

MILES MATISE

SPIRITUALITY
and the HELPING
PROFESSIONS



Spirituality and the **Helping** **Professions**

Miles Matise

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Brief Contents

Preface	xxiii
1 Spirituality for Helping Professionals: A Brief History	1
2 The Dis-Ease of Our Time	13
3 What Is Spirituality?	23
4 A New Kind of Client	47
5 The Instinct of Faith	57
6 Spirituality and Development	69
7 Spiritual Stages of Development	93
8 An Emerging Theory: A Psychospiritual Model	109
9 A Model to Integrate Spirituality and Counseling	133
10 Spiritual Emergence: An Opportunity and a Crisis	159
11 Professional Counseling for Spiritual Emergencies	183
12 Spiritual Triggers and Maladies	195
13 The Midlife Rebirth	221
14 Quest and Meaning	251
15 Sacred Suffering	267
16 The Primal Wound	283
17 The Wounded Healer: Healer or Healing? An Exploratory Analysis of Becoming a Counselor	313
18 Interventions for Spirituality in Counseling	337
19 Hope for the Sacred	387
20 Varieties of Spiritual Experiences	413

21	Further Varieties of Spiritual Experiences	441
22	The New Wave: The Future of Therapy	459
	Index	483

Detailed Contents

Preface	xxiii
1 Spirituality for Helping Professionals	1
A Time of No Religion	1
Are Humans Innately Religious?	2
Psychology and Religion: The Beginning	3
Freud and Other Early Contributors	3
William James	4
The Humanist Revolution	4
The Existentialists	5
The 1960s in the United States	6
21st-Century Spirituality	7
Conclusion	8
Case Study	8
Questions for Reflection and Discussion	9
Activity for Practice	9
Resources for Further Study	10
Books	10
Videos	10
References	10
2 The Dis-Ease of Our Time	13
The Dis-Ease of Our Time	13
Individualism and Freedom	13
Generation ME	14
Reason and Being	15
A Paradigm Shift	16
The Postmodern Shift	17
The Patriarchal Shift	18
The Spiritual Shift	18
Conclusion	20
Case Study	20
Questions for Reflection and Discussion	20
Activity for Practice	21
Resources for Further Study	21
Books	21
Videos	21

	References	21
3	What Is Spirituality?	23
	A New <i>DSM</i> Category	23
	Definitions of Spirituality and Religion	24
	Challenges of Defining Spirituality	27
	Contemporary Definitions of Spirituality	28
	A Caveat to Defining Religion and Spirituality	29
	Different Types of Spirituality	29
	Spirituality and Wellness	30
	Wellness and Spirituality	35
	What Is Wellness?	35
	Spiritual Wellness Is Preventative	35
	Wellness Models	36
	Conclusion	40
	Case Study	40
	Questions for Reflection and Discussion	41
	Activity for Practice	42
	Resources for Further Study	42
	Books	42
	Websites	42
	App	42
	References	42
4	A New Kind of Client	47
	The “Nones”	47
	Who Are the SBNR?	48
	Patterns of the SBNR	49
	How the SBNR View God	50
	Conclusion	52
	Case Study	52
	Questions for Reflection and Discussion	54
	Activity for Practice	54
	Resources for Further Study	54
	Books/Article	54
	Websites	54
	Podcasts	55
	References	55
5	The Instinct of Faith	57
	The Instinct of Faith	62
	God Concept	64

Conclusion	65
Case Study	66
Questions for Reflection and Discussion	66
Activity for Practice	67
Resources for Further Study	67
Books	67
Websites	67
Videos	67
References	67
6 Spirituality and Development	69
The Nature of Development	69
Historical Synopsis	70
Theories of Adult Development	71
Ontogenetic Models	71
Sociogenic Models	72
Multidimensional Models	72
Holistic Models	73
Transpersonal Models	73
Future Directions	74
Spiritual Stages and Development	75
Combining Spiritual and Psychological Approaches	75
The Twelve-Step Program Model	76
Pastoral Counseling	77
Brief History of Pastoral Counseling	78
Families' Experiences with Pastoral Counseling	78
Case Study: One Parent's Experiences with Five Chaplains	79
Data Collection and Analysis	80
Themes of Pastoral Counselor Visits	80
Discussion	85
Conclusion	86
Case Study: Sheranda	87
Questions for Reflection and Discussion	87
Activity for Practice	87
Resources for Further Study	88
Books	88
Websites	88
References	88
7 Spiritual Stages of Development	93
Carl Jung as a Spiritual Proponent	93
Alfred Adler and Wellness	93
James Fowler's Stages	94

x Spirituality and the Helping Professions

Ken Wilber's Stages	96
Soulcentric Stages of Development	97
The Need for Professional Recognition in the Helping Professions	98
Research for Professional Recognition and Training	99
Implications for Spiritual Practice	100
Certified Spiritual Counselor Proposal	101
Incorporating Spirituality in Training Programs	102
Conclusion	103
Case Study	104
Questions for Reflection and Discussion	104
Activity for Practice	105
Resources for Further Study	105
Books	105
Websites	105
References	106
8 An Emerging Theory: A Psychospiritual Model	109
Major Contributions	109
Highly Sensitive People	110
View of Human Nature	110
Personality Formation	111
Structure of Consciousness	111
Structure of Personality	113
The Authentic Self	114
View of Motivation	114
Causes of Psychopathology	116
View of a Healthy Personality	116
Goals of Counseling	117
Assessment and Treatment Strategies	118
Stages of Development	119
Spiritual Awareness Guide Model	119
Moving Through the Stages	121
Identity Crisis	122
Separation-Individuation	122
Somatic Symptoms of Spiritual Growth	123
The Development of the Self	124
Brief History of the "Self"	125
The "Self" and Postmodernism	126
The Protean Self	127
Cultural Considerations	128
Conclusion	129
Case Study	129
Questions for Reflection and Discussion	130

Activity for Practice	130
Resources for Further Study	130
Books	130
Videos	131
Websites	131
Podcasts	131
References	131
9 A Model to Integrate Spirituality and Counseling	133
The Need for a Spiritual Strategy	134
Wellness and Spirituality	136
Spiritual Assessments	137
Spiritual Development	138
Stages of Spiritual Development	139
States of Intervention and Spiritual Activities	141
The States and Activities for Practice	142
Significance for Practice	148
Conclusion	149
Case Study	149
Questions for Reflection and Discussion	149
Activity for Practice	150
Resources for Further Study	150
Books	150
Websites	150
Videos	150
Appendix A: Spiritual Awareness Decision Tree	151
Appendix B: Spiritual Awareness Guide (SAG)	152
Spiritual Awareness Guide (Key)	153
Appendix C: Spiritual Commitment Contract	153
References	154
10 Spiritual Emergence: An Opportunity and a Crisis	159
Spirituality and Religion	159
Am I Going Crazy?	160
Spiritual Emergency	160
What Are Spiritual Experiences?	162
Cultural View of Spiritual Experiences	162
Spiritual Crisis as Spiritual Emergence	163
Individual Spirituality	164
Indian Spirituality	164
Culture-Bound Syndromes	166
The Therapeutic Process	166
The Discipline of Spirituality	167
Spiritual Crisis as Growth	167

