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# **Spiritual Evocation**

## **Guidelines for Spiritual Direction in Drug Abuse Treatment**

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# Chapter 1

## Motivation and Spiritual Direction

It is a long-known frailty of human nature that we do not do that which we ought. The essence of this dilemma is ambivalence, a conflict of short-term desires and impulses with higher values and goals. The exercise of any discipline involves some over-riding of the immediate in service of the ultimate.

Some spiritual directors assume, even require a significant level of motivation in the seeker for spiritual growth: “If you have the will, we will find a way.” Yet to do so in effect confines the benefits of spiritual direction to those who are already sufficiently far along in their spiritual journey to be ready and willing to follow a higher path. There are many who hunger for that which can fill their inner emptiness, but who for various reasons do not seek out the path of spiritual direction. Perhaps they do not frame their dilemma as spiritual, or fear inner darkness. Perhaps they grew up without a spiritual vocabulary, or bear still-painful scars of exposure to toxic religion. Whatever the reason, many who hunger are unlikely to seek out the services of a spiritual director.

### The Puzzle of Addiction

A well-recognized example is found in those captured in the bonds of addiction. Most is known scientifically about alcohol dependence, but the pattern is common to all addictive behaviors with propensity to inspire dependence, such as drinking, smoking, drug use, gambling, and compulsive sexuality. All involve immediate gratification to the jeopardy of long-term physical, mental and spiritual health. It is a central puzzle of addiction that the behavior persists long after the person recognizes its harmful nature and desires to escape it. Although addiction sometimes has a component of temporary physical discomfort upon cessation (such as drug withdrawal), the larger pattern of dependence involves the behavior occupying an increasingly central place in the person’s life. The development of drug dependence involves a gradual displacement of the person’s other natural interests, activities, relationships, and values. The sense of urgency increases, and efforts to refrain are unsuccessful. In advanced form, the drug or other addiction comes to occupy a central place in the person’s life, taking priority over all else. It becomes, in Tillich’s framework, the person’s ultimate concern. In sum, addiction is perhaps the clearest modern expression of idolatry, of giving to something mortal the allegiance and devotion that belong to the immortal.

It is not surprising, then, that there is a modest inverse relationship between religious involvement and substance abuse or dependence. Those who are more active in a religion and for whom faith occupies a central place in their lives are less likely to develop dependence on a drug. Similarly, those entering treatment for alcohol/drug problems tend to have very low religious involvement, and are often quite alienated from organized religion. Furthermore, the traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous emphasize the vital importance of spiritual growth and transformation in recovery from substance dependence. It is as if one drives out the other: *Spiritus contra spiritum* in the oft-quoted phrase from Carl Jung.

Consider, then, the common dilemma of people caught in addiction. Over time they come to recognize that they are trapped, and know all too well the cost of their addiction. They at least dimly sense an inner emptiness into which they have poured alcohol, drugs, or credit cards. Despite their intentions and resolutions, they continue spiraling downward. If the path out of this spiral is truly a spiritual one, they may have a problem. Religion may be alien or anathema, and spirituality a foreign terrain. It would not occur to them to turn to spiritual disciplines, let alone seek the guidance of a spiritual director.

### **Spiritual Evocation: Spiritual Direction with Those Less Ready**

Suppose, then, that a spiritual director has the opportunity to work with people who are less ready than those who typically seek out their services. Assume, instead of an eager seeker, that you are to work with people who are profoundly ambivalent about exploring their spirituality. This is a common situation in counseling more generally. People often seek treatment in response to pressures from family or the courts. It is a fairly safe assumption, for example, that people entering addiction treatment are ambivalent about doing so.

The combined approach described here, termed *spiritual evocation*, is a particular style for facilitating spiritual formation, growth, and development. It is a blend of ancient and modern; ancient traditions of spiritual direction, and a modern client-centered counseling style that creates an atmosphere of safety and evokes personal motivation for exploration and growth. This evocative style of spiritual direction is akin to that described by the Trappist monk, Thomas Merton. The counseling approach draws heavily on the work of psychologist Carl Rogers, as evolved in a modern approach known as motivational interviewing.

This combination of skills may be especially beneficial in working with people who are, for various reasons, less open initially to exploring their spirituality. Spiritual directors often work with people who are already motivated and eager to deepen their spirituality. Sometimes such readiness is regarded as a prerequisite for seekers in spiritual direction. Spiritual evocation is intended to extend the benefits of spiritual direction to those who might not otherwise seek them, whose spiritual growth has been obstructed in some way.

This integration of methods was particularly inspired by people with alcohol and other drug dependence, who are frequently quite alienated from religion, and yet for whom spiritual formation is often regarded as urgent, a matter of survival. While this integrated approach is not intended solely for people with drug dependence, addiction does represent the dilemma for which spiritual evocation was developed. It may be particularly helpful for people who have, for whatever reason, given priority to material concerns at the cost of their spiritual health. Short of a crisis that triggers reevaluation of priorities, such persons may be at best ambivalent and resistant to exploring their spirituality. They are, therefore, unlikely to take initiative in seeking spiritual direction. If by circumstance or outreach they do come into contact with an opportunity for spiritual direction, an initial challenge is to work through their ambivalence to exploring their spirituality.

The method presented here does not provide comprehensive guidelines for spiritual direction. This is not written to help professionals who are unfamiliar with spiritual direction to learn how to do it. Rather, expertise in spiritual direction is assumed as a starting point. These guidelines focus on the integration of spiritual direction with the counseling style of motivational interviewing, which was designed specifically for working through ambivalence. Thus the integrated approach of spiritual evocation is meant to meet the needs of a population whom spiritual directors may not ordinarily meet or be prepared to serve. The counseling style that is described here is one that can be used throughout spiritual direction.

## **Stages of Change**

For decades it was believed that there was no way to help people with alcohol or drug dependence until they were ready and motivated for change. It was thought that the person had to hit bottom before recovery could begin.

More recently, however, research has shown that there are effective ways to help people who are less ready or motivated for change. The transtheoretical model of James Prochaska and Carlo DiClemente describes change as a developmental process, with a predictable sequence of stages. A particular contribution of this model has been its clarification of the stages that lead up to action:

In the *precontemplation* stage, the person is not even considering change. From a spiritual direction perspective, this describes people who sense no need for spiritual exploration or growth.

In the *contemplation* stage, the individual is ambivalent. Aware of some reasons and need for change, he or she is also comfortable with the status quo. From a spiritual perspective, there is attraction and reluctance, both a hunger and fear or reticence to explore spiritual terrain.

In the *preparation* stage, the balance has tipped. The pros of change outweigh the cons, and the person intends to change but is uncertain what to do. The person becomes open to spiritual seeking, and taking action depends on finding an approach that is personally acceptable and accessible.

In the *action* stage, the person takes active steps toward change. In the context of spiritual direction, this might be reflected in initial experimentation with spiritual disciplines.

In the *maintenance* stage, the person's new pattern becomes stabilized. In spiritual formation this could involve finding a pattern of practice that is self-sustaining, and building it into daily life.

Like addiction counselors, spiritual directors are also familiar with the pattern of recycling through these stages. Initial intentions and actions are not always sustained. We tend to fall back to old

familiar ways. This is not necessarily reason for alarm, for it is a common aspect of human nature. The key is to cycle again through the stages and get back on track.

One choice for a spiritual director is to work only with those who are at least at the action stage, who have already decided that they want spiritual direction. Similarly, addiction counselors sometimes tell less motivated clients to “come back when you’re ready to work.” It is possible, however, to work with people who are less ready for change. At any given time about 80% of people with active alcohol/drug problems are at the precontemplation or contemplation stage, not “ready” for change. In the addiction field, thinking has changed toward regarding motivation as part of the counselor’s task. A person in the contemplation stage needs something different from someone in the preparation or action stage. Contemplators need help in resolving their ambivalence. People in preparation need help in sorting out how they might proceed, and those in action need support in doing it.

### ***Docere and Ducere***

There is a classic tension in human discourse. It is found in conflicting styles of education, management, parenting, counseling, corrections, and health care. It is a tension between *docere* and *ducere* – two Latin verbs that describe contrasting styles of interaction.

The first, *docere*, refers in education to a process of insertion. It is the one-way transmission of knowledge, from an expert to a recipient. *Docere* is the root of the English words *docent*, *doctrine*, *indoctrinate*, and *doctor*, and also of *docile*, the complementary role of the recipient. It implies, “I have what you need.” The recipient is understood to be lacking in something that is needed (e.g., wisdom, insight, skills, knowledge, or truth), which is then provided by the expert. The needed material is installed into the recipient, thus redressing the deficit.

The other Latin verb, *ducere*, is a process of pulling rather than pushing. It is the verb for drawing water from a well; *e ducere* is literally to draw out. Within a human interaction, it is a process of calling forth from another that which is already there or is emergent. It is birthing rather than installing. The underlying view is that “*You* have what you need,” and together we will bring it forth. It is the respectful heart of Socratic education, client-centered counseling, and patient-centered medicine.

These are, of course, two ends of a continuum. Individual teachers, counselors, and managers are found all along this dimension, from authoritarian putting-in to collaborative bringing-out. So are spiritual directors.

### **Spiritual Direction and Evocation**

The term *director* seems to imply an expert model, whereby someone with authority tells another person what to do or how to do it. For this reason some have preferred terms like *spiritual facilitator*, *companion*, *listener*, or *friend*. Whatever name is given to the role, spiritual directors also vary along the *docere/ducere* continuum.

The approach to spiritual direction described in this guide falls far to the *ducere* end of the continuum, in the tradition of Thomas Merton. Merton characterized a particular *docere* style as a “perverted” form of spiritual direction:

*The “director” is thought to be one endowed with special, almost miraculous, authority and has the power to give the “right formula” when it is asked for. He is treated as a machine for producing answers that will work, that will clear up difficulties and make us perfect. He has a “system.” or rather, he has become an expert in the working of somebody else’s system. [He] assumes as a basic axiom of the spiritual life that every soul needs to be humiliated, frustrated and beaten down; that all spontaneous aspirations are suspect by the very fact that they are spontaneous; that everything individual is to be cut away, and that the soul is to be reduced to a state of absolute, machine-like conformity with others in the same fantastic predicament. . . . Obviously, no direction at all is preferable to such direction as this. (pp. 18-20)*

At the other end of the spectrum is a companionable *ducere* style. Here spiritual wisdom is regarded as residing within or coming through the seeker, and the “director” has a role akin to that of a midwife. Like Carl Rogers, those who work in this way tend to trust an inherent direction within the person, a “God within” seeking to be realized {Thorne, 1998 #177}. Of this approach, Merton wrote:

*The whole purpose of spiritual direction is to penetrate beneath the surface of a man’s life, to get behind the façade of conventional gestures and attitudes which he presents to the world, and to bring out his inner spiritual freedom, his inmost truth. . . A spiritual director is, then, one who helps another to recognize and follow the inspiration of grace in his life, in order to arrive at the end to which God is leading him (p. 17).*

A *ducere* or evocative approach seeks to bring out that which is latent, already potential in the person. Another analogy for the spiritual director’s role here is that of a theatrical director, to bring out the natural skill and talent already present in the actor while suggesting small points of refinement. The director-actor interaction is first and foremost a relationship.

