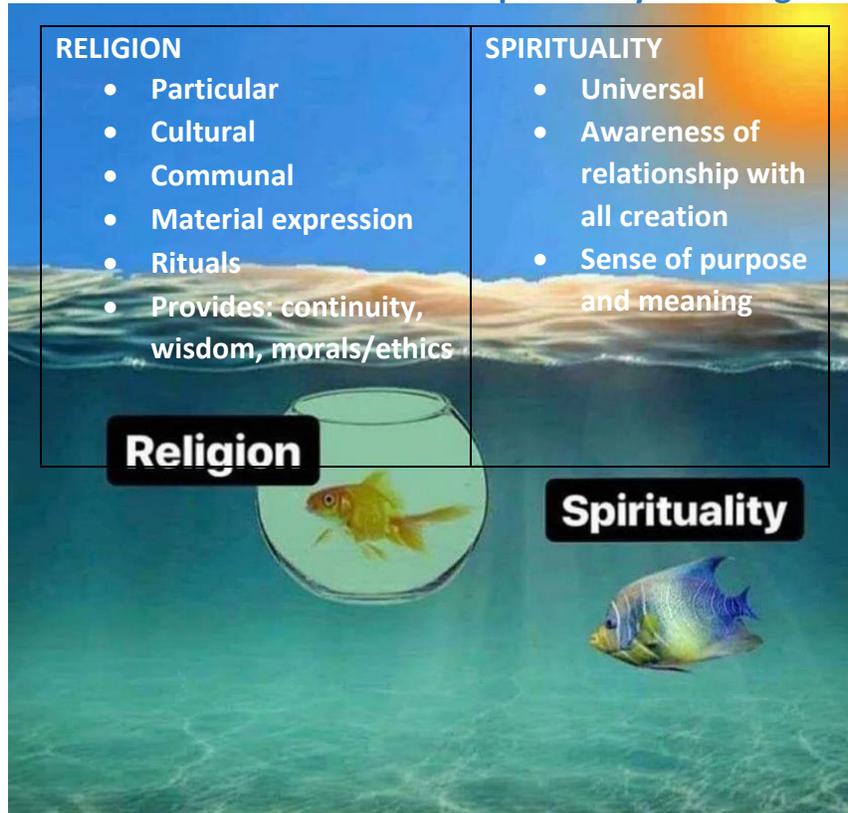


What is the difference between spirituality and religion?



What is your spiritual type?

Assess which type you identify with the most. (4 – I identify with the most, 1 – I identify with the least). Write your rating score in the blank.

Physical / Body

- Find the presence of higher power in the world around you.
- Appreciate the wonders of Creation.
- Enjoy rituals and liturgy
- Values hands on activities

Intellect / Mind

- Interest in truth, justice, theology, law, covenant and logic
- Meditate on principles and teachings
- Find meaning in intellectual activities (example, studying sacred text, read philosophy)
- Seek clarity, need beliefs to "make sense"

Emotion / Heart

- Prize harmony & warmth
- Find sacred (or meaning) in relationships
- Seek joy, love, and compassion
- Value goodness, devotion, acts of service

Meaning / Soul

- Look for meaning, purpose, and hope
- Contemplate the mystery of the Divine
- Interest in symbol, metaphor, and transcendent experiences
- Value imagination, creativity, visions for the future

A Toolbox of Spiritual Practices

Below is a partial list of practices that may help you cultivate spirituality in your life. Take a look at the list and see what speaks to you. Which of these nourish your spirit? How would you incorporate these practices into your life? What would you add to the list?

- Belong to and participate in a faith community
- Take part in rituals, symbolic practices, and other forms of worship
- Read sacred and inspirational literature
- Practice forgiveness of yourself and others
- Listen to or make music
- Spend time in deep reflection, meditation, or prayer
- Participate in groups that involve trust and cooperation (example, sports, hobby or interest groups)
- Observe day of designated for sacred rest – stop doing and enjoy being
- Engage in dance and other types of physical expression
- Involve yourself in acts of kindness to others
- Spend time in nature
- Appreciate the arts
- Be creative – painting, knitting, cooking, gardening, fixing things...
- Share your spiritual journey with others
- Keep a journal
- Nourish others by serving food
- Caring for animals
- Growing and caring for plants, garden
- Joining a social movement for the common good (social, environmental justice)

PATHS/ACTIONS IN OUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

(Adapted from Quadratos by Alexander Shaia)

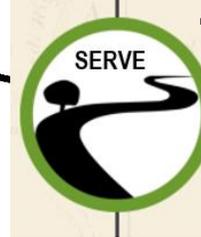
1. How do we face change?

