

Life-Changing Spiritual Practices

Volume 1

*Individual spiritual practices to build into your lifestyle,
as you walk the spiritual path on practical feet*

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YourSpiritualPractice.com

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Prosperity Publishing House
Durham, NC

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Holton, Bil
Making Your Life a Spiritual Practice, Volume 1 / Bil Holton and Cher Holton
p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-1-893095-90-8

1. Spiritual 2. New Thought 3. Self Help
II. Title

Library of Congress Control Number: 2015943622

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

To the Divine within you

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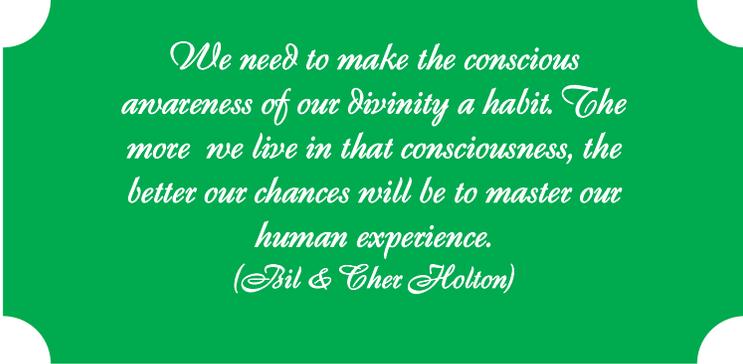
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Introduction

Spiritual practice refers to the intentional and purposeful choices you make, actions you take, soul deepening habits you adopt, and rituals you perform each day to nurture your connection with your Divine Nature. It means becoming consciously one with the Eternal Presence within expressing as your Higher Self, so you can master the art of living by staying connected with your own truth and purpose.

It is an intentional personal journey inward to experience your ‘soul-fulness.’ And you do that by building into each day spiritual practices that keep you focused on your spiritual growth. A spiritual practice is not a dogmatic path, nor is it a ‘worship a god in the sky who is an entity separate from you’ path. It is a path of Self-realization that acknowledges you are the human expression of the Eternal Presence (God) expressing Itself at the point of you.

Spiritual practices can take many forms. And that’s the wonderful thing about devoting yourself to a spiritual practice. You can decide what practices constitute your over-all practice! While the forms of spiritual practices may differ, the intent is the same: nurturing the connection with your Higher Self which we call the Extraordinary You.



*We need to make the conscious awareness of our divinity a habit. The more we live in that consciousness, the better our chances will be to master our human experience.
(Bill & Cher Holton)*

The spiritual practices we share in Volume 1 are all sacred experiences, whether they involve just a few precious moments or take longer nuggets of your time. Developing a regular spiritual practice is a highly personal and intuitive process. We feel certain you’ll find the perrrrr-fect practices that resonate with your core being.

We applaud your desire to live a more spiritual life. You’ll find it’s the difference between surviving and thriving. The transformation you’re seeking—we’re all searching

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for—is possible when we enrich and enliven our lives by adopting a daily spiritual practice.

Choose what works for you. Adopting a practice someone else recommends is not nearly as important as how you *feel* while you're engaged in it. Be willing to “try out” a number of these practices. Look for a good fit between the practice and you. When you commit to a practice, see it as one of the ways to express your spiritual unfoldment. Make it high on your lifestyle priority list. See it as concrete evidence of walking your talk.

Spiritual Practices

Abracadabra-ing

This spiritual practice employs mindfulness meditation, affirmative prayer, visualization, and positive affirmations as the open sesame to healing and enlightenment. Abracadabra, as an incantation, was first used in the third century AD in a book called *Liber Medicinalis* by Sammonicus, a Roman savant and physician.

He recommended wearing an amulet displaying the word written in the form of a triangle:

A - B - R - A - C - A - D - A - B - R - A
A - B - R - A - C - A - D - A - B - R
A - B - R - A - C - A - D - A - B
A - B - R - A - C - A - D - A
A - B - R - A - C - A - D
A - B - R - A - C - A
A - B - R - A - C
A - B - R - A
A - B - R
A - B
A

The power of the amulet was believed to cure diseases and guarantee health and longevity. **From a spiritual perspective, it is the ‘abracadabra nature’ of the divinely ordained powers within us—and not an external physical object like an amulet—that cure illnesses and disease, and guarantee us the health, wealth, and happiness we seek!**

Here’s How This Spiritual Practice Works:

This powerful spiritual practice invites you to employ all of the practices mentioned in the opening paragraph as spiritual ‘amulets.’ Spend time in the Silence, affirm your connection with Spirit, visualize your alignment with your Higher Self, and repeat positive statements about your intentions to be, do, and have from a consciousness of abundance, gratitude and connection.