The MI paradox of a client-centered yet directive approach is evident in spiritual direction. The ultimate direction is understood as coming from God as manifest in the particular seeker. The director merely facilitates the process . . . and yet, the director is also an active partner in this dance of spirit. The process of in-spiration comes through both seeker and director, and through their unique relationship.

Merton was also clear that the spiritual director is concerned with the *whole* person.

*There is a temptation to think that spiritual direction is the guidance of one’s spiritual activities, considered as a small part or department of one’s life. You go to a spiritual director to have him take care of your spirit, the way you go to a dentist to have him take*

*care of your teeth, or to a barber to get a haircut. This is completely false. . . .The spiritual life is not just the life of the mind, or of the affections, or of the “summit of the soul”-- it is the life of the whole person (p. 14).*

## Chapter 2

### What Evokes Change?

There are direct parallels among spiritual direction, counseling and psychotherapy. All are intended to facilitate a process of growth and change. All involve finding a facilitative way of being with others.

The interpersonal style that is described in this guide arose from a series of discoveries about what actually facilitates human change. Some of these are a bit surprising or counterintuitive; they conflict with popular notions about what evokes change.

#### *Empathy*

The psychologist Carl Rogers taught that it is natural for human beings to change and grow in a positive direction, given a properly supportive atmosphere. His *client-centered counseling* approach was predicated on the idea that the counselor does not need to direct the process of change.

Instead the counselor provides vital supportive conditions that make change possible: unconditional acceptance, accurate understanding, and personal honesty. When a counselor provides this kind of interpersonal atmosphere, clients naturally move in positive ways {Rogers, 1959 #13}{Truax, 1967 #31}.

The most studied and teachable of these critical conditions for change is the skill of *accurate empathy* or understanding, which is also central to spiritual direction {Guenther, 1992 #186}. “Empathy” does not mean identification with the person, such as experiencing their emotions or having had similar experiences. If anything, such identification can get in the way of understanding.

Rather accurate empathy involves a particular way of listening that draws the person out, creating discovery and movement. Reflective listening is a complex but learnable skill that continues to be refined throughout a lifetime of practice.

In addiction treatment, empathy appears to be a particular potent catalyst for change. Often the strongest predictor of recovery is the therapist or counselor to whom a person is assigned. In one of our own studies {Miller, 1980 #29}, problem drinkers were randomly assigned to one of nine counselors, all of whom were delivering the same standardized behavioral treatment approach. The rate of client improvement varied widely from counselor to counselor, and the best predictor of client outcome was the level of accurate empathy shown by the counselor during treatment. The more empathic the counselor, the more he or she listened in this skillful and reflective way, the more clients changed. For the most empathic counselor, the client improvement rate was 100%, as compared with 25% for the least empathic counselor. The counselor’s level of empathy continued to predict treatment outcomes two years after treatment {Miller, 1983 #32}.

#### “Dose” Levels

Another surprising finding from the alcohol treatment literature is that client outcomes do not seem to be related to the dose of treatment received. It is true that the longer people choose to stay in and adhere to treatment, the better they do, but there is a built-in confound here in that both length of stay and outcome may be affected by a third factor (such as client motivation for change). In studies where people are randomly assigned to longer versus shorter treatment, outcome differences are rarely found. Dozens of studies have shown that even relatively brief counseling of one session or two can trigger significant change {Bien, 1993 #23}{Dunn, 2001 #25}.

## **FRAMES**

What is it, then, that is happening when even brief counseling is beneficial? In an analysis of clinical trials {Miller, 1994 #38}{Bien, 1993 #23}, we identified six elements that were often present in effective brief counseling. These can be remembered via the acronym FRAMES.

*Feedback.* Often effective brief counseling included something to help people take a close look at themselves, to take a kind of personal inventory. Usually this was in the form of personal feedback on a measure that allowed them to evaluate their own drinking and its consequences.

*Responsibility.* Effective brief counseling often emphasized the person's responsibility for change. Rather than disempowering the person, the message was in essence, "It's up to you what you will do. You can certainly continue on as you have been, or you can do something different. No one else can do or decide this for you. It's really in your hands." This is done without any shade of shaming, blaming or sarcasm. Rather it is the pronouncement of a truth, that the power for change does not lie in the hands of the counselor or spiritual director.

*Advice.* Nevertheless, every effective brief intervention included clear advice, a recommendation or encouragement that sits side-by-side with the truth that it's up to the person to decide what to do. One useful way to offer advice is first to ask permission to do so: for example, "Would it be all right if I told you some things that others have found helpful?"

*Menu.* Often the person was provided not with a single recommendation, but rather with a menu of options. Often there is not just one way to move forward, but a variety of possibilities. Offering the person a menu of options elicits the mental set of choosing among them, whereas offering one option elicits the mental set of evaluating what is wrong with the suggestion. For spiritual directors, this suggests the menu of spiritual paths and disciplines that are available for seekers.

*Empathy.* Whenever the relationship style of the counselor was described, effective brief interventions were characterized by an empathic, supportive, facilitative approach. Rather than telling, the counselor was listening to and interested in hearing the person's own perspectives, ideas and concerns.

*Support.* Finally, effective counselors supported the person's confidence in the possibility of change. Psychologists speak of this as "self-efficacy," but for a spiritual director the source of confidence is larger than trust in the person alone. The general point here is that change can and does happen, and there are particular ways in which to open oneself to it.

### **Faith, Hope and Vision**

Relatedly, an effective counselor inspires trust, hope, and a horizon toward which to move. Sometimes, when hope seems wholly absent, it is necessary to lend the person some of your own {Yahne, 1999 #179}. More often it is a matter of discovering that in which the person does trust and have hope, that which the person values above all else. A person's own belief in the possibility of change is a self-fulfilling prophecy, as is the counselor's own faith and hope for positive change.

### **Meeting Resistance**

In addition to being a property of electrical systems, *resistance* is a concept borrowed from psychodynamic psychotherapy. The basic idea is that when one moves too quickly and close to the truth, the person's unconscious defenses are activated to oppose movement forward. A less mysterious way to think of resistance is as one side of ambivalence. With regard to any possible change, there is something like an internal committee of voices pro and con. The language that counselors interpret as resistance represents one side of the person's inner dilemma. Either way, resistance favors status quo rather than movement.

Client resistance can be reliably measured from counseling audiotape or videotape. In addiction counseling, at least, the level of resistance offered by a client is highly responsive to the counselor's style. Directive, didactic and confrontive counselors tend to elicit high levels of resistance, whereas far less resistance is evoked by counselors who are warm, supportive and empathic {Miller, 1993 #41}. Furthermore, treatment outcomes are predictable from in-session resistance. The more the client resists, the less he or she changes. A key for effective counseling, then, appears to be relating in a way that does not evoke, but rather diminishes client resistance.

### **Agape**

Although I had been summarizing these characteristics of effective brief counseling for many years, I found no coherent psychological theory to organize them and account for their efficacy. Then one day it struck me: What do we know that happens in relationship between two people, can have a surprisingly powerful effect even in a relatively brief time, reduces negativity, and in some way involves joining respectfully with the other? Framed in this way, the answer was apparent: It is love, and a particular kind of loving {Miller, 2000 #71}. C. S. Lewis nicely differentiated this selfless *agape* from three other Greek words (*eros*, *philia*, and *storge*) all of which are translated in English as "love" {Lewis, 1960 #187}. Writing from a psychoanalytic perspective, Fromm characterized this selfless and healing form of love as an art that embodies respect {Fromm, 1956 #185}: "the ability to see a person as he is, to be aware of his unique individuality. Respect means the concern that the other person should grow and unfold as he is." (p. 23).



## Chapter 3

### Motivational Interviewing in Spiritual Direction

The facilitative method of motivational interviewing (MI) is intended as a foundational counseling style upon which these guidelines are built {Miller, 2002 #15}. The descriptions of MI here are cursory, and primary focus is on how this approach melds with the process of spiritual direction. These guidelines are by no means sufficient in themselves to foster competence in the practice of either motivational interviewing or spiritual direction.

Motivational interviewing (MI) is first and foremost characterized by a facilitative way of being with another human being. Miller and Rollnick (2002) have described this fundamental spirit as *collaborative, evocative, and respectful of autonomy*. MI involves a collaborative partnership, rather than a teacher-student, expert-recipient relationship. It is person-centered, very much attuned to the concerns and perspectives of the individual. MI is also evocative rather than prescriptive; it is *ducere* rather than *docere*, drawing out that which is already present in the person. A spiritual director might understand this as connecting to “that of God within the other.” Finally, MI is respectful of the individual’s autonomy, the human capacity and right to choose his or her own course. From a spiritual perspective, this might be understood as each person’s God-give free will or personal agency.

#### Ambivalence

As described above, the construct of ambivalence is central to MI. Smokers often want to quit and simultaneously also want to keep smoking. Substance dependent people want to keep on using their drug of choice, and also want to escape the negative effects. There is nothing pathological about this. It is normal human nature. We want to eat our cake and still have it. Ambivalence about change is normal. It is where most of us get stuck.

Next consider the motivations of someone who goes into a helping profession, be it social work, counseling, medicine, psychology, pastoral ministry, or spiritual direction. Usually there is an innate desire to set things right, to help people get on, or back on the right path. This “righting reflex” in us wants to advocate for change, to explain why it is important, and teach how to do it.

Now if most people are ambivalent about change, and most helpers manifest a righting reflex to advocate for change, what happens when they meet? The helper is, with the best of intentions, predisposed to give the answers, to take responsibility for the pro-change side of ambivalence, perhaps educating as to why change is needed, and advising as to how it can be achieved. When an ambivalent person encounters such a change advocate, there is a natural tendency to respond with the other side of the ambivalence. This can take the form of arguing that change is unnecessary or infeasible. It may appear as passivity during counseling and lack of change from one visit to the next, not following through with plans or assignments they were given. Whatever form this takes, it is tempting to interpret it as resistance to the helper’s good efforts to stimulate change.

From an ambivalence perspective, however, this dilemma is entirely understandable. The two players are acting out the person's ambivalence. The helper becomes the protagonist, taking the pro-change lines. The person is left with the voice of reluctance, defending and acting out the status quo. That might be all right, a kind of engaging psychodrama, were it not for the fact that people tend to become committed to that which they defend. The more resistance a client expresses in brief counseling, the less likely change is to occur. Left in this somewhat adversarial role, people literally talk themselves into not changing.

That is why a central principle of MI is to evoke *from the person* his or her own motivations and plans for change. If you, the helper, are advocating for a new path while a client defends the old one, you're in the wrong chair. MI encourages the person to give voice to both sides of the dilemma, with particular attention to the person's own desire, ability, reasons, need, and commitment to change. In MI, the person literally talks her or himself into change.

