

Life-
Changing
Spiritual
Practices
Volume 5

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

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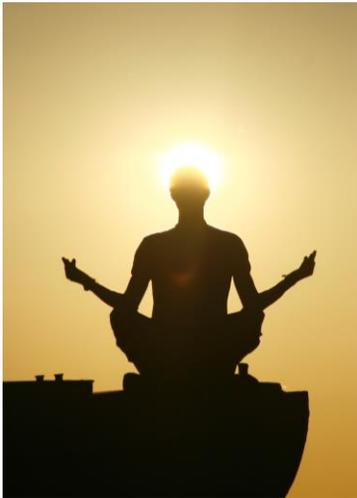
Spiritual Practices Introduction

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 accelerate your enlightenment. And you do that by building into each day spiritual practices that keep you focused on your spiritual growth. We focus on “orthopraxy”—the belief that lifestyle and practice are much more important than mere verbal orthodoxy. That means applying spiritual teachings is the key to enlightenment.

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 that 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.



The spiritual practices we share in Volume 5 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 *perrrr-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 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 *feeeel* 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.

Baoding Balls

This practice invites you to use Baoding balls as a meditation, healing, concentration, and exercise aid. Baoding balls are a traditional product of Baoding, China, and are believed to have been created during the Ming Dynasty.

Most Baoding balls are manufactured as a pair of hollow spheres, one inside the other, with a chime between which rings as the inner ball strikes it.

Here's How This Spiritual Practice Works:

Rotate two or more Baoding balls repetitively in the palm of your hand to concentrate on them as you rotate them. Use them to improve your manual dexterity and strength, serve as aids in healing, and assist you in recovering from injuries and sickness.

As you gain proficiency in using them, you can gradually increase the rotation speed until the balls separate in your hand. Eventually you can learn to rotate them completely without the balls touching each other.

As a meditation aid you can use a Baoding ball rotation after each word or increase the number of rotations so you can repeat an affirmation in the time it takes to rotate the balls. You can use either hand, a combination of both hands, or both hands at the same time.



Be Aware of the Divine Matrix

This spiritual practice makes it clear that you must be aware of the divine matrix and that phrases like *The Field of Infinite Potential*, *universal field*, *quantum hologram*, *divine matrix*, and *Zero Point Field* are based on human cognitive constructs. What you call the universe and how you describe it depends on your level of awareness, openness to new information, and ability to verbalize your experience.

What we're suggesting in all of the spiritual practices on scientific subjects is more than semantics. And it's certainly much more than a cavalier journey involving scientific terms and concepts.

This universal field, this divine matrix, this quantum hologram, this "Zero'ed' Field, this Field of Infinite Potential is the out-picturing of Cosmic Consciousness Itself in physicality. Although consciousness is outside of space-time, its etheric or physical form is very likely the quantum matrix that Max Planck talked about, and its updated divine matrix version by Gregg Braden. (We could be wrong, but we could be onto something).

Spiritually speaking, mind and matter — and the universal field or matrix — are integrally expressions of One Reality. However, we believe that Reality is beyond matter because we have come to believe that consciousness, not matter, is the ground of all being.

The greatest tool you have for understanding the "matrix" is your super-conscious and the will to use it. You are constantly unfolding into your spiritual beingness, and with that unfoldment comes the introspection you need to use the "matrix" to accelerate your enlightenment.

Of course, your quantumizing and spiritualizing of eternal truths are only approximations and interpretations of what is real. They are your attempts to understand the nature of being and existence and your role in It.

Here's How This Spiritual Practice Works:

Forget everything you learned in "kindergarten" about an anthropomorphic God separate from you. Why? Because your *you*, our *we*, and the invisible and visible universe is God expressing Itself in Its myriad of physical forms.

Claiming Your Dependence

“The goal of every living brain,” says neuroscientist Andrew Newberg, “no matter what its level of sophistication – from the tiny nerve cells that govern insect behavior to the highly complex human brain, has been to enhance the organism’s chances of survival by reacting to raw sensory data and translating that data into a negotiable rendition of the world.”

The process which guides an insect’s rudimentary neural network is the same process that powered the ingenuity of Einstein, the creativity of Shakespeare, and the scientific interest of the Dali Lama. It’s the same process that brought you to this connection adventure and it’s the same process that will determine what you eat today.

The difference, of course, between an insect’s understanding of the world and your understanding is due to the complexity of your highly evolved neural real estate. You are able to respond to your environment with the help of the 100 trillion highly intelligent cells that make up your body. These cells respond to multi-sensory input inside and outside of your body because they are conscious entities.