On the first path, we encounter an earthquake. All that we knew is shaken to the core. Yet, this is not an end but an invitation to a new journey, beyond the familiar to a deeper way of being. Like a mountain trail, this path requires great exertion, and we can only see a step ahead. Do we have the courage to climb, one step at a time?



4. How do we mature in service?

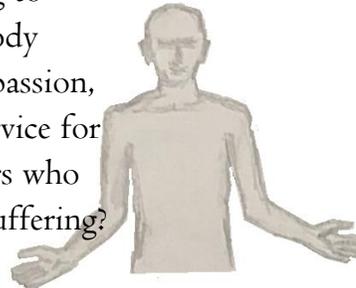
Often overlooked, the fourth path is where we must bring the new vision we have glimpsed into our ordinary, day-to-day realities. While the journey thus far has brought us awareness, we now take up the work of truly transforming our everyday attitudes and behavior, and one day at a time, the world around us too.



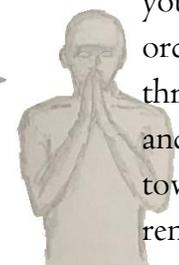
What do you need to let go?



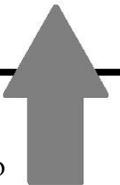
How are you going to embody compassion, & service for others who are suffering?



How will you weather the storm?
How will you endure?



What do you need in order to thrive, heal and move towards renewal?



2. How do we move through suffering?

The second path is by far the most difficult. We are betwixt and between. Yesterday's reality is gone, the new has not yet come. Our uncertainty can be terrifying. As in winter, we are not able to see the growth deep at work in the ground, and all seems lifeless. We feel fragile and alone, and perhaps find ourselves slipping into despair. Is help coming?



3. How do we receive joy?

The third path takes us by surprise. Like springtime, a bright fresh reality appears suddenly all around us. Awake to a sense of communion with all, we discover that joy arrives from somewhere beyond ourselves. We perceive everything as gift. We see a larger reality, and glimpse fresh ways that life can be lived.





THE TOOLBOX PROJECT

The 12 Tools

Tools for Learning • Tools for Life



Breathing Tool

I calm myself and check-in.

Quiet/Safe Place Tool

I remember my quiet/safe place.



Listening Tool

I listen with my ears, eyes, and heart.

Empathy Tool

I care for others. I care for myself.



Personal Space Tool

I have a right to my space and so do you.

Using Our Words Tool

I ask for what I want and need.



Garbage Can Tool

I let the little things go.

Taking Time Tool

I use time wisely.



Please & Thank You Tool

I treat others with kindness and appreciation.

Apology & Forgiveness Tool

I admit my mistakes and work to forgive yours.



Patience Tool

I am strong enough to wait.

Courage Tool

I have the courage to do the "right" thing.



GIVING & RECEIVING (UNIVERSAL HUMAN NEEDS) *From Marshall Rosenberg's NVC - "Nonviolent Communication"

Purpose / Goal / Direction
 Vision
 Mentor / Community Support / Guidance
 Friendship / Companionship
 Patience
 Gratitude / Grace / Thankfulness
 Hope
 Recognition
 Good communication
 Cooperation
 Kindness
 Belonging
 Appreciation
 Acceptance
 Connection
 Respect
 Nurture
 Authenticity
 Honesty

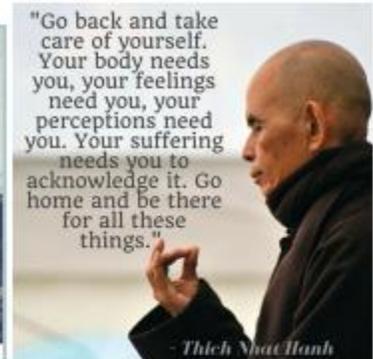
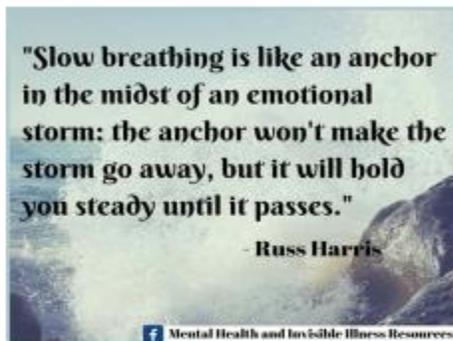
Creativity
 Transparency
 Commitment
 Rest and Sleep
 Solitude
 Peace
 Resilience / Perseverance
 Mutuality
 Laughter / Joy / Fun
 Play
 Presence
 Freedom
 Inspiration
 Choice / Autonomy
 Space
 Meaning
 Awareness
 Tenderness
 Inclusion

