

### Are you a “Spiritual Person”?



People often confuse Spirituality with Religion although we can be both “religious” and “spiritual”. So what does that mean? Is it also possible to be religious without being spiritual, or to be spiritual without being religious? When you go to church every Sunday and say your prayers every day, does this mean you are a spiritual person? You practice yoga and meditate every day. You belong to spiritual group and are devoted to following the teachings of the group. Does this mean you are a spiritual person, or what, then, does it mean to be a spiritual person? Spirituality is not a destiny, or something you have to do in order to obtain a higher form of existence or position in the future. It is a form of existence, a new culture, a lifestyle that is the answer for humanity's survival. In this Article we will explore the concept and benefits and the practical application of a life devoted to “Spiritual Growth”.

(Picture: Hans Neleman / Getty Images on Pinterest).

### What does it Mean to be a Spiritual Person?

Traditionally spirituality has been defined as a process of personal transformation in accordance with religious ideals. However, in the modern era spirituality is often separated from religion, and has become more focussed on individual subjective experience and psychological growth. For some it may refer to almost any kind of meaningful activity or blissful experience, but without a single, widely-agreed definition. For most people, being a spiritual person is synonymous with being a person whose highest priority is to be loving to oneself and others. A spiritual person therefore cares about people, animals, and the planet, and their thoughts are kind rather than judgmental toward themselves and toward others. Spirituality begins with a reverence for the ordinary that can lead us to insights and experiences that are anything but ordinary. A deep knowing that we are all One, and a Spiritual person consciously attempts to honour this Oneness. We are all connected in some way by an invisible, energetic field, or active presence. This force field can be tapped into when we raise conscious awareness of ourselves and others. Spirituality can also relate to values of reverence, service, godliness, devotion, and the prayer, or contemplative part of daily life, but without necessarily the external signs of any form of religious expression. Spirituality then does not refer to a specific belief or authority or truth, as it translates to the way you live, rather than what you believe, that accounts for your spirituality. Can you be both religious and spiritual? Of course! When you are operating in your religion from your heart rather than from the learned dogma of your mind. For whatever form or object this Infinite Intelligence and Field of Consciousness takes-on in your life, Spirituality has to do with the way that relationship brings about transformation, inspire ethics and moral, called higher standards of living, and how it translates to a meaningful service to humanity.

Spirituality is a concept relating to an alleged immaterial reality; an inner path enabling a person to discover the soul or essence of his, or her being. We are being spiritual when we feel a connection to other individuals or the human community, divine realm, nature and the multi-universe. There are many ways to cultivate Spirituality, however all spiritual paths contain three ingredients vital of spirituality. **First**, the practice of a religious tradition at some stage in your life, as to make it your own; will acquaint you with the practice of daily devotion. The symbolic value that is translated in various traditions all serve to awaken our sense of a greater reality, hope for the future, and the orientation of the mind needed to give life meaning and value. We get to discover the Divine being that we are beyond space, time, our mind, thoughts, emotions and body when we engage in spiritual practices. While no holistic course, or spiritual programme can provide all the answers for you, it can *help you begin to consider the options. It can help you to ask the right questions and give methods that can help you to find your own personal answers.* **Second**, we gain knowledge and learn many lessons from the inexhaustible resources contained in the practice of a variety of spiritual traditions, allowing yourself to explore ideas to clarify your own views that can be practiced in a dedicated and practical philosophy of life. And by spiritual practices we include holistic health as Yoga, Meditation, Tai Chi etc. and many other modalities that integrate Physical health with the interconnectedness of the whole.

