Spirituality: On the Pathway to Wellness

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- Spiritual, but not religious?
- Religious, but not spiritual?
- Religious and spiritual?
- Neither religious nor spiritual?
In what way is your spirituality connected with your religion?

How would you define spirituality?

What/where do you feel your spirituality or a genuine warm feeling?

Which situations feel non-spiritual or irritating?
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- **Healing/Growth** – a force toward greater individual or world health
- **Understanding/ Meaning/ Answers** – the drive towards greater knowing
- **Connection** – a related or connected feeling
- **Feeling** – a particular sense-state, (e.g. a state of flow perceived in quiet moments or moments of meditation)
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- **Force God/Higher Power** – some kind of relationship to a higher power
- **Inner/Within** – an internal construction, a knowing inside
- **Energy/Metaphysics** – awareness of an underlying energy or reality undefined by contemporary
- **Negative Case** – people who do not see themselves as spiritual, define spirituality in a negative way or have no understanding or definition of spirituality at all.
Wellness includes six important dimensions: occupational, social, emotional, intellectual, physical and spiritual. The spiritual dimension, according to the National Wellness Institute*, recognizes the search for meaning and purpose in human existence.
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• This search includes the development of deep appreciation for the depth and expanse of life and natural forces that exist in the universe.
It will help to keep several tenets in mind as your clients explore spiritual themes in their lives:

• This spiritual search will be characterized by a peaceful harmony between their internal personal feelings and the external realities that exist in their lives.

• While conducting this search, they may experience feelings doubt, despair, fear and disappointment as well as feelings of joy, happiness, contentment and discovery.
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- These important experiences and components to their search will be displayed in the value system they adapt to bring meaning to their existence.
- They will know they are becoming spiritual or more spiritual when their actions become more consistent with their beliefs and values, resulting in a “world view.”
In the book, *Spirituality for Dummies*, Sharon Janis suggests some of the ways that spirituality can manifest itself:

- Experiencing a higher universal love
- Surfing the waves of life with a light-hearted view that nurtures a positive sense of humor
- Achieving the ability to see the spiritual in one’s ordinary life
- Developing a mature approach to life that includes peacefulness and spirituality
- Experiencing the divine through faith, optimism and an unfettered heart
- Trusting one’s own inner guidance
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• The art of self-reflection goes back many centuries and is rooted in many of the world’s greatest spiritual and philosophical traditions. Socrates, the ancient Greek philosopher, was known to walk the streets engaging the people he met in philosophical reflection and dialogue. He felt that this type of activity was so important in life that he went so far as to proclaim, “The unexamined life is not worth living!”
The unexamined life is one in which the same routine is continually repeated without ever thinking about its meaning to one’s life and how this life really could be lived.
However, a structured reflection and examination of beliefs, assumptions, characteristics, and patterns can provide a better understanding, which can lead to a more satisfying life. A greater level of self-understanding about important life skills is often necessary to make positive, self-directed changes in the over-used or repetitious patterns.
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• The assessments and exercises in this book can help promote this self-understanding. Through involvement in the in-depth activities, the participant claims ownership in the development of positive patterns.
Why Use Self-Assessments?

- Self-assessments are important in teaching various life skills. Participants will
  - Become aware of the primary motivators that guide their behavior.
  - Explore and learn to identify challenging situations.
  - Explore the effects of messages received in childhood.
  - Gain insight that will guide greater understanding of one’s spirituality.
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- Focus thinking on behavioral goals for expanding one’s spirituality.
- Uncover spiritual resources that can help one to cope with problems and difficulties.
- Explore personal characteristics without judgement.
- Develop full awareness of personal strengths and spiritual understanding.
Forgiveness & Acceptance

• You have the opportunity to forgive both yourself and other people. Forgiveness is a conscious decision to let go of resentments, thoughts of anger, and revenge related to an offense committed against you, or for offenses you committed to yourself or others. Forgiveness is not the same as forgetting what has happened. It just means that by embracing forgiveness, you will reduce the negative feelings you have about what happened and move to a happier and freer life in the present.
The Forgiveness & Acceptance Scale can help you explore your thoughts, feelings and actions related to forgiveness – both forgiving yourself and forgiving others.

Forgiveness is an act of the will, a choice and a decision.
Personal Centering Scale Directions

• Many paths to spirituality may be open to you and you will also discover several spiritual disciplines that can help you deepen your spiritual growth and center you. **Personal centering refers to tuning into, or coming into, greater harmony with your inner natural self.**
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• This assessment will help you identify the ways to embark on a spiritual path, identify the pathways you are already following to enhance your spiritual growth, and perhaps give you some tips about other resources.
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• Life can be very challenging and very satisfying, often at the same time. The essence of spiritual awareness is to better manage the life’s challenges and start experiencing the joys that life and the universe has to offer. Spiritual awareness is learning more about yourself, your spiritual nature and ways to open yourself to a spiritual view of life.