How does this notion of ambivalence apply to spiritual formation? There is in each of us, I believe, a natural tendency to seek and be drawn to God, and a restlessness to connect with that which is beyond us. There is no need to implant that desire. It is already there, hard-wired. There is also in human nature infinite capacity for distraction, diversion, busyness, concern and obsession with the material world. These voices can drown out still small call of the spirit. It is partly for this reason that so many spiritual disciplines focus on silence, centering, turning focus away from distractions and toward the realm of spirit. It is normal to be drawn in both directions. Spiritual direction is, in part, about tipping the balance of ambivalence toward spiritual growth.

## **Active Listening**

Fundamental to MI is the artful and learnable skill of reflective listening, which Carl Rogers termed *accurate empathy* and his student, Thomas Gordon, called *active listening* {Gordon, 1970 #153}. In this way of being with people, the listener is far from passive. It is hard work, much harder than asking questions. The essence of a good reflective listening response is *a statement that makes a guess about the meaning of what the person has said and helps the person continue on in exploring that meaning*.

*A reflection is a statement.*

A reflective listening response is best posed as a statement rather than a question:

Do you mean that you're wondering what God thinks of you? (Question)

You're wondering what God thinks of you? (Question - voice inflects up at end)

You're wondering what God thinks of you. (Reflection - a statement)

*A reflection makes a guess about the person's meaning*

A reflective listening statement is the testing of an hypothesis about what the person means. When you can't even guess, the simplest reflection is a direct repetition of

part or all of what the person said, adding nothing. At this level there is no guess involved, and there is a danger of the illusion of understanding. Nevertheless, even this level of reflection often encourages the person to continue talking and to clarify meaning.

A somewhat better reflection is to rephrase what the person said, without going much beyond it. The usual method is to find a synonym for a key word in the person's statement, and substitute in the synonym on reflection.

Client: I'm not sure why I'm here.  
Counselor: You're not sure why you're here. (Repetition)  
You're wondering why you're here. (Rephrase)

A more complex reflection, the *paraphrase* goes beyond simple rephrase, and makes a guess as to the yet-unspoken meaning. One way to think about this is *hypothesis-testing* about the person's meaning. Another way to think about paraphrase is *continuing the paragraph*, guessing what might be the *next* statement that follows from what the person has said.

Client: I'm not sure why I'm here.  
Counselor: You're uncertain why you came here. (Rephrase)  
This is something new for you. (Paraphrase)  
You're not sure what to expect. (Paraphrase)  
You're wondering if it was a good idea. (Paraphrase)  
Being here makes you nervous. (Paraphrase)

Sometimes *metaphor* or *simile* can be an effective paraphrase, particularly if you draw on images to which the person relates.

Client: I'm not sure why I'm here.  
Counselor: It's kind of like walking into a new building and not knowing your way around. (Simile)  
You're in the dark about what you're doing here. (Metaphor)

Note that all of these are statements rather than questions, and all are guesses about the possible meaning of what the person said.

#### *A reflection helps the person continue exploring*

Here is the test of a good reflection. If the person continues with the line of exploration, going a little farther or deeper to explain his or her meaning, it was OK. If the person stops, changes the subject, or backs away from what was previously said, it may not have been a good reflection.

Notice that there is no penalty for “missing,” for guessing wrongly about what the person meant. If it’s a good reflective listening statement but incorrect, people usually just continue on by explaining what they did mean. Right or wrong, either way you learn more by offering a reflection.

The style of MI relies heavily on accurate empathy. As a rule of thumb, you should be offering two to three reflective listening statements for each question you ask. To do so, avoid asking two or three questions in a row. Ask one good question, then reflect, reflect, reflect.

### **Open Questions for Evoking and Exploring Spirituality**

So what constitutes a good question? A first general guideline is to ask open rather than closed questions. Open questions are those that give the person plenty of room to move in constructing a reply. Closed questions have short answers, like yes or no, fencing in the possible responses. Examples of closed questions are:

Do you believe in God?  
Did you grow up in a religious family?  
How many brothers and sisters do you have?  
How often do you pray?  
Have you ever fasted?

It’s not wrong to ask closed questions. Sometimes you do need to get a specific piece of information, which is the function of a closed question, but there are also some problems with closed questions.

1. They tend to close people down. Ask very many closed questions, and your client may feel interrogated. Closed questions can elicit defensiveness, whereas open questions give people more room to move, more freedom to explore.
2. Closed questions, when used beyond moderation, imply an expert role. They give the impression that if you can just ask enough questions, then you will have the diagnosis, the answer. This is the process that one expects when visiting a physician – to answer a series of mostly closed questions, leading to an expert diagnosis and treatment. Asking closed questions, particularly at the beginning of a session, quickly sets up a *docere* pattern of communication.
3. Because they elicit short answers, closed questions subtly tip the balance of communication toward your doing most of the talking, which is just the opposite of what is desirable in spiritual evocation.

Asking open questions tends to have the opposite effect. Open questions challenge people to reflect, to explore. Answering a closed question requires not only content, but also some processing and organization of information. You therefore learn not only facts, but also something of how the person organizes meaning. Open questions soften your expert role, honoring people’s own expertise

regarding themselves and fostering a more collaborative relationship. They also give you, the facilitator, more flexibility about directions in which to move. Within all that the person offers in response to open questions, you intuit and choose where to explore.

In considering what open questions to ask, it is helpful to have an organizing framework to guide your exploration. You may well prefer another, but I have found a structure proposed by Paul Pruyser to be particularly helpful here {Pruyser, 1976 #191}. It centers around seven key themes in understanding a person's spirituality, seven broad areas that can be fruitful to explore.

I hasten to emphasize, as Pruyser did, that these are not meant to be authoritative categories, to be slavishly explored with each and every person. The purpose in spiritual evocation is not to construct a comprehensive map of the individual's spiritual personality, but rather to foster spiritual growth. Don't misappropriate a medical model here, that you complete a check-up, arrive at a diagnosis, and prescribe a treatment. Neither is an expert personality assessment model the way to go: that you will evaluate the structure and malformations of the individual's spirituality and then know how to proceed with curative or at least ameliorative therapy. In spiritual evocation, direction arises from the interaction of your facilitation skills with the person's own inner wisdom, from the meeting of two human persons in the presence of God.

Pruyser's seven spiritual themes are thus possible content to explore through open questions. Some may prove to be unfruitful avenues with the particular person sitting with you, while others may bear rich fruit. Here are the seven themes. I have recast them somewhat, and have highlighted core human experiences corresponding to each, but they are fundamentally as Pruyser proposed them. If the person does not relate to theological language, asking about the related core human experience will often open up the broader spiritual topic.

What about using the name of God in your interview? Pruyser observed that "No God talk is needed in the . . . interview, although there should be no ban on it" (p. 63). Many people will use a name of God to describe the Holy, but there are also non-theistic religions and spiritual frames of reference. You are likely to learn early in the interview whether the person uses God language, and can adjust your interview accordingly.

**1. Awareness of the Holy.** Spirituality involves a search for the sacred, the transcendent, and one's relationship to it. What, then, does the person regard with reverence as sacred? For what does this person make significant sacrifice, or would be willing to do so? To what, if anything, does this individual acknowledge dependence and subjugation? To what does the person ascribe ultimate worth? Here one also encounters idolatry, the investment of ultimate worth in that which is material or ephemeral.

A core spiritual experience to explore here is that of awe, reverence, or unspeakable joy. This is a common component of mystical experience and spiritual transformation {Miller, 2001 #192}. When and how has this person felt awe or bliss?

**2. Providence.** Whatever the person's conception of the Holy, how does he or she understand its disposition or intentions? Is God (or the universe, the world, a Higher Power) a good and friendly reality, or dark and punishing, or removed and indifferent? What or whom do they trust? What is expected of them, and what does God (or the world) owe them? In what do they hope? Where (if at all) do they see light and promise? What happens after death?

A core experience to explore here is benevolence. When have they deeply felt benevolent intentions – toward them, or their own toward others? When and whom have they deeply trusted?

**3. Faith.** The focus here is not necessarily on “a faith,” a particular religion or creed, although certainly this can be important. Rather, to what is the person committed? What does he or she have faith in, believe in? To what extent does the person feel secure and anchored, versus adrift? How inclined is the person to encounter and explore new ideas and perspectives? Or does the person seem closed down, with little freedom to move? What, in Tillich's language, is the person's ultimate concern, or ground of being?

A core experience here is deep security. This is not to be confused with certitude, the absence of doubt. Rather in the midst of life's storms, has the person still felt in some sense safe, grounded? A related experience is the courage of commitment, of devotion to something larger than the self.

**4. Gratitude.** What is the person's experience of being blessed (or cursed)? For what is she or he grateful? Is there a sense of sufficiency, of having “enough” (in material goods, recognition, relationships, love) or a tone of deprivation, entitlement, and hunger for more? Has the person “earned” and deserved that which he or she has? There is, of course, the opposite stance of inability to accept grace, of ultimate undeservingness.

A core experience here is unmerited grace. When has the person needed and experienced forgiveness? When has the person extended forgiveness, and why? When have they been blessed? Related is the experience of contentment, of *dayenu* – enough – to be satisfied with what one has.

**5. Repentance.** To what extent does the person take responsibility for his or her own actions and circumstances? Again there are two extremes. At one, the person experiences excessive remorse and responsibility. At the other, the person perceives little or no responsibility for adversity, and assumes a victim role. At issue is conscience, the self-monitoring and self-dissatisfaction that lead to recognition of a need for change.

Core experience in this domain includes remorse, regret, contrition – normal human displeasure with self in reaction to actual or perceived guilt.

**6. Connection.** In what ways, if at all, does the person feel connected to fellow human beings, to humanity in general, or to all of creation? At the low end is a dog-eat-dog individualism,

a sense of being isolated, estranged, disconnected from or in competition with others. Higher levels of experienced inter-connectedness and interdependence are found in the communal responsibility of Judaic *Shalom*, and the mystical experience of oneness with all of humanity or the universe.

Core experiences in this domain include caring for others and being cared for, reverence for life, and union.

**7. Vocation.** Finally, what is the person's sense of purpose in life? Is there something that God wants from him or her, or from all human beings? What is it that the person hopes or is called to do with his or her life?

Core experiences in this domain include calling or sense of belonging with particular tasks, talent, satisfaction (or dissatisfaction/restlessness) with how time is spent, and a sense of meaning and purpose (or lack thereof) in one's life.

