

# A Cumulative Life



“People, like trees, are cumulative. Trees develop a new ring for every year of life just as humans develop throughout the years by building upon every thought, feeling, and experience which they have stored in their minds and bodies. As we grow older, we do not stop being one age when we become the next age, nor do we lose the person we used to be when we become our newer, older selves.

Somewhere inside us we are all the ages we have ever been. We’re the 3-year-old who got bit by the dog. We’re the 6-year-old our mother lost track of at the mall. We’re the 10-year-old who got tickled until we wet our pants. We’re the 13-year-old shy kid with zits. We’re the 16-year-old no one asked to prom, and so on. We walk around in the bodies of adults until someone presses the right button and summons up one of those kids.

In other words, we might feel like a functional adult in the morning and be catapulted into trauma in the afternoon by a comment or experience over which we had no control.

The center of the tree, like us, is quite small in the beginning. Throughout its lifetime, the tree builds upon its core. Like a tree, all the ‘rings’ of our lives comprise who we are today. The very energy that gives us life comes through them. Although we may not know it, the way we thought when our ‘rings’ developed still influences our thinking today. Our sense of self is informed by the way we interpreted our life experiences during the former years of life.” -Cathy Thorpe