*To be Spiritual is the sense of “being” whole and complete as authentic being.* The more I live connected to my authentic self, the more I grow and evolve just as everything in nature does. It is also important to study the Sacred Writings, and biographies of a variety of spiritual leaders to gain insight and principles for a stable foundation for your journey. **Third**, to expand and deepen your spirituality in secular ways, even through nature, the arts, study of philosophy, psychology, and science. Modern Science and the study of quantum physics e.g. confirms that we are made up of waves and vibrating particles of energy that makes up this grand universe. Archaeological findings have proven historical data accounted for in Religious Texts that validates the authenticity of Sacred Writings and human existence beyond chance. We connect to our spirituality when we are present and allow our authentic and true divine force of creation to be revealed, and science can assist awareness of this process. Every building has a foundation on which it stands. The stronger the foundation, the more durable the building. The deeper the foundations, the higher the potential of the building. Every person needs a foundation, a basis on which their lives can be built on. The big question is: Does our compliance with our cultural or religious upbringing create a path for us to a real and profound spirituality? Morality seems to have sprung from religion, but how does it fit into spirituality? In contemplating the conflict between what we believe and what we experience, how do these conflicts and doubts help or hinder our personal and spiritual growth? How do we integrate our experience of the real world into the world of the Bible, the Qur'an, or the Bagavagita? How does the individual feature into the spirituality of the whole? How does the face of “God” mesh with each individual face on the planet?

## What is Spirituality, and How do we define Spirit?

A detailed article found on Wikipedia.org, defines the term spirit<sup>1</sup> to mean the "animating or vital principle in man and animals", as derived from the Old French "spirit", which comes from the Latin word "spiritus" (soul, courage, vigour, breath), used to translate the Greek word "pneuma", and Hebrew "ruah". Spirituality, or concerning the "Spirit", then relates to matters of the heart. There is no single, widely-agreed definition of spirituality. The term "spiritual"<sup>2</sup> is now frequently used in contexts of broad similarities between alternative ideas and pursuits as part of one movement. Those who speak of spirituality outside of religion often define themselves as spiritual, but not religious, and generally believe in the existence of different "spiritual paths," emphasizing the importance of finding one's own individual path to spirituality. Sheldrake<sup>3</sup>, states that Modern Spirituality emphasises the "deepest values and meanings by which people live, and according to Cousins<sup>4</sup>, it embraces the idea of an ultimate or an alleged immaterial reality and envisions an inner path enabling a person to discover the essence of his/her being. "Spiritual experiences"<sup>5</sup> can include being connected to a larger reality, yielding a more comprehensive self; joining with other individuals or the human community, with nature or the cosmos, or with the divine realm (Burkhardt and Nagai-Jacobson). Seybold and Hill<sup>6</sup>, observed that within "Spirituality" we find a common emphases on the value of thoughtfulness, tolerance for [all] practices and beliefs, and appreciation for the insights of other religious communities, as well as other sources of authority within the social sciences. Spiritual practices, for the Dalai Lama<sup>7</sup>, therefore include meditation, mindfulness, prayer, the contemplation of sacred texts, with the main intention as ethical development, to cultivate love and/or compassion.

## What is a Spiritual Orientation to Life?

With such a great emphasis on non-materialistic concerns, many people have felt that Spirituality ignores basic needs and resources need for daily living. It needs to be said, however that all Religious teachings through the ages identify the greatest hindrance to Spiritual Growth, as an over emphasis on materialistic concerns and attachment to wealth and achievement in life, as a substitute for meaning and significance. A holistic approach to Spirituality then, has to do with the experience of that field of energy or Consciousness, in context of the whole experience of life.

<sup>1</sup> Online Etymology Dictionary, "Spirit". Etymonline.com  
[http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=spirit&allowed\\_in\\_frame=0](http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=spirit&allowed_in_frame=0)

<sup>2</sup> Hanegraaff, Wouter J. 1996. New Age Religion and Western Culture. Esotericism in the mirror of Secular Thought, Leiden/New York/Köln: E.J. Brill.

<sup>3</sup> Philip Sheldrake. 2007. *A Brief History of Spirituality*, Wiley-Blackwell. p. 1-2.

<sup>4</sup> Ewert Cousins, preface to Antoine Faivre & Jacob Needleman. 1992. *Modern Esoteric Spirituality*, Crossroad Publ.

<sup>5</sup> Margaret A. Burkhardt and Mary Gail Nagai-Jacobson. *Spirituality: Living our Connectedness*, Delmar Cengage Learning, p. xiii

<sup>6</sup> Seybold, Kevin S.; Peter C. Hill (Feb 2001). "The Role of Religion and Spirituality in Mental and Physical Health". *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 10 (1): 21–24.