**Table 1**

**Some Spiritual Themes, Core Experiences, and Avenues for Exploration**

Pruyser's Themes	Core Spiritual Experiences	Possible Open Questions for Exploration
Awareness of the Holy	Awe Reverence Bliss, Joy	What do you regard as sacred or holy? What gives you a sense of awe or wonder? For what/whom are you willing to make significant sacrifices? When in your life have you felt a deep sense of joy?
Providence	Benevolence Trust Hope	What do you imagine God is like? What image do you have about what happens after death? What or whom do you trust? What gives you hope?
Faith	Deep security Safety Courage Commitment	To what/whom are you most committed in life? How safe do you feel in your life? What or whom do you believe in, have faith in? What things are you anxious about?
Gratitude	Grace Blessing Forgiveness Contentment	For what are you most grateful? When in your life have you felt truly blessed? When has it been hard for you to forgive someone? When have you experience forgiveness from someone?
Repentance	Remorse Regret Contrition	In what ways could you be a better person? What things in your life have you regretted? When have you felt guilty or ashamed? When have you seen a need for change in yourself and done it?
Connection	Belonging Caring Being loved Union	In what ways do you feel connected to other people? Where do you feel at home, like you belong? Whom do you care for? Who cares for you?
Vocation	Meaning Purpose Calling	How do you understand your purpose in life? How do you spend your time? Why? What do you want to do with the years of your life?

## Asking Questions that Foster Movement

Another attribute of good spiritual evocation questions is that they elicit from the person openness and movement toward spiritual growth. Consider the following open questions. Which seem to you to be good questions, by this criterion?

1. What do you hope may happen as you explore your spirituality?
2. Why have you not been praying?
3. In what ways is it important for you to deepen your spirituality?
4. What do you think prevents you from committing time to spiritual disciplines?
5. If you did want to grow spiritually, what might you do more or less of?
6. What is it that you didn't like about religion when you were growing up?

From this perspective, the questions with odd numbers are the ones more likely to evoke answers that move the person toward spiritual openness and exploration. Answers to the even numbered questions, in contrast, are likely to focus on the person's reasons for not pursuing spiritual growth. Again, it is not *wrong* to ask such questions, and there may be good reason for doing so, but in general you are more likely to see movement rather than resistance if you ask evocative questions like the odd-numbered ones above.

What is the principle here? Remember that ambivalence is an obstacle that often immobilizes people from moving ahead with that which they know they ought to, even want to do. Ambivalence has two sides. The odd-numbered questions ask about one side of the person's spiritual ambivalence, whereas the even-numbered questions ask about the other (reluctant) side. In general, the more a person voices the pro-change side of ambivalence, the more likely change is to occur.

There are five general motivational themes to guide you in asking evocative open questions that foster movement. These have to do with the person's Desire, Ability, Reasons, Need, and Commitment to change (in this case, to putting time and focus into their spiritual development).

*Desire.* First, there is desire for change. Desire is reflected in verbs like want, wish, willing, hope, and like.

*Ability.* Second, there is language about one's ability to do what is needed. Perceived ability is expressed in words like can, could, and able. The phrase "I wish I could" bespeaks desire but lack of confidence in ability.

*Reasons.* Third, there are specific reasons or advantages for change, for putting time and effort into spiritual growth. Usually these have to do with particular desirable outcomes that the person expects to follow from the change, or the avoidance of undesirable outcomes.

*Need.* Fourth, motivation for change is reflected in statements of general need. “I’ve got to do something.” “I really *need* to be more disciplined about this.” “It’s very *important* to me to attend to my spiritual as well as physical health.”

These four, remembered via the acronym DARN, are the engines of change. Our research indicates, however, that change is less likely to happen unless one hears *commitment*.

*Commitment.* Here the person is expressing a verbal intention, commitment, or promise to do something. There are many ways of expressing this, and they vary in strength. Weak (but nonetheless important) commitments include, “I’ll think about it,” “I’ll consider it,” or “I’ll try.” The latter of these hints at doubt as to *ability*. Like “I wish I could,” the phrase “I’ll try” bespeaks some willingness, but a lack of confidence. Stronger commitment is expressed in phrases like, “I promise,” “I guarantee,” and simply “I will.”

Our research indicates that the more people explore Desire, Ability, Reasons and Need, the closer they move to making a commitment and trying out a change. So what are some open questions that you might ask in order to explore these sources of motivation? Here are some examples:

**Desire**           What would you like to be different in your spiritual life a year from now?  
Tell me more about this feeling you have of wanting to be closer to God.  
What would you be willing to try in order to deepen your spirituality?  
If you had three wishes for your spiritual life, what would they be?  
What do you hope will happen through our work together?  
Which of these do you think you might enjoy the most?

**Ability**           Of these different tools that we’ve discussed, which seem most possible for you?  
Tell me what you’ve done in the past that worked for you spiritually.  
What makes you think that you can stick with this? How would you do it?  
What could you do if your mind starts to wander?  
How confident are you that this is right for you?

**Reasons**         What might be some of the good things about practicing meditation?  
Why would you want to spend more time in prayer?  
What do you think you might learn from fasting?  
You decided to sign up for this study. What were your reasons?  
How might this change you for the better?

**Need**             How important is it to you to deepen your spiritual life?  
What is it that you need to do?  
What do you think you have to do?

**Commitment**     So what have you decided to do?  
What do you intend to do to make that happen?  
Will you do that this week? (A closed question, but OK here)

What are you going to do?  
What do you plan to do?  
What are you prepared to do?  
What are you ready to do this week?

In general, explore DARN elements first, rather than asking for commitment too early. As your work progresses, you will develop a sense of when and what the person is ready to commit to, to do.

## **Responding to Motivational Statements**

When the person offers a statement that bespeaks motivation for change, how should you respond? First and foremost, reflect it back to the person in order to reinforce it. The person hears herself or himself first say it, and then hears your reflection of it. Remember to follow up with reflection rather than moving right into another question. The purpose of the open question is to open up a theme of motivation for change, and once it's open your task is to develop it. Usually the best way to do this is to reflect, listen to what the person says next, and reflect. Follow the person's line of thought, feeling and experience. Question, reflect, reflect, reflect.

There are other ways, too, to help the person keep exploring a self-motivational theme. You can ask for elaboration:

*In what ways* do you think you would feel closer to God?  
How might you do that?  
What is it about meditation that appeals to you?

You can also ask for specific examples:

Tell me about a time when you felt particularly close to God.  
What have you done in the past that seemed to work for you?  
What do you already know about meditation?

Remember that the focus of these questions is on the positive, on that which motivates the person to grow spiritually and to devote the time and energy needed to do so. This is not to ignore the other side of ambivalence. In fact, when reluctance arises it is wise also to acknowledge and reflect it. But continuing to reflect, explore, elaborate, and gather examples of the person's reluctance is generally to encourage status quo. It's a bit like reflective listening with a person who is quite depressed. Just listening to and reflecting a person's depression, feelings of worthlessness, hopelessness, suicidal thoughts, and sadness isn't particularly helpful. It only digs the person in deeper, as they talk themselves further into depression.

Another important response to a person's self-motivational statements is to summarize them. As you hear statements of desire, ability, reasons and need for spiritual growth or for a particular spiritual discipline, remember them (write them down if you need to), and periodically offer a

collection of what you've heard thus far. Think of these desire, ability, reason, and need themes as flowers that you are collecting, and from time to time you offer the bouquet back to the person to inhale.

So you've been feeling kind of adrift, a bit lost, and you hope that grounding yourself in some spiritual disciplines might give you a kind of anchor. You've also found in the past that when you have meditated, you gain a sense of inner peace and have more patience with your kids. You also said that you've never really read scripture carefully, and you think that you might find some helpful perspectives there. What else?

This, "What else?" is an invitation to continue giving you flowers, adding items to the list of motivations for change. Continue collecting flowers until you sense that you have at least the most important ones, then perhaps switch to asking about a different DARN category.

In time, you will come to a place where you sense that the person is ready to move on, to talk about specific steps to take. Perhaps their reluctance seems to subside, or they begin to ask about what they might do. Sometimes readiness appears as a time of quiet, a sense of peacefulness or resolution. At this point, test the waters of commitment.

A good way to test the person's readiness for Preparation or Action is first to offer a grand summary of all the self-motivational themes you have heard. You might introduce this with a transitional statement like this:

Well, let me tell you what I've heard so far as you have talked about your reasons for coming here. I'll try to pull together the things you've told me, and let me know if I've missed anything . . . . .

There follows a bouquet, a summary of the person's motivations for change. When you reach the end, ask if you got it right, and for anything that you missed.

With the grand bouquet as a background, you then ask a key question. The essence of a key question is, "What next?" Rather than prescribing what the person should do, you instead ask them to take the natural next step. Some examples:

- What are you thinking about doing at this point?
- What might you do to make that happen?
- What do you want to do?
- So given all this, what are you going to do?
- What do you plan to do?
- What are you prepared to do?
- What are you ready to do?

You will notice that these are all open questions about commitment, as discussed above. Commitment is what you are trying out with this transition. What is the person ready, willing and

able to do? If you meet a wall of reluctance, you asked for commitment too soon; go back to exploring DARN motivations for change. If, however, the person expresses some willingness to prepare for and take action, it's time to negotiate what that will be.

## **Giving Information and Advice**

*1. Permission.* Particularly as the interview progresses toward specific action, you are likely to be asked for your opinion and advice, for your professional expertise. The general principle in offering information and advice is to do so *with permission*. If the person asks for your opinion, you have permission to give it. If the person has not explicitly asked for information or advice, then you should ask permission before offering it.

Would it be all right if I suggested some things that have worked for other people?

There is one thing I'm concerned about with your plan. May I tell you?

I remember something that was written about this a few centuries ago. Is it OK if I take a minute to tell it to you?

I wonder if it might be helpful to practice this right here. Would that be OK?

*2. Ask-Provide-Ask.* A second good practice in providing advice or information is to make it a two-way process. The formula here is Ask-Provide-Ask. In the case of information, you might first ask what the person already knows about the topic. For example:

Client: How do people pray?

Counselor: There are many ways. What kinds of prayer do you already know about?

Client: How do people make time for meditation?

Counselor: I wonder what ideas you have for how you might make time?

As usual, after asking an open question follow up with reflective listening and "what else" eliciting. Sometimes after the person responds thoroughly to this asking, it is no longer necessary for you to provide input. Usually, though, the next step is for you to provide the information or advice that was requested.

There are actually quite a few different ways to pray, and chances are you'll find that some are better for you than others. Let me tell you about five styles in particular that are the most common for American adults. . . .

It really does help to find a regular time for meditation, to build it into your schedule like brushing your teeth or exercising. It's pretty common for busy people to feel like there's no place to fit it in, but I can suggest some things that have worked for other people. . .

Then ask for the person's response to what you have provided. Ask-Provide-Ask.

Of these five styles that I've described, which ones sound most appropriate for you? What do you think?

Those are just a few ways that people have fit meditation into busy lives. How do you think you might do it?

3. *Menu of Options*. Finally, when offering suggestions it is usually better to provide several options instead of suggesting only one. When a counselor makes a single suggestion, a normal response is to think about (and say) what's wrong with it. When you offer several suggestions you provide a different mental set: to choose among them the one(s) that seem most appropriate.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Practicalities**

Spiritual evocation begins with this process of exploring the person's spirituality, hopes, and goals. This process may well occupy a full session or two, in which your primary task is to elicit the person's own motivations for spiritual growth. The principal tools for this eliciting are to ask open questions, listen reflectively, provide support, and offer summaries of self-motivational material. The overall purpose of this process is to understand and strengthen the person's motivation to work with you in spiritual direction.