Vocal Acupuncture

The more well-known form of acupuncture which everyone is familiar with is an alternative healing technique based on traditional Chinese medicine. It involves the penetration by single-use thin needles along the skin of the body, or the application of heat, pressure, or laser light to correct imbalances in the flow of qi through channels in our bodies called meridians.



Vocal Acupuncture is the name we use to describe the power of spoken affirmations. Psychologist Barbara Fredrickson assures us that people who experience more positivity and then voice it become “more optimistic, more resilient, more open, more accepting, and more purpose-driven.” She goes on to say that “positivity opens your mind and allows you to appreciate what is in such a way that you want to talk about it, which reinforces your positive outlook.”

In his bestselling book, *Buddha’s Brain*, Rick Hanson says, “Every time you say a positive affirmation, every time you engage in positive self-talk, every time you sift positive feelings and views into painful, limiting states of mind—you build new neural structures. Over time, the accumulating impact of this positive material will, synapse by synapse, change your brain in positive, life-affirming ways.”

Neuroscientists are telling us that certain positive words—like ‘peace,’ ‘compassion,’ ‘joy,’ ‘kindness,’ and ‘love’—have the power to alter the expression of genes throughout the brain and body, turning them on and off in ways that lower physical and emotional stress.

According to positive psychologists Rowe, Hirsch, and Anderson, another practical consequence of positivity’s mind-broadening powers is enhanced creativity. A broad mindset changes the way you think and act in a wider range of circumstances. When you see more, more ideas come to mind, more actions become possible.

Here’s How This Spiritual Practice Works:

As you can see, this spiritual practice offers you mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual health. Positiveness, in all of its forms and expressions, is a centering practice, one that increases your chances of walking the spiritual path on practical, positive feet. As a spiritual practice, Vocal Acupuncture invites you to use positive affirmations; affirmative prayer; mantras, optimistic phrases, and positive self-talk as often as you can. It means intentionally building these positivity statements into your spoken words and vocabulary.

Random Acts of Kindness

Practicing random acts of kindness is a deliberate attempt to brighten another person's day by doing something thoughtful, nice, and heartfelt. Kindness is a way of showing others that they count. It is a spiritual practice that sends the message that generosity, kindness, and compassion are the kind of virtues that define a healthy society.

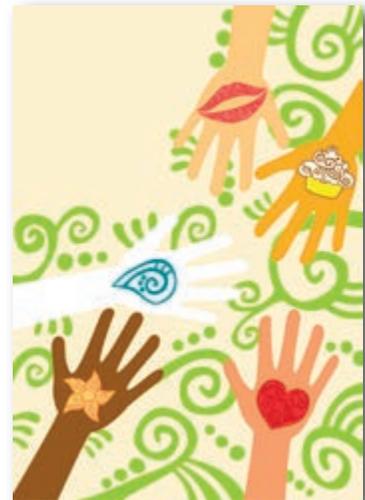
By practicing kind acts toward others, you're helping to create a kindness-aware climate that fosters communities that value generosity of spirit and action. In a study published in an online edition of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, researchers have provided evidence that cooperative behavior is contagious. When people receive kindness they tend to "pay kindness forward" by showing kindness to others. This cascade of kindness and generosity spreads, creating a multiplier effect. Each act of kindness is like a "matching grant" of (reciprocal) kindness that is truly contagious (James Fowler and Nicholas Christakis, "Connected: The surprising power of our social networks and how they shape our lives," Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 107(9) 5334 – 5338, March, 2010).

There are many ways of practicing kindness, of which these are just a few:

- Cook a healthy meal for someone,
- clean a friend's house,
- give some change to another customer to help pay for his/her purchase,
- thank your bus or taxi driver,
- deliver a dessert to firefighters and/or school teachers,
- help a child start a piggy bank,
- help someone find a job,
- mow a senior citizen's lawn,
- pay someone's parking meter before it expires,
- leave Post-it Notes with inspirational messages on them for colleagues to see.

