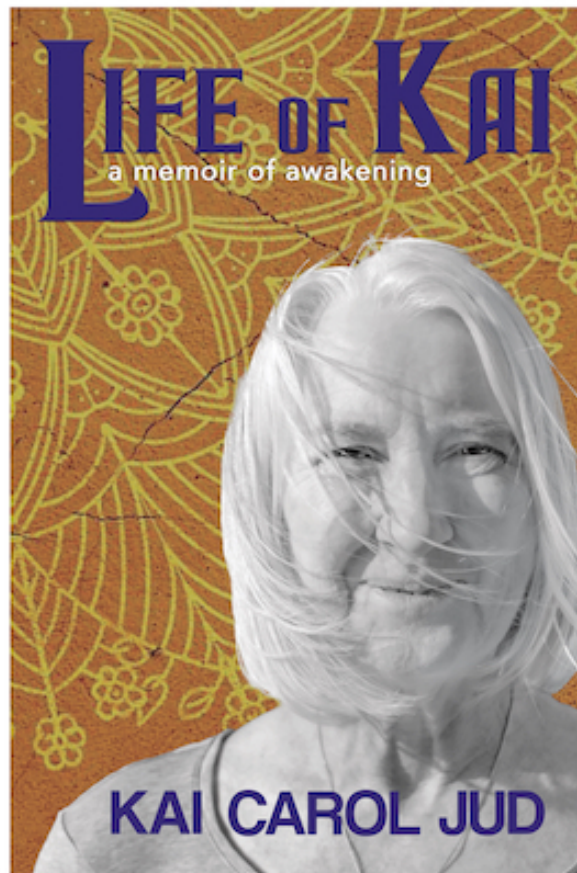


Life of Kai

A Study Guide



Below, you will find questions inspired by each chapter of *Life of Kai*. The questions allow you to walk through your life's journey, tracing the stories, noting the high points and the challenges, your support systems and beliefs, your dreams and accomplishments. This process can be explored with or without the book, with a group, or on your own. You may find it helpful to have a journal for your reflections. There is no need to follow the questions in order. Follow your own energies!

This is an opportunity to map your own life, allowing you to get to know yourself and your world and perhaps to fall in love with yourself in new ways. These are big questions. Take your time. You may even want to stay with one question for a while. Let yourself dream into the answers. There is no right or wrong. Find your own way and write your own story.

Life of _____

(Fill in your own name)

Part 1 - PREPARATION

Chapter 1 - Into the Underworld

1. When did you first experience the death of a beloved?
2. Did this event affect your beliefs about God, the world, your family?
3. Have these beliefs changed as you matured or experienced death again?
4. What does Rumi mean when he says to be kind to sorrows that come?

Chapter 2 - Beginnings

1. How would you describe the household you were born into? What were the loving energies, the conflicting energies, the scary energies? What strategies did you learn to navigate the complex challenges of your childhood home?
2. Where are you in the birth order in your family? How were you shaped by older siblings or births that followed yours? If you are an only child, how did that shape you?
3. What were the central events of your childhood that shaped your understanding of the world and your place in it?
4. Who were your childhood teachers (for good or ill)?

Chapter 3 - Growing Up

1. What are some of the childhood events in your life that shaped your later years?
2. What of your mother's qualities have you taken on that you find positive or negative?
3. What of your father's qualities have you taken on that you find positive or negative?
4. What does Rilke mean when he says to "live into the questions"? Can you find examples from your life?

Chapter 4 - Planting Seeds

1. How have your grandparents affected your Life? What stories do you have about them? Are you aware of other ancestors?
2. Have you ever experienced love at first sight? How did that story end?
3. Looking back at your life, when did you first realize you were planting seeds that would eventually blossom?
4. What are the seeds you are planting today?

Chapter 5 - Finding My Work

1. What influenced you to find the work that you are doing?
2. Who supported you?
3. Was the line to your present work straight, or were there twists in the road?
4. Is there work (either paid or volunteer) that you wish you could be doing?

Chapter 6 - Meeting My Mother

1. How have you processed feelings when relationships end?
2. What have you learned from these endings?
3. What rituals have you used or wished you had used to process endings?
4. Have you ever had visions or messages from people who have died? How have these messages affected you?

Chapter 7 - Soul Mates

1. What are the obstacles to opening your heart fully to love?
2. What childhood contracts did you make to keep yourself safe?
3. What are the qualities that you want in a partner?
4. What are the ways that you have grown in your relationships?
5. What areas would you like to see more growth?

Chapter - 8 New Life

1. How do you deal with transitions in your life? Where do you find support?
2. If you have children, how do you respond when they reach the same ages you were when you had positive or negative experiences?
3. Have you experienced times when your identity has been shattered? How did you build a new identity for yourself?
4. How have you fired your energy when your life no longer felt nourishing or vibrant?

