

## Article 6. Identifying a Healthy Spiritual Practice

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### Introduction:

Wholism encourages us to adopt some form of spiritual practice as an important step in creating balance and harmony in our lives. The intent of this guide is to offer some characteristics to look for and standards to apply when choosing a new spiritual practice or evaluating one we are currently following. Please note that this guide is biased by my own nature and experiences and is meant to be **helpful** rather than **true** for everyone. **MG**

### Personal Benefits:

Healthy spiritual practices provide us with personal benefits. They help us:

- connect with something greater than our physical selves and this material world
- quiet overactive thoughts and feelings and experience periods of inner calm
- observe and change unhealthy beliefs, attitudes, and actions
- receive guidance and direction in our daily life

### Positive Effects on Our Community:

Healthy spiritual practices have a positive effect on our community. They enable us to:

- express feelings of love and compassion for all forms of life in our community
- treat all forms of life in our community with kindness, dignity and respect
- co-operate with all living things in our community rather than compete with them
- see the unity of all living things and eliminate "us" versus "them" thinking

### Empowerment: The Key Component

Healthy spiritual practices **empower us**, they don't enslave us:

- they provide us with a direct personal connection with the Universal Life Force
- they don't require a human intermediary, a "spirit guide", or a group "process".
- they provide us with more personal freedom and choices in our lives, not less

### Distractions and Dangers:

Consider avoiding any spiritual practices that:

- rely on "props" such as costumes, symbols, crystals, emotional music, etc.
- are led by spiritual teachers or gurus who do more than motivate and encourage
- use mental or emotional "techniques" to gain power and advantage over others
- focus on the "spirits" of material objects, plants, animals, and human beings
- ask for large financial or other commitments for more than facility upkeep or general expenses

### A Simple Test to Determine if Your Current Practice is Right For You:

Ask yourself this question:

- am I now more loving and compassionate than I was before I began this practice?

Gaining new insights and wisdom are wonderful benefits of a spiritual practice, but its ultimate value is the degree to which it can help us display more love and kindness in our daily actions. If our practice is making us more clever but less kind, something's wrong! In the end it's always about love.

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