As you move toward an action plan, you will be drawing upon and offering a menu of disciplines, time-tested tools for spiritual seekers. Over the course of your work together, help the person choose some of these disciplines and practice them between (and sometimes within) your sessions. Normally this process of introducing disciplines and negotiating a between-session practice plan would begin in your second session. If the person seems ready, however, you may begin this even in the first session. On the other hand, if the person does not seem ready to proceed, it is not necessary to negotiate a practice plan in the second session. The number, selection and timing of disciplines are flexible, and you should use your discretion as to how best to proceed.

The counseling style that you maintain throughout spiritual direction should be the collaborative, respectful style of spiritual evocation described above. In any particular session, reflections should outnumber your questions by at least two to one, and most of your questions should be open questions.

#### **Session Content**

Once you begin practice plans, each and every session should include the following elements: (1) inquiring about the person's experience in practicing spiritual disciplines, (2) problem-solving (in the counseling style of spiritual evocation) for obstacles that the person is encountering, and (3) negotiation of a specific practice plan that the person agrees to pursue prior to your next meeting. More general exploration of spiritual issues, within the style of spiritual evocation, is permissible in sessions.

Sessions should not include counseling interventions other than spiritual evocation. Your contract with the client is to provide spiritual direction, and does not encompass therapy to address clinical problems such as depression, addiction or anxiety.

#### **Session Mechanics**

All spiritual evocation sessions will be conducted in a private professional space, either at Turquoise Lodge (first 1-2 sessions) or in professional offices. Do not conduct sessions at your home. Two offices will be available at CASAA for scheduling through Mary O'Leary. CASAA

office space is generally available between 8:00 am and 7:00 pm Monday through Friday, when security staff are on duty. You must complete your work and exit the building no later than 7:00 pm.

All sessions are to be tape recorded from beginning to end, except if a client requests that the tape recorder be turned off for a period of time during a session. At the first session, remind the client, in your own words, that tape recording is a routine part of the study, and that tapes are used both for research purposes and to ensure that spiritual direction is being delivered in accordance with the protocol. This should not be a surprise because it is specified in the consent form that they signed, and we will review this condition in the consent interview.

We will provide you with a tape recorder to use in audiotaping sessions. Please ensure, given the space that you are using, that the tape recorder and microphone are placed so that both your voice and the client's will be clearly audible on the tape. We will also provide the audiotapes that you need. Use one audiotape per session, and on each tape clearly mark the Participant ID Number, the Session Number, and the date.

After each and every session, complete a Session Record Form. Please handle and store all tapes and forms with utmost security in order to protect client confidentiality until you pass these materials to Mary. The loss of an audiotape would be a serious breach of confidentiality. Mary will maintain chain-of-custody records for each audiotape from the time she receives it from you until the tape is destroyed.

### **Timing of Sessions**

You may meet up to twelve times with a client for spiritual direction. From the date of your first session, all sessions must be completed within a period of four months. Sessions will normally be about an hour in length, although you have discretion in this. You also have discretion as to the number of sessions to complete within the 4-month window. If you and your client judge that you have completed your work together in fewer than 12 sessions, that is fine.

### **Missed Sessions**

It will happen from time to time that a participant misses a scheduled session with you. If this occurs with a particular client, provide a written card with the next appointment time and/or a reminder call on the day before the scheduled sessions. Normal procedures when a client does not appear for a session are:

1. Telephone the client 15 minutes into the scheduled hour, to reschedule the session. Brief discussion by telephone is OK, but do not attempt to conduct a session by phone.
2. If you do not reach the client by phone at that time, write a brief hand-written note to be mailed to the client, expressing in a caring way that (1) you're sorry they missed a session, (2) you want to keep working together, and (3) you will call to reschedule. If you already

have a standing weekly appointment time, you can just indicate that you look forward to seeing the person the next week at the same time.

3. If you did not reach the client by phone at the time of appointment, continue to call until you reach the person to confirm your next appointment, even if you have a regular scheduled appointment time.

### **Invoicing**

In order to be reimbursed (\$50 per completed session), fill in the standard invoice form provided and give it to Mary, who will copy and submit it for UNM processing. Normal processing time at UNM is four weeks.

### **Responding to Emergencies**

You are unlikely to encounter a clinical emergency in the course of your work with participants in this study. Should it happen, however, here is what to do.

If there is a medical emergency (e.g., chest pains), call 911. On CASAA phones dial 9911 (9 for outside line). At CASAA, the security officer (usually Franki Totten from 10:00 am to 7:00 pm) may also be able to help.

If you are concerned that a participant may require psychiatric hospitalization (e.g., acutely suicidal) call my (Dr. Miller's) emergency line (350-6358). If I do not answer, try my home phone (265-3318). If you are unable to contact me, call the Psychiatric Emergency Service at the UNM Mental Health Center (2600 Marble NE) and ask for the psychiatric resident on duty (272-2920). The Psychiatric Emergency Service is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. At CASAA, the security officer (usually Franki Totten from 10am to 7pm) may also be able to help (925-2398. From CASAA phones, it is just 5-2398.).

You will receive a tour of CASAA to acquaint you with the office arrangement, telephones, and the security officer's location. For an outside line from CASAA telephones, press "9" and then dial the number. There is no second dial tone after the 9, just continue with the local number.

### **Intoxication**

Again, it is highly unlikely to occur, but if a client comes to an appointment obviously intoxicated, the standard procedure is to reschedule the session rather than proceeding. In the interest of the person's safety, if the person has driven alone, encourage him or her to call a relative or take a taxicab rather than driving. If necessary and possible, offer to pre-pay the cab fare within Albuquerque. Obtain a receipt from the cab driver and we will reimburse you. Never drive the person in your own vehicle or ride along. At CASAA, the security officer (usually Franki Totten from 10am to 7pm) may also be able to help.

## **Chapter 5**

## **The First Session(s)**

### **Candle**

A simple symbol is used to signal that the focus of spiritual evocation sessions differs from prior counseling or psychotherapy that the person may have experienced. This symbol is a lighted candle, which is to be present in all sessions. Because some people are sensitive to scented agents, use an unscented candle. Normal procedure is to light the candle in the presence of the client, marking the beginning of your session. This may be done after an initial period of small-talk and greeting. Extinguish the candle after the person has left.

### **Structuring Statement**

At the beginning of the first session, offer a structuring statement to give your client clear expectations about your work together. You should complete this before lighting the candle at the first session. Here are some key points to cover:

1. We can meet for up to 12 sessions during the next four months.
2. All of our meetings will be individual and confidential, and they are free of charge.
3. Our first meeting or two will be here at Turquoise Lodge, and after that we will meet in professional offices at a Center near the airport.
4. Our sessions will vary in length, but normally will be for an hour or less.
5. As indicated in the consent form you signed, we audiotape record all sessions. This is done for research purposes. If, however, there is any point at which you want to discuss something off tape, we can turn the recorder off for that part of a session.
6. What we talk about here is strictly confidential, and we carefully protect your anonymity and privacy. The director of this study obtained a special certificate of confidentiality that even protects your records from subpoena by any court.
7. If I do my job well, I will not do most of the talking. This is not about my telling you what to do. Rather I will be listening quite a lot to your own spiritual experience.
8. Our focus here is on spirituality, which is part of every person. I am not here to preach or convert, or to promote any particular religion. I accept whatever your own background and experience is.
9. When we start each session, if it is all right with you, I will light a candle as a symbol of . . .  
Xx How do you say this?
10. Most of the important experience will probably not happen during our sessions, but in your daily life before and after. Spiritual growth is a bit like exercise or learning to play a musical instrument. It takes time, and there are things to do. Over the course of our work together, I will share with you a variety of things that you could try out in your daily life in between our sessions, and afterward. None of these is required, however; it's completely up to you.

After your structuring statement, ask, "How does that sound to you? What questions do you have that I can answer before we get started?" [Not, "Do you have any questions?"]

Ask permission, if the client has not already given it, to light the candle, and do so. If for some reason the client does not give permission to use the candle, it is OK not to do so.

### Open Motivational Interviewing

The rest of the first session should consist primarily of motivational interviewing with regard to spirituality. The rhythm here is to ask an evocative open question and then listen, reflect, follow. Your goal is to understand, at a beginning level, the person’s spiritual (and religious, if applicable) journey in life thus far, as well as his or her spiritual values, hopes and aspirations for the future.

Remember to listen in particular for “flowers” – material that reflects an openness to, hunger (desire or need) for, or reasons and ability to pursue spiritual growth. Reflect and affirm these when you hear them. Offer periodic bouquet summaries of the flowers the person has offered, and then ask for more.

Also listen carefully to and reflect material from the other side of the client’s ambivalence about spiritual growth: lack of desire or need, reasons for reluctance, perceived lack of ability or potential. An empathic reflection is usually the appropriate response, and these reluctances (leaves?) can be incorporated into your bouquets. Remember, though, that a bouquet should emphasize the flowers and not the leaves. The leaves and thorns are there as background in the context of flowers.

Here is an example of how an initial session might unfold.

F designates the spiritual counselor, director or facilitator

C designates the client

The right hand column has commentary on what is happening. When numbers appear, they indicate reflections that are simple repetition (1), rephrase (2), paraphrase (3), or continuing the paragraph (4).

F	So is it all right with you, then, for me to light this candle?	Asking permission, giving the client control
C	Sure.	The candle is lighted
F	What I plan to do for the rest of this session is ask a few questions and mostly listen to your own background and experience with regard to your spirituality. Since I don’t really know anything about you at this point, let’s start very broad, and you can decide how to help me understand the unique person you are. So if you’re willing, tell me the story of your own spiritual journey so far, maybe starting with your growing	A mini-structuring statement to signal what’s next  Asking permission, and an open question.

	up years. We have plenty of time.	
C	Well, God was a big topic with my Mom when I was growing up. She always wanted us to go to church and be religious and all.	
F	That was important to her.	2
C	Yeah. She was always praying and quoting Scripture to us. It was OK, I guess.	
F	It was OK with you in some ways. . .	2
C	For a while, yes. My sister was more into it than I was. But when I got older, like a teenager, I just chucked the whole thing.	
F	Religion didn't make sense to you any more.	3
C	I don't know about making sense. It's just that I got interested in other things, and kind of forgot about religion. It wasn't for me.	
F	You were changing, and other things became important.	2
C	Yeah, well I joined a gang, and they definitely weren't into religious stuff.	
F	It wasn't cool.	4
C	Right. We were into like turf and chicks. And drugs, lots of drugs.	
F	So God kind of took a back seat.	4
C	Yeah, I guess. I just didn't think about it much.	
F	About God	2
C	Yeah.	
F	Well let me ask you this. You've been talking about God, and I wonder, what do you imagine God is like?	Open question - Providence
C	I don't know. Bad ass old man, maybe.	
F	Old and mean.	2
C	And big and tough. Not somebody you want to mess	

	with.	
F	Not exactly the friendly type. Somebody you don't want to get too close to.	3
C	For sure. Scary old guy who's into revenge.	
F	This is how you imagined God as a child.	3 a guess
C	And maybe now, too. I don't think about him much though.	
F	Mostly you want to stay away from God, and still sometimes you think about him.	3
C	Sometimes.	
F	And what are the pictures, or the ideas or feelings that come to you when you do think about God?	Open question - Providence
C	Bad feelings. Somebody who's gonna get me. Somebody behind me, coming at me.	
F	A pretty creepy feeling.	
C	Yeah. I don't like to think about it.	
F	And still, you decided to come here, which suggests to me that there is also another side to this, something you're hungry for or looking for. What might that be?	Open question Evocative - Desire
C	I've been to AA, and they say that praying and spiritual stuff is important in recovery. The counselors here say that, too.	
F	And that's something you want, to recover from the troubles you've had.	4
C	Damn right. I didn't come in here to go back out and start using again.	Change talk - for abstinence
F	You're hoping to stay away from drugs when you leave here, and it seems like your spirituality has something to do with it.	3
C	That's what they say.	
F	You're not too sure.	4

