a passage--after all, it's not a crisis for everyone. Reading his own work, Hollis discusses the pressures that lead to this passage, points out the weight of past influences, and offers suggestions on how to navigate these treacherous waters. With a calm tone and a friendly voice, Hollis leads listeners through this perilous period and advises on ways to negotiate it. While the narration is fine, the book itself is dense, and listeners may need to take some time to reflect on some of its profound ideas. K.M. © AudioFile 2007, Portland, Maine-- Copyright © AudioFile, Portland, Maine

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Author James Hollis's eloquent reading provides the listener with an accessible and yet profound understanding of a universal condition—or what is commonly referred to as the Mid-life crisis. The book shows how we may travel this Middle Passage consciously, thereby rendering our lives more meaningful and the second half of life immeasurably richer.

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If you want to not be insane and bitter past 50, read this!

By DB361

This is the BEST book about getting safely to the other side of 50. It is NOT pop-psyche or New Age. It is solid Jungian psychology. It is written to and for an educated audience but is jargon free. His prose is very good. It is a short book and therefore one that actually can be read in a couple of sittings. It shows the process of how one develops survival mechanisms at an early age that become threadbare in adulthood, but are very hard to recognize and change without some honest reflection and hard work. But he makes an excellent case that failing to do the work leads to a deepening of the misery one often experiences at the

onset of mid-life. Hollis tells the reader what must be done, and makes it seem exciting rather than painful.

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful.

More tools from the good doctor

By Steve

I picked this book up shortly after finishing another Hollis book called "Why Good People Do Bad Things." I was so impressed by that book that I wanted to delve further into Hollis' Jungian take on life and I was not disappointed.

"The Middle Passage" examines many of the same concepts but focuses more on that time in our life when we seem to seek meaning with greater desperation than when we were younger. It really is a special time and this book encourages the reader to not only celebrate the gifts this milestone in life provides, but to furthermore seize the opportunities to re-define ourselves on our own terms and once and for all destroy the roots of angst and frustration.

This book helps make sense of the jumble of conflicted emotions, duplicity, and self-destructiveness that lingers in all of us and comes to an ugly head during this transitional phase of life. Understanding why and what is the most beneficial tool that Hollis provides, and armed with it, I can dissect myself with the precision and sense of purpose that had heretofore been little more than shouts into the void and the maddening cycle of failure. As a teacher, I can appreciate the value in being given the chance to help myself instead of being provided with water-downed solutions that build no independence and problem-solving skills. Hollis does just that and I will forever be indebted to his wealth of understanding of the human psyche and his willingness to share it with the rest of us.

The seeds Hollis plants demand painful and thorough self-analysis to bear fruit. The look within might be too frightening for many or simply too difficult for those seeking soft answers and blankets of comfort instead of chilling realities. If you are ready to take the journey or are already down the path and finding yourself a bit lost, use this psychological map. It bears repeating of the cliché that you can not know where you are going if you don't know where you've been.

146 of 149 people found the following review helpful.

Remember the pain is a symptom, and you must find the cause

By C. Collins

James Hollis had written a short but well thought out book on the midlife crisis. The term "mid-life crisis" would not be a term Hollis would use, because he sees the conflicts and disturbances that happen at mid-life as wonderful warnings that new directions are needed to achieve a meaningful life. He compares the depression, the loss of energy, the unexplained anger, the flare up of passion, as earthquake type pressures that give evidence of the rumblings below.

He compares the magic thinking of children, to the heroic thinking of young adulthood, to the more realistic thinking of the second adulthood. It is during this second adulthood that we must recognize what behavior patterns we bring from our early family of origin and whether those patterns have become maladaptive rather than adaptive. He asks us to be aware of emotional outbursts or unrealistic passions of any type that signal that an unresolved complex still directs us emotionally and may be blocking our growth. He asks us to be willing to go into the luminous darkness within to seek answers, after all, by midlife you should have seen enough of the world to know that answers rarely lie outside of ourselves.

I enjoyed the poetry of Tennyson, Rilke, and Kazantzakis that he uses throughout the book. I especially liked the linkage to Tennyson's Ulysses, a poem that honors the fact that Ulysses' greatest adventures happen after mid-life.

Hollis believes the greatest tragedy during the midlife crisis is to remain unconscious and never examine the illusions, concepts, complexes, and dark shadows within us. After all, as we reach mid-life, this is the last chance for a meaningful life. The meaningful life is a higher goal that the happy life for both Jung and Hollis.

Hollis links his concepts to the ancient Greek dramatic concept of the tragic flaw. This flaw is usually

unconscious and eventually brings the hero to ruin, at which point, his eyes are opened and he sees beyond the veil of illusion under which he has acted.

Hollis would say that the meaningful midlife is one in which ego needs are met and the ego becomes a tool, not an ever hungry brat requiring constant feeding. The wise adult uses the ego to achieve a meaningful life, but does not have to achieve fame and fortune to feed this bottomless belly. The complexes are identified when unexplained or unwarranted anger and passion occur. After all these are just sign posts of an inner strategy failing to operate as it did back in childhood. The shadow has been accepted so that one's faults are put in perspective and do not weigh one down day after day with guilt and flashbacks and recriminations. This gives us the strength to go into the final years where one by one we lose all those whom we have loved and eventually they will lose us.

Jung asks "Are we related to something infinite or not?" and he defines life as a luminous spell between two dark mysteries. Coming through the mid-life crisis allows us to personally answer these thoughts and concepts.

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