

What does it mean to be soulful or spiritual?

I'm often asked what I mean when I refer to spirituality or soul in the context of life at work, at home, at play or in relationship. Here's what I mean.

For me, soul or spirit (and I will use them interchangeably from here on) describes the Essential, Innate Force or Energy that lives inside every human being. Being soulful or spiritual, then, means living one's life according to a deeper meaning that results from a lifelong exercise of self-reflection and exploration.

Soulful moments

No one, that I know of, lives life spiritually 24/7/365. However, many spiritual folks experience moments of joy, communion, connection, love, compassion, gratitude, and silence, etc. wherein they "transcend" their ego self. In this spiritual place, these folks experience a kind of "knowing", a kind of "connection" to the whole of the Universe where they have a sense of "wisdom," where they really "see" life from this larger dimension or perspective – where all the "masks" and false appearances melt away. These moments are not "mental." These moments are more like being "in the zone" where we know how to do, be and have but not from a "mind"-directed perspective. In this place, we are "out of our mind."

Spirituality in the "real world"

Experiencing soulfulness or spirituality in the real world – at 9:00 Monday morning – means treating others with dignity and respect, kindness, compassion. It means we respect the world and all that the world contains – its abundance of plant and animal life – by not polluting, destroying, or degrading the flora or fauna of the planet in our everyday decisions about how we live. Spirituality means telling the truth, being self-responsible, accountable and forthright with all those with whom we deal – at work, at home, at play and in relationship – acting with full disclosure and honesty.

Soulfulness means coming from a place of balance and harmony – an equilibrium or alignment between what we think, feel, say and do. And taking an Inner approach to prioritizing our life – work life, family life, personal life – in the pursuit of activities that nourish and enrich every aspect of our life. That we choose, honestly, sincerely and self-responsibly to focus on the well-being of our mind, body and spirit.

Spirituality means we choose to live life as a steward of the planet, that we come from a place of "we," not "me," and continually reflect, and then act upon, what "we" want and need, how "we" want to be acknowledged and appreciated, and how "we" can contribute to the well-being of all of us. As a steward, we explore how we can make a difference for the greater good, and how we serve to enhance the well-being of others.

Passion and purpose are hallmarks of soulfulness - that our heart drives us and gives us direction. When we live from a heart-based place, then we are up-front, honest, sincere and in integrity at work, at home, at play and in relationship – no dishonesty, shortcuts, collusion, deception or underhandedness. We live from a place of joy, enthusiasm, appreciation, collaboration and community.

Ingenuity, inventiveness, imagination, discovery, creativity and innovation are soulful and spiritual drivers. We look for new ways of do-ing and be-ing. We exude boldness and

initiative. We are open to new ideas and are continuous learners in all of life. Continued self-awareness is paramount.

Finally, soulfulness and spirituality are about being conscious - in our thoughts, words, and deeds. We seek an ever growing awareness of our motives and values. We are intentional in every moment. We see the "truth" of what is happening and know the difference between the "truth" and our projections and fantasies that we make believe are the truth. Consciousness is the lifelong process of increasing self-awareness about "who I am," "how I am" and "what I'm here to do with my life" - ever seeking to bring our unconscious self to conscious awareness.

My take is that our life at work, at home, at play and in relationship is more honestly served, and truly rewarding, when we focus on ethics, values, integrity and principles that emanate from the place of soul or spirit.

So, some questions for self-reflection are:

- Do you consider yourself a spiritual person? If so, how does your spirituality play out in your life at work, at home, at play and in relationship?
- Do you ever feel you want to make a difference? If so, what would that difference look like?
- Do you feel your self-worth is defined by your net worth?
- What do you feel the planet demands of you?
- Are you a change-maker? How so?
- How do you nurture your mind, body and spirit?
- Does your life reflect harmony?
- What do you not know about yourself?
- Do you ever reflect on your spiritual nature?
- What is necessary for your spiritual growth and development?
- Do you ever feel guilty you're not doing the things necessary for your spiritual growth?
- How much time do you spend in self-reflection?
- What was your experience around spirituality (not religion or theology) like when you were growing up?

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