

## **Spirituality – My Thoughts**

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The term spirituality or being spiritual is used quite frequently these days, but what exactly does it mean and how does it relate to life?

Spirituality has been defined in numerous ways. These include: a belief in a power operating in the universe that is greater than oneself; a sense of interconnectedness with all living creatures; an awareness of the purpose and meaning of life and the development of personal, absolute values. It's the way you find meaning, hope, comfort, and inner peace in your life.

Although spirituality is often associated with religious life, many believe that personal spirituality can be developed outside

of religion. Acts of compassion and selflessness, altruism, and the experience of inner peace are all characteristics of spirituality.

The greatest challenge is that many people define spirituality by religious connotations, but religion is almost exclusively based on outward experience and conforming to someone else's rules. Spirituality is not so much about external observations, but more about inner experiences. It is deeply personal and something that only you can truly define for yourself since these inner experiences are often very hard to fully express in words and explanations.

One of the most powerful and useful ways to define spirituality for yourself is to recognize and nurture that divine spark deep within you. Ultimately spirituality is about enriching your experience of life, allowing you to see a greater sense of

meaning and purpose in life. Regardless of how you define spirituality, it is that still silent voice deep within. It is your spirit and it is your constant companion on life's journey. It is your own personal connection to the higher intelligence that's present in all of life.

The study of spirituality goes deeply into the heart of every matter and extends far beyond the physical world of matter. Spirituality connects you with the profoundly powerful and divine force that's present in this universe. Whether you're looking for worldly success, inner peace, or supreme enlightenment, no knowledge can propel you to achieve your goals and provide as effective a plan for living as does spiritual knowledge.

Different religions can look quite unlike one another. Some participants bow to colorful statues of deities, others listen to

inspired sermons while dressed in their Sunday finery, and yet others set out their prayer rugs five times a day to bow their heads to the ground. Regardless of these different outer manifestations of worship, the kernel of religion is spirituality, and the essence of spirituality is God or the Supreme Being.

Spirituality is:

- Beyond all religions yet containing all religions
- Beyond all science yet containing all science
- Beyond all philosophy yet containing all philosophy

Loving and respecting all religions and images of God doesn't mean that you have to agree with all their doctrines. In fact, you don't even have to believe and agree with every element and doctrine of your own religion! This goes for any teachings you may encounter along your path.

There is a path for all of us. We are all on this earth for a specific reason. Our job is to find out what that reason is and follow it. Whether the experience is for us alone or as an example for many people, our unique purpose is undeniable.

The definition of spirituality varies greatly from one person to the next. Often called Source, God, Energy, Awareness, The Universe, or whatever feels true for each individual, the idea of an ultimate power gives new meaning and purpose to one adopting change for the better. For some, as their journey unfolds, the wonder, amazement and appreciation for the world and all it holds begins to surface, and they may come to a realization there must be a Supreme Power, a Creator, someone or something greater than they.

It is this realization or belief of a Supreme Power that can hold an answer to those seeking to define spirituality. Each

individual has the right to determine what that means for them.

There are a variety of ways to improve and strengthen your unique definition of spirituality, including:

- Increasing your faith. This is at the root of improving oneself. If we develop our faith in humanity and the world, our definition of spirituality will automatically be strengthened. What is faith? It is believing in what you have not seen. It is knowing the end result of something before you experience it. Faith knows no doubt. Developing this aspect is essential. It is also extremely powerful.
- Being willing to change. When we are faced with a problem, most of us automatically turn the blame to someone or something else, instead of looking within to find our answers. Are we willing to look at any situation

with an honest heart and admit if we are wrong? And further, be willing to change our ways?

- Doing the work. Any amount of progress takes dedication and commitment. Are we willing to take on the work required to make significant changes? Are we ready to commit? Without action, there is no prize.
- Improving ourselves in temporal matters. We may think that a little white lie doesn't matter, but ultimately, if we are willing to let ourselves go down any path we ultimately know is wrong, even on a small level, it may lead to bigger and less desirable actions, and in turn bigger problems. It's important to be honest, both with ourselves and everyone around us. Life flows much easier when we develop this attitude.
- Letting go of ego. We all have that voice in our head that tells us of all the problems we'll encounter by taking on a

new perspective. We worry about making the right choices for our lives. We fear the unknown and think about all the problems we could face embracing a new attitude. We worry, fret, fear, go back and forth with decisions... It is just our ego talking. Whenever we are unsure and out of sorts, rest assured that old part of us is visiting. When this happens it is wise to say to this voice "Thank you for sharing" and then go right ahead and do what you know in your heart is the right thing to do. Just stay in the moment. The ego has no control over us when we do. Don't give your power away to something that doesn't exist. We are always in control of every minute of our life. Set aside time each day to develop your path. What is your goal? What do you want for yourself? What do you want to do for others? Decide how much time you would like to devote to this path and then go out and do it. You'll find yourself growing

from each experience you give yourself to. You'll benefit even more if you can recognize and learn from the lesson in each situation.

It's important to live by your creed. Don't be a hypocrite.

Decide what you believe in and then just go for it.

As you grow, your standards and views will change, and your definition of spirituality will too. Life has a way of teaching us the things we need to know, we just have to be willing to see it. Be open in your journey and be willing to learn new things, always being aware of how you feel. Trust in your ability to make the right decisions.

There is something greater out there than we are. We can choose to discover the meaning of spirituality for ourselves through our own self-development, which hopefully, will help

us stand for light and truth wherever we find it. Spirituality is,  
and always will be, a personal journey.