<sup>7</sup> Dalai Lama. 1999. *Ethics for the New Millennium*, NY:Riverhead Books.

The word *holistic* has to do with the integrity of the whole integrated with its constituent parts. It is not, therefore, the study of any one religion, nor is it the study of any one perspective of the Divine. Rather it is the study of every constituent part of the whole of Life, as it relates to our human experience in totality and how we integrate that with our daily lives. How do we define the whole of this energetic field of existence or Infinite Intelligence referred to as God? What if, however, different views are all about the same Being, but with different names given by peoples of differing tongues and cultures? Does this add more to the wholeness that is God or subtract from it? The simple fact is that God, by whatever name, can only be explained within the heart and mind of each human being, though this is not often how we come to our understanding of God. The mystery about this "Field of Consciousness", is that it is an active presence that wants to engage with YOU, that means having a relationship that is interactive.

Most of us come to that understanding through an education imposed on us by our families or cultural background, which also includes some more or less rigidly placed standards on our behaviours. And these standards demand compliance to some more or less frightening eternal possibilities. For Christians, Muslims, and Jews; the threat of hell looms ever large on the horizons of our choices. For Buddhists and Hindus the threat of bad karma hangs over the head of every option, choice, thought and action taken in life. But are these fears enough to stop a man or woman in the tracks of "sin?" So far, if we look at the realities of our world, we'd have to answer a resounding "NO." We often tend to think of God in terms of comparing good and evil, punishment and reward. But is this true? Do we stand perpetually on the pendulum that swings from heaven between the two opposite poles of good and evil? If we are not good, are we bad? If we are not bad, are we good? Most Christians think of God as the all-good God who exists in opposition to the evil Satan. Buddhists make no such claims regarding any Higher or Super-Being, and put such choice fully in the hands of each individual human. Gnostics thought of each individual human journey as a transformative path to divinization; a journey that will ultimately make each of us fully aware of our own Divine nature. More recently, people started to question the good vs. evil controversy for its validity and wonder if it isn't true that below all of our activities there isn't some pressing Divine Energy that brings us through a transformative experience to a deeper, truer and Higher Self. What then is the meaning of life and why are we here. What is my purpose and how can I learn to be more at peace with myself and my fellow human beings? These are the questions that must be asked and either answered or accepted as eternal answerless questions by any individual who seeks to understand and own a spiritual orientation or holistic view of life. The individual journey into the mind and soul of one's own spirituality is the key to finding this meaning for human significance.

## The Practice of Spirituality.

What are the benefits of being connected to your spiritual side. All intelligent beings realised by now that Life involves more than just our physical existence and its mechanisms for survival that relies on us breathing right and getting adequate sleep, water, nutrition and exercise. Further, our mental capacity works best in service to support this emotional Intelligence when our spiritual focus in life is well established. While our mental capacities give us our ability to be creative, to solve problems and to focus, it still requires the mind-space of conscious engagement and rational response to any given context. Pressure and its associated habitual reactions, sees our mind-space closing in on us and, as a result, impacts on our cognitive and creative thinking capacity. Intentional emotional energy (self motivation) is the force that gives us passion and commitment, and which answers the question, "why do I exist?" It gives our lives meaning, a sense of purpose, and a reason for being. When our actions and behaviours are spiritually orientated, everything that we do will become meaningful and relevant towards my future. Living "Spiritually" aware, is to live our lives with passion, action and direction, in a way that adds value to others too. Spirituality then finds its meaning in the way we speak, the way we act, what we think and the values we express in our attitudes and behaviour in society.

When spirituality remains in the container of Religion and does not become practical in the way we express ourselves in this world, we will proverbially be "too heavenly minded and no earthly good." Religion is meant to develop our spiritual nature, to bring us closer to the experience of God, and the experience of something beyond our physical reality. Through the years political agendas and ethnic preference has deprived organised systems from the benefits gained through spiritual practices. One of the greatest gifts of being spiritual is that it aligns your sense of self to something that you may not have ever imagined was within you. Our perception of ourselves as small, transforms and expands into the realization that we are an interconnected part of this enormous and mysterious universe. Spiritual people feel there is much more to life than just our gender, race, family, job title, and status in life – not as an dogmatic attitude, rather as an growing awareness that unfold. In time, we obtain the ability to handle hard times with more peace and acceptance, once we adopt a spiritual perspective.