Since we're sowing acts of kindness, here are a few more:

- send someone an eCard,
- spend time with someone who needs someone who will listen,
- buy someone a book,
- write a positive blog post,
- praise someone,
- give a homeless person something to wear,
- show compassion to someone you may dislike,
- send notes of appreciation,



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- give money to down and out people on the side of the road,
- be generous with compliments,
- say ‘Bless you’ when someone sneezes,
- post inspirational quotes on your Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram, and other social media pages,
- help someone financially,
- pet-sit for someone,
- email a quick note to a friend who needs to ‘hear’ a kind word,
- let someone go in line in front of you,
- take a photo of people who want to capture a vacation moment together,
- wash someone’s car,
- give theatre tickets away for free,
- shovel snow for a neighbor,
- tip big for extraordinary customer service,
- treat a friend to some fresh fruit,
- politely let another driver merge in front of you,
- call a friend who is sick,
- give a napkin folded into a rose to a waitress for her excellent service.

Practicing random acts of kindness is a spiritual practice that is congruent with the very concept of practicing spirituality itself.

Here’s How This Spiritual Practice Works:

Each day, look for five opportunities to “pay kindness forward”—and notice the impact it has on your own well-being! Email us to let us know what you did ... and/or what you discovered about the effect on you!

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Aging Gracefully

Aging gracefully is possible no matter who you are or what kind of life experiences you have had getting to where you are today. The process of growing older is a natural process for all of us. Grappling with the illnesses and deaths of parents and friends; the sudden transitions of family members and friends younger than us; age-related physical limitations; loss of flexibility, mobility and vigor are all representative of the aging process.

However, aging as a spiritual practice is not about diet, exercise, medications, bingo, crossword puzzles, or memory exercises. Why? Because aging can also be characterized by a zest for life, health and fitness, optimism and positivity, travel, cultivating meaningful relationships, spiritual growth, meaningful work, learning new talents and skills, new beginnings and fresh insights, and redefining what aging is all about.

Aging as a spiritual practice sees our later years not as a time of decline, but as a time of fulfillment and completeness as spiritual beings who are getting near the end of our earth experience. Preparing ourselves for mastering the art of living starts with cultivating our inner life, acknowledging our dynamic relationship with our Higher Self, and striving to align our human self with our Higher Nature.

Take a peek at Lewis Richmond's book, *Aging as a Spiritual Practice*. It'll help alleviate any doubts you may have about aging gracefully. Aging well starts where you are now. It's never too late (or too early) to start a spiritual practice that brings you into the wholeness and happiness you deserve.

Here's How This Spiritual Practice Works:

Spend time reflecting on yourself, and how you feel about the aging process. Write down all the positive aspects of aging, and what you love about the age you are now. Set an intention of focusing on the benefits of your aging process, and commit to doing one thing every day that celebrates you!



Affirmations: Sell Yourself on Yourself

Do you talk to yourself? Do you talk to yourself out loud? Now for the totally revealing question: Do you answer yourself? (We believe those who answer affirmatively are the truly sane people ... they definitely know a good conversationalist when they find one).

Seriously, research says we all talk to ourselves—and 75-95% of what we say is usually negative. Take a few moments to consider how you talk to yourself. Have you ever leveled criticism at yourself?

If you have used self-demeaning comments to describe yourself, it's time to re-program your messages. **What you tell yourself has a direct relationship on your ability to handle stress; deal with people; achieve personal, professional, and spiritual goals; and connect with your Higher Self.** We unabashedly advocate selling yourself on yourself.

Here's How This Spiritual Practice Works:

Develop a set of short, powerful, positive affirmations about yourself. We call them Personal Empowerment Triggers (aka, PET phrases). Here are a few examples:

- I am one with the Inexhaustible Source of my abundant supply and I am blessed with awesome prosperity.
- I am one with the Eternal Presence and I have such heir power that I attract and enjoy unlimited abundance.
- Because I am one with my Higher Self, I enjoy peace, health, and plenty in all areas of my life.
- I am one with Infinite Intelligence and I live joyfully and prosperously at the speed of my Christ Consciousness.