Thanks to the research being conducted in the new science of epigenetics, we now know that our lives are not determined by our genes, but by our reactions to environmental cues picked up by our five senses.

Biologist Bruce Lipton reminds us that we are not the victims of our genes. Instead we tend to be misled by the perceptual filters of our five senses.

When you think about it, the five senses could be considered as the “five wounds of the unenlightened.” These “wounds” are the perceptual filters that color your reactions to the world out there. If your filters are solely ego-based, you tend to see shadows as real and see duality and separation as all there is.

If the world teachers and quantum physicists are right, and we believe they are, the world of appearances truly is illusion. So, depending only on the five senses to make sense out of the external world is not an enlightened perspective.

A sense-coated orientation will never help you master the art of living. And it certainly will interfere with your connecting with your Higher Self. You must declare your independence from your dependence on outer appearances.

Faulty perceptions based on our five senses cause what we call *spiritual arrhythmias*. They upset the rhythm of our spiritual growth. And the longer

we stay out of balance the more we buy into the smoke and mirrors of outer appearances.

We invite you to declare your independence from *depending* on things “out there” for your health, wealth, and happiness.

That’s exactly what we did when we left corporate America as business consultants. We were in 3rd tier negotiations with a corporate giant who wanted to buy our consulting firm. We were tempted to sell. At the time we were doing 200 dates a year. We were tired and we wanted something more out of life.

They did a very good job appealing to our egos. Remember the Bible story where Jesus was tempted. Well, our materialistic egos took us to a very high mountain and showed us all of the kingdoms of the world and said, “*All this I will give you if you will bow down and worship me.*”

Their offer was fair, but it didn’t feel right. There was more uneasiness than positive energy. Have you ever been there? We turned the deal down for three reasons:

- We had decided to move in a spiritual, not material direction. The company was offering us an opportunity to see the world. But we already had an international clientele in Europe, South America, and Canada. Their stock plan was good, and the money was good, but like I said, we wanted to move in a spiritual, not material direction.
- The deal-breaker was something laughable, but important. We feel a little embarrassed to tell you. They offered us two weeks vacation the first year, three the second year, and four after five years. We had 25 years in the business. We worked hard and played hard. We weren’t going back to two week’s vacation.
- It occurred to us that their plan might be to buy our business, give us token positions, and then let us go in a year or two.

Their offer came in September of 2000. September 11, 2001 would have changed everything anyway. We have never regretted our decision, because again, we wanted to move in a spiritual, not material direction. We have always depended more on our 6th sense – *intuition* – and on our 7th sense – *authentegrity* – to see the world more clearly.

In John 8:32, the Christ as Jesus makes an amazing proclamation. He says, “If you continue in my word, you are my disciples indeed; you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.”

What Jesus is sharing here is a statement about living “in dependence.” If we really want to move away from living “in dependence” in terms of our reliance on our five senses, our fixation on the world of appearance, and all the fear, anxiety, and stress that comes with it—if we want to become truly independent (free), then we must become dependent on truth!

To be independent of the world of appearance and claim the abundant life that’s yours by right of consciousness, you must live “in dependence” of your spiritual practices! You must be unrelenting in your commitment to living at your highest, most elevated level of awareness of oneness that you can!

It’s easy to get caught up in the world of appearance, but if you manage to move past it, and focus instead on Truth, amazing things can happen. The Associated Press reported a story of two men who spent more than a week adrift in the Gulf of Mexico, surviving on a small raft and rations after their barge sank during Tropical Storm Debby.

As we listened to them being interviewed, a comment one of them made really jumped out at us and caused us to include it in this spiritual practice. Now, he didn’t necessarily realize he was “practicing truth” — but you be the judge.

Gerald Chessher, 57, and Vance Bryan, 48, were moving cargo on a barge from Captiva Island in Florida to Cancun, Mexico when they got caught in the storm. Chessher said, “The rain was so harsh. It was like a zillion marbles.”

After losing power, the men evacuated their barge to a raft, where they would spend the next nine days being “tossed around like rag dolls” while the U.S. Coast Guard searched for them. When rescuers found their capsized barge, they feared the worst. Chessher’s mother began to plan her son’s funeral. (The world of appearance was at work!)

But here’s the moment of “dependence” on truth—a critical moment for Vance Bryan came when he turned to Gerald and said, “*You know, Gerald, we’re gonna survive this!*” And Gerald replied, “*I know that Skipper! Let’s go fishing!*”

That was a transformative moment, and the two men fought to survive in the blistering heat. They rationed their water – just ten ounces a day – and ate fish they caught from the sea. The men were spotted by a Good Samaritan on a passing boat, which notified the U.S. Coast Guard ... and the rest is history!