Since we believe we are all one and, the lives of each other affect one another, a spiritual person would be less inclined to hurt another person or living being. Instead, they would think of how they may bring more light and love to life (any person or nature). A spiritual perspective cultivates compassion and empathy for every living being. Spiritual people surrender to the higher force and allow things to flow, for they trust that everything is always unfolding for our highest good. Practices such as meditation, prayer, yoga, praying and contemplation develop a person's inner life and connect you to the knowledge and wisdom that is always available to you. Spiritual experiences may sometimes include feeling connected to a larger reality, yielding a more comprehensive self awareness. Being connected to an immaterial reality that is beyond our physical realm eliminates uncertainty and fear of the unknown, enabling you to live life with purpose and passion. When things don't go your way, it is easier to surrender knowing that there is a higher and kind force that knows why sometimes there is a need for chaos and suffering. We can trust, knowing that all things will pass, that as all things' nature is to die, to birth and shed the old – to go with the flow of life and appreciates yourself and every moment as a sacred gift from the divine source. Spirituality then is experienced as a source of inspiration or motivation for life that develops your Spiritual Intelligence (SQ), self confidence and self motivation, through understanding our individual life purpose, values and vision for the future. Spiritual Intelligence is about looking at the World as a "spirit being" instead of looking at life as a physical entity that contains a spirit. You are Spirit, and live temporary in a body with an opportunity to use this body to bring value and significance to the world we live in. Where Emotional Intelligence refers to our potential and the skill involved in interacting with other people, Spiritual Intelligence relates to the ability to connecting with your Higher Self and at a deeper level with the Source of Life. It is more than just Religious ritual and mechanical routine, but relates to your own integrity in the way you express yourselves in the world. When I say one thing and then act another way - I live a life that is not truthful to myself and therefore hinder the flow of Life, Love and a meaningful expression of whom I am. We need to ask ourselves if we really are aware of the times and places where, I am untruthful to myself, and do I really realize then the consequences of my own thoughts and actions.

## So where does Prayer fit into the Picture?

Prayer focuses the mind on pure intention, clarifying intent and renewing our focus, yearning to transfer the gold of inspiration, and wish to see the greater vision unfold. Prayer is the opportunity to visualise upliftment or even correction of incorrect or impure thinking in gratitude for what we are and have. It is not a complaint or demand for what we lack, rather an expression of what is needed to be realigned and the openness to the steps I need to take to adjust my mind (thinking) to express the fullness of Love, in the way I talk about and view another. When I see and communicate with all of life as an interaction with the Divine, I bring my thoughts and behaviour in alignment with Love.

Abraham, through Esther Hicks, said: "*You ask through your attention, through your wanting, through your desire – that is the asking; whether you desire it to happen, or you desire it not to happen, you are asking ... You do not have to use words. You just have to feel it in your being: I desire this. I adore this. I appreciate this, and so on. That desire is the beginning of all attraction*".

So what about prayer, when and how do we engage? If we are interconnected with Spirit, whatever form or ideology you relate to God, then whatever you think is an extension of consciousness. Becoming aware that someone can spy on your thinking and overhear any conversation that is going on in the mind – elevate the orientation of the mind into a level of awareness that eliminate irresponsible monotonous habitual tracks to repeat itself. Taking responsibility for our thoughts in how we engage with life, even with ourselves as part of life, positions you in the role of the observer and gatekeeper of the mind. Instead of allowing automatic scripts to run in the background, which is mostly negatively inclined, empowers the mind to redirect your level of awareness towards wholesome and uplifting concepts. So the accusations of the proverbial devil on the shoulder serve a purpose for reminding you that the mind needs to be brought under conscious control to refocus your attention and so your energy towards that which is for the greater good of all. The consequence of being attentive towards what you think and commune with yourself, is an awareness of an spiritual interaction that takes place where thoughts manifest in the world that I am aware off, thus create. If what you think is conscious, thoughts are prayer, even those about relationships and courtship. Mantras and Prayer constructs as the "Lords Prayer" (Our Father in Heaven ...), is just a tool to realign your thinking with higher consciousness, or tuning the mind to be more attentive and receptive towards an energetic intelligence, or spiritual orientation.