	Spiritual Crisis or Mental Illness?	168
	Functional Psychosis as Spiritual Emergency	169
	Spiritual Crisis as Identity Crisis	169
	Spiritual Emergence	170
	An Example of Spiritual Crisis	171
	Anfechtungen (Spiritual Trial)	172
	Nonordinary States	173
	Somatic Symptoms of a Spiritual Crisis	173
	Spiritual Emergence as a Conversion Experience	175
	Conversion as Re-Membering Your-Selves	177
	The False Self at Work	178
	The Impostor	178
	Conclusion	179
	Case Study	179
	Questions for Reflection and Discussion	180
	Activity for Practice	180
	Resources for Further Study	180
	Books	180
	Websites	181
	Videos	181
	References	181
11	Professional Counseling for Spiritual Emergencies	183
	Spiritual Counseling	183
	Spiritually Attuned Counselor	184
	Barriers and Ethical Considerations	186
	Diversity	187
	Self-Awareness, Competency, and Knowledge	187
	Advantages and Disadvantages of Religion and Spirituality Counseling	188
	Spiritual Assessments in Counseling	189
	Integration	190
	Conclusion	191
	Case Study	191
	Questions for Reflection and Discussion	192
	Activity for Practice	192
	Resources for Further Study	193
	Books	193
	Websites	193
	Videos	193
	References	193

12	Spiritual Triggers and Maladies	195
	Transpersonal Crisis	195
	Growing Beyond the Mask	196
	"Straining at the Seams"	197
	Spiritual Struggles as Triggers	197
	Triggers to Transpersonal Crisis	198
	Misguided Desires as Triggers for Crisis	199
	Pre/Trans Fallacy	201
	Spiritual Bypassing	201
	Spiritual Abuse	202
	Addiction	204
	Overstimulation and Highly Sensitive Persons	206
	Existential Doubting	208
	Counterfeit Gods	209
	Addiction as Attachment	211
	Loneliness	211
	Emotional Immaturity	212
	Emerging Adulthood	214
	Conclusion	215
	Case Study	215
	Questions for Reflection and Discussion	216
	Activity for Practice	216
	Resources for Further Study	216
	Books	216
	Websites	216
	Videos/Podcasts	217
	References	217
13	The Midlife Rebirth	221
	The Successful Malcontent	222
	Redefining Success	222
	The Crisis	223
	The Midlife Dilemma	223
	What Does a Midlife Crisis Feel Like?	225
	Components of Midlife Process	226
	Depression in Midlife	226
	Meaning in Midlife	228
	Is Meaning Created or Discovered?	228
	Power in Midlife	228
	Midlife and the Task of Differentiation	229
	Degrees of Separation	229
	Reconnection	230
	"Old Paradigm" Midlife	231

	Masculine and Feminine Energies	232
	Decentering of the Self	232
	Conversion as Identity Crisis	233
	Back to the Invisibles	234
	Soul Work	235
	Archetypes and Energies	235
	Selecting a Spiritual Path	237
	HOPE as a Guide	237
	Coaching Through Midlife	238
	Older Adult Populations	238
	Common Concerns of Older Adults	239
	Counselor Attitudes and Beliefs	240
	Navigating Cultural and Ethnic Variables	242
	Therapeutic Approaches and Technology	242
	Ethical Considerations of Older Adult Populations	243
	Conclusion	244
	Case Study	245
	Questions for Reflection and Discussion	245
	Activity for Practice	245
	Resources for Further Study	246
	Books/Articles	246
	Websites	246
	Videos/Podcasts	246
	References	247
14	Quest and Meaning	251
	Learning to Die	252
	The Quest	253
	The Search as Identity Crisis	254
	The Perennial Philosophy as Guide	256
	Psychologies of Meaning	257
	The Modern Meaning Movement	258
	Existential Angst	258
	Approaches to a Well-Balanced Life	260
	Life Transitions as a Crisis of Meaning	261
	The ABCs of Meaning	261
	Conclusion	262
	Case Study	262
	Questions for Reflection and Discussion	264
	Activity for Practice	264
	Resources for Further Study	264
	Books/Articles	264

	Websites	264
	Videos/Podcast	265
	References	265
15	Sacred Suffering	267
	Forms of Suffering	268
	Shared Suffering	269
	Models of Pain	270
	The Problem of Pain	270
	The Role of Pain	271
	Creating an Identity Around Pain	273
	Pain and Meaning	273
	Philosophy and the Swimming Pool	274
	Normal Feelings and the Inflation of Mental Illness	275
	The End of Good Pain?	275
	Acceptance and Commitment Therapy	276
	The Role of Psychotherapy Is Not to Cure	276
	Conclusion	277
	Case Study	277
	Questions for Reflection and Discussion	279
	Activity for Practice	279
	Resources for Further Study	279
	Books/Journal Articles	279
	Websites	280
	Video/Podcasts	280
	References	280
16	The Primal Wound	283
	Primal Wounds and Core Beliefs	284
	The Family Trance	285
	Primal Wounds and Spiritual Struggles	285
	Death Instinct	286
	Denial	287
	Self-Nurturing	287
	Preoccupation with Pseudo-Problems	287
	Addictive Bonding	287
	Microsuicide	287
	Nationalism	287
	Religion	288
	Conformity	288
	Liminality	288
	Rituals and Liminality	290
	Ritual and Rites of Passage	291

Biases Toward Rituals	291
Myth and Ritual	292
Rituals and Ceremonies	293
Function of Spiritual Rituals	293
Trauma	295
Posttraumatic Growth	296
Trauma Treatments	296
The Complicating Factors of Asymmetrical Conflict	298
Posttraumatic Stress Disorder	298
Evidence-Based Treatments	300
The Compulsion to Repeat the Trauma	300
Cognitive Processing Therapy	301
Prolonged Exposure Therapy	302
Eye-Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing	302
Group Therapy and Letter Writing	304
Adaptive Disclosure Therapy	305
Ecopsychology	306
Spirituality as a Resource for Trauma	306
Conclusion	308
Case Study	308
Questions for Reflection and Discussion	309
Activity for Practice	309
Resources for Further Study	309
Books/Journal Articles	309
Websites	310
Videos/Podcasts	310
References	310
17	
The Wounded Healer: Healer or Healing? An Exploratory	
Analysis of Becoming a Counselor	313
A Unique Calling: Motivations for Healing	313
How Helping Professionals Develop	314
Finding One's Way	315
A Framework for Understanding the Wounding of Healers	316
Wounded or Impaired?	316
The Role of the Wound in Healing	317
Historical Examples of Wounded Healers	318
Themes of the Wounded Healer	319
Theme 1: Adversity	320
Theme 2: Previous Therapy/Recovery	320
Theme 3: Spirituality	322
Theme 4: Woundedness	323
Theme 5: Cultural Considerations	325