It would have been easy for these men to just give up. But they reached down deep within themselves and discovered a strength they did not know they had – they used Divine Ideas to fight the conditions surrounding them

and they focused on the intention of survival! They connected with their Higher Selves.

According to neuroscientist T.J. Davidson and psychologist Dan Goleman, who shared research related to a psychological perspective on transformations of consciousness, we can literally change the brain's neural circuitry in important ways by engaging in meditation every day for an hour each day.

Athletes and musicians train many hours every day to achieve their mastery. Why should it be any different for us, in terms of rewiring our brain to transform our dependence on our five senses into an independence based on our oneness with Spirit?

Here's How This Spiritual Practice Works:

Understanding the incredible power of "No Separation" brings us our true independence! So, here's your spiritual practice. Commit 30 minutes each week, to intentionally focus on the way you choose to use your five senses so you can literally rewire your brain and rejuvenate your life experience. For example:

Sight: Read inspirational material and/or look at beautiful pictures, then spend time in the Silence reflecting on it.

Scent: Include scented candles or incense as part of your meditation time.

Touch: Add a tactile feature to your meditation time. Hold special stones or beads; walk barefoot in nature; stand in a stream and let the water run over your feet.

Hearing: Include music in your meditation time. Vary it and try some new and different types of music to see how the various music styles affect the meditation experience. Move to the music to allow your body to embrace the sensations. You might also use your denials and affirmations, speaking them out loud so you hear yourself saying them!

Taste: Try an eating meditation, where you totally focus on each bite, savoring the texture and taste of the food, allowing gratitude and appreciation to flow through your being as you partake.

Then, as you resume your daily activities, become aware of how differently you are using your five senses. Have they become more sensitized, activated, and enlightened? Notice the power of your sixth sense — your intuitive awareness. Begin hearing it, listening to it, trusting it, and acknowledging its impact.

The view from the inside-out is a lot more peaceful, joyful, and fulfilling. We have declared our independence from outer appearances and our dependence on truth principles. If you who want to claim your independence, repeat these affirmations aloud a few times each:

I declare my independence from outer appearances.

I absolutely...positively... trust in my divine connection.

I affirm everyday is a Neocortex day.

Imagine—every day a Neocortex Day! WOW! Every day an acclamation of your freedom from the world of outer appearances so you can declare the truth principles you know!

Give from an awareness of gratitude to the channels of your spiritual feeding, without questioning if there is “enough,” and become aware of the difference it makes in your experience.

Live believing in the Truth of who you are – worthy and divine – no longer in dependence to the world of appearance, but totally, completely independent of the shackles of the senses and living life. Claim your dependence on Truth principles, free and independent of any sense of separation whatsoever – celebrating every day as a Neocortex Day, as In Dependence on Truth Day.

Japa Mālā Beads

A *Japa mālā* is a set of commonly used by Hindus and Buddhists. It's usually 108 beads, although a different number of beads can be used. The



Dominican rosary is a string of prayer beads used by the Catholic Church which is similar to the *mālā* beads except that Catholics use the beads to separate the recitation of a number of prayers instead of mantras. Similarly, the Muslim *misbaha* is a set of 99 prayer beads used to keep track of counting during prayers to Allah. The Greek *komboskini*, Russian *chotki*, Romanian *metanii*, Macedonian and Serbian *broyanitsa*, and Bulgarian *broyenitsa* are all similar prayer ropes.

In the *Bhagavad-Gita* it says, “On me all things are threaded, as rows of pearls on a string.” All things (*sarvam idam*) – the totality of all manifestation which includes all visible and invisible worlds – are connected. *Mālās* are used for keeping count while reciting, chanting, or mentally repeating a mantra or the name or names of deities. Mantras are typically repeated hundreds or even thousands of times. *Mālās* are used so that you can focus on the meaning or sound of a mantra rather than counting its repetitions.

Here’s How This Spiritual Practice Works:

Say one repetition for each bead while turning your thumb (usually the right thumb) around each bead. When you arrive at the head bead, turn the *mālā* around and then go back in the opposite direction. There are typically knots between each bead so the beads will not be too tight on the string when you use them.

If you decide to use more than 108 repetitions, then, according to Tibetan traditions, grains of rice are counted out before the chanting begins and one grain is placed in a bowl for each 108 repetitions. Each time you complete a full *mālā* of repetitions, remove one grain of rice from the bowl. You can add extra counters to your *mālās* (usually in strings of ten). You can place these strings after every 10th bead in order to keep track of a large number of repetitions.