C	Oh, I think they're right. They seem to know what they're talking about, and some of those guys have been clean for a long time.	
F	In AA	4
C	Yeah, and here, too. Some of these counselors used to be on the street. They kicked it long ago.	
F	And you like what you see in them. You want some of that for yourself.	4
C	I do! I want whatever they've got.	Change talk
F	And it seems to you like what they've got has something to do with spirituality. So let me ask you this. If you wanted to follow this spiritual path that you're seeing, how might you go about it? What things might you do?	4 Open Question Evocative - Ability
C	Go to meetings. They say you've got to do that. And pray, I guess. Ask God for help.	Change talk - spirituality
F	God - that bad ass old man.	3 Linking reflection
C	Yeah, well he's a higher power for sure. He's the man.	
F	Pretty powerful.	2
C	You want to get it done, you go to the man.	
F	And one way you could do that is by praying. What else might you do?	2 Open Question
C	I don't know. I'm not even very good at praying.	
F	What is that like for you, praying?	Open question
C	I don't really know what to say. I feel bad for all the stuff I've done, and I figure God isn't going to listen to me.	
F	God only listens to people who do good.	3
C	Well, I don't know about that. People at the bottom, God listens to them, too, sometimes.	
F	At the bottom, when you have nowhere else to turn. Like Bill W.	4
C	The AA guy? I don't know much about him. But yeah, if	

	you're really sincere, I think God listens.	
F	So praying sincerely, that's one thing that you might do, and you're pretty stumped about anything else, except maybe going to meetings.	Summary reflection
C	What else can people do?	Envisioning
F	You're curious. There are quite a few ways that people have found helpful over the centuries, and I'll be glad to tell you about them. That could be part of our time together. Do you think you'd be willing to try out a few?	3 Low-commitment closed question
C	I guess so.	Commitment (low)
F	For me, the question would be why I should go to the trouble of trying new things. What do I have to gain? What do you hope might happen in our spiritual work together? What is it that you want?	Open Question Evocative - Desire
C	Some peace, maybe? Drugs numb me out and make the pain stop for a while.	
F	You're in a lot of pain now.	2
C	Not physically, no. Well, some. But I mean the pain in my head. Bad shit. I don't even like to talk about it.	
F	Bad feelings, memories maybe.	3
C	For sure. I didn't sleep much last night.	
F	The pain is right here and now for you, keeping you awake. Normally you might take drugs to numb it, and one thing you hope that you might find on this path is some peace inside yourself, some rest.	3
C	Rest, yeah.	
F	You're really tired.	2
C	Tired of a lot of things.	
F	You want your life to be different, and one piece of that is to find some peace within yourself. I understand that, and believe me, it's possible. Very possible. What else?	3 Lending some hope
C	I just ask myself what it's all for. What good am I?	

F	You'd like to feel some meaning in your life, some positive purpose.	3 Reframe
C	It feels pretty dark inside right now.	
F	It would be nice to feel some light in there.	3
C	Light. Yes.	
F	Kind of like a flower opening up in the morning, letting in the sunlight.	3 Simile
C	Yeah. I like that. I saw some crocuses outside today.	
F	Winter is ending.	3
C	Maybe so.	

The facilitator is collecting flowers, seeds of motivation for spiritual growth. This process would normally continue for most or all of the first session, at the end of which you offer a summary, a full bouquet that you offer back to the client. It might sound like this.

Let me see if I can draw together the things you've told me today, and you let me know if I leave out something important. I appreciate your helping me to understand your past and present with regard to spirituality, which will be very useful as we think together about the future.

You grew up in a fairly religious family, and that was just part of your childhood. As you came into adolescence, though, you went off in a different direction, and kind of lost interest in religion. You thought of God as powerful but cruel, and someone from whom you'd rather keep your distance. So far so good? (Client nods)

So now you're here in treatment, and what you really want is to have a new life, to stay away from drugs. People in the program tell you that spirituality is an important part of recovery, and you're kind of inspired by some of these people who have been in recovery for a long time. You want what they have. That's one reason you signed up for this study. You would like for the pain in your head to quiet down, and to feel some peace inside -- not only peace, but a sense of meaning in your life, a sense of positive purpose. You're not too sure how to get there. Besides going to AA meetings, which you've started doing, the first thing that occurs to you is to pray. You said you're not too good at praying, and that God might not listen, and you also think that God does listen when people are sincere. You're curious, too, about other things that people do to grow spiritually, and you liked that image of a flower opening up to sunlight. Maybe that's a good way to think about our time together.

What have I missed?

When the client affirms your summary, you have a choice to make. Should you test the waters with regard to readiness? If you have been hearing some signs of readiness, you could try a key question right after this summary. One possible form of this is the “importance ruler”:

So let me ask you this. How important is spiritual growth to you at this point? On a scale from zero to ten, where zero is not at all important, and ten is extremely important, how important would you say it is?

And the follow-up question is:

And why are you at a \_\_\_\_\_ and not zero? Why is this important to you?

Other possible key questions would be:

So what are you thinking at this point about your spiritual growth? or

What about putting some time into this over the next few months? or

How willing are you to work together over the next few months, and to try some things in between our sessions to open up that flower a little?

### **Negotiated Practice Between Sessions**

If successful, the process of spiritual evocation does not happen primarily in your sessions with a client. The most important work will usually happen in between sessions, as the seeker practices spiritual disciplines and opens herself or himself to spiritual formation. It is important for clients to understand this. Your sessions together are not “treatments” that in themselves do what is needed. They are not like visits to a dentist, orthopedist or chiropractor to set things right. Rather, spiritual development happens through practice. Find an analogy to which your client can relate. For example, a piano teacher, golf coach, or personal fitness trainer can provide some helpful tips, but a few visits with such a guide are not beneficial in themselves. What makes the difference is putting what you learn into regular practice.

Also explain to your client that it is important to find what works for him or her. As with physical strength, there are many ways to go about improving one’s fitness. Although there are some commonly recommended methods such as regular walking, running, bicycling, or weight training, what matters is to find the routine that best fits each individual. This sets the stage to introduce a menu of spiritual practices, as described later.

Think carefully about how to describe practice between sessions. For many clients, words like “homework,” “assignment,” and “discipline” may have very negative connotations, with overtones of failure. Find out what skills the person has learned, and have he or she learned them. Depending on the person’s background, negotiated practice might be described as something to:

try    experience    practice    do    experiment with.

It can be thought of as an:

exercise    experience    experiment.

## Chapter 6

### A Typical Session

Here is the outline of a typical session of spiritual evocation, once you have finished the first phase that normally fill a session or two.. You have flexible discretion in conducting your sessions, but generally each session after the first one or two would follow this broad outline. The counseling style of motivational interviewing is to be maintained throughout your work with each client.

1. Light a candle to signify the beginning of your time together.
2. Invocation. Allow a short time of centering. A relatively neutral starting point is a period of silence, perhaps 30-60 seconds, focusing on the rhythm of breathing. Here is how you might introduce this:

*To begin, let me invite you to take just a quiet moment. If it's comfortable for you, close your eyes [to model, you close your own eyes at this point] and in silence just pay attention to your breath. Notice the air as you inhale and exhale. Do that for just a moment now.*

As you get to know each client, you may try a different form of invocation that is appropriate to the person's own background and preferences.

3. Check-in. This is a broad, open question asking how the client has been since your last visit, what has been happening, with focus on the person's spiritual life as appropriate. Here are a few examples:

*How have you been since our last visit?*

*What have you been experiencing since the last time we talked?*

*What has been happening this week, particularly in your spiritual life?*

Attend with reflective listening to what the client has to offer, listening especially for themes that may guide your work together. Explore particularly any spiritual material that the client offers by asking open (not closed) questions and following with reflections. There is a pitfall here, in that many clients would willingly spend the entire session recounting the details of their week to a good and sympathetic listener. Remember that the purpose of your time together is spiritual evocation, and it is your job to keep your sessions moving in this direction.

4. Check-back. The next step in most sessions is to check back on any negotiated practice. How did it go? What did the client experience? What were the good things and the not-so-good things about the practice(s)? What problems or obstacles did the client encounter? This deserves some time and focus, again through open questions and reflection. Ask permission before making suggestions or raising concerns.

5. Exploration. The check-back may point to broader spiritual themes to be explored. Listen for the broad themes described above in Table 1 (page 19) and consider avenues of exploration that are provided there. Again, adhere to the general counseling style of motivational interviewing.

6. Negotiation of Practice. Following from the client's experience with prior practice (check-back) and your spiritual exploration, negotiate specific steps or practices for the client to pursue. This is neither one-sided prescription ("Do this in the week ahead") nor completely unguided choice ("So what would you like to do this week?"), but something in between. You have a finite menu of spiritual practices on which to draw, as outlined below. Use the style of motivational interviewing in negotiating practice, including:

Open questions. What are the person's felt spiritual needs? What spiritual practices have been meaningful for her or him in the past?

Use of the menu. Use the bubble sheet (below) to describe a range of spiritual practices. To which of these does the person feel drawn? Which could be most meaningful, helpful, etc.? Why?

Reflective listening. Continue to use ample reflective listening, at least two reflections for each question you ask. Avoid the trap of relying heavily on questions, and evoke the person's own spirituality through reflection.

Direction. This is not open-ended nondirective counseling. Your contract and focus is on spiritual direction. If the person wanders off, gently bring him or her back to the task at hand, to focus on spiritual formation. This can be a difficult judgment call, because spirituality does encompass the whole person. It is so unusual and rewarding to have an attentive and accepting listener, that clients will be inclined to process details of their daily life, family relationships, history, etc. Sometimes these details are quite pertinent to spiritual formation, but at other times they are diversions from or even avoidance of spiritual exploration. Use your judgment to keep focused on spiritual direction.

7. Guidance. In exploring new spiritual disciplines, clients will need some guidance from you, right down to practical details (e.g., Where and when do I practice? Should I close my eyes? What if I start thinking about something else?). Some spiritual practices will be completely unfamiliar, and require description and guidance. Others will be more familiar, and you will explore the person's history and experience with them. Help the person leave your session with a clear understanding of what to do.