Chapter 9 - When the Student Is Ready

1. List the teachers who have been influential in positive or negative ways.

2. Describe moments when fate tapped you on the shoulder and shifted the trajectory of your life.
3. Have you taken the chance to have an experience that took you out of the ordinary? What were the obstacles, if any? What were the gifts?
4. Have you ever fallen into Oneness? How did that change your perception of reality?

Chapter 10 - Grandfather

1. What does Mark Nepo mean when he says, "There is nothing to do and nowhere to go. Accepting this, we can do and go anywhere."
2. Describe how you support yourself when you cannot change what is?
3. What does "All is well" mean to you?
4. What teachers or teachings help you get through difficult situations?

Chapter 11 Making the Medicine Ours

1. What are your fears about dying?
2. What do you believe about having an observer or witness who can watch your actions without judgment? Have you experienced this?
3. What does Rumi mean when he says, "Out beyond ideas of right and wrong, there is a field. I will meet you there"?
4. What are some of the attachments that you would find hard to let go of?

Part 2 - ON THE ROAD

Chapter 12 - Leaving Home

1. Have you had experiences that you felt you couldn't share with others?
2. What are you grateful for?
3. Do you see yourself as more head-centered or heart-centered? Would others agree?
4. Have you ever experienced letting everything go and having to start your life over? If not, do you wish you had this opportunity? If so, what would you be letting go of?

Chapter 13 - On the Road

1. What do you do just for fun?
2. What would you do if you knew you couldn't fail?

3. What are some synchronicities that have affected your life?
4. What do you do when you are unsure about your next steps?

Chapter 14 - Flitting Butterflies

1. What does home mean to you?
2. What is your relationship with nature?
3. How do you resist change in your life? What is the price?
4. How have you been shaped by the outside world?

Chapter 15 - The Voice at Estes Park

1. How good are you at receiving, asking, and giving? Do you have judgments about yourself when you ask, give or receive?
2. How well do you take care of yourself?
3. What fears arise when you choose to take care of your needs over the needs of others?
4. How do you get in the way of having your needs met?

Chapter 16 - Becoming Elders

1. Do you have friends older and younger than yourself? What do they offer you? What do you offer them?
2. How do you feel about becoming an elder? What would you want to give?
3. What personal story do you need someone to hear?
4. What would you have to give up to follow your heart? Do you know what your heart wants?

Chapter 17 - Ram Dass

1. How do you relate to Ram Dass saying that getting old isn't easy, but neither is dying?
2. In what ways does connecting to your body contribute to your spiritual path?
3. How are you a healthy mirror for another person, or how is another person a healthy mirror for you?
4. What would be essential for someone to know about you?

Chapter 18 - Initiation

1. What do you do in the face of the suffering of others?
2. Who have been important teachers for you?

3. How do you handle "not knowing"?
4. In what crucial ways have you shaped and been shaped in your life?

Chapter 19 - Meeting the Gurus

1. Have you ever felt like the actual events of your Life were dream-like?
2. Do you have a meditation practice? If not, how do you quiet yourself?
3. What lessons have you learned from nature that apply to your life?
4. Can you describe a journey that changed you forever?

Chapter 20 - Losing My Brother

1. Have you lost a family member(s)? How has their loss changed / affected you?
2. Does fear of death affect your life? How? What do you fear?
3. How have you handled grief? Is there grief in your life that is still unexpressed?
4. What does Gibran mean when he says, "Life and death are one, even as the river and sea are one?"

Chapter 21 - The Wedding and the Funeral

1. Have you experienced times when celebration and grief have been mixed? How did you handle that challenge?
2. How has your family handled grief?
3. Do you want a ritual at the end of your Life? What would your Celebration of Life include?
4. What would you change if you knew you had one year to live, one month, or one week?

Chapter 22 - Preparations

1. Name times when you have been disappointed about a turn of events and then found out there was a blessing in that change.
2. Describe a new situation that you had to face alone. Where did you find the strength?
3. Describe a time when you did what you needed to, even though you hurt or disappointed someone you loved. What did you learn about yourself and your loved one?
4. What adventure do you hope to have before you die?

Chapter 23 - Into the Rainforest

1. Talk about a time when you received the kindness of strangers.
2. What would you like to heal in your emotional life? What are the obstacles to the healing that you long for?
3. What would the world be if we looked at everyone and everything as God?
4. What needs to die in you to live fully?

Chapter 24 - The Journey.

1. How do you ground new experiences (integrate and make them your own)?
2. How do you ground yourself when feeling anxious or ungrounded
3. How have you taken responsibility for another person's behavior when it wasn't yours to do? How did that turn out?
4. How do you deal with the reality that life is forever changing and death is an intrinsic part of life?