Insights for Professional Development	327
Countertransference	327
Self-Care	328
Stigma and the Wounded Healer	328
Conclusion	329
Case Study	330
Questions for Reflection and Discussion	331
Activity for Practice	331
Journal and Discuss	331
Resources for Further Study	332
Books	332
Videos/Podcasts	332
References	332
18 Interventions for Spirituality in Counseling	337
What Difference Can Spirituality Make?	337
Spirituality in Group Counseling	338
Spiritual Group: Initial Considerations	340
Leading the Spiritual Group	342
A Spiritual Group Model	345
Concluding Thoughts on Spiritual Groups	349
The Enneagram as a Spiritual Intervention	350
Historical Roots of the Enneagram	350
The Core Types of the Enneagram	353
Enneagram and <i>DSM</i> Correlates	355
Enneagram Process: Integration and Disintegration	358
The Enneagram in Action	360
Case Study: Using the Enneagram with a Couple	361
The Enneagram Difference	364
Ecotherapy: An Alternative Treatment Modality	365
Ecotherapy Research Evidence	366
Ecotherapy in Health Care Settings	368
Green Infrastructure	368
Animal-Assisted Therapy	369
Horticultural/Gardening Therapy	370
Outdoors Interventions	370
Ecotherapy in Treating Substance Abuse	371
Green Projects	372
The Power of Ecotherapy	372
Conclusion	373
Case Study	373
Questions for Reflection and Discussion	374
Activity for Practice	374

Resources for Further Study	375
Book/Journal Articles	375
Websites	375
Videos	375
Further Resources for Spiritual Activities	375
Sample Spiritual Commitment Contract (Matise, 2014; Matise et al., 2017)	375
Spiritual Intervention Categories (Matise et al., 2017)	376
Powerful Words: A Vocabulary of Spiritual Life (Rabbi Elisa Goldberg, 2014)	378
True or False? (Developed by Reverend Caroline Cupp; as cited in Goldberg, 2014)	378
What Does It Mean for Prayer to “Work”? (Created by Rabbi Amy Eilberg, 2001)	378
Quotes and Prayers to Use in Spirituality Groups	379
Tree of Life: Spiritual Practice Activity	381
References	382
19 Hope for the Sacred	387
Science and Spirituality	388
Explicate and Implicate Orders	388
Entanglement	389
Newtonian View (Fragmented)	389
A Return to the Invisibles	390
Religion and Evolution	391
Religion as Relational	392
The Invisibles as Soul Work	393
Lost in Translation	393
The Spiritual Path	393
Spiritual Maturity: A Process	394
Search for Meaning as Maturing	395
Growing Up Unevenly	395
“Normal” Maturation	396
Growing Up Is Giving Up	397
Maturation and Creative Expression	398
The Quest to Return	398
Uncharted (Developmental) Territory	399
A Spirituality of Imperfection	399
The Sacred Experience of Being Human	401
The Spiritual Personality	401
Creative Impulse	402
The Creative Art of Meaning-Making	403
Psychotherapy as Spiritual Process	403
The Spiritually Attuned Therapist	404
Being a Spiritually-Attuned Therapist	406
Conclusion	407
Case Study	407

Questions for Reflection and Discussion	408
Activity for Practice	409
The Self-Questioning Process	409
Resources for Further Study	409
Books/Articles	409
Websites	410
Videos/Podcasts	410
References	410
20 Varieties of Spiritual Experiences	413
Varieties of Spiritual Experience	415
The Voice of God	416
Overidentifying with the Ego	419
Who Can Hear the Voice of God?	420
When God Talks Back	421
Developing Heart	421
The Counterculture Movement of the 1960s	422
Entheogens	424
Hallucinogens and Spirituality	424
History and Effects	424
Understanding of Hallucinogens	426
Psychopharmacology	427
Defining Terms for Entheogens	428
Alternative Treatments	428
Clinical Applications	430
LSD (Lysergic acid diethylamide)	430
DMT (N-dimethyltryptamine) and Ayahuasca	431
Psilocybin (Mushrooms)	432
MDMA (Methylenedioxymethamphetamine)	433
Ketamine	433
Ibogaine	433
Cannabis	434
Benefits of Entheogens in Spiritual Treatment	434
Living Deeply: Noetic Experiences	435
Conclusion	435
Case Study	435
Questions for Reflection and Discussion	436
Activity for Practice	436
Resources for Further Study	437
Books/Articles	437
Websites	437
Videos/Podcasts	437

References	438
21 Further Varieties of Spiritual Experiences	441
Shamanism	441
Ecospirituality	441
Coupling as a Spiritual Practice	442
Spiritual Pilgrimages	443
How to Use YouTube for Spiritual Awakening	444
Career and Vocation as a Spiritual Path	445
Intuition and Creativity	446
Atheism as a Spiritual Experience	447
Atheism	448
A New Atheism Emerges	449
Spiritual Atheism	449
The New Atheism	450
Kenosis	451
Iipseity	451
Other Forms of Spiritual Experiences	452
Spiritual Eugenics (The Dark Side of Spirituality?)	453
The Baloney Kit	454
Conclusion	455
Case Study	455
Questions for Reflection and Discussion	456
Activity for Practice	456
Resources for Further Study	456
Books/Articles	456
Websites	457
Videos/Podcasts	457
References	457
22 The New Wave: The Future of Therapy	459
From Classical Physics to Quantum Physics	460
The Order of Chaos	461
The Quantum Leap	463
The Link Between Chaos and Psychology	466
Energy Psychology and the Quantum Leap	470
Energy Techniques of Healing	471
The Next Wave	473
The Postmodern Quest	474
The Postmodern Sage	477
Conclusion	478
Case Study	478

Questions for Reflection and Discussion	478
Activity for Practice	478
Resources for Further Study	479
Books/Articles	479
Videos	479
Podcasts	480
Apps	480
References	480
Index	483

Preface

WE ARE ALL searching for something. For some it is to be happy; for others it is to be rich. As we grow older, our desires may be for financial stability, contentment in a relationship, or better relations with our children and others. Perhaps many are just searching for what really matters to them. Alex de Tocqueville (1835) wrote an essay entitled “Why the Americans Are So Restless in the Midst of Their Prosperity” after visiting the young nation. This restlessness has also been called “the most common sickness of our time” (Stauffer, 2018, p. 441). Even in our prosperity, we want more:

It is odd to watch with what feverish ardor the Americans pursue prosperity and how they are ever tormented by the shadowy suspicion that they may not have chosen the shortest route to get it. ... At first sight there is something astonishing in this spectacle of so many lucky men restless in the midst of abundance. (Stauffer, 2018, p. 441)

Americans, Stauffer (2018) said, “never stop thinking of the good things they have not got” (p. 442).