The 109th bead on a *mālā* is called the *sumeru* bead. The count always starts with the bead next to the *sumeru* bead. In the Hindu and Vedic traditions, if you’re doing more than one *mālā* of repetitions, you must change directions when reaching the *sumeru* bead rather than crossing over it. Some Hindu traditions hold that the correct way to use a *mālā* is with the right hand, with the thumb flicking one bead to the next, and with the *mālā*

draped over the middle finger. By the way, the index finger represents ego, which is believed to be the greatest impediment to enlightenment, so it is best to avoid using it when you are chanting on a set of mālā beads.

If you employ this practice, the type of prayer we recommend is affirmative prayer which is a series of positive affirmations of your choice that affirm your alignment with your Higher Self (Divine Nature).

Deflate Literalgate

Biblical literalism is a term used to define Biblical interpretation in two different ways. It can refer to the dictionary definition of literalism (adherence to the exact letter or the literal sense) where literal means “in accordance with, involving, or being the primary or strict meaning of the word or words (not figurative, simile, metaphorical, allegorical, or MetaSpiritual).” This approach not only obscures the literary and primary meaning of the scriptural text, but its deeper spiritual context.

Biblical literalism can also refer to religious fundamentalist hermeneutics (letterism) that attempts to uncover the meaning of scriptural passages by considering not just the grammatical words, but also the syntactical aspects, the cultural and historical background, and even the literary genre. It emphasizes the Biblical inerrancy bias of religious fundamentalists.

This spiritual practice was developed to encourage you to drop the literal-only approach to sacred scripture, because of that approach’s myopic ‘letterism’ and failure to embrace the figurative, metaphorical, allegorical, simile, and MetaSpiritual interpretations of scripture that uncover deeper spiritual meanings.

Unfortunately, a literalist approach assumes a priori knowledge of the author’s original intent and fails to give the authors of sacred scripture the benefit of purposefully choosing to conceal the deeper, more esoteric meanings of their written material.

Here’s How This Spiritual Practice Works:

The message of this spiritual practice is loud and clear: deflate literalgate! Otherwise, you will fail to put yourself in a position to discover the rich and transformative value of the metaphysical wisdom contained in Biblical passages. So, explore the figurative, metaphorical, allegorical, simile, metaphysical, and theosophical approaches to sacred scripture to your heart’s content. You’ll find that you will accelerate your appreciation for the depth of inspired religious material, as well as your enlightenment. (See our *Avoid Conversations With Literalbots* spiritual practice in Vol 2).

Take a Spiritual Journey: The Jerusalem Effect

This spiritual practice invites you to take a journey—without leaving your home! Your itinerary in this spiritual practice goes from Jericho to Jerusalem by way of Calcutta, through a movie called *City of Joy*. And it starts with the Pal family.

Hasari Pal is a farmer who moves to Calcutta with his wife and three children in search of a better life. Unfortunately, the Pals don't get off to a very good start. They are cheated out of their rent money and thrown out on the streets, and it's difficult for Hasari to find a job to support them. But the determined family refuses to give up and eventually finds a place in the poverty-stricken city.

Meanwhile, at the other end of Calcutta, disillusioned Texas doctor Max Lowe (Patrick Swayze) has arrived in search of spiritual enlightenment. He too, gets off to a rough start. He is roughed up by thugs and left bleeding in the street without his documents, money, or possessions.

Hasari comes to Max's aid and takes the injured doctor to the "City of Joy," a slum area populated with lepers and poor people. It becomes the Pals' new home and the American's home away from home.

Max spends a lot of time in the neighborhood, but he doesn't want to become involved with the residents because he is afraid of becoming emotionally attached to them like he did his surgical patients in America.

However, he's coaxed into helping his new-found friends by a strong-willed Irish woman, Pauline Collins, who runs the local clinic. Eventually, Max sees that there's more to Calcutta than he realized. He sees that India's poor are rich in many ways. The depressed physician begins to find himself.

Max decides to stay and use his considerable medical skills at the clinic. As the movie ends, Max is standing in the heart of Calcutta. He has a serene expression on his face that is vintage Swayze. As the lens angle widens a graphic appears on the screen which says, "*All that is not given is lost.*"

The movie symbolizes not only Swayze's journey from Jericho to Jerusalem, but our journey as well. The character Swayze plays had a Calcutta experience. Our journeys have a different name.

We may have a Katrina experience, a cancer experience, a World Trade Center experience, or a near death experience. Or we may have a divorce

experience, a serious accident or illness experience, a Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 experience, or an unemployment experience.

