

Exploring elderhood at Findhorn Foundation

Rich, expansive, poignant, nurturing and more...

In February 2013, I brought a vision to fruition: co-leading a week-long programme at [Findhorn Foundation](#) on elderhood. My co-facilitator Ineke and I, had high hopes for the week, which were more than fulfilled: a tribute to the quality of our participants, to the magic of this spiritual community, and the great support we received from the community there.

We hoped to explore elderhood on the inner and outer, individual and collective levels, and amply fulfilled this hope. We dug below the fear and denial so common about ageing and dying, and recognised the gifts and joys of elderhood, as well as the losses. As one participant said, "When time and energy are limited, and health is variable, it's an invitation to live wisely, focus on what really matters, enjoy every moment."



The Community Centre at The Park, Findhorn Foundation

We used a wide range of approaches, including sharings, meditations, solo time, storytelling, sacred dance, and some inspiring sessions with elders' organisations around Findhorn. The work of a few Findhorn elders in running the Community Care Circle is especially impressive: includes organising paid and voluntary care for those who need it, building care flats for those whose

own home is unsuitable, and providing training and practical advice on many aspects of ageing, including how to *receive* care.

One of the most powerful experiences of the week was when our group joined the weekly Elders Meditation in the main Sanctuary. There was such power and character in the silent presence of nearly thirty elders, with a combined age around 2000 years. For me it highlighted a sense that the beauty of elderhood is about the emergence of full, authentic individuality, and its miraculous interweaving with others.

Findhorn is a good role model of a community which already includes and supports its elders pretty well. Our schedule enabled our participants to enjoy this, for example Taize singing every morning, movement classes for oldies, shared meals in the community centre, sacred dance and other shared events in the evenings.

It was very satisfying to find that our week helped the whole Findhorn community to recognise and appreciate what it already does to support the elders, and also to recognise and start working on what more could be done. For example, it would be great if the loving and personal quality of care already provided on a small scale could be expanded more widely, and if this became a role model for mainstream society. This is one of various ideas which I and others are now exploring. Perhaps a good summary of the whole week is this comment from one participant, "From this week I have the sense that 'we have to do something', and also that 'all is well'. I like both feelings."

Tags: Ageing, Community, Relationships, Social issues, Elderhood, Support