We invite you to create PET's of your own. Two rules are in order as you prepare your PETs:

- Keep your PETs positive and life-affirming. Instead of saying things like, "I am no longer tired," say, "I am filled with vibrant energy."
- Keep PETs in the present tense. Avoid phrases like: *I'm going to be able to speak in public with confidence someday. I intend to be more successful at living the truth principles I know.* Instead, give yourself positive launches like: *I speak in front of groups with ease and confidence. I am living the truth principles I know joyfully and successfully everyday.*

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Develop two types of PETs. One set includes a **core curriculum**: PETs that are related to your general attitude, philosophy, and well-being (*I am rich, well, and happy in all areas of my life*). The other type relates to specific spiritual goals (*I live a Christ-centered life. I am aligning my human self with my SuperSelf™, my True Self, with speed, ease, comfort, and joy*).

Take a few minutes to either write a couple of PETs or retrieve a few of your favorite affirmations. You may even want to modify them based on the “rules” we’ve shared. (Go ahead and take care of that. We’ll wait!)



Now, review them quickly and then affirm each of them aloud several times.

How did it feel to write, modify, find your PETs? Most people admit that after the initial awkwardness of saying positive things about themselves disappears, this activity feels pretty good.

Record your PETs as a message to yourself on your smart phone or on a CD—or even videotape yourself. Be as up-beat and enthusiastic as possible. Then, on your way to and from work or when you’re running errands, call up your message on your smart phone or pop the CD into your CD player. Reinforce your success with your own personalized sell yourself on yourself pep talk.

Don’t feel frustrated if you don’t believe yourself initially. When you get serious about something, self-doubt tends to creep in just a little. After all, you have accumulated a lifetime of negative self-talk. ***The important thing to remember about affirmations is that you’re not saying affirmations to make them true, you’re affirming them because they are Truth.***

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Ananda Moments

The word *Ananda* means ‘bliss’ in Pali and Sanskrit, as well as in other Indian languages. So, this spiritual practice advocates moments of joy, happiness, and bliss as we connect with our SuperSelf™ (Higher Self, Christ Self, God, the Eternal Presence). To achieve a state of extreme happiness, ecstasy and completeness is the essence of this practice.

A state of bliss results from being unified with the Universe through your super-consciousness. When you reach a blissful state, there is a deep knowing that you are one with all things, and that oneness is at the core of who you are.

Blissfulness gives you a moment-to-moment spiritual experience that is opening, trusting, and softening into each new moment of your life. Samādhi is a state of transcendental bliss. It is the eternally expanding realization that your ego is not real, and that you (the soul, spirit, and divine essence) are what is truly real and will never die. Samādhi is a Sanskrit term used in Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism that refers to a higher level of concentrated meditation. It is a non-dualistic state of consciousness in which the consciousness of the experiencing subject (the meditator) becomes consciously one with the experienced object (the Eternal Presence, God).



Here's How This Spiritual Practice Works:

This spiritual practice encourages you to set a daily intention of experiencing moments of extreme happiness, ecstasy, and joy. They may occur from meditation experiences, becoming totally absorbed in a sunset or star-studded sky at night, being immersed in a physical and/or mental activity that brings you incredible joy, or experiencing heart-melting music—to name a only a few.

Ambitious Carding

For magicians, an ambitious card is a card effect where a selected card continually rises to the top of the deck after being placed into the middle of the deck. You've probably seen the trick and wondered how the slight-of-hand works. (The magicians aren't telling!)

From a spiritual perspective, Ambitious Carding is the psychosomatic process where a particular truth principle surfaces into your conscious awareness to help center you when you face life challenges, disappointments, and setbacks. It is a good spiritual practice to adopt because it helps you stay positive and optimistic.



What makes ambitious carding work as a spiritual practice is the amount of time you spend in esoteric and metaphysical study. The more you immerse yourself in higher thought, the greater your chances are in 'calling up' the learning. The more spiritual principles and teachings you know and use, the more these teachings will rub off on you. You'll have favorite teachings, be attracted to life-changing concepts, and remember maxims that have changed you at a soul level.

Here's How This Spiritual Practice Works:

Make the following statement a non-negotiable habit: "Every time I face a troublesome life situation I'm going to say to myself '*What spiritual principle can I use to give me the wherewithal to handle this situation?*'"

It sounds so simple, but it works. Having the intention to purposefully call upon the spiritual principles you know is a prerequisite for drawing them from your memory banks and making recall easier. It's just like that magician's ambitious card!