Ask permission before giving guidance or direction, and frame your advice as suggestion or recommendation.

Would it be all right if I recommended . . .

Could I describe for you . . . .  
Would you like to hear a little about . .  
May I make a suggestion?

One useful form of guidance is to help the client practice within your session. If meditation is being considered, for example, have the person try out the guidance you have given while still in the session, and discuss the person's experience, difficulties, etc. This is not applicable to all spiritual disciplines on the menu, but can be helpful with those that can be practiced within sessions.

8. Commitment. End this portion of your session by asking for commitment. Describe (or ask the client to describe) what spiritual practice the person has chosen, and work out the specific details of when, where and how. Ask if this is acceptable. Then ask some version of a commitment question, to which you are looking for a "Yes" answer. Commitment questions are action-focused. For example:

Will you do that this week?  
Is that what you're going to do?  
Do you intend to do that this week?  
Are you prepared to do that this week.

Commitment questions do not ask about desire, ability, reasons, or need, although these themes are related.

Is that what you want to do? (Desire)  
Can you do that? (Ability)  
Why do you want to do this? (Reasons)  
Is this what you need to do? (Need)

A "yes" answer to such questions is not really a commitment. The essence of a commitment question is "*Will* you do this?"

When people answer a commitment question, they do so with varying levels of commitment strength. "I will" is strong commitment. "I'll try" or "I guess so" also signal commitment, but at a much lower level. Here are some examples of committing language, ranging from higher (5) to lower commitment (1).

*Strength Levels of Committing Language*

5	4	3	2	1
I guarantee I will I promise I vow I shall I give my word I assure I dedicate myself I know	I am devoted to I pledge to I agree to I am prepared to I intend to I am ready to	I look forward to I consent to I plan to I resolve to I expect to I concede to I declare my intention to	I favor I endorse I believe I accept I volunteer I aim I aspire I propose I am predisposed I anticipate I predict I presume	I mean to I foresee I envisage I assume I bet I hope to I will risk I will try I think I will I suppose I will I imagine I will I suspect I will I contemplate I guess I will I wager I will see (about)

9. Closure. In closing a session, offer a summary reflection to gather and celebrate what has happened in the session, including what the client has committed to do in the coming week. Ask if the person has any questions, or anything else that needs to be discussed before you finish. Schedule your next meeting.

In sum, a typical session will include:

1. Candle lighting
2. Invocation
3. Check-in
4. Check-back
5. Exploration
6. Negotiation of Practice
7. Guidance
8. Commitment
9. Closure

## Chapter 7

### A Menu of Spiritual Practices

As indicated earlier, these guidelines are not intended to provide expertise in spiritual direction. Rather they describe a set of 13 disciplines that can be used in spiritual evocation, all of which have been widely described {Foster, 1998 #184} and xx (other citations from Vincentia et al.). For each of the disciplines, brief guidelines are provided for its use within the broader range of your expertise. Most of these are disciplines that are shared among world religions, and that can be used by people regardless of their particular beliefs. Most of the spiritual disciplines listed here can be practiced during a session of spiritual direction, and it is appropriate to do so.

#### Introducing the Menu

Early in your work together, usually in the second session, introduce the menu of spiritual practices. The general points to cover in your introduction are:

1. There is no single path in spiritual development. There are many practices that have been used for hundreds or thousands of years by people seeking spiritual growth.
2. You will decide what vehicles you want to use in your own journey. I don't know what is best for you.
3. What I can do is describe for you a variety of practices that people have used over the centuries in seeking to understand and develop their spirituality.

Use the bubble sheet to illustrate the menu of practices to be discussed. Start by asking if there are any that look familiar - practices with which the person have had experience at some point in his or her life. Rather than marching through the list, take some time to explore the spiritual practices with which your client is more familiar.

Clients often ask at this point what particular words mean. For example, "What do you mean by reflection?" or "What does reconciliation mean?" You should be ready to explain each of the 13 practices in your own words, and in clear and simple language. For example:

Reconciliation is the healing of a broken relationship. It could be your relationship with another person or with God. Reconciliation includes practices of forgiveness, confession, letting go of resentments, or making amends.

Clients may also misunderstand one or more of the practices listed, describing something other than what is meant. If this happens, listen to and honor what the person says, and then clarify what the practice means. For example:

Client: Meditation - that's one I do all the time. When I get up in the morning, while I'm having coffee, I think over that I need to do and plan out my day. I also like to read and think about things.

Counselor: You like to reflect on your day before it starts, and on things that you read. – to take some time and turn them over in your mind. That's a little different from what is meant by "meditation" here – in fact it's a little more like this practice of "reflection." Let me describe the difference . . .

After exploring those practices that are familiar to the client and listening to his or her experience with them, go on to other items on the bubble sheet, explaining each one at least briefly. Ask whether the person has ever experienced these, knows others who practice them, etc. Practice reflective listening to what your client offers.

After reviewing the menu, clarify that you will not be using all of these in your work together. Rather this is a menu from which the person can choose and try different practices. Then ask an open question about which of these feel right to the client. Some possible forms are:

Are there any of these to which you feel particularly drawn?

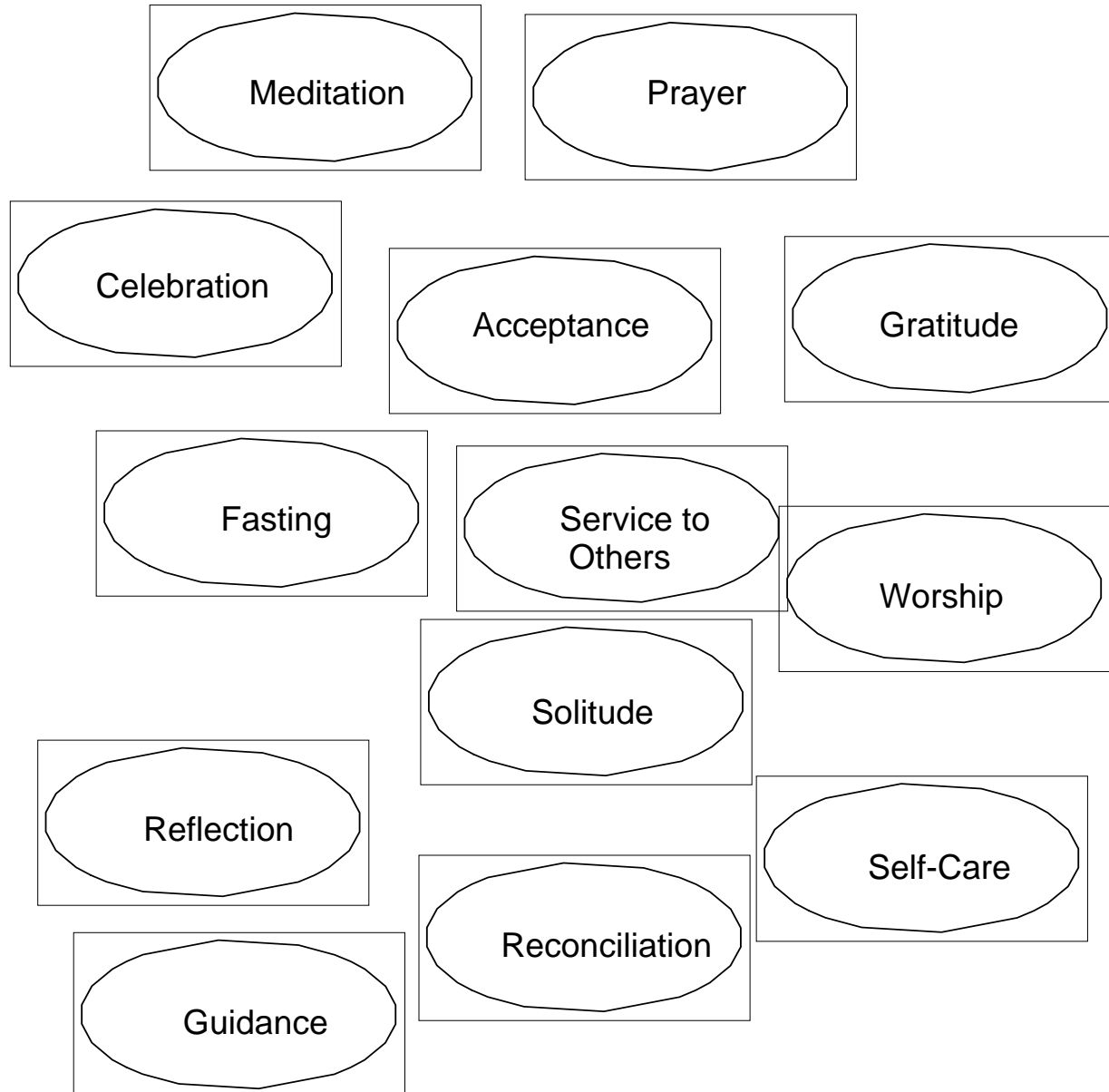
Which of these might be a good place to start?

As we've discussed these, which ones sound like they could be most helpful for you?

Which of these sound most comfortable or appropriate for you?

In subsequent sessions, you may use the bubble sheet again as you negotiate additional practices.

## Some Spiritual Practices



## 1. Meditation

“Meditation” and “contemplation” are sometimes used interchangeably. To complicate matters further, both terms are also used to refer to silent centering prayer, as well as to the practices described below as *reflection*. For purposes of spiritual evocation, we are using *meditation* to refer to practices of silent centering (including the various forms of silent prayer, transcendental meditation, etc.). The term *contemplation* is also reserved here for practices of silent centering, and thus is interchangeable with meditation. Another common use of these two terms, to refer to mindful and attentive awareness, is described below under *reflection*.

As with each of the spiritual practices, it is wise when introducing meditation to learn first what the person’s prior experience has been with this discipline, or what connotations the term “meditation” may have for this particular individual.

The mechanics of meditation are relatively simple, and have been widely taught outside spiritual contexts {Benson, 1990 #180}{Bien, 2003 #181}. The essential elements are:

- a quiet place away from demands and distractions
- a point of focus, at least initially
- releasing, rather than following the inner chatter of thoughts
- silent attention

*A quiet place.* Look for where there may already be quiet spaces in the person’s life, within which meditation can fit. These need not be times of sitting still. There may already be a regular space of running, walking, gardening or such wherein meditation could be practiced. For most people, however, a good starting point is sitting in a quiet place.

*A point of focus.* Particularly when people are first learning meditation, it is helpful to have a point of focus for attention. Common foci with eyes closed include one’s breathing or a word or sound. With eyes open, attention can be fixed on a particular point such as the flame of a candle or a sunset.

*Releasing.* Many things compete for attention during meditation. Primary among these are thoughts, the constant inner chatter of consciousness, but bodily sensations (such as pain) or external stimuli (such as sights and sounds) may also intrude. The key is to not focus on or follow these as they occur, but simply to observe and release them. No attempt is made to stop thoughts or other experiences from occurring. Thoughts invite us to follow them, but instead the meditator observes the thought pass by like a leaf on a stream and returns attention to the point of focus. With practice, the inner silence itself becomes the center of awareness.