Whatever its outer manifestation looks like, it's all the same journey: the road from Jericho to Jerusalem; the road from material attachments (Jericho) to spiritual enlightenment (Jerusalem).

Swayze's character realized he could find joy, inner peace, and a sense of purpose in the midst of incredible poverty and human suffering.

As we lose our attachment to material things, we too can find joy, inner peace, and a sense of purpose! We can move to a higher plane of living, moving, and being. We can see things differently. We can hear things differently. We can say things differently. We can do things differently.

In his book *A New Earth*, Eckhart Tolle says, "Any life form in any realm – mineral, vegetable, animal, or human – can be said to undergo 'enlightenment.' It's, however, an extremely rare occurrence since it's more than an evolutionary progression. It implies a discontinuity in its development, a leap to an entirely different level of being, and most important, a lessening of materiality."

He goes on to ask, "Can humans defy the gravitational pull of materialism and materiality and rise above identification with form which keeps the ego in place and condemns them to imprisonment within their own personality?"

We would modify Tolle's question by replacing the word "will" for the word "can." "*Will* we defy the gravitational pull of materialism?" We believe we can – if we want to – if we set our minds to it! It's a matter of having more will power than won't power.

It's about gumption, courage, and commitment. It's about leaving the world something it rarely sees – a person becoming one with his or her SuperSelf.™

Lowell Fillmore agrees. In his powerful Unity classic, *The Prayer Way to Health, Wealth, and Happiness*, he said, "(We) are more than (we) appear to be. We're Spirit, and it's the Spirit in (us) that gives us authority over all things. We need not surrender (our) spiritual authority to any (material) thing placed in our path."

It requires, as Tolle so aptly puts it, "a leap to an entirely different level of being." In other words, it requires a steady, determined, and prayerful journey from Jericho to Jerusalem.

Here's How This Spiritual Practice Works:

Since you're taking an exciting journey, a journey from materialism to spirituality, we thought it would be useful to share some tips for the journey. We've done our fair share of traveling over the years. Most of our clients are located throughout the U.S., and we also have clients in other countries (it's that typical "prophet in your own country syndrome"). On top of that, we enjoy traveling for fun, so we've learned a lot about how to travel successfully and easily. It's interesting how many of the tips you would use to have a successful vacation journey apply to your all-important spiritual journey. Here are three powerful tips for your trip.

1. Map Out Your Journey!

By this we mean understand where you're planning to go.

A colleague of ours was booked to present a program in a state she'd never been to before. Her client made all her travel arrangements; all she had to do was retrieve her ticket and board the plane. Being fairly new in the business, she had not learned how easily that things can go awry.

When she arrived at her destination, no one was there to pick her up. When asked where she wanted to go, she had no idea! It was a terrifying moment for her, and although she eventually got through to the meeting planner to find out the name and location of the hotel where she was speaking, she learned an important lesson. It is critical (and powerful) to know where your destination is!

On the other extreme, there were several trips where, once we located where our client was sending us, we were able to find some great side trips for fun to build into our trip. Knowing the territory helped us add value to our journey.

On your journey to spirituality, it's so important to clarify exactly where you're headed. Then you can map out your stops along the way. For example, once you know you're taking the journey from materialism to spirituality, you might want to map out stops for some classes; certain books to read; meetings with people who could provide insight and guidance along the road. And don't forget to build in those spiritual gas station and restaurant stops — we call it going to Headquarters. All these things will make your journey focused and fulfilling as you travel.

And just as you use a map when you travel, you'll want to keep your spiritual map out and available. Here's something to help you remember your directions. Close your eyes for a moment. Keeping your eyes closed, point in the direction of TRUE NORTH. Keep your hand pointed in the direction of where you think TRUE NORTH is and open your eyes. Look around! Are you certain you're pointing in the right direction?

Here's the real question. If you really wanted to know for sure which direction was TRUE NORTH, what do you need? A compass, of course! Only with that compass would you know where TRUE NORTH was. On your spiritual journey, it's every bit as important to know what TRUE NORTH is. It's your Divine Nature, of course. By focusing on your TRUE NORTH, and staying aligned with it, you'll know you're always traveling in the right direction.

2. Enjoy the Journey!

Charles Kuralt had a marvelous observation. "Thanks to the Interstate Highway system, it is now possible to travel across the country, from coast to coast, without seeing anything!" Likewise, when we get so bogged down in the "stuff" of our everyday lives, it is easy to hydroplane through life without ever seeing anything!

Think about this — how often do we plan a vacation, and during that planning phase, we constantly think about the vacation. We're at work, but our minds are on that vacation. We're doing our chores at home, but our minds are on that vacation. We're serving in church roles, but really, our minds are on that vacation. Who knows what we miss by not being present at where we actually are.

