

# The Journal of Psychological Studies

Science, Philosophy and Religion

## Spiritual practices for everyday life

Spirituality is fundamental to achieve balance, harmony and integral health. Do we know how to practise, how to experience spiritual

values in our existences? Do we know how to connect and stimulate the divine within us?



As spirits, we are the architects of our own destiny, through the choices we allow ourselves to make.

There are people who are highly knowledgeable about spirituality and live with psychic and spiritual disturbances and conflicts, showing the absence of the daily practice of essential values. On the spiritual path, practice is more important than intellectual knowledge. Through self-control, we stop being victims of the challenges of destiny, becoming central character of our own evolutionary script, through individual effort.

Considering the self-encounter, we list practical, experiential possibilities:

**The therapy of humbleness:** Humbleness is the principle of learning. It is one of the essential values of the Soul, it helps us to assess our weaknesses while pride or selfishness avoids observing them. The aim of the experience of humbleness is the practice of charity, characterising cordiality, respect, simplicity and cooperation.

It is time to review our thoughts, emotions, actions; to evaluate our attitude towards those around us, to analyse what we carry in our heart. We exercise humbleness before those who show pride; we practice humbleness before those who are vain; we experience humbleness in the face of selfishness. It is necessary

is necessary to re-edit the film of our unconscious. Jesus encouraged a spirituality which promotes psychic health.

**Meditation therapy:** Meditation consists of daily practices involving essentially concentration of attention. Do not fight against thoughts. Conquer them with patience. The practice of meditation facilitates self-encounter, contact with the transcendence of the ego; it relaxes the mind and the body. It develops concentration and self-control and balances anxiety.

Meditate daily, choosing and keeping healthy thoughts, fixing them by repetition and applying them to your behaviour through action. Meditation is above all a way of life, a way of being.

**Prayer therapy:** Prayer is not a word; it is a feeling. To pray is not to recite at a certain predetermined moment, it is not to say beautiful words at specific moments, but it is to experience in daily life the feelings that prayer brings, making prayer the "way of life", your "way of living".

External temptations only stimulate internal temptation. Therefore, vigilance and prayer are fundamental conditions for not falling into the temptations of one's own ego. To pray is to relate to God and to allow his guidance.

**The therapy of forgiveness:** The practice of forgiveness, in the light of depth psychology, is the overcoming of the feeling of vengeance, of images of revenge, of hatred, of grief, through the exercise of accepting the other, without validating what is illegal and contrary to

the ethical code of life. Forgiveness is an act of liberation from our emotional prison. What the other does is his problem, how we react is ours. To forgive is to de-identify oneself from one's own resentment, hurt, anger; to free oneself from emotional disturbances and to heal oneself.

**The therapy of benevolence:** Benevolence, or the science of doing good, the art of the good actions is, from the point of view of depth psychology, the commitment of humanity towards creatures. It is the heartfelt practice of good.

**The therapy of gratitude:** The practice of gratitude refers to the good experiences; the bad ones that did not come and the negative ones that we experience, as they are methods of self-education. Optimise your mind. Manage your emotions. Challenge and recycle your thoughts. Focus on your choice to forgive, understanding that only unhappy people criticise, defame others.

The psychology of gratitude favours the balance of the ego-self axis, if lived daily, as a guideline of inner security, it promotes psychological maturity. Psychological maturity is proportional to the experience of gratitude.

**Love therapy:** Love is a conquest of the mature, centred spirit. It is a form of self-denial in spontaneous self-giving. Love favours peace and trust, promotes non-violence, resulting in fraternity which unites people, and they show solidarity.

**The therapy of self-healing:** Practice daily: self-forgiveness, self-acceptance, self-love, resilience, joy of living. Pray with simplicity. Exercises your will for generosity and empathy.

Practice more and more spirituality, that is, exercise the universal good actions every day, in everything you do, hence dissolving limitations, expanding the inner light, which is the capacity to love yourself, others and Life.

*Evanise M Zwirtes*

*Transpersonal Psychotherapist*

## Will and challenges

The role of the will is of great importance, both in facing challenges and in reaching the desired goals. However, it is necessary to distinguish between "will" and "wanting", as well as between the egoic desires and the real needs of the being.



Although used as synonyms in informal language, in a deep psychological sense want is understood as a force coming from the ego, while the will is linked to the Self.

