

Guidelines for Developing a Spiritual Practice

Why begin a spiritual practice?

There are many reasons to begin a spiritual practice. You may be facing a personal challenge, such as the loss of someone, the loss of a job or the ending of a relationship. You may feel a need to improve your mental well-being and be looking for something to help alleviate stress, anxiety and depression. Or you may feel the need to connect to your Higher Power, to strengthen your spiritual journey and to find more meaning in your life.

The secret to beginning and maintaining your inner strength and growth and to taking on a more positive outlook on life is found in the creation of a daily spiritual practice. This daily spiritual practice is a routine of things that you do every day. A wholistic approach considers the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual areas of your life and brings balance into your life.

I invite you to begin a spiritual practice recognizing that the goal is a daily practice but also recognizing that in the beginning you may just be doing your selected practice at random times, and it may take you a while to find your own rhythm. It's important to begin slowly and to be patient and gentle with yourself.

You may want to reflect on the following questions before beginning: What is my purpose and intention in establishing a spiritual practice? Do I want a deeper connection to God? Do I want to live a more balanced life? Do I want to develop my intuition? How much time am I able to devote right now? How often am I able to engage? Do I want to spend the beginning of my day or the end of my day in divine ritual? Am I a morning person or an evening person?

How do I incorporate spiritual practices into my daily life?

Decide on and Commit to a Regular Time.

This is done on a daily basis and can be anywhere from 15 minutes to an hour a day. For example, you may decide to begin by meditating or journaling each morning and then adding to your time as you establish your routine. Try to be consistent and realistic. Daily practices work best for many people when experienced at the start of the day. If a daily routine seems too much, perhaps do 3 mornings a week and increase this as you start to notice benefits. You may have to set your alarm a little earlier! If this doesn't work for you, then set aside time in the evening.

Set Up a Sacred Space

The sacred space that you create can be a corner in your bedroom or beside your favorite chair in your living room. If you live alone, it may be in your den, or if you're an artist, it could be a corner in your studio.

Creating an altar whether it's a small table or a window sill gives you a place to acknowledge the importance of your sacred space and a focus. For example, placing a candle here and lighting it to begin your meditation, prayer or journaling sets the time as sacred and acknowledges your intention to honor your higher power. You may want to place objects on your altar that have special significance for you, perhaps images or symbols that represent your faith.

Choose Your Practice

You may already be doing things that strengthen yourself spiritually. But if you are now wanting to be intentional and set up a spiritual practice, start with one or two specific practices and commit to a regular time. You know yourself, so choose what works best for you. If you've tried meditation in the past and that didn't work, then try journaling. Journaling is a good way to clear your mind and to work through daily challenges, and it helps you to be more self-aware and reflective. For more suggestions, refer to

Spiritual Practices Guidelines – Twelve Spiritual Practices

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