The United States of America is a paradox. Myers et al. (2000) described Americans as being spiritually hungry in an age of plenty. There is much positive to be celebrated economically, medically, and technologically, and there is even more peace in the world. In fact, over the course of the last 2 decades, warfare has been diminishing among countries. The world is a less violent place than at any time in recorded history (Fettweiss, 2021). Today a far greater percentage of the world’s population lives in peace than at any time before in history, and yet fear, anxiety, and depression are at all-time highs. According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA, 2021), almost 20% of the population suffer from some type of anxiety disorder, with social phobia as the number one fear among adults. Also, 1 in 5 people suffer from some form of depression (ADAA, 2021). Some statistics show that depression has increased 26% for older people who are close to the end of life (Muraresku, 2020). There is an existential and psychological distress that weighs heavily on individuals as they prepare for death. As Muraresku (2020) noted, “We simply don’t end well in this country” (p. 5).

Why start a book on spirituality like this? Because America is experiencing a shifting paradigm, and still most Americans value some kind of higher purpose and embrace some kind of spirituality. For counseling to be effective, it must address the body, mind, and spirit (Corey, 2006). The need for a working model and strategy to integrate spirituality in counseling is necessitated by the spiritual and religious landscape of the United States, as well as the changing demographics of our population (Newport, 2015). Evidence supports that some spiritual and religious beliefs can be effective in bolstering the resilience of clients and support better psychological functioning. Religious and spiritual beliefs and practices can aid outcomes, reduce stress, improve coping, and strengthen recovery (Bhosale, 2015; Koenig, 2005; Miller & Thoresen, 2003). Furthermore, spirituality can aid in promoting a more positive worldview by clarifying purpose and meaning in difficult situations, increasing social support, and establishing a sense of hope for a person.

While the god of our understanding is becoming less and less defined, more people are able to identify with a spiritual mindset rather than the tired doctrine and stale dogma of their parents' religion. However, this is not a discredit of religion, as many are still able to find a sense of hope in one or even many. Seekers are favoring experience more than cognitive precepts toward right-thinking and orthodoxy. This is part of the paradigm shift that we find ourselves in the middle of. With unlimited access to the teachings of the world's religions and offshoot spiritualities, Muraresku (2020) stated that a new phenomenon has emerged, with approximately 27% of all Americans belonging to the spiritual but not religious (SBNR) category. Times of crisis often lead individuals on a path toward spirituality. For instance, after the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States, Quran sales surged as Americans attempted to understand what they could not fathom. In a postmodern world, Muraresku (2020) offers, the aim of SBNR people is to construct their own spirituality by taking what they like from some and not committing to any one path.

One reason for writing this book is that a country has never been so diverse as the United States, and as a result, it has become a spiritual marketplace, like a smorgasbord that consumers can walk by and take whatever varieties their appetites dictate or needs demand at various times in their lives. The message is that people want to know what religion and spirituality (R/S) has to do with their lives. They are asking more questions rather than proceeding with blind faith: Who am I? What is my purpose? Does it matter how I live my life? Do morality and ethics matter? What is the meaning of death since we all will experience that one day? Seekers ask questions and demand answers that the helping professional (HP) often finds themselves in the midst of when assisting a client. If the HP has not ventured into this area of their own life, they will have barriers to assisting others to venture deeper in their search.

Part of the spiritual marketplace mentality is the creation of a quest orientation (Roof, 1999). In a spiritual marketplace the democratizing of the spiritual life places the burden on the seeker, which is all of us (Lesser, 1999). Religion and spirituality are also major media enterprises. They are fuel for a part of the economy in the way of media, television, movies, apps, talk shows, news channels, and even politics. The influence exerted by these forces in our culture is somewhat imperceptible. At virtually every level of our societal system, R/S

values, beliefs, and traditions trickle downward and find their way into our minds, schools, courts, laws, politics, and so on. To demonstrate the global reach of R/S in the world today, about six billion of the world's more than seven billion people claim the importance of R/S in their lives in some way (Johnson, 2014).

Each of our paths is a unique journey and must be created with imagination and discretion. The establishment of a spiritual marketplace is due in part to several factors. One is the decline of traditional theism (Roof, 1999). Traditional theism involves an anthropomorphic conception of God, and yet modernity is challenging people to allow for other influences on a changing world. Another challenge proposed by Roof (1999) is the challenging of *religious dogma*, which are codes that provide a script for the organizing of principles and instructions for how to act, behave, and even think. These scripts can provide a story to create one's metaphysical history by providing a past, present, and future orientation. These stories in which we are born into can help identify archetypes whose energies we are drawn to. These codes and scripts usually require some obedience to their authority, which has come into question in a postmodern world. What Roof (1999) and others have called a "disenchantment" with organized religion is coupled with an interest of many to integrate Eastern philosophies like Buddhism and yoga practices with Western psychological concepts. The result is a turning within rather than looking without for one's authority. One's own experience has become paramount and the guiding impetus rather than simply being told how to act and what to believe. As pointed out in Sanskrit, the words "authority," "author," and "authentic" come from the same origin in meaning. Where there is a lack of translucence in their conjunction, an imbalance weighs and perturbation ensues. Each person adds their own creative genius to the effort of constructing a spiritual narrative of their life. This quest for "wholeness" is what underlies much of the modern person's motivation to search and seek for a better way to live.

While there are many well-worn paths to choose from, many seekers desire one different from their predecessors or may want to create their own, drawing discriminately from other well-worn paths. Lesser (1999) outlines a few characteristics as a guide:

- Who has authority? Historically, it has been the institution that dictates how to worship.
- What is spirituality? Historically, it has been to follow the directions of those before you.
- What is the path? It has typically been what those before you have said it is.
- What is truth? Truth has been an easily definable concept that is explainable and unwavering.

In contrast, a new spirituality would approach these questions with more scrutinizing discernment. For instance, who has authority? From a postmodern perspective, each person is the best indicator of their spiritual hierarchy. Each person defines their version of spirituality according to their own longings. One's path to the divine may include various aspects of several well-worn paths and highly imaginative rituals of their own. What is truth may include an amalgamate of traditions, such as psychology, theology, sociology, and science. All of these will inform the individual's idea of what is sacred in life and their ethics.