The desires of the ego, considered here, are those which many times exceed the real needs, being the latter those which allow a dignified life and access to all that is important in the journey of learning. The desires are not an evil in themselves, because the pleasures are also part of existence and sometimes have an important role, but many times they enslave and/or mislead the less warned, who channel their energies primarily to satisfy them.

The will, however, is a force at the service of the individuation process and its challenges. Coming from the Self, it does not always find the ego mature and willing to structure

itself to adapt its attitude and make possible a more conscious journey. However, as this force does not cease to exist, the barriers created by the immaturity of the ego amplify the existing conflicts, generating discomforts, pain and suffering which do not cease until the causes are eliminated.

When Abraham Maslow presented his famous Pyramid of Needs, he placed at the top what he called "Meta needs" which observed lead to the search for values such as "truth, beauty, justice, integration, unification and tendency towards unity". Unfortunately, consumerist and mass cultures produce a distorted vision of success and fulfilment, producing creatures disconnected from the true values of existence and of themselves.

We are facing innumerable challenges to build a culture that values the construction of virtues, that bases education, psychology and the norms of human coexistence on the noble values of human being. For that, it becomes urgent to activate the will, even if it seems to be a fight against the current. To activate our courage, discipline, humility, and perseverance, which will allow us to raise the high flights destined to the human condition.

*Iris Sinoti*

*Jungian Therapist*

## Resilience and peace

"Pain is a blessing which God sends to his elect; therefore, do not grieve when you suffer; rather, bless Almighty God who, through pain in this world, has marked you for glory in heaven." This is how Joanna de Ângelis begins her text "Patience", in chapter IX of the Gospel According to Spiritism, under the pseudonym "A Friendly Spirit".

Patience is the science of peace! It nourishes the being with the framework to be aware, to know and to dominate peace. It represents a state of mind for all those who are willing to conquer themselves, overcoming the evil inclinations.

And for such, in the journey undertaken of conquering and education, in search of serenity in the experiences, the management of resilience is essential. A word so often used, but which refers to a behaviour to establish peace.

To be resilient is to be able to adapt to the adversities of the path, to the challenges which, apparently, are unexpected, and to stand firm to face the pain that shakes but understanding that it is an experience that educates.

Jesus, the Prince of Peace, taught, in testimony, the meaning of conducting oneself resiliently in order to be a peacemaker. With gentleness, on a cross, he gave new meaning to pain, making explicit his resilience to present peace to the world.

Therefore, Joanna, closes the message quoted: "Be patient, therefore, be Christians. This word sums it all up". Being Christian sums it all up: resilience and peace!

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### Meditate and love

My dear reader, observe yourself in your daily life. You can easily memorize the number of your documents, memorize several telephones, evaluate your friends and know your family members well. You know exactly how many kilos you need to lose and what you like and dislike. However, you do not know precisely where you are, who you are and what you are doing here. You know quantum physics, religion, politics, everything about your idol of the heart, but you cannot answer a simple question without stammering: Who are you?

More than 2400 years ago, at the time of Socrates, there was a famous temple called the Oracle of Delphi, located on the island of Patmos, Greece. Remembered until today, it was the most important Greek oracle of antiquity, where citizens went when they needed to receive some guidance from their gods (spirits) through the Pythonesses (mediums). In the entrance of the temple, there was an high relief inscription that welcomed visitors: Before... know thyself.

When meditating on the real meaning of human existence, we remember the lessons of the Gospel when it refers to love, configuring it as the refinement of feelings, being the only one that will prevail permanently. The other feelings are emotions that take us back more to the beginning of our evolutionary journey than to the objective to be reached.

When Jesus pronounced the word love, people trembled, and time was divided: before and after Christ. Man was rescued from matter and souls of goodwill allowed themselves to be immolated in Roman circuses in order to overcome instincts in favour of unconditional love.

**Davidson Lemela**

**Neuropsychologist**

### The mental creativity of the soul

In the evolutionary path, there are countless challenges that are presented as a way to test the Spirit and drive progress, with the goal of completeness. In this sense, there are many characteristics and abilities to be developed during the long trajectory that presents itself. In the human stage of this long journey, our brain presents a third "layer", called neocortex, which is responsi-

ble for the "noble" functions such as reasoning, more developed language, logical capacity, among other complex abilities that differentiate us from the animals, whose instincts predominate.