And then, we go on vacation. Invariably we check email and voicemail, follow the stock market, and worry about what's piling up while we're away. Imagine what we miss on the vacation, because we're not fully present. And then we get home or back to work — we wish we could be back at that beach, or the mountains, or wherever it was we vacationed! And we begin dreaming of our next big get-away!

It seems that wherever we are, we're thinking about being somewhere else.

We want to encourage you to enjoy the moment! In our meditation classes, we focus on the concept of "mindfulness" — being present, totally present, in the moment. For example, one evening when our granddaughter was with us, we drove over to a friend's home to pick up a project she had done for us. As we pulled into her driveway, we saw 12 deer in the yard of the home across the street. The three of us just sat there, awe-struck. It was an incredible sight to behold! And if we had not been totally present in the moment, we might have missed it!

We get so caught up in getting somewhere, that we often forget to just "BE." Throughout your day, we encourage you to just stop, take a breath, and look around you. Enjoy the journey and embrace the wonderful surprises you encounter when you are present to the "now" moment. And in each moment, remind yourself to focus and be joyful and peaceful. You make the choice of how to BE in every moment.

3. Travel Light!

There's a great story told of a “chicken-hearted knight” who was so worried as he went off to battle that he packed everything he could imagine he would need. He had his sword and armor for protection, a large jar of ointment for sunburn and poison ivy, an ax to chop wood, a tent, blankets, pots and pans, extra food, and several bags of M&Ms!

He went off clanking and thudding — a moving junk pile! Halfway across a dilapidated bridge, the boards gave way under his weight and he fell into the river. Because he was so weighed down with stuff, he got stuck in the middle of the river!

We've learned that with airline travel, it's best if you can carry everything you need in your carry-on bag. It can be a challenge, but it's also amazing how little we really need to take with us. We've done week-long spiritual retreats with only our carry-ons. (We sent our course materials and props ahead to make life simpler).

We took a 2-week trip overseas with only carry-on luggage — and we didn't do hiking, camping, or hostels. We're hotel people! But it was really fabulous to be able to travel without being burdened with a bunch of stuff!

Do you think people generally have too much stuff? There's actually a Self-Storage Association, representing a \$20 billion industry, with a total of 51,500 primary facilities in the U.S covering some 2.2 billion square feet of rentable storage space. But it's not just physical stuff that weighs us down — that's just an outer manifestation of what's going on inside.

Are you traveling through life weighed down with fears, resentments, and grudges? Burdened by past beliefs and imbedded theology, what-if's, and material stuff? It's time to release anything that is not serving you — let it go! Travel light!

Want to go a step higher? Don't just travel light — *Travel As Light!* Be a beacon along the journey, so everyone who sees you will feel the energy of your Divine Nature and will themselves be lifted to a higher octave!

We're travelers together on the most exciting journey we can ever take — the journey from Jericho to Jerusalem — from materialism to spirituality. As you travel, consider this last piece of guidance from our travel guidebook:

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matthew 6:19-21)

Here's the essence of this spiritual practice as you travel the spiritual journey from Jericho to Jerusalem on practical feet:

- Map Out Your Journey (remember that TRUE NORTH is your Divine Nature)
- Enjoy the Journey (embrace the wonderful surprises you encounter when you are present to the “now” moment)
- Travel As Light (be a beacon of Divine Light wherever you go)

Millstones Into Milestones

Every household in Israel 2000 years ago used small millstones to grind grain. They would put kernels of corn on the millstone, and then use another rounded rock to grind the corn on the hand-held millstone. They also had *mule* millstones in every village. *Mule* millstones were huge. They were usually over eight feet in diameter and made of solid rock, chipped into a round slab. Many villages in Africa and the Middle East still use them.

They have a long wooden bar which goes diagonally across them, and at the end of the bar is a yoke for a mule or an ox. The mule or oxen walks its merry-go-round all day long. Round and round it goes on the same track, grinding the grain for the village.

A Peace Corp volunteer in a small African village witnessed the *retirement* of an old mule which had walked thousands of miles turning millstones for 30 years. When it was freed, the mule walked in circles. Its only tether was mindless habit.

In *A Christmas Carol*, Charles Dickens describes the plight of Scrooge who is admonished by the ghost. “It is required of all of us that the spirit within us should walk abroad among our fellow-men, and travel far and wide; and, if that spirit goes not forth in life, it is condemned to do so after death. It’s doomed to wander through the world — oh, woe is me — and witness what it cannot share, but might have shared on earth.”