Another reason for writing this book is the paradox we find ourselves in. Prothero (2007) described this paradox as residing in the fact that despite Americans' interest in religiosity and spirituality, they are fairly illiterate as it pertains to religious and spiritual issues. He continued that in a multicultural society, the world's religions are "no longer quarantined in the nations of their birth and *instead* [emphasis added] live and move among us" (Prothero, 2007, p. 3). This creates an urgency for greater literacy for HPs to address their multicultural clientele. The lack of religious and spiritual literacy is more dangerous than ever, according to Prothero (2007), largely because other than being a magnanimous force for good in the world, religious perspectives have also been sinister forces for diabolical actions. Since every known culture has some religious and ritualistic spirituality they adopt, these tend to greatly inform our thinking, morality, ethics, and general way of living. These are often deeply held core beliefs that are inherited, adopted, and sometimes rejected and modified, yet their influence still lingers like a veneer over our lives. Having some R/S literacy can help us get to the root of our clients' schemas and belief system. It can also facilitate their further development by asking the deeper questions and helping them avoid discrepancies between what they say, think, and do.

A major assumption of this book is that HPs must address their own personal issues regarding religion and spirituality before they can help others. The spiritually attuned counselor is one who is intentional about their own spiritual growth, practice, and development so they can support others in their own process. Spiritually attuned counseling is based on a developmental rather than a pathological model of health, and its perspective is salutogenic, focusing on spiritual factors that support health, coping, and well-being (Antonovsky, 1996). The spiritually attuned counselor practices the art of spiritual listening and presence in order to facilitate spiritual growth and the emergence of experiences and feelings that stimulate a sense of closeness, connection, intimacy, awe, and wonder. The goal of spiritual counseling is to promote the process of transformation in spiritual, psychological, moral, and somatic dimensions (Sperry, 2001).

Another assumption is that it is essential to understand R/S in order to integrate them into a more culturally accurate conceptualization of a client and thus meet them where they are on their journey. It does not require scholastic interpretation but rather personal intrigue as to the function of R/S in a person's lived experience, whether it be a coping mechanism, a means to seek meaning and purpose, or an assuage for acquired negative feelings. The point is not why or how a particular method is effective for a person but what is effective for that person at a particular time in their life.

This book is not intended to be a comprehensive text on R/S, as there are many books that provide such information. Rather, the main purpose is to provide a strategy for HPs who are on their own journey of personal growth and to assist those who desire to utilize religious and spiritual means to facilitate their own growth and navigate life's terrain.

The book is organized to start with a discussion of the spiritual need of these modern times as I see it and a spiritual strategy for working with individuals on this important issue. As seeking beings, most people are on a quest and searching for something, be that meaning,

purpose, happiness, or some other aspect—no matter how significant—to foster contentment and stability in their lives. I then address issues that can be challenging when working with a person around spiritual issues, such as spiritual crisis and emergence, spiritual abuse, spirituality and addiction, sacred suffering, and liminal spaces. I then present some of the more popular paradigms and approaches (i.e., models) that influence the ways in which we work with individuals while making the case for a developmental perspective to conceptualize the individual and their spirituality. I look at the transmodern “self” and how that affects a person’s development of a “god concept” for their life. The book explores the perspective that healers are wounded, and from this we can more effectively help and assist others on their journey of faith and development. Then I explore the use of rituals as a way to foster the beneficent effects of spirituality in one’s life as well as techniques to promote the emergence of the spiritual in a person’s life, such as the Enneagram, ecopsychology, shamanism, entheogens, and group work on the issue of spirituality in a person’s life. The evolution of the new atheism is a modern phenomenon worthy of note, as more and more people are referring to themselves as generally spiritual without an affiliation to a formal dogma. Finally, there are several interventions in the way of activities to prescribe a person for further development. They are intended to be experiential in nature to meet a person where they are. Since there is no one right way to approach and embrace the divine in a person’s life, these are intended to facilitate a person’s learning through cognitive, behavior, and affective methods. Lastly, for those who are educators or may want ideas on the pedagogy of spirituality for HPs, I include a framework for a course and certification on this important area of wellness for individuals to consider.

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Spirituality for Helping Professionals

A Brief History

THERE HAS HISTORICALLY been an alienation between psychology and religion (and spirituality). The irony is that Freud, often considered the father of modern psychology as we know it, struggled to resolve the polarizing ideas of religion and spirituality and how they manifest in the psyche of a person. This was most evident in Freud's treatise on *Moses and Monotheism* (1939/1961) and *The Future of an Illusion* (1927/1961). As the study of mental health and the individual has evolved and in the light of neuroscientific discoveries of the brain, the field of counseling has adapted to and led the charge to integrate spirituality into counseling practice (Bhosale, 2015; Miller & Thoresen, 2003). A spiritual strategy for counselors is emerging yet remains fragmented as it applies to the integration of spirituality into counseling practice. Other indicators for the need for a spiritual strategy are that Gallup polls continue to reveal that despite a downward decline in the percentage of Americans who identify with Christian religion, the level of spiritual belief in the United States has remained consistent in regard to respondents reporting a "belief in God" (Newport, 2015). There has also been a long tradition of individuals associated with mainstream psychology and counseling who have laid a foundation with their thoughts and ideas for the integration of spirituality and counseling practice, implying spirituality as having implications for personality development, growth, healing, and change (Richards & Bergin, 2002).

A Time of No Religion

Before there were any formal religions or defined spirituality, there was supernaturalism. This is the belief that "everything is full of gods" (Evans, 2009) and that there are forces beyond human capacity and understanding. Supernaturalism is the basis of humanity's religious belief systems. The beliefs in good and bad spirits were common magical beliefs that were prevalent until the Age of Enlightenment in the late 1700s. The works of Isaac Newton (circa 1686) and John Locke (circa 1689) provided a more scientific and mathematical way of viewing reality and emphasized reason, individualism, and skepticism. This was a precursor to the inception of the Protestant Reformation with its opposition toward religious dogma that tended to promulgate "magical thinking." However, humanity has never quite seemed to rid itself of the

inclination toward faith alone as a means to appeal to the gods. There seems to be an innate quality that humans possess that renders them able and willing to seek outward and inward for some kind of transcendent experience and achievability.

A distant example of humankind's appeal for transcendence, ritual, and perhaps the seeking of something greater than themselves (i.e., some kind of god/s) manifested in the creation of art. In recent times, there have been discoveries of the ancient cave art of our ancestors. The art seems to have its origins hundreds of thousands of years ago and was thought by some as a form of ritual, religion, or spirituality. Some even speculate the creators of this cave art were under the influence of a mind-altering substance as perhaps a striving toward transcendence (Hancock, 2007). Some of the most famous cave-art sites include (Wisher, 2020):

- Lascaux cave in France (circa 17,000 years ago)
- El Castillo cave-art site in Spain (circa 40,000 years ago)
- Rouffignac cave in France (circa 13,000 years ago)
- Tan-Tan figurine (circa 500,000 years ago)
- Berekhat Ram figurine (circa 250,000 years ago)

Are Humans Innately Religious?