Learning & Growth
 Self-Respect
 Healing
 Vision / Dreams
 To Grieve
 Love
 Consideration
 Empathy
 Community
 Understanding
 Trust
 Support
 Stability
 Safety Exercise
 Financial Security

SEAM - Self care basics

Stitch up the Broken Seam of Grief (by Phyllis Kosminsky, Ph.D)

S - Self-regulate: As intense feelings arise, take slow deep breaths. Do not ignore or distract - be mindful with your body, your feelings & emotions. Be gentle with yourself.



E - Eat: Put some nutrition in your body.



A - Activity: Move your body, go for a walk even if it's just to the end of the block.



M - Monitor Self-Talk: Notice thought patterns, especially unrealistic "should" & "must" statements, as well as "should've", "would've", "could've" statements.

Journaling



Counseling



Support Group



Read a book on Grief



Religious Statements/Aphorisms: True or False (Developed by Caroline Cupp)

Some religious statements can be harmful to a suffering person and prevent development of a relationship with the Divine. Discuss the following statements below and see if they are helpful or harmful to you.

- 1) God doesn't give more than you can handle.
- 2) If I'm suffering, I must have done something to deserve it.
- 3) Forgiveness has its limits – You can't be forgiven for something wrong you do over and over again.
- 4) Evil and pain are part of God's plan for the world.
- 5) It's not ok to pray for things I want.
- 6) If I really trusted God, I wouldn't need medicine.
- 7) If I never prayed before, it's wrong to start when things are going badly.
- 8) God is good all the time.

What does it mean for prayer to "Work" (Adapted from list created by Amyi Eilberg)

Prayer is an integral part of most religious traditions; therefore it may be useful to consider the topic directly, especially when someone has expressed frustration with prayer. Often we may believe that prayer only "works" when we get what we've asked. The following list offers alternative understandings of what makes prayer "work." Read out loud and ask participants to identify which one best reflects their experience.

- 1) Prayer may "work" in that one may have asked God for something which indeed came about.
- 2) Prayer may "work" by invoking a greater sense of God's presence.
- 3) Prayer may "work" by way of distraction, momentarily pulling the one who is ill out of his or her pain and suffering into a place of beauty or transcendence.
- 4) Prayer may "work" by way of focusing more deeply on the pain or discomfort in the suffering person's life; in this way, prayer can be deeply grounding and clarifying.
- 5) Prayer may "work" by quieting or centering the self.
- 6) Prayer may "work" by significantly connecting the one praying or being prayed for with their community and tradition.
- 7) Prayer may "work" by helping one praying or being prayed for with their community and tradition.
- 8) Prayer may "work" in focusing the pray-er on the blessings in his or her life, enabling him or her to magnify his or her sense of gratitude.
- 9) Prayer may "work" by helping to focus on what really matters in life.
- 10) Prayer may "work" by connecting people to each other.

MYTHS OF GRIEF *Prepared by Christie Eastman, MA. LPC*

Grieving is a personal and necessary journey with no predictable time frame or stages. Misconceptions about grief are common in our society because we tend not to openly mourn or talk about grief. When you and those around you let go of these misconceptions, it allows you to authentically express your hurt and grief in a healthier, more healing way.

INSTRUCTION: Read the myth (in bold), then ask participants if they have heard about the statement, and ask what they think about it. After the participant has shared their input about the line, the facilitator will then read the paragraph underneath, then ask the participants if they agree with it or not.

Common Myths Regarding Time

Myth #1: After a certain amount of time, you should be over it.

Sometimes people who care about our suffering say things that don't help much, like, "Isn't it time to get past this and move on?" or "It's time to pull yourself together and get on with your life."

The truth is there's no timeline to grief. In fact, if you lost someone you cared very much about, you will never stop grieving, but your grief will become more manageable over time.

Myth # 2: Time heals all things.