Chapter 25 - My Name Is Kai

1. Do you like your name? Why? Or why not?
2. Do you have other names than your birth name, such as nicknames or sacred names? What are they?
3. What would you pick as a new name?
4. Have you ever felt that you had died to part of your Life and were reborn into another?

Part 3 - GOING HOME

Chapter 26 - Clowns

1. What stories have you made up about reality?
2. Are some of the stories you made up un-nourishing? If so, what is the payoff in continuing to believe these stories?
3. How do you know what is real?
4. How do you sort out the conflicting stories the culture tells us?

Chapter 27 - Seeing the Face of God

1. How much do you allow yourself to play? What kind of play do you enjoy?
2. What vows did you make when you married? If you have not married, what vows would you hope to make with your beloved?
3. How have you held change in your relationships? What is the price of not allowing relationships to change?
4. Does anything frighten you about being in an intimate relationship? What?

Chapter 28 - The Right Thing for the Wrong Reason

1. Have you ever done the right thing for the wrong reason?
2. How do you deal with illness — your own or someone you loved?
3. How do you handle goodbyes?
4. Talk about some challenges you have met with a beloved. How did you find your way through?

Chapter 29 - Into the Dark

1. Where do you hide your private darkness?
2. What tools do you have for getting through dark times?
3. Where in your body do you hide your fear?
4. Have you had to let go of something you love in the hopes of making something better?

Chapter 30 - Melting into the One

1. What would you imagine doing if you got a terminal diagnosis? Who would you tell?
2. Would you want to know that you were dying?
3. What is your idea of a good death?
4. Imagine yourself on your deathbed. What words might you want to hear at that time? What would you wish to say before you took your leave - gratitude, forgiveness, appreciation, regret. You may not have the ability to speak when the time comes, but this could be a good preparation for our inevitable death. Write a deathbed letter to yourself or to others.

Chapter 31 - Sending Chris on his Journey

1. What do you want done with your body after you die?

2. Have you talked about death with family or friends?
3. Do you want any special rituals carried out after your death?
4. How have you found comfort after the death of a beloved?

Chapter 32 - Talking to God

1. Have you ever talked to mystical beings, e.g., God, archangels, totem animals, or the stars?
2. What are chapters in your life when you moved to a new level of self-awareness?
3. What would your younger self want to say to your present self?
4. What would your current self want to say to your younger self?

Chapter 33 - Grief

1. How have you handled grief in the past?
2. Has the fear of losing your beloved affected your relationship? How?
3. Do you have any spiritual beliefs or experiences that help you in times of grief?
4. What could you find in the natural or material world that would be a symbol of your grief? How could you use these objects to support your grieving process?

Chapter 34 - Dreaming

1. Do you have an observer who can witness your behavior from a distance without judgment? If so, how has that helped you in difficult times?
2. Can you look at some of the hard times of your life as gifts? What have you learned? How have you changed? How do you find gratitude when life is hard?
3. What is the difference between a pilgrimage and a trip? What would it be like to think of your life as a pilgrimage?
4. Can you think of a time when an "angel" appeared to save you from a situation you thought you couldn't handle alone?

Chapter 35 - Letting Go

1. Have you ever listened for the message of healing that an illness might be sending you? What did you learn?
2. Is there a song that represents what is happening in your life now?

3. Has someone important in your life died? How did you come to acceptance if you did? Or, if not, what are the current obstacles to acceptance?
4. Do you have any animal totems (an animal spirit you call upon or invoke for its special powers and survival skills to serve as a guardian or protector when facing adversity)?

Chapter 36 - The Burn

1. How do you look to your friends for support during challenging times?
2. Talk about a ritual you have carried out.
3. Are there times when animals have been a healing influence in your life?
4. What are your favorite foods? Do you have stories about them?

Chapter 37 - Pilgrimage

1. Talk about a time of a new beginning?
2. Who are some of the most influential people in your life? Why? Have you thanked them?
3. What does Rumi's poem, "Out beyond ideas of right and wrong, there is a field. I'll meet you there," mean?
4. What are some of the different phases of grief that you have experienced?

Chapter 38 - Testing

1. Talk about a time when you went through testing before you could meet your goal.
2. Talk about a time when you received kindness from a surprising source.
3. What are you waiting to do until you are older?
4. Why are you waiting?

Chapter 39 - Finding Home

1. What are the requirements of a home?
2. What do you love about your home?
3. What would you want to change?
4. When you feel grief, sadness, and despair, what helps you remember that life also has blessings?

Chapter 40 - Awakening

1. What would it mean for you to awaken?
2. What courageous or small acts would it take to break through a stuck place?
3. Have there been times when you had to be shattered before you could wake up?
4. When has a friend helped you through a hard time? How?

Chapter 41 - A Love That Has No End

1. Who are your ancestors?
2. Have you found ways to stay connected with a loved one who has died?
3. What do you think happens after we die?
4. Do your beliefs about death affect how you live? How?