This innate desire continues to evince itself, not only in mythology (e.g., Campbell, Jung) but also in modern media and movies, such as every configuration of superheroes who possess “more than human” capabilities; religious figures espoused by religions (e.g., Catholic saints); and movies like the Star Wars franchise (11 total, not including spinoffs) and the Batman movies (only seven movies, not including television series). This is mentioned to enhance the reader's awareness of the enduring appetite for this kind of mythology.

For the purposes of this book, an abbreviated history of the tenuous relationship between psychology and religion is provided beginning with the birth of psychology, which is itself an emolument of the Age of Enlightenment. According to most authorities, the modern era of psychology began in 1879 in a laboratory in Germany by Professor Wilhelm Wundt, Max Friedrich, and G. Stanley Hall. Because it was Wundt's laboratory, he is considered the principal founder of psychology as a field of science (Hunt, 1993). Until that time, most participants were medical doctors of some kind, but Wundt was the first person to be called a psychologist. Up to that point there was no formal separation between the individual's psyche (i.e., mind or spirit) and religious or spiritual persuasions.

There was once no separation between an individual's psyche and spirit. *Psyche* originally meant “breath,” “life,” or “soul” in Greek. Derived meanings included “spirit,” and ultimately “self” in the sense of conscious personality. In other words, psyche and spirit were an unnatural separation. According to Lesser (1999), William James deterred “separating religion and the study of human behavior, fearing what he called ‘medical materialism’ or tendency to pathologize and treat them as medical problems instead of states of mind that may be important ‘dark nights of the soul’ or transcendental flights of the spirit” (p. 66).

From time immemorial there have been various kinds of healers involved in the mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of a person, known as *cura animarum* (“the care of souls”; Kurtz, 1999). In fact, the history of psychology was linked with a religious worldview, called “pneumatology.” According to Wiggins-Frame (2003), the term *psychologia* referred to the human mind and *pneumatology* was concerned with the spirit; thus, psychology emerged as the study of mind, body, and spirit, linking them together. Modern day psychology emerged in the late 19th and 20th centuries as the division between religion widened due to the advancement of the scientific method as a means to distinguish the credibility of the field of psychology. At best, the relationship between psychology and religion has been cyclical.

Psychology and Religion: The Beginning

Freud was one of the many theorists of psychology, most of whom ignored spirituality completely or were antagonistic toward it. Freud contributed his most profound insight on religion in his book *The Future of an Illusion* (1927/1961). For Freud, religion had its origin in a person’s helplessness, thus confronting the intrinsic desires of the unconscious (Fromm, 1967). He contorted that in this process a person develops an illusion made up of childhood experiences: a mere regression to when the child felt protected by a parental figure (a superior being) whom the child aimed to appease to oblige their wishes and avoid punishment. Freud (1927/1961) used the term *repetition compulsion* to describe this and likened it to an “obsessional neurosis” (p. 11). For Freud, this was the objective of human development: to face reality and rely on their own powers to overcome infantile fixations. Religions were precarious to human development because they discouraged critical thinking. Anything that promoted sanctification of such behaviors (i.e., formal religious systems) was antithetical to healthy human development. According to Fromm (1967), Freud’s view was that “the ideals of human development were knowledge and reason, neighborly love, reduction of suffering, independence, and responsibility, all of which are the ethical core of the world’s primary religions” (p. 18).

Freud and Other Early Contributors

Carl Jung and Alfred Adler were founding theorists of the field of psychology (and contemporaries of Freud) who leaned toward an openness to the influences of religion and spirituality. Jung, who had early experiences with the occult and whose father was a minister, held onto this view of the human as more than their material body. Whereas Freud’s aim of human development was based on reason, Jung’s idea of development incorporated emotional experience and surrender to a transpersonal force, beyond the ego of the person. Jung granted religion and spirituality as purveyors of myths and archetypes that were transmitted from generation to generation through what he called the “collective unconscious.” Whereas Freud opposed any kind of religious influence as stifling to human development, Jung tended to promote the mysterious unconscious to a kind of religious phenomenon (Fromm, 1967; Jung,

1957). Adler, who also split with Freud, took a broader psychosocial perspective of the whole person to include their religion and spirituality as part of human development and their social interest. His individual psychology (the Latin *individerere*, “do not divide”) sought to allow for more influences toward the healthy development of a person, as opposed to Freud’s more restrictive instinct theory as the sole catalyst of human behavior that needs to be controlled and governed (Adler, 1998).

William James

William James was the first person in the United States to be called a psychologist and taught the first course on psychology proper at an American university. James also wrote the first official textbook on psychology in 1890, *Principles of Psychology*, earning him the distinction as the father of American psychology (Benziger, 2009). Not long after the success of his *Principles of Psychology*, James wrote his popular *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902) in which he continually pushed the scientific bounds by integrating spirituality and psychic phenomena, “considering them an extension of abnormal psychology” (Hunt, 1993, p. 153).

With the rise of behaviorism in the early 20th century, the belief was that “religious behavior occurred because it served as reinforced stimuli” (Skinner, 1953, p. 12). It was not until Gordon Allport’s 1950 book *The Individual and His Religion* that a resurgence occurred in the field of psychology, thus again decreasing the gap between psychology and religion (Wombles, 2010). There were several factors that exacerbated this decline in the field of psychology. Beit-Hammahmi (1977) lists six significant factors that lead to psychology and religion becoming less closely linked:

- The psychology of religion did not detach from the philosophy of religion.
- Psychology as a field sought credibility and to identify as a hard science.
- Research in this area tended to be uncritical and less rigorous.
- Behaviorism was on the rise and more conducive to measure in a laboratory.
- Studying religion was a conflict of interest because of the observer effect of researcher’s own interest and practice in religions (p. 22).

The Humanist Revolution

By the 1960s signs of a reunion between psychology and religion were becoming evident. Humanists and existential theorists emerged as a reaction and objection to the more deterministic and mechanical cognitive and behavioral theorists’ beliefs regarding the person. The main thrust, according to Wiggins-Frame (2003) of the humanists was to restore the dignity, even the soul, of the person, though not in a religious sense. They underscored the potential of the human and the notion of an innate ability to make responsible choices for their lives when provided the right circumstances for growth. Human beings and their ability to reason and respond were thought of as paramount, thus eradicating the need for a higher power to

rely on. Humanists and existentialists are often thought of as similar, in that they embraced pain and suffering and the need to create meaning from it. Carl Rogers (1902–1987), one of the founders of this movement, was credited with rehumanizing psychology, and like the swinging of a pendulum, he and others sought to correct the overdeterministic view of the person who could simply be controlled and managed by external forces and their environment (Benziger, 2009). Rogers’s optimism toward the human potential led him to believe and ultimately validate through research that providing certain conditions for a person (unconditional positive regard, not judging, and empathizing with the person) would naturally promote development toward being a “fully functional” person (Rogers, 1961).