These instant reminders are what keeps you on your spiritual path instead of wandering off into the barbs and briars of stray paths. It almost feels like magic!

Time Lapse Photography

One of the most beautiful, mesmerizing, and inspiring spiritual practices is watching time lapse photography. Still photography is a wonderful spiritual practice, too, as we've just shared—but time lapse photography is still photography in stunning motion!

If you've ever seen Louie Schwartzberg's time lapse photography brilliance, you'll agree! He is an award-winning cinematographer, director, and producer who captures breathtaking images of nature that celebrate life—revealing the spiritual connections, universal harmony and rhythms, patterns and beauty that we share with nature. The filmmaker explains the spiritual side of what he captures on film this way:

“Metamorphosis has always been the greatest symbol of change for poets and artists. Imagine that you could be a caterpillar one moment and a butterfly the next.”

In that sage statement, Louie truly captures what every spiritual practice is all about: seeing the connection between our human self (caterpillar) and our Christ Self (butterfly). And as a spiritual medium, time lapse photography focuses our attention on the continuity of our spiritual journey as we unfold into the innate divinity that is our birthright as spiritual beings having a human experience.



Here's How This Spiritual Practice Works:

Google the phrase “time lapse photography” or Louis Schwartzberg. Either search will bring up beautiful examples of time lapse photography. Louis Schwartzberg even has a few Ted Talks, where he explains his process and what it means.

Immerse yourself in this medium. Spend a chunk of quality time watching the incredible visuals and stunning images as they merge into each other. Let them speak to your soul, and then journal about your experience.

Use this spiritual practice as a way to escape from the hectic pace of your life, and experience the divine order of the unfoldment of the world in front of your eyes. You will emerge a stronger, more peaceful, more awakened person as a result.

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A Penny for Your Positive Thoughts

Most people are surprised at how negative they really are. They think negatively, talk negatively, refer to themselves and others negatively, and generally negate anything that comes into their sphere of awareness.

Psychologists tell us that most of us grew up in negative environments—home, school, church, work, etc. Neuroscientists even have a word for it. It’s called the “negativity bias.”

Some people have Ph.D.’s in negativity. Don’t you agree? You probably know some of them. There are people who wear negativity like a badge of honor. Others wear it like a straight jacket and struggle to get themselves out of a negative disposition. Negativity comes from a consciousness grounded in lack, and fear, and anger, and hopelessness.

Here’s the thing. All of us have been exposed to negative environments. We’ve been told we’re not good enough, that we’re failures, that we can’t do certain things or have certain things. And there’s a part of us, that wounded child part of us, that says—what if they’re right? We put a positive spin on that kind of malpractice by saying—negation is simply a choice you don’t have to make. And you certainly don’t have to allow it to form outposts in your consciousness.

So, it’s important to become aware of how often you think, say, and act positively. And that’s what this spiritual practice is all about. It is designed to help you focus on a positive mindset.

Here’s How This Spiritual Practice Works:



Find some sort of clear plastic bottle (bank, bowl, container) in which you can collect pennies. We’re suggesting that you select a clear container so you can see the amount of pennies the container holds.

Carry an index card, Post-It-Note, or slip of paper with you. (Keep it in your pocket, wallet, or purse). Be aware of each time you have a positive thought, feeling, word, or action. Do your best to acknowledge your positiveness by recording a hash mark on the Post-It-Note (slip of paper, index card) as soon possible after you become aware of it.

At the end of the day, count the number of hash marks which ‘prove’ how positive you’ve been all day. Place a penny for each hash mark in your bank (bottle, container). Watch the pennies “grow” during the course of the week. (Although you won’t see your newly formed neurons growing in your brain, neuroscientists assure us that positive thoughts and actions add new neural real estate and strengthen our neural connections. It’s called neuroplasticity).