Time alone does not heal the broken heart of loss. Allowing ourselves to grieve over time heals the broken heart.

Myth # 3: What didn't hurt last year won't hurt this year.

Sometimes we tend to think of grief in a linear form: "If I face a difficult situation or memory once, I can check it off the list and move on. If it hits me hard the next time around, I'm somehow regressing."

Sometimes what seems like evidence of "regression" is actually evidence that you are now able to face some things that you might not have been able to face before.

Holidays, special occasions and anniversary date are often times when the pain seems to come out of nowhere. Be prepared for this. When these times are approaching, have a plan that limits extra stressors, involves people who love you, and include an escape route in case you need time alone.

Common Myths Regarding Pain

Myth #4: Avoid the pain and it won't hurt you.

Grief that is unaddressed, put aside, numbed, stuffed down, or shut off can grow bigger and less manageable. Just like ignoring pain in your side could lead to a burst appendix, avoiding the pain of loss can lead to emotional and relational ruptures in our lives.

The way to heal the pain of loss is to allow the natural process of grief to take its course for as long as it needs. Just like physical pain in the body, emotional pain is an indicator that we need to pay attention and care for the thing inside of us that is hurting.

Myth #5: Crying only makes it worse.

Working hard not to cry or shutting our tears off is like keeping the locks closed in a dam; eventually the dam will break and the resulting flood of emotion will come crashing down on us and those around us. In the meantime, the pressure is building. We can't feel much of anything, good or bad, and our health and overall vitality suffers.

Tears are a purposeful response to various kinds of pain. Notice how a child cries when the pain is bad, or an adult cries with a migraine. Tears wash some of the pain out. Just as the body secretes the chemicals needed when there is damage to a certain body part, tears are part of our body's natural healing response for both physical and emotional pain.

Myth # 6: Talking about my loss only makes it worse.

Choosing not to talk about our loss keeps us from interacting with painful emotions and memories and keeps the memories and the hurt trapped.

Talking about the loss loosens the grip of the pain and allows us to develop new insights and accept encouragement. Talking with someone who's been there and is further along in the grief process is especially helpful. They will quickly understand how confused and troubled you are and can offer hope from their experience into yours.

Myth #7: Getting angry won't help anything.

Anger is a natural part of the grief process. When you lose someone very dear to you there are a lot of things to be angry about. Simply being honest about the emotion you're dealing with at any given time will help that emotion work its way out.

Denying or repressing anger only strengthens its grip on you and allows anger to decide how to express itself. If anger is not expressed, it takes a toll on your health, vitality and relationships.

Find a safe and appropriate way to express your anger. Talk about it. Journal it. Go slam a tennis ball into a wall. Tell someone you trust all the reasons you're angry. Be honest with your anger.

Common Myths Regarding "Being Strong"

Myth #8: I shouldn't bring anyone down by bothering them with my pain.

Identifying a few trusted people you can reach out to with your loss can become a lifeline for you, and an opportunity for them to see their help as meaningful and purposeful to someone in need of support and comfort. Your trusting them is a blessing to them, not a burden. It could also deepen that relationship in ways you never thought possible.

Myth #9: If I only had enough faith, I wouldn't be struggling so much.

If you loved the one who died, you will struggle. Pain and suffering are not evidence of a lack of faith. Some of the spiritual "greats" of history suffered from deep grief and depression. As we see from their lives, suffering can produce faith and character in ways that nothing else on earth can produce.

Common Myths Regarding "Getting Over It"

Myth #10: If I can't get over this loss, I will never be happy again.

You will never "get over" this loss. Because you loved the one who died, you will always have some level of grief about letting them go. But you will learn to live better with the reality of the loss and how it has changed your life over time, especially as you allow grief to heal you, and as you allow yourself to be an active participant in the rebuilding of your life.

Myth #11: If I begin really living again, I am dishonoring my lost loved one.

Learning to live again is one of the best ways to honor those who have gone ahead of us. If they loved you, they would desire healing and wholeness for you.

Myth #12: Grief is a terrible emotion.

Grief is not an emotion; it's a process of healing. There are many powerful emotions that can accompany grief, such as sadness, anger, guilt and despair, but grief itself is the natural process that allows for those feelings to be experienced, accepted, expressed and worked out. In that respect, grief is not your enemy— it is your friend. Grief is not a reason to be hopeless, but a reason to have hope that you will find your way back to a life very much worth living.