

# FIRST, BE SPIRITUAL

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*First be Spiritual and then be Spiritualist, was given to me in an earlier writing session. It is the theme I feel for this 90th convention in a few weeks. It feels more and more that my role in the ISA is to bring more emphasis on Spirituality (Spiritual/personal growth) as a foundation for Spiritualism.*

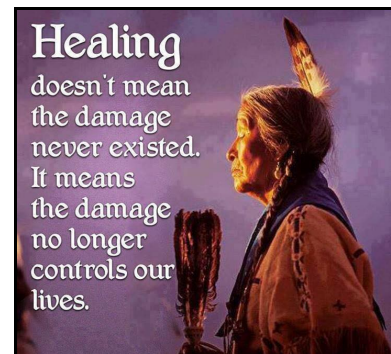
The concept is not unique to Spiritualism and is actually quite universal. Whatever label we choose to self-identify will always be secondary, or at least should be, to being Spiritual. Whom in your life would you prefer not to be Spiritual? Do we not need Spiritual teachers, bankers, salesmen, mechanics, waiters, doctors, nurses, piano players and hopefully, ministers and priests?



Spirituality is not passive or always gentle. It is tough-love at its best - appropriately strong in the right moments and for the highest reasons. As a good parent will love their children enough to say “no” to anything that is ultimately harmful or not in the best interest of the child. The trick is always to know your motivation. The success of our actions matching our intentions will always be directly related to the progress we have made with clearing our emotional body of traumas. The old adage *forgive and forget* tells us the first and most vital step in the process and the natural end result at completion of that process. Forgiveness is a vital part of the first steps in this process and once the emotional charge is no longer there you will forget – naturally.

It is simply not possible to clearly pass our best intentions on without some distortion before healing is complete within our emotional body. Much like the quality of the light passing through a lens is affected by the purity and clarity of that lens. The earliest glass window panes can be a visual metaphor for this idea. Early window panes passed light quite well but were difficult to see through. You could get diffused light but not clear vision. Today modern glass making techniques not only produce clear glass panes with no visible distortion, but can have other beneficial properties as well. UV (ultraviolet) glass will block higher frequency light responsible for sunburn as well as fading colors on draperies and furniture. However, this same feature makes it the wrong glass to use for a greenhouse as plants use these higher frequencies of UV light.

Similarly we too become a *lens* that our intentions and inspirations must filter through. We cannot separate our *personal growth* from our *Spiritual growth*. Religion is not an end but should be a road map for *Spiritual growth*. This personal growth (emotional clearing) is work everyone must do to be clear and at peace. The specific steps vary and are for you to choose. At one time it was said, *all roads lead to Rome*, similarly there are many paths to awakened Spirituality and all will include some form of personal house cleaning. Our potential for *Spiritual Growth* is limited by our *Personal Growth*.



Masters in Eastern religions called it *enlightenment*. However, this is a new time and age that is not only for Masters, Gurus and Yogis. It is a time now for everyone of us to step into and embrace our mastery, *our self-mastery*. God, the Creative-Force has given each of us dominion over just one small yet very critical part of this great universe – ourselves. Nothing can be more important than mastery of self. For it requires the purifying of the *lens* that we are. Whatever we choose to do with this life is affected by the

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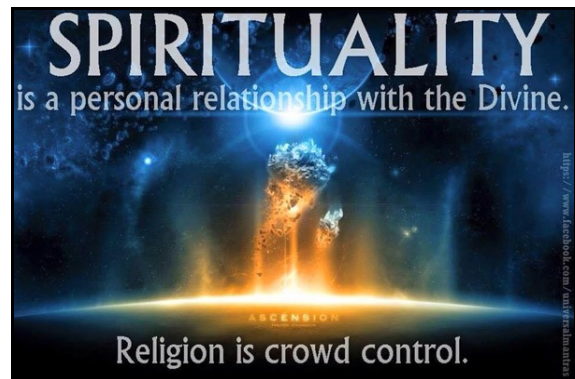
level of purification we have accomplished. Did you ever intend to help someone but succeeded in hurting them instead? Your intention no matter how well intended filtered through your *lens* producing actions affected by your own distortions - your unfinished business, your unforgivable hurts, your wounded self.

There is a great story that is a powerful metaphor about intention and consequences. The setup to the story varies with the teller but goes something like this:

*A man finds a cocoon on his firewood and places it on the mantle. He waits in hope there is a butterfly growing inside. In time the warmth of his room has the cocoon stirring with life. With great interest but growing concern the man watches the struggles of the tiny creature to break free of the cocoon. In time, sensing there must be a problem, he decides to "help." Carefully he takes a razor and cuts the cocoon ever so carefully. Soon the struggles of the butterfly break open the cocoon and it emerges spreading its damp and delicate wings. The man is delighted to finally see this beautiful creature emerge and begin to dry it's wings. The next day the man awakens to see the butterfly still walking his mantle, he watches and waits but again the next day it's the same. Becoming concerned he calls a friend who is an expert with such creatures. After hearing the story his friend declares "this butterfly cannot fly." "Why, what is wrong with it," asked the man? "There was nothing wrong with the butterfly, but in helping it escape it's cocoon you deprived it of the struggles it needed to strengthen it's flight muscles," explained his friend.*

It is clear in this story that the man's lack of understanding played an obvious role. However, perhaps not so obvious are how his inner needs may have played a role in him to taking wrong action. Perhaps it was his own deep seated need to be "saved." With just a little more patience he would have allowed nature to take its course. Unintended consequences often happen from actions to *help* others when the underlying motivation is our own need. *Physician heal thyself*, are wise words still.