Abraham Maslow (1908–1970), another early proponent of humanism and the human potential movement, asked the question, “How can people maximize their potential?” By studying what made for healthy personalities, he did not concern himself with pathology. He described people as being growth-oriented, and according to his hierarchy of needs model, when a person satisfied their lower needs (i.e., physiological, safety, belonging, and esteem), they would continue on toward self-actualization and self-transcendence by what he described as “peak experiences” (Maslow, 1982).

The Existentialists

Some existential psychologists allowed for accommodating of religion and spirituality back into the discussion, further merging the poles between psychology and religion. The new question they asked was, “What does it mean to be human?” Existentialism was a philosophical movement prior to being adapted as a therapeutic theory, and there are existentialists who allow for a God concept or higher power (e.g., Kierkegaard, Tillich, and Buber) and those who do not (e.g., Nietzsche, Sartre, and Heidegger; Benziger, 2009). A therapeutic encounter with an existential-minded therapist helps a client navigate their life with courage while addressing themes of anxiety, freedom, responsibility, and death in order to create meaning and purpose along their journey.

Other existential theorists who allowed for the integration of religion and spirituality were Erich Fromm (1900–1980), Viktor Frankl (1905–1997), and Rollo May (1909–1994). In contrast to Freudian psychoanalysis and the emerging medical model that sought to “cure” the person, Fromm (1994) identified himself as a “physician of the soul.” He believed in the importance of people having religious and spiritual experiences and did not think they had to believe in a God concept. He recognized that some people seek these kinds of experiences and are more open to a sense of awe and wonder, a longing to experience “oneness” and self-transcendence to “leave the prison of one’s selfishness and separateness” (Fromm, 1994, p. 141). As a physician of the soul, his aim was to facilitate a person’s capacity for love by “waking up” and striving.

Viktor Frankl wrote the infamous book, *Man’s Search for Meaning* (1959). Having survived two Nazi death camps (Dachau and Auschwitz), he saw what humanity was capable of in a dark and sinister sense concerning good and evil. He spent the rest of his life developing logotherapy as a way to make sense of his experiences and aid others to strive for meaning and

develop their human qualities of freedom and responsibility. Teleology, a reference to seeking purpose and meaning in the world, was more important, he concluded, than a person's desire to seek pleasure. His approach to life was positive and was described as a "tragic optimism" in which he did not agree with pathologizing certain feelings and attitudes, such as sadness or unhappiness. Instead, he believed these were symptoms of maladjustments and creating meaning from our suffering (Frankl, 1946/1984). According to Frankl (1946/1984), meaning was established by "creating a work, deed, or goal to accomplish; encountering others to accomplish this goal; and a person's attitude toward unavoidable suffering" (p. 115).

Rollo May was an American existentialist. Even though existentialism, as a movement, had been in full force in Europe for several decades, May brought a different optimism to the often dismally tragic nature of the atheistic existentialism. May (1940) expressed that religion and psychology had once been hostile toward each other; however, in reality they are "collaborators not competitors" (p. 25). He believed that psychology and religion were complementary and stated that "religion teaches us to love our neighbor, and psychotherapy helps us to understand why that is so difficult" (May, 1940 as cited in Benziger, 2009, p. 116). May's perspective was that life was made up of polarities and dialectics (e.g., freedom vs. control, good vs. evil, etc.). Human health and growth were accomplished by balancing these polarities throughout one's life. This dilemma of creating balance between polarities took courage and creativity, which were human qualities to be developed on the journey of life.

The 1960s in the United States

As Dunbar (1994) stated, "The 1960s Zeitgeist opened doors to all kind of love" (p. 103). It has been reported that American and European countercultures of this era were spawned by the desire to merge the polarities and adapt Eastern philosophy (mainly Buddhist concepts) and Western rationalism (mainly psychological concepts). Dunbar described this period, which is still evolving, as an anti-intellectual movement with a nihilistic bent toward overindulgence and chaos by doing away with law and order. The main principle is self-understanding, though at times the quest of this movement is rebellious and promotes the breaking of social conventions regarding indulgence without bounds, such as "free love" and the abusing of drugs and substances. Two popular American works that were representative of this movement were Jack Kerouac's *Dharma Bums* (1958) and Robert Pirsig's *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* (1974). The overwhelming religious influence of this time in American culture was Judeo-Christian theology, with its emphasis on "logos" (reason), referring to the divine mind as penetrable with reason, the paramount of humanity. The universe being intelligible, humans could, in a sense, reason their way to the divine, thus becoming gods. A repercussion of this was the masculinizing of divine ideas and organizations to the detriment of feminine principles. The mere rebelliousness of some in this movement served to be more destructive rather than helpful. Also, the movement was aimless, without much of a goal other than to topple the controlling ethos of law and order and then to pick up the pieces and figure it out. To seek balance and find a middle way seem more prudent when the

energy of this movement settled. With the blending and integration of Buddhist principles in a Judeo-Christian culture, while sprinkling in some interpersonal psychological concepts, a middle way may just be possible.

Another polarity that those in the field have been trying to reconcile over the decades is that of religion and spirituality (R/S) and psychological principles. The current atmosphere in psychology and counseling has been greater openness to the beneficial effects of no longer isolating R/S as categorical issues separate from and ineffectual to the person being helped. The more prevalent issue of including R/S in the assessment, diagnosing, and conceptualization of the person is addressing the inadequate training of helping professionals to deal with such phenomenology. Wombles (2010) notes that while there is a renewed popularity of allowing for how R/S shapes a person's life, more people are turning away from organized institutional religion and seeking answers to such perennial questions as, "Who am I?" "Why am I here?" and "How should I live?" from the field of psychology. However, true to its roots, before psychology was a formalized profession, it was was of philosophical descent.