For this reason, we have countless creative possibilities which, when well used, lead to a gain in consciousness. But like everything that is underused, our creative capacity also remains imprisoned while we are hostages of our fears, laziness, dependency as well as our own desires. The excessive search for security and comfort, so much to the taste of the immature ego, also ends up harming the capacity to solve the enigmas of the soul and respond to existential challenges. Furthermore, routine influences in a negative way the development of creativity, because when we always seek the same routes, not only in the

the literal sense, but also in the way of thinking, of experiencing life, as well as when we neglect the search for knowledge, we do not access all the potential we have.

The search for the development of creativity involves making a commitment to our evolutionary process, not limiting the repertoire of responses to life, as this hinders

our progress. Expanding the field of knowledge, not being content with the answers that come through other people, but allowing ourselves to take a journey to find them, internally and externally, as a way of widening the lenses to know ourselves, other people and the world. Modern science has coined the term "Neuroplasticity" to define the brain's enormous capacity to reorganise, adapt and respond creatively to the challenges that present themselves. It is important that these noble functions are at the service of the soul, for a conscious work of individuation, through which we develop all the potentialities inherent to our being.

**Cláudio Sinoti**

**Junian Therapist**





### Gratitude: inner healing

Our world is one of trials and expiations. We are all imperfect, and we need to be aware of this. More than that, we need to know ourselves as human beings, as souls, as spirits, and to seek inner improvement and education of feelings. Otherwise, we will continue to fall ill easily and distance ourselves from real happiness.

Taking into account that the Earth is a great school of souls, we are invited by Divine Providence to the development of our potential virtues. And gratitude is one of them. Curiously, the planet is also a great hospital. There are thousands of illnesses, physical and mental, both on the physical plane and in the spiritual world. And look how extraordinary, Medicine has been getting to know and incorporating religiosity and spirituality in its practice. Prayer, compassion, empathy, charity, forgiveness and gratitude are recognised as human experiences that lead to the maintenance of health or prevention of disease. But they are also adjuvant elements in the clinical improvement or even cure of many illnesses.

Gratitude is a word derived from the Latin *gratia*. According to the dictionary, it means a feeling of grace experienced by a person in relation to someone who has granted them a favour, help or benefit. In other words, a form of recognition. Although we are capable of appreciating moments, achievements and people with optimism, not all of us do it naturally and frequently. Sometimes we

even need a reminder or a nudge to do so.

More than strengthening ties, the habit is beneficial for generating happiness for those who receive and those who expressed the gesture. Gratitude rewards generosity and maintains the cycle of healthy social behaviour.

According to researchers at Harvard Medical School in Boston, gratitude is a powerful medicine for the brain. When experiencing the feeling, two parts of the organ are activated: ventral medial prefrontal and the cortex in the dorsal portion. The areas are involved in perceptions of reward, morality, positive social interactions and the ability to understand what another is thinking.

And that is not all. Research has proven that gratitude strengthens interpersonal bonding, aids well-being, increases resilience, reduces stress and helps prevent depression. In a study of adults, the group that did a gratitude exercise showed improved mental health compared to participants without the activity.

Also, according to the study, the health of gratitude followers is very good as they have stronger immune systems, have low blood pressure and sleep well. Those who are grateful on a regular basis maintain higher levels of joy and positive emotions.

Being grateful involves admiring the goodness of the world and gratitude acts as nourishment.

If I ask you what you are grateful for now, I am sure, many

conclusions will come to your mind, such as family, friends, your health and that of other people around you, and more. They can be big or small reasons.

Gratitude is a way to appreciate having, instead of always seeking something new in the hope of becoming happier or thinking that you cannot feel satisfied until you achieve all physical and material needs. It avoids the harm of uncontrolled ambition and greed.

Habits are strengthened by use and practice. With gratitude as the focus, the brain is constantly at work with innovations and positive biases. It is worth stressing that one should be grateful for different episodes.

See suggestions for exercising gratitude to add more grace to life.

- When you have contact with supermarket employees, clerks and cashiers, take the time to look them in the eye and really give thanks.
- Thank God for life, for health, even moderate health. Thank God for the stars that shine upon you forever.
- Write or say a compliment for a loved one, while they are still alive (incarnate), child, youth, adult or elderly. Family member or not.
- Appreciate the thanks they give you on a daily basis. For that too is gratitude.

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