



Developing Spiritual Wellness

Learn to be silent.
Let your
quiet mind
listen and absorb.

PYTHAGORAS
(580 BC – 500 BC)



The words of Pythagoras, the Greek mathematician and philosopher, speak to the importance of silence and the value of prayer and meditation in your life.

It has been estimated that the average person has sixty thousand separate thoughts each and every day. The problem is that we revisit these same sixty thousand thoughts day after day. They are a hodgepodge of continuous monologues about schedules, money worries, grocery lists, family concerns, vacation plans and so forth. Our minds are filled with the same chatter day in and day out.

Learning to be quiet and meditate means learning to enter the gaps in between your thoughts. In this silent, empty space between your thoughts you can find peace. It is in this silent place that confusion will disappear and enlightened guidance will come to you.

You will find that the daily practice of meditation leads to a greater sense of well-being, increased energy, higher productivity, more satisfying relationships, a closer connection to God, and sense of spiritual wellness.



How many times have you asked yourself, “Am I satisfied with the way my life is going? Is this what life is about?”

These are questions that relate to spiritual wellness. You don’t need to wait until you hit a midlife crisis to review your life. Taking time out to think about what lends meaning and purpose to your life each day and then taking actions to support the spiritual dimension of your life will help you live life to its fullest and feel good about what you have accomplished each day.

START BY LOOKING INWARD

Spend time in nature: Connect with nature. Contemplate the continuity of life and death and the interdependence of all living creatures. Watch the sky, the sunrise, the sunset. Listen to the waves or the wind in the trees. Smell the grass, trees, flowers. Open your senses to nature and experience the moment.

Express your creativity: Sing, draw, paint, play an instrument, sculpt, build, cook, garden, dance. Whatever you do to express yourself, experience it fully, leaving behind the stress and worries of the day.

Engage in spiritual practice: Pray at home, in nature or at a place of worship. Do yoga. Meditate. Tune out the world and focus fully on your thoughts. Concentrate on your breathing - in and out - for a few moments a day, as a way of turning inwards. Keep track of the various thoughts that enter and exit your mind and how they lead to the next thought. Your awareness of the frenetic activity of your mind will help you transcend the frenzied pace of your thoughts.

REACH OUT TO OTHERS

Share writings that inspire you: Share with someone else poems, passages from sacred works, literary quotes, or songs that inspire, guide and comfort you. Talk about what they mean to you.

Practice kindness: Look for the chance each day to practice small acts of kindness. Compliment a friend. Let someone else go first in line. Pick up the trash. Help someone with their packages. Say please and thank you. And smile.

Perform a community service: Become a volunteer at a soup kitchen, an orphanage, a local non-profit organization, a senior citizens’ home, a hospital. Join an organization that promotes the health and welfare of citizens and the environment.



Mind & Spirit



PRAYER:

Lord, make me an instrument of Your Peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
And where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled as to console;
To be understood as to understand;
To be loved as to love;
For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal light.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

(1182 – 1226)

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE:

- Make it a daily practice to recite a prayer that inspires you. If you do, you will find yourself beginning to act on the words in the prayer.
- If you find yourself in a confrontation with someone, before you react ask yourself, "Is what I am about to say motivated by my need to be right, or my desire to be kind?" Pick the response that stems from kindness, no matter how much your ego objects.
- Practice sending out love where you previously radiated hatred. Do this even in situations where you are not forced to react, such as when watching the news or reading the newspaper.
- Look into your heart and be honest about the people who have hurt you in your life. Where there is pain, practice pardoning. Forgiveness is the very foundation of spiritual awakening.

This simple prayer by the founder of the Franciscan order of monks expresses a deep yearning to be the spiritual being that inhabits our physical form. The prayer is a way of focusing on being consoling, understanding, giving and forgiving in everyday life. We all have the capacity to do so, but it is usually the exceptional person who gives more than they ask.

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