

(October 7, 2024, reading: Spokane Friends: The Search for Self.)

PROLOGUE: *Life is a sacred journey. Faith is the guide.*

SPIRITUALITY

Recently Yohan Maurer offered in a recent sermon: "The voice of God is spiritual." Got me thinking about spirituality and offer some observations, inspired by over 60 years of Quaker meditation and the writings of Thomas Merton who thought: "There is no greater comfort than the substance of silence" to suggest meditation generates a sense of self. Merton offers: "Spirituality enables us to find ourselves and lose ourselves at the same time".

Spirituality is seeking a meaningful connection with something bigger as positive emotions in a religious sense, posing peace, awe, contentment, gratitude and acceptance.

It's suggested there's a growing body of evidence when applied to spirituality as associated with well-being and this morning, I'll try to cover the importance of a spiritual search, understanding it seems "too great to be fully expressed in words".

It's a challenge, knocking on the door of insight, more a personal reflection, a self-examination, an inner voice, a guidepost for interaction with others in our society who as a community share space and existence.

Spirituality is self-examination, an inner voice, a guidepost with others who share our lives as well as our extended community. It's a broad concept with room for many perspectives. It includes a sense of connection with something bigger and typically involves a search for the meaning of life, a deep sense of being alive, interconnected beyond ego, a spiritual joy.

As to spirituality and the issues of self-discovery, we don't have the opportunity to live the life of a monk as Merton, for we must face if not deal with pressing and critical realities of everyday events.

Spirituality offers the value of personal lessons of responsibility that offer insight and reason for our existence far beyond the reach of everyday realities. Beyond the perimeter of daily life, and spiritual probes have the potential to soothe the savage beast within, to offer comfort and strength interacting with pressing realities, the strength and healing process of being ourselves, an extension of self-awareness. Indeed a search that provides discovery and responsibility as we relate to our community as Quakers.

Spirituality is a personal quest to understand answers to the ultimate questions of life, its meaning, who we are and clearly frosting on the cake when it comes to religious values, hoping to comprehend reasons for our existence.

The best way to think of spirituality is to search for meaning, connection and ideals. Hopefully we will find ourselves also spiritually supporting how we live. In a religious sense to consider what is true and proper.

When it comes to fully understanding spiritual definitions, understand they overlap as belief, comfort, reflection, ethics and awe, an individual experience which affects the way we think, feel and behave.

In the *here and now*, our Quaker community is hopefully an ideal place for reflection, a process that leads to insight, a spiritual message, and a conclusive answer for our existence, supported by community bonds as we sit together in service. It's good to remember reality reflects who we are and how we interact for the benefit of spiritual growth, which I suggest is a very personal journey.

(About 500 words)