

# Counseling the Spiritual Self

by Diane Eisenman

What is the meaning of my life? What is my purpose? Where do I go from here? How do I get unstuck? Am I alone? Is there a God? These questions often come in mid-life when children leave, when jobs get old, retirement begins, or when a new urge for freedom emerges. These are not uniquely 'religious' questions, but rather refer to the very life force that pulses through us with each breath we take. We long for inspiration, for something greater than our singular lives.

As counselor, I provide a framework that assists clients to walk this journey successfully. Seven milestones along the way keep clients moving forward. Begin with a spirit of honest **inquiry**. "What am I looking for? Whom do I choose to walk beside me?" Then commit to **reviewing** your life story up to this point, discovering those pivotal moments when you learned what you currently hold as your personal truth.

Next, bring to **awareness** what your life looks like now. See your choices, your relationships, and your spiritual practices, evaluating what effect those choices have on your spiritual, mental, emotional and physical well-being.

**Let go** of those beliefs, activities and relationships which no longer serve you, trusting your own guidance, no longer relying on messages received from others about who you 'should be.' Acknowledge the habits and addictions you have created that prevent you from going forward, and release them.

Now begin to **envision** the life that you desire. Discover what nourishes you and gives you joy. Create new activities, events and relationships that support your quest for meaning and purpose. Expand your listening to include the wisdom voices within.

Having achieved clarity, collect resources from within yourself, and engage the resources surrounding you. Seek people who welcome your gifts. Identify the form your pursuits will take, whether volunteering, a new career, a renewed career, a retreat, building a business, or exploring the world. With this **plan**, walk toward your greatest vision.

Finally, take deliberate **action** in the outer world to manifest your desires. From this unstoppable place, you can transform your life into the best you can possibly imagine, living a life of meaning, purpose, fulfillment, and joy. This is the truly self-actualized life, and the goal of all spiritual counseling.

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