The Practice of daily devotions also cultivates a deeper awareness of a Spiritual Presence that sustains life and assists the seeker to become consciously Spiritual. Prayer develops sensitivity to a deeper connection to this field of consciousness. The practice of a Spiritual Orientation in life has many benefits, psychologically and physically. Firstly, prayer is the language of personal development to identify the meaning of life and your purpose therein. Through contemplative reflection, the asking, we release everyday stress and discover the steps towards victoriously living a life of peace, balance and significance. Finding answers to inner motivational and emotional blocks enables us to release mental stress and to freely express your feelings. Prayer also disciplines the mind away from negative distractions and fine-tune to heart and intuitive mind to receiving guidance in order to overcome difficulties and obtain a better sustainable future. Lastly, having a Spiritual Orientation in life helps you to reconnect with your authentic self (who and whatever that may be), and through prayer, whether it takes on a form of art, dance or song, can help you to again get in touch with those hidden dreams, ignored aspirations and unexpressed passions that is inspired by Spirit. Ultimately, living spiritually and the practice of prayer assist in the path of enlightenment.

### Becoming Consciously Spiritual.

What immediately arises in the conscious mind is a little voice that starts to doubt your ability to be Spiritual without making an egotistical achievement about it. And what is tricky about being consciously spiritual is firstly the effort of conscience to obstruct awareness and growth of man's inherent spiritual essence, based on false beliefs of humility and man's illegitimate position to equate himself with "God". This is all due to religious conditioning. Thus feeling guilty whenever we claim anything "Spiritual" or seemingly godly in us or supernatural, we quickly fall back into a worm mentality that focuses on cultural and social conditioned "unholy poor me", thinking. However, when we disregard this fear of rejection to go beyond the norm, we'll be able to step out through the veil. In search of the truth we establish a deeper connection with the Mystery. In the longing to commune with Infinite Spirit, and to be the expression of this field of Consciousness made flesh, the Universe unveils the greatest secrets and a unique relationship with "All that Is" emerges.

What does it really mean to be spiritually enlightened? Does it mean to expand your consciousness to infinite proportions with the goal of understanding and becoming one with the Divine, or "All that Is"? For some it is that point in life when you understand that everything is connected. And yet it is a journey, where each step on that path brings you closer to the Mystery, understanding the things you can't 'touch', or 'see', or 'understand' with the mind, and yet they are all there, if we are just open enough (believe), and receive. The ancient traditions hold that enlightenment is first the realization of ones condition as the journey begins from where you are not , to where you want to be, and the end of suffering. What does "spiritual enlightenment" mean to you? How would someone go about becoming enlightened spiritually exactly? Becoming consciously spiritual is an orientation that guides the journey to "Enlightenment", yet this state of realization is only the beginning, and not the end. Every individual is also on a unique path in life, and difficulties, trauma and suffering awakens the call to return to the heart, a return to innocence; when we realize that we have never been separated from God and are not guilty of the unforgivable "sin", and thus the release of fear and distorted thinking. A Course in Miracles teaches us that meaningless thoughts are showing me a meaningless world. Everything you see is the result of your thoughts. Your thoughts affect what you see and your experience of the world, yourself and the greater reality of "All that Is". Pursuing a path that will develop your faculties for the Spiritual will lead man back to his creator.

### Conclusion: The Way Forward.

Though this journey can be made through the support of a particular religion, religion in itself is not necessary to its completion. In fact, for many, the deepest part of this journey begins "*in medias res*" (in the middle of trauma), even in the midst of what some would call the dark night of the soul. Sometimes what we've known of religion, what we've known of faith just stops working for us. We find our dogmas dry-throated and unable to speak to us. We lose faith in the leaps between what we seem to know and what cannot be experienced any longer from the old framework. We cannot sense anything that even looks like God. We cannot pray or meditate. The world of spirituality, as we have previously known it, is dead to us. And we find that we long for something deeper, something more profoundly true, something that not only makes sense to the mind and soul but also to the body. We long for a "Supreme Being" or at least a sense of our own Beingness. And so begins the search for God in the middle of chaos as part of our path in life.

