



Spiritual Development

What is spiritual development?

To firstly put spiritual development in to context it is perhaps an idea to explain what spiritual development is not. Developing ones spirituality is not about sitting in a dark room contemplating the depths of the universe and other associated topics for eternity. Perhaps the perception of what we think spiritual development is may even conjure up the stereotype images of living like a monk or a nun, or even running away to some mountain retreat to find oneself and ask the assistance of a wise cross legged guru, with a big white beard!

There are many other stereotypes all of which fall short of explaining adequately what spiritual development really is, which is why many people float from one fad belief system to the next, continually searching for something that is more spiritually fulfilling. But what is spiritual fulfilment and how do we know that we have reached spiritual fulfilment? Is this the reason why we begin our personal journey of spiritual development to find a state of being that we find fulfilling?

The development of any individual take places on a number of different levels and these levels make up the whole, so it is impossible to isolate one aspect of our human being that can define what it is to develop spiritually. Spiritual development embodies all three aspect, the mind the body and the spirit.

Developing the mind

As we are human beings we all have freewill, which is the ability to make choices, this is in fact what separates man from the animal kingdom. It is by using our freewill choice that we can begin to mould our life experience for better or for worse. It should be pointed out that the freewill of others also has an impact on our ability to make choices.

How we learn to think and exercise our ability to think is also an integral part of our spiritual development because, how and what we think about, will influence our choices and it is our choices that will influence our actions. And our actions influence the world around us, potentially affecting the lives of others. Our emotions are also governed by our thoughts. Our hopes and fears our dreams and nightmares all have their roots in our mind.

Contrary to popular belief thinking and the ability too think is a skill that can be learnt and like any skill it requires practice to develop and improve. This is why thinking is so important in our personal and spiritual development. The practice of thinking has the potential to help us feel happier and feel more emotionally secure within ourselves establishing a greater sense of individuality. And developing a greater sense of individuality cultivates our sense of personal responsibility.

Personal responsibility

What do we know to be right and what do we know to be wrong? Do you take responsibility for your actions, are you aware of the impact that you have on the lives of other? So many people lay the blame for their life choices and the mistakes that they have made at the feet of other people. The worst victim in the need to shift blame is God. How many wars have been waged in the name of God, how many serial killer, thieves, liars, politicians and con men have all claimed that their actions where all in the name of God? And how many of us still find it too difficult to take responsibility for our action?

Taking responsibility for our actions is yet another key aspect of our spiritual development, it is the door way to developing a moral and value system that is based on cultivating peace and truth, instead if lies and illusion.

Honesty lies at the heart of our value system and when applied with wisdom can help us to engage in personal problem solving that can result in creating a more fulfilling life experience. It is not always easy to walk the path of truth and it does take practice but when we do it can be a life changing experience and one that can makes us feel more in tune with the universal life force that we call God.

The needs of the soul

The needs of the soul are simple and that need it is to grow, and also to develop and evolve the four spiritual emotional essences of love, sensitivity, compassion and understanding. This could be best described as the heart of true spiritual development, the development of the soul. As the soul is immortal it is the only part of our being that survives after our death, so what we carry with us to the next life is the sum part of our life experience retained within the soul essences.

How the soul grows is a holistic process that involves the mind and the emotions. As the soul essences are based on the positive emotions of love, sensitivity, compassion and understanding when we express these emotions with true depth it is the energy within our soul that grows when we give freely without condition. We give love, we are sensitive, we are compassionate and we are understanding. These are simple principles with which to live our lives but they do take time to understand. We also have three other needs, which are the need to love, to give love other and to receive love.

As love is the strongest positive emotions known too man there is the opposite negative emotion, which is fear, and it is fear that holds back our spiritual development.

Fear

Fear is the darkness that clouds our mind and affects our ability to make decisions. It is the most primitive out of all our emotions and it is the most destructive, which is why overcoming our fears is a positive step in the right direction when it come to our personal growth.

It may not always be easy to establish the root of our fears; in fact many of our choices are made out of fear. So, some of the choices that we regard as being having little impact may cause a great deal of pain, perhaps if we feel insecure or lonely, hurt or vulnerable. Fear is a part of our in-built need to survive, it is our sense of self-preservation, and despite fear helping our species to survive it also lies at the root of our destruction.

A unique journey

Spiritual development is a very unique process for each and every individual. For some people it is not about worship or ritual but more about a collection of sound principles by which to live your life. Spirituality is a lifestyle choice and one that has its foundations based in reality and not fantasy, it is the core to living a happier and more fulfilled life.

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