21st-Century Spirituality

The relevance of not only the study of R/S but also its effect on a person's life has never before been more important, especially in a post-9/11 world. As Wombles (2010) asserted:

What creates a religious terrorist willing to sacrifice his or her own life while killing as many people of other belief systems is a topic that should be of paramount importance. The differences inherent in a devout believer who practices his or her faith with a commitment to harm no one and the believer who pursues a holy war ought to be considered worthy of study. It is far past time to do so. (p. 3)

As Lesser (2000) points out, 21st-century spirituality is postmodern in nature and phenomenological in that it defends and endorses the individual's lived experience. This is in contrast to traditional spirituality, which emphasized hierarchical power structures with exclusive prescriptions for spiritual growth and espoused only one "Truth" (Cottone, 2011; Lesser, 2000). A postmodern perspective recognizes changes and does not vie for one absolute version of reality or absolute "Truth." In fact, a postmodern view accentuates the individual's role in constructing their own "truths." Postmodern spirituality accentuates the individual's perspective and weakens the strength of religious institutionalism. According to Lesser (2000), 21st-century spirituality is based on a democratic and diverse view of spiritual traditions and history. "It draws from religious teaching of the Christian tradition and weaves it with the wisdom of the contemplative and Eastern traditions, feminism, and the findings of contemporary psychology, into new forms of spirituality" (Lesser, as cited in Sperry, 2001, p. 3).

A strategy for recognizing and determining when it is appropriate to address a client's spiritual needs can lead to more accurate assessment, determination of resources, and evaluation

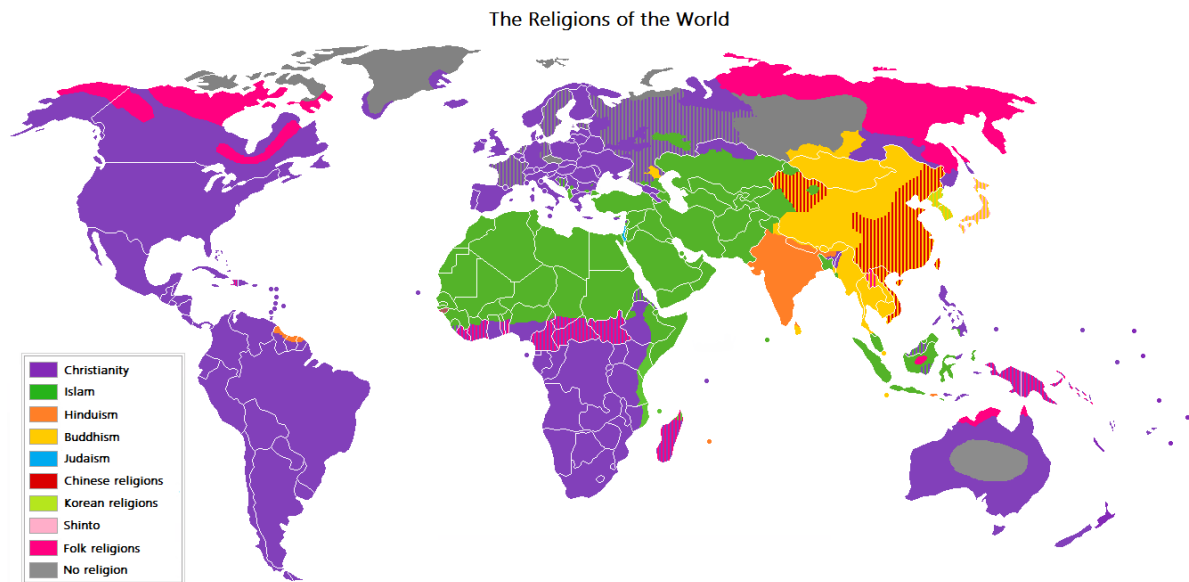


FIGURE 1.1 Map of the Spread of World Religions

of the impact of beliefs on mental health outcome and decision making, as well as remove barriers to the use of spiritual resources to assist in treatment of mental health concerns.

Conclusion

Spirituality has been an element of every known society and culture. The question of whether or not religion and spirituality should be addressed in the therapeutic process is no longer an issue (Cashwell & Watts, 2010). As our society becomes more multicultural, our institutions are placing more emphasis on religion and spiritual issues as sources of support, identity, and resources. Surveys continue to indicate that most people in the United States consider themselves religious and believe that God has a plan for their lives (Cadwallader, 1991). With that many people having some kind of religious belief or conviction, it can be deduced that counselors will have clients who are in some way religious or spiritual. Training in the spiritual dimension needs to be a part of graduate counseling programs in order to provide spiritually attuned counseling. The omission of spirituality from counseling programs promulgates the separation of counselors from the very people they will be helping.

Case Study

Most of my life I have felt pushed and pulled. My father pushed me into school, sports, and so forth, and over the years my resentment grew for him, as he was always directing and controlling my life and berating me when I challenged his authority, sometimes physically. My parents divorced when I was 14 years old, and without parental control I began a life of

permissiveness in my relationships with women and in my use of psychedelic drugs and marijuana. When I finally graduated from college, I rejected my father's wishes to pursue a career and returned to school to seek another degree. In some ways it's just a place to be that I like. Most of my life revolves around living for today, a hedonistic style that has no concreteness of goals and aspirations, with a lack of definition of "what a man should be." I float in and out of people's lives. They see an image of me as a user of women, a recreational drug user, and a jerk. My fear is that I am nothing more than that image and I am empty inside. I want to be able to open up more and let people see the "real" me (i.e., warmer, sensitive sides of me), but I have difficulty doing that. I have a strong need to become close and intimate with others, yet I never let myself become vulnerable because I fear being dependent on them and trapped by their love.

1. How would you begin with this client from a spiritual or religious perspective? What specific questions might you ask this client concerning R/S issues?
2. Think of a person who seems lost or empty. Could they be lacking something spiritual? If so, what do you mean? If not, why?
3. What are the main issues that he struggles with? How would you describe their etiology from a R/S point of view?
4. What fears, challenges, or concerns do you have in integrating R/S into your work with this client?

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. Imagine a time where there were no organized religions. What helped people come together? How did people cope with the transitions of life (e.g., birth, loss, tragedy, death, etc.)?
2. Discuss your views on why or why not religion is innately human. Is spirituality any different? Is it inevitable that religions emerge among people? Why or why not?
3. What is your own personal history of religion and spirituality? When were your first R/S feelings? Why did you gravitate toward a particular R/S perspective?
4. How do you describe a 21st c. R/S view of humans, the world, the afterlife, etc.?

Activity for Practice

Instructions: Devote some time (not all in one sitting) to reflecting on these questions. It may help to read them first, then let them sink into your consciousness. Then have a journal or notebook and write your responses, free associating the best you are able. The idea is to get beyond your social conditioning to your deeply held values and beliefs. Remember, these are your private responses. You will not be judged or evaluated on them, so be as truthful as possible with yourself. They can always change.

1. How can you increase meaning in your life?
2. Who are we as human beings? Are we more than flesh and bones? Where did we come from (beyond the womb)?
3. Are we in control of our lives, or is our life a result of fate?
4. Where did the universe come from?
5. Is there a God, divine being, or some “Other”?
6. If there is a God, what is your relationship to it/them?
7. Does life continue after the physical body dies?

Resources for Further Study

Books

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Videos

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Fig. 1.1: Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Major_religions_distribution.png.