When we consider the trauma of the events that have brought you to this place of self-inquiry, then maybe we need to realise the grace offered to you. And one day when others are ready, and only then will they also seek to find answers. It is therefore not my place or right to question and judge their process of awakening as of lesser value than mine. Only God will know, maybe they are more "spiritual" than I am, and don't need to go through the turmoil that I have chosen as my destiny. May our orientation towards life therefore be one that seeks the Divine in all that we do. May I find the "Log in my eye before I find the dust in another's eye". May I be found the last to cast the stone, judge not so that I may not be judged. Faith stems from connecting to one's true self, not from an identity ideology or sense of assurance that comes from blindly accepting dogmatic belief, or attainments in life. The essence of our capacity to serve emanates from the degree to which we have realized our true self. For this reason the journey of awakening to self-knowledge - is the path of service to life and to others. Once we have begun to heal the deep wounds of distrust and survival fear modes, which we inherited through our families and cultural conditioning, we cease to externalize a sense of distrust of our world and each other. When we have learned to face and hold our deepest fears, we cease to become victims of them, and no longer perceive and transmit a fearful reality. We begin to realize love is a far greater teacher on this "journey of awakening". We then realize that we are all travelling on a great train, yet most people will not set their baggage down. To serve humanity then, is to cease from this fear-based self-interest that corrupts our human affairs. Your life then becomes the moral, ethical and behavioural manifestation of love. And that is what the "Spiritual Orientation and Personal Transformation Program": Alter Point, attempts to help you to do. The Personal mastery Course will assist you in finding your own "Truth" in the whole perspective of who we as human beings are, and to live that Truth with dignity in the totality of the human experience.

## Spirit Directing and Guidance.

Maybe you find yourself at the point of "*in medias res*" (in the middle of trauma), feeling lost, without hope and direction in life, and all that seem to be referred to as "Spiritual", just does not make sense. What if your biggest challenges, the difficulties and struggles you are facing right now, is actually preparing you for the greatest Transformation you will ever experience. Are you looking for a sense of purpose and for a more inspiring career and meaningful life? Torturing your conscience for a sense of direction, begging the Universe for assistance with a difficult decision? Are you interrogating your guides, trying with all your might to listen to your heart, but hearing no clear answers? Then look no further, your prayers has been answered and you are now at the right place. You are here for a reason. We are here to help you ...

- Believe in yourself and your unique role in Life,
- Create a compelling Vision of who you truly are,
- Rediscover your Mission (your Life's Purpose),
- Explore ways of living your Mission that lead to an enriched quality of life,
- Receive Spiritual Guidance and reconnect to Spirit and the greater reality of "All that Is".



Spiritual Growth takes on many faces. It may look different for you than it does for me, but it always connects us more deeply to the One in whom we live and move and have our being, and to each other. The heart of spiritual direction is journeying with someone who is able to help you recognize the ways that you hide, and guide you through work with the Spirit of God to a deep place of hope and freedom. Consciousness Coaching is an advanced methodology of coaching that creates shifts in the client's awareness leaving them empowered to influence providence and create a self designed destiny. The ability to assist others to achieve more and gain clarity, both in their lives and at work, and access the resources they need to solve problems and fulfil their dreams, is both a sought after and highly rewarding skill. It is also an ability that can be learnt. Spiritual Directing offers a voice of guidance to those who are intent on growth, with special emphasis given to recognizing and responding to a "Higher Presence" in ones life and listening truth into being. Should you like to know more about Spirit Directing or Consciousness and Transformational Coaching, Please feel free to visit our website at: <http://metalife coaching.co.za/spiritdirecting.php> or contact us directly. Want to know more about me then visit my page at: <http://about.me/martinbrits>