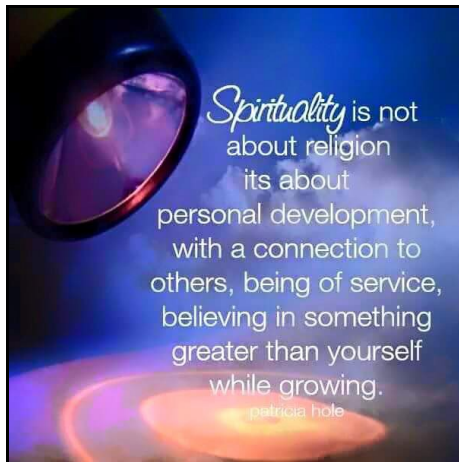
Our greatest needs for healing are hidden from us. We long ago developed a *blind spot* for our most painful emotional traumas. It was a necessary defense and survival mechanism at the time. But much like trauma care it is intended to be temporary - a *bandage* required to protect a tender and vulnerable spot. It allows us to survive long enough to get *proper care* for complete healing. We will hide these emotional traumas until we are strong enough and have enough self-confidence to confront them. We put it off because they are our *greatest fears*. A tourniquet can save a limb and/or a life but is an temporary emergency measure - left on too long it goes from helping to causing more damage. It goes from saving to causing the loss of the limb and even the life it was intended to save. So too our suppressed emotional traumas get worse like an infected splinter. Until the splinter is removed things get worse.



Our emotional blind spots must be found by looking for the evidence. By definition they are hidden from our direct observation. Fortunately life is a *mirror*. It has been reflecting accurately what we need to see but we will not see it until we become ready and allow it. Until then we will see it as an attack on us. We will devote great energies attempting to change the world outside – the cause is always someone or something else. We will blame the messengers and miss the message. Attempting to change everyone else is an exhausting, frustrating and fruitless endeavor. Eventually it is in utter exhaustion that we become *sick and tired of being sick and tired*. Our liberation comes when we finally let go of fighting the

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world. Then we catch a glimpse of the truth we have been avoiding. The changes needed are not *out there* but *in here* - within our self. We finally realize, *I have no real power to change anyone but myself, however I do have full power to change myself.* The next seeming paradox will then present itself, *I cannot change the world around me, but as I change myself, the world around me changes.* The Creator has given us dominion over our own being and nothing more – fortunately changing our self is the most powerful contribution we can make to the unfolding of Creation. This is a universal truth.



Lenses work both ways and so does our inner clearings. We become a *Clear Channel for Divine Source* to flow through so our guidance and inspiration becomes ever more clear. We become a powerful channel for *Divine Love* (healing energy) to flow through. Even our daily walk through ordinary life becomes a prayer and meditation. All activities become sacred. We become an instant blessing to all we encounter. Miracles follow us and become ordinary.

Does this sound too God-like? Too ego driven? The distinction comes from the limitations of ego driven actions. The human ego can only mimic and attempt to look like that which is Divinely inspired. Most ministers have good intentions for their ministry, but there are some that will be ego driven, not Spirit driven.

Whether intentional or not an ego driven ministry can appear to be the same as Spirit driven ones and perhaps even be wildly successful. The worldly success of a ministry is not an endorsement by God. Good things happen within ministries with corrupt leadership despite the ego-based corruption. How is this?

When we come to understand that power only comes through you - through each of us. We each choose what to do with this power. Miraculous healing may happen at large rallies in the name of Jesus. Is it Jesus that accomplishes the healing? Did he mean it when he said, “all these things I do you shall do and even greater?” Does Jesus want our power or does he want us to follow in His footsteps and learn to use it as He did? Jesus is the focal point that allows each one to open fully to allow the Divine healing power of God to flow. Both projected through each one there and allowed in by those being healed. Are we not each created in the likeness and image of God?

God, Divine Source projects through each one of us. Like the sun shining on all equally so does the God-Force. How this energy gets distorted and misused is up to us. We are responsible for the polishing of our own *lens* (self) so that we are a clear and open channel. It is how *Thy Will* becomes *my will*. It is not obedience in human terms. God does not need our obedience, but does want our clear focus. Like a solar array each mirror must be clearly polished and when aligned with countless others on a single spot millions of watts of power is produced. This from the very same sunlight that warms our face! Our collective potential is limitless when we act in concert. The God-Force Energy is minimal when fragmented, when we act alone as separate individuals. It is ours to choose.

### 12 Symptoms of Spiritual Awakening

1. An increased tendency to let things happen rather than make them happen.
2. Frequent attacks of smiling.
3. Feelings of being connected with others and nature.
4. Frequent overwhelming episodes of appreciation.
5. A tendency to think and act spontaneously rather than from fears based on past experience.
6. An unmistakable ability to enjoy each moment.
7. A loss of ability to worry.
8. A loss of interest in conflict.
9. A loss of interest in interpreting the actions of others.
10. A loss of interest in judging others.
11. A loss of interest in judging self.
12. Gaining the ability to love without expecting anything.