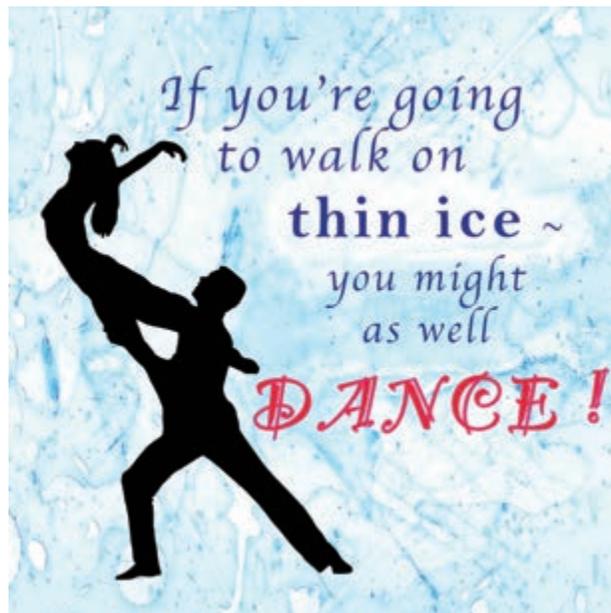
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At the end of the week empty the container (bank, bottle) and put the pennies in bank coin wrappers. It's beginning to look like a mini savings account, right? Save the full penny rolls to deposit in the bank (when you accumulate a sufficient number of rolls).

Putting your 'banking' aside, the pennies will become visible evidence of your positive outlook on life. They'll symbolize your growing positivity quotient. Focusing on positive thoughts limits negative thoughts—the negative thoughts are crowded out. When you keep negative thoughts from intruding, you begin to re-program your neural real estate by strengthening the neural pathways toward a "positivity bias!" And that's the direction you want to go to align your human self with your SuperSelf™, your Christ Self, the Extraordinary You.

Repeat this spiritual practice as often as you can, as a way of checking up on yourself and reinforcing your personal positivity.

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P i n t e r e s t i n g

You would be surprised at how valuable and spiritually deepening Pinteresting can be as a spiritual practice. It is an online visual connection tool that people use to post their ideas and interests. You can create and share collections (pinboards) of visual bookmarks (pins). Pinterest allows you to save images and categorize them on different boards. You can follow other users' boards if they have similar interests as yours.

You will find people interested in spiritual and/or religious subjects who post inspirational quotes, personal viewpoints, humor, art and graphics. Many of the posts are human interest pins that can lift your spirits and add a spiritual dimension to your day.

Here's How This Spiritual Practice Works:



If you haven't already, go ahead and sign up for a Pinterest account. It's free, and you can do it at [Pinterest.com](https://www.pinterest.com). Once you join, you can search for topics of interest to you, and find a multitude of pictures, quotes, posters, and information. Use these as stimulation for your spiritual enrichment, as you choose the ones that bring you meaning.

If you are so inclined, create a few boards that reflect your spiritual interests. There is excellent 'how-to' information on the site. As you surf the web, any time you find yourself captivated by an image, simply "pin it" to one of your boards. You are sharing your spiritual enrichment with others.

Consider Pinteresting as a spiritual practice. Become Pinterested in spiritual subjects. Contribute your own posts.

Sacred Reading and Study

*M*ake this spiritual practice a lifelong practice. Delving into spiritually-enriching materials will keep you on a growing edge that will deepen your spirituality and broaden your perspective in ways that you won't fully understand until you do it! We aren't just talking about the Bible here! Some of the most significant study areas we have found that deepen our spirituality are metaphysics, theosophy, anthroposophy, philosophy, quantum physics, the neurosciences, biology, epigenetics, and the social sciences. There is no shortage of material out there, so get busy and jump into a spiritual practice of sacred reading and study.



Here's How This Spiritual Practice Works:

Make it a habit to study spiritual material at least a half hour every day. Pick a spiritual subject that interests you. Expand your interests to topics that are thought-provoking and take you out of your comfort zone. There are a multitude of ways to accomplish this:

- Read a spiritually focused book;
- watch a spiritually rich YouTube, TED talk, DVD, or TV show;
- study a metaphysical text;
- delve into a metaphysical glossary;
- browse through a list of spiritual quotes.

If you are reading, highlight and/or underline sections that are especially meaningful. Write in the margins. Re-read exceptional passages. If you are watching something, keep your journal nearby, to capture insights and ideas.

Studying with an eye toward later practicing what you read will help you progress much faster than studying for inspiration only. What you put into practice will be a source of lasting spiritual growth. Keep records of your notes. Record your thoughts. Write original affirmations based on your reading.

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