

Defining Your Spirituality

Spirituality is an entirely personal thing. It is a word that can make some people uncomfortable because of associations with organised religion or pagan rituals, but it is a concept we should all embrace. It is important to move beyond any pre-conceived ideas you might have and to understand that you define what spirituality means to you, and that by its very nature it is dynamic and its meaning to you may very well change throughout your life.

There is no precise definition of the term 'spirituality' but most modern definitions tend to reference a sense of connection to something bigger than ourselves, connection to others and to nature, a search for meaning, purpose and peace. Some people find this through some form of religion but many people just by creating space in their life for reflection, contemplation and taking time to focus on their inner world. The outer world is important, as we must survive and thrive there, but we find the greatest joy and meaning in our lives when we include time contemplating and caring for our inner worlds.

Meditation is a common way to achieve this, but if you don't feel ready or inspired to meditate try one of the following:

- Spend time in nature. Take a walk in the bush or on the beach. Leave all distractions behind (don't take your phone!) and just take in the sights, scents and sounds around you.
- Be more mindful as you go about your everyday activities. Pay attention to what you are doing at any given moment. When brushing your teeth pay attention to the taste of the toothpaste and the sensations of the brush on your teeth and gums. Don't be planning tomorrow's dinner or writing a mental shopping list!
- Take up exercise such as Yoga or Tai Chi, where mental focus and inward reflection are a part of the exercise routine.

Remember also that meditation comes in many forms and doesn't have to be complex. Start with a simple meditation on your breath. Just find a quiet place to sit, close your eyes and focus on your breathing. Whenever your mind begins to wander to other things just gently bring it back to your breath.

Embrace your spirituality. Take some time to figure out what being spiritual means for you. What makes you feel connected to something greater than yourself? What brings you a sense of peace? What offers meaning for you? Taking time out from doing to just be will enable you to gain a deeper understanding of yourself, your priorities, and your purpose. This is how you find joy and meaning in your life, and with those everything becomes better and easier.

While it might seem like this is just something else you need to try and find time for in a busy schedule that just doesn't have any spare space, the rewards to be gained will more than pay for themselves. Taking just 15 minutes to calm and centre yourself through meditation or mindfulness on a busy day can greatly help you get through the rest of your day more efficiently and effectively by increasing your focus and concentration.