The traveling salesman in *Death of a Salesman* and the protagonist in Kafka's *Metamorphosis* are always on the road and yet going nowhere. Despite their labor, they always find themselves back where they started.

In *Rambo and the Dalai Lama*, Gordon Fellman describes the belief that human life is based on conflicts of interest, wars, and the opposition of people to each other and to nature. This belief, he says, is a default setting, a kind of millstone.

A more enlightened perspective, he says, sees cooperation, caring, nurturing, and loving as equally viable ways of organizing relationships. Fellman sees shifting from adversarialism to mutuality as essential to the survival of our species. We would add unified vision, shared values, and a millstone-free perspective to his formula.

And that’s the gist of Matthew 18:3-6. (Read one of your favorite literal translations, and then read our *Metaphysical Gospel of Matthew* interpretation).

Stumbling block comes from the Greek word, *scandalon*, from which we get the word, *scandal*. Stumbling blocks are millstones. The millstone the Christ as Jesus was referring to was the *mule* millstone in Matthew 18.

In one of the best books to come out of the Unity Movement, *Discover the Power Within You*, Eric Butterworth writes, “If you, who believe in the divinity of humankind and the omnipresence of God, do not act as if you believe it, then what hope is there (for you) or the world?”

When you know the truth and then don’t apply the truth, you have essentially placed a millstone around your neck – the millstone of complacency, disbelief, doubt, fear, arrogance, or pretense.

The chief reason people fail to demonstrate the possibilities available to them isn’t that Spirit is withholding their good, but because they’re not applying the truth principles they already know. They’ve chosen instead to walk the millstone path, around and around in a world of illusion.

Another Unity writer, Rev. Sue Sikking, writes in her book, *God Always Says Yes*, “The souls of all of us are feeling the pressure of the evolution of a new consciousness. All pressures and unrest in the world today are tokens of this great (transformation). The pressures in us and outside of us are the (growing pangs) of this new birth. We must be aware of what is happening to us so that we aren’t caught in the old concepts (*old millstones, we would add*) of evil and punishment.”

We can turn millstones into milestones and milestones into smilestones when we turn *diddlysquatch order* into Divine Order. Divine Order is when we divinely order our experience from the consciousness of our oneness with Spirit. Diddlysquatch order is a millstone perspective. It means allowing our fractured and frightened ego to tempt us into believing we are separated from Spirit, that we are not divine beings, and that all good things must come to an end.

How many times have you heard this millstone perspective? What kind of affirmation is that? Good things never come to an end – they’re simply repressed, delayed, forgotten, or exploited. What *ends* is our connection with good things, like our connection with Spirit when we forget or repress our divinity. Millstone thinking is a fractured way of thinking. It comes from a millstone consciousness. But we can get off the merry-go-round whenever we want.

Here’s How This Spiritual Practice Works:

Do you sometimes feel like you are literally dragging those heavy millstones around with you everywhere you go? When we get caught up in the world of appearances, it can really feel like we are loaded down with the

heavy weight of problems or responsibilities, and like that old mule, we find ourselves going around in endless circles.

A milestone, on the other hand, is literally a stone set up beside a road to mark mileage points between locations. We use the term to describe actions or events which mark a significant change or stage in development. When we say we've hit a milestone, it's usually cause for celebration! So how do you transform those appearances of millstones into a celebration of milestones, or better yet, into smilestones?

Here are three things that can help you turn millstones into milestones so that you can live the life you are meant to live by adopting them as spiritual practices.

1. Get Rid of the Blinders.

Just as the mules and horses are wearing blinders so they aren't distracted in their work, how often do we wear spiritual blinders. We think we are focusing, but actually we are seeing things from only one perspective. We are narrow in our vision — we're in a rut (rigid unchallenged thinking) and we limit our awareness of the options that abound and surround us.

In Mark 8:18, shortly after the Christ as Jesus had fed the 5,000 and the 4,000 (there were probably closer to 15,000 and 12,000 people because they didn't count the women and children back then), He and the disciples were out on the lake and the disciples had not brought food. They were arguing about it, and Jesus said, "Having eyes, see ye not?" He was reminding them to take off their blinders, not get sucked in by appearance. See through spiritual eyes for clarity. It isn't a millstone — it is a milestone, an opportunity we can create!

2. Pay attention to the "Click."

When our intuition guides us to an awareness, a truth, there is an almost perceptible "click" in our heart center. When you hear a truth, you KNOW it somewhere deep within the very depths of your being.

