

What Does Spirituality Mean and Why Is It Important for Your Well Being?

By Kay Roberts, MA

Now more than ever, in a time that feels sometimes heavy and uncertain, having a strong spiritual foundation is critical to having a healthy and well-balanced life. A good starting point is to first define spirituality for yourself. This is a wonderful reflective exercise. Take a moment to ask yourself, “how do I define spirituality?” and then continue reading.



In defining spirituality, there is the Buddhist definition naming spirituality as *shamatha*, or “tranquil abiding.” Others describe spirituality as the spirit piece of our lives. This spirit is connected to the source of all life. It is the very breath we breathe. Body, mind and spirit is commonly used for identifying an inter-connectedness of our humanness. Others name spirit as the part of us connected to something much larger, something beyond us. Perhaps your spirituality exists in, or has grown from, a faith tradition that helped, or hindered, your early understanding of what it means to have a spiritual life. For our working definition of spirituality, we will use this statement as a foundation to build upon:

Spirituality is not about religion. Rather it is an acknowledgement of our spiritual essence by exploring our desire for purpose, meaning and an interconnection with others.

Next, we ask ourselves how we can best nurture our spiritual life. We do this to build a strong foundation of well being to learn to both positively navigate life and then better handle what life sends us. There is no ‘right’ way to nurture our spiritual lives. An essential discipline in our spirituality is the *tending* of our spiritual life. We tend our spiritual life much like a gardener who waters, feeds and weeds in order to have a healthy harvest. Among the many ways people nurture their spiritual lives, you may find those who tap into:

- Mindfulness, [meditation](#), prayer or taking time to be silent
- Yoga, Tai Chi, Qigong, massage
- Walking, hiking, running (even more beneficial when done in nature!)
- Journaling
- Adequate sleep
- Healthy eating
- Addressing mental and emotional health
- Well being breaks during the work day
- Social activities with friends
- Volunteering
- Donating money to a worthy cause
- Workshop or retreat on spirituality
- Deep breathing
- Drinking [enough water](#)
- Intentional, daily time for spiritual exploration
- A spiritual retreat of any length or finding a community of like-minded seekers
- Creative expression including, music, art, dance, Zen-tangle and coloring for adults
- Read a book from our recommended [spiritual resource reading list](#)
- Study expanding a spiritual vocabulary
- Support from a spiritual counselor, coach or mentor



We tend to our spiritual life by first choosing to enter this journey. We can become seekers of wisdom and nourishing acts when we make space in our lives for the intentional nurturing of a stronger foundation of our spirits. We travel this journey by paying attention and listening carefully, so we can get in touch with the longing of our human spirit. We strive to live peaceably and justly with other human beings. Through the nurturing of spirituality, we begin by taking many steps on this pathway to well being. With each step, we soon understand the potential for a deeper connection to a richer and more brilliant inner life.

At times this inner seeking challenges us in how we currently think, live and act in the world. When we experience breakthroughs, we can name these new understandings as spiritual *awakenings*. It is important for us to awaken to all the ways that our spiritual lives are being newly formed. This is what builds a strong spiritual foundation and we can begin to see what is possible with each new awakening. By growing awareness to the many layers of life we learn how to *continually* nurture our spiritual lives. This helps us build a strong spiritual foundation.

To further your spiritual path, consider spending time reflecting or journaling. Here are two resources you can use:

- [Deepening Our Spiritual Lives](#): This series of questions can support you in further reflection of your spiritual history to help you more fully connect into your spiritual essence.
- Review the VITAL WorkLife [Wheel of Well Being overview and assessment](#) each year to keep yourself aware.

In the busyness of life, we may lose sight of the fact spiritual living is not an after work or weekend obligation. Rather, our spiritual life becomes the very fabric of our daily living and becomes our preferred way of being in the world. Even during good times, our spiritual life can suddenly express itself in the form of discomfort or dissatisfaction, our spiritual foundation can help return us to a deep inner peace and calm while we determine the source of the potential new frustration.

With a strong spiritual foundation, we can focus on what is truly essential. This strong foundation can support us in creating a new vision to see what opportunities are ahead, rather than hanging on to our fears and anxieties about change and what the future may hold. However you choose to nurture your spirit, this investment will ensure you have a consistent source of hope, strength, comfort, meaning and peace. You will want to continue to 'tend this inner garden' to ensure an ongoing, strong spiritual foundation.

We Can Help

Are you seeking guidance in setting a spiritual foundation? Contact us to schedule an appointment with a counselor or coach who can help you with this journey. Call us at **800.383.1908**, message us via the [VITAL WorkLife App](#) or [contact us online](#) to get started today on nurturing your spiritual foundation.

#35-005-0821