It's like the eye doctor, when he or she is testing your eyesight for new glasses. They put the machine up to your eyes and show you a line of tiny letters. Then they keep shifting the lens, asking which is sharper, this one (click) or that one (click)? You are going along trying to differentiate, and all of a sudden, there is a click — and the letters are perfectly sharp and clear. And you want to yell, "STOP! — That's it!" You don't even realize how unclearly you were seeing things until you get that perfect click that brings everything into absolute focus!

That's what happens when we tune in to our Higher Self, our Extraordinary Nature, and become consciously one with our Source. Everything we are seeing in life changes and clicks into focus. We see through new eyes, and recognize the good of all we are involved in.

3. Always Apply the Question of Truth.

“And what would that question be?” you ask. Whenever we get bogged down in millstones, we know we have lost our perspective. It's time to visit Headquarters and do some serious meditation. Do not ask, “Why did this happen to me?” or “What did I do to deserve this?” and not even “What lesson am I supposed to learn from this?” There is no anthropomorphic god sitting “out there” throwing situations at us to give us lessons! We need to keep our attention on the question of Truth, “How can I use this for good?”

For example, Cher used to do keynotes during Administrative Professionals Week. She confessed that doing these programs wasn't much fun. Let's just say, she had trouble seeing the Christ in some of the rude people. She was very frustrated and feeling a bit “Millstone.” However, on the way home from one of these programs, she told herself, “Okay Cher, how can you use this experience for good?” And by asking that question, she gave her Authentic Self (Higher Self) permission to respond!

She realized two powerful things: 1) She knew for sure that this audience was NOT the one to speak to! 2) She was very clear that helping people connect with their Extraordinary Self is what she is here to do. (That's also Bil's inner “surge” – spiritual urge).

So, let's sum up, with a powerful example!

You probably heard about *American Idol Gives Back*, their big campaign raising money to feed hungry children in America and in Africa. Part of their show each week has included video footage from their trip to Africa, and the obvious impact it had on each of them. That reminded us of the book, *Love In The Driest Season*. The author is Neely Tucker, a Washington Post staff writer. In this book, he describes the experiences he and his wife had as they volunteered at an orphanage in Zimbabwe, Africa. It is a vivid example of turning millstones into milestones.

The story begins with a newborn girl who was abandoned and left to die in the tall grass of the Highlands of Central Zimbabwe, Africa. Ants swarmed over her and began attacking her right ear — a millstone, for sure. That attack caused the child to scream in pain, which was heard by a passerby, who followed the cry and discovered the baby, umbilical cord still attached. Her cry saved her life.

She was taken to an orphanage, where she was named Chipo, which means gift, where she became one of more than a half million orphans in a nation of 11 million people. Enter Neely Tucker, and his wife, who were volunteers at that orphanage.

Chipo was lying unresponsive in her crib. On one occasion, Neely was spoon feeding her, and she reached out her long spindle of an arm and wrapped her hand around his finger.

“In so doing,” he said, “she softened a heart that had developed a callous in a land of so much violence and death.” The result of that sick little girl's grasp was a commitment by the couple to do everything possible to save her life. Childless themselves, that moment changed them from volunteers to people with a mission, — they set their hearts on adopting her. They faced many appearances of millstones. They had to:

- Save Chipo's life after she stopped breathing due to extreme pneumonia.
- Ease her out of that dull unresponsiveness of an institutionalized child.
- Deal with a country that was very unfriendly towards foreign adoption and where officials repeatedly lost the paperwork that the Tuckers spent hours completing.

The Tucker's determination, in the face of the resistance, led to months of persistent and aggressive waiting. Because he wouldn't leave the country without Chipo, Tucker took months of unpaid leave which caused him to lose his job. The lives of this couple were driven by their desire to rescue one child. And by changing millstones into milestones, they did it. It took nearly two years, but they were finally able to take Chipo home and make her a part of their family!

How did they do it?

They removed the blinders of the impossibilities of the situation; the blinders of cynicism that comes when you are overwhelmed by so much poverty and illness; the blinders that said it could not be done.

They paid attention to the “Click” that happened when Chipo wrapped her little hand around Neely's finger — and his heart!

They asked the question of Truth, “How can I use this for good?” They kept asking that question, and the answers led them to the resources and help they needed to accomplish their goal.

Here's the real secret of this spiritual practice. When you are faced with millstones of any kind, use them as steppingstones to milestones of spiritual transformation and joy!

Begin using this spiritual practice now! Pick a current challenge in your life and use the three steps that characterize this practice as steppingstones to achieve the results you want. Turn any millstones along the way into milestones of accomplishment.

This ends the Free Sample of Life-Changing Spiritual Practices, Volume 5. You can [order the entire book by clicking here.](#)