*Silent Attention.* In Buddhist meditation, the usual intention is emptying of consciousness, an experience that is often associated with deep peacefulness and relaxation (Benson & Klipper, 1990).

Foster (1998) observed that in Christian context, this emptying is not a goal in itself, but rather it makes room for God, Christ and Holy Spirit to fill the person. The intention in this case is to open oneself to a Divine-human encounter, to listen. How people construe the purpose of meditation will vary, but the essential elements of practice are the same.

As with all of the disciplines, explore what your client's experience has been with this practice in the past. Has the person ever tried meditation? What ideas or associations does the person have to meditation? More generally, what does the person experience in silent aloneness? For those new to meditation, always practice in the office for a session or two before encouraging practice at home, so that you have the immediate opportunity to discuss the person's experience and to problem-solve obstacles that arise.

It can also be helpful to connect the practice of meditation to the person's daily experience. Where in the day might it be best to practice? A regular time and place can be helpful. Start with smaller periods of meditation: 5, 10, or 15 minutes. The length of practice may increase with experience. As meditation becomes familiar, it can be combined and practiced with daily routines such as running, walking, or gardening.

Here are some steps that are often helpful in the practice of meditation.

*Silence.* As much as possible, get away from noise, action, and distraction. Background noise tends to interfere, although with practice it can be tuned out. Listening to music is a different practice. Meditation is facilitated by inner and outer silence.

*Prepare.* In order to prepare oneself for meditation, it is helpful to take an initial time of centering. Begin with silent centering to calm your spirit, perhaps focused on the rhythm of inhaling and exhaling. The usual recommendations for posture involve a position that does not require much effort to maintain, and that does not create muscle tension. Sitting upright or reclining in a comfortable chair with legs and arms uncrossed, or lying flat often work well. Experiment with different postures to find what works best, and then stick with it.

*Invite.* Ask for the desire to be open; invite God (higher power, peace) to enter.

*Focus.* Direct silent attention to a point of focus, such as the inhaling-exhaling rhythm of breathing. There is nothing that is "supposed to happen." Just stay with relaxed focused attention.

*Releasing.* Do not follow thoughts or sensations that come into consciousness. These will intrude, and efforts to stop thoughts are likely to fail and to become distractions themselves. Rather just notice the thought and then release it, let it float by and return to the point of focus.

*Images.* Some find it helpful to use imagery during meditation. A common image is that of white light. Some focus on a holy presence (such as Jesus) or symbol (such as a cross).

*Tools.* Some find particular actions or movement to be helpful tools in facilitating meditation. Foster (1998) suggests beginning meditation with palms facing downward, releasing whatever is on one's mind and heart, then turning palms upward to receive God's spirit. Some use structured movement such as Tai Chi as part of meditation.

Another form of movement for meditation is the walking of a labyrinth. The labyrinth as a spiritual tool has ancient origins, but there has been a resurgence of interest in this particular discipline within the past two decades. As the name implies, the labyrinth is a maze through which one walks, usually in silence. Typically there are no walls; rather the boundaries of the labyrinth are marked by lines or stones on the ground. There are also large cloth tarps available to be laid on the floor or ground, onto which a labyrinth has been printed. There are various forms for a labyrinth, but those currently used in spiritual practice tend to have several qualities. They are typically laid out as concentric circles. One enters at a designated point, often beginning with a path that leads to a circle partway in, and then follows the path around. There are many turns along the way. Sometimes one draws closer to the center, and soon thereafter one may be on a far outer circle. Finally, just as one seems farthest away, the path leads abruptly to the center, which may be empty or may contain artifacts or places to sit or kneel. One spends a self-determined amount of time at the center, and then follows the same path back out.

Walking of the labyrinth can be combined with various other spiritual disciplines such as prayer, meditation, or attentive awareness. It is unhurried, and one may stop along the way in or out. Some people carry with them an object that represents something that they want to release, to let go of, and leave it at the center of the labyrinth. (In the outdoor labyrinth at Ghost Ranch, one may find near the center objects such as a key, a pack of cigarettes, a flower, an emptied bottle, a dark stone.) There is nothing that is "supposed" to happen when one walks the labyrinth, and the experience can be quite different from one time to the next. In the Albuquerque area there are two labyrinths open to the public.

Regular practice is important. It need not be for long periods of time, but with practice meditation often becomes easier, familiar, deeper. It also changes, and this is a worthy topic for discussion in check-back. Encourage your client to be patient, practicing meditation without seeking to achieve something. Experiment with different approaches.

## 2. Prayer

About 95% of American adults report that they pray, including some who also say that they do not believe in God. Prayer differs from but overlaps with meditation, with its primary purpose being encounter, communication, and communion with the Divine.

As with other disciplines, it is important to start with the person's own past and present understanding of prayer. Ask an open question about the person's experience with prayer, and follow with reflective listening. How, when, where, why, and with whom has the person prayed? Spend as long as it takes to understand the person's experience with, preferences and predisposition for prayer.

Prayer, Foster (1998) says, is an experimental method. One does not know, going into it, what will happen. People differ in the forms of prayer that they find particularly helpful and meaningful. Many do not appreciate that there are many types of prayer, and may be familiar with only one or two. A general approach in spiritual evocation is to introduce the person to a variety of forms of prayer, and encourage experimentation with and flexible movement among these types.

Describe to the person the variety of styles of prayer that can be practiced. Review the handout "Some Varieties of Prayer." Help the person to plan a particular time and place for the practice of prayer. Where could the person go to pray in order to minimize distractions? How could it fit into the person's daily experience and routine? A consistent prayer chair can help to induce a state of prayer. Foster recommends sitting in an upright position, but you can also experiment with prayer while walking, standing, kneeling, exercising, driving, etc. For some, the use of incense becomes associated with and facilitates prayer.

Another possibility is to have the person write out prayers. This can be done without much forethought or preparation, or through a process of meditation to listen for prayers that arise. Used over time, the writing of prayers can become a prayer journal.

Some people find the ACTS formula helpful as a sequence for ordering prayer:

- Adoration: to offer one's love and praise to God
- Confession: to reflect on and confess one's shortcomings
- Thanksgiving: to give God thanks for one's blessings
- Supplication: to ask God to respond to personal or others' needs

Foster's palms-down/palms-up sequence is useful here as well. With palms down (e.g., on one's lap) one lets go of and turns over to God that from which release is needed. Then with palms turned upward, one awaits and receives from God that which is needful.

If it is helpful, it is entirely appropriate to practice prayer together within a session. You could model prayer aloud, pray in silence together, have the client pray aloud, or chant together. It is also, of course appropriate to pray for your clients before or after sessions.

Yet another aid is found in classic prayers from the person's tradition. There are individual prayers (such as the prayer of St. Francis), corporate prayers (such as the Lord's prayer and Niebuhr's serenity prayer), and published prayer collections or journals (such as Dag Hammerskjöld's *Markings*).

### **3. Fasting**

For millennia people of faith in various world religions have fasted for spiritual reasons. Fasting is often used in combination with other disciplines such as prayer and meditation. Jesus did not instruct his followers to fast; rather his teachings assumed that they would do so: "When you fast . . ." Jewish, Christian, Muslim and Hindu traditions all include fasting in times of crisis, and in association with certain holy observances.

Fasting is also an exercise of self-control. It is the mirror-opposite of immediate gratification and addictive behaviors. It is abstaining from a pleasure (most commonly food) rather than indulging it. The research of social psychologist Roy Baumeister indicates that regular practice of a self-control discipline strengthens the "moral muscle" for resisting temptation and adhering to one's values and beliefs {Baumeister, 2005 #183}.

One's motivation for fasting is important. Dieting to lose weight or in preparation for blood tests is not the same as a spiritual fast. Explore the client's spiritual motivation for fasting. For example, some Christians find that fasting increases their awareness of the extent to which they are normally controlled by physical desires, and strengthens their ability to be free from such domination. It is a discovery that one need not eat immediately in response to a growling stomach, and many are surprised at how easy it is, and freeing of time. For Jews and Muslims it is done in the spirit of obedience to God's commands. Still others find that fasting intensifies their prayer and awareness of God. There is a long history of individual and communal fasting in spiritual preparation, or in time of urgent need.

There are some practical precautions to be taken before you negotiate fasting as a spiritual discipline for a client.

1. Before beginning a fast, the client must consult with his or her physician in order to determine that it is safe to do so. A form is provided for physician signature, certifying that in the physician's opinion a fast is not contraindicated. If the client does not have a primary care physician, we will try to link her or him up with one. It may also be possible for us to obtain a medical consult for clients without medical care. Do not prescribe or negotiate a fast without first receiving the signed physician certificate from the client.
2. Within this study, a fast from food will be no longer than 24 hours. Medical risks are almost all associated with longer fasts than this, and for the vast majority of Americans a 24-hour fast is health-promoting rather than hazardous.

3. Advise the person to maintain adequate fluid intake during the fast. For a total caloric fast this would be water, but juices can be used for a partial fast.

As a spiritual discipline, fasting is not restricted to food. One may fast from anything that is habitually indulged on a daily basis (e.g., watching TV, accessing the internet). Catherine Marshall described fasting for 24 hours from criticalness of others {Marshall, 1986 #188}. One may also fast from particular foods, such as meat, sweets, or fast food.

A good piece of advice is not to tell others you are fasting. The spiritual benefits of fasting may be undermined by boasting or complaining to others about the practice. Keep it to yourself.

A usual starting point is to fast through one meal; for example, to fast from breakfast to dinner or from sunrise to sundown without lunch, or from lunchtime until the following morning at “breakfast.” As one becomes more familiar and comfortable with fasting, fasts can become longer. Again, the longest fast to be encouraged within this program is 24 hours.

#### **4. Self-Care**

Is self-care a spiritual discipline? Western religions encourage taking care of the body, of physical health, as consistent with God’s intentions for humankind. Abraham Maslow’s pyramid of human needs also points in this direction. Basic physical needs for air, water, food and shelter take precedence when they are unmet. As these are met, people can attend to needs further up the pyramid, with higher spiritual needs at the top. This implies that taking good care of oneself with regard to nutrition, sleep and exercise promotes not only physical but also spiritual health.

Intermediate in Maslow’s pyramid are social needs for support, comfort and community. These are also worth exploring. What support does the person have for moving toward new life? Is he or she linked with a community that nurtures spiritual growth and health?

Simplification is a self-care theme that runs through spiritual direction, and is described by Foster (1998) as a spiritual discipline in itself. Simplification is, in part, breaking one’s attachment to *stuff*, to material things, and the illusion that these are necessary to happiness. Various compulsions of excess may be efforts to find happiness and fill emptiness: shopping, eating, working, and of course substance abuse. Simplification is a clearing away of these excessive “needs” and one’s dependence on them.

One can also be possessed by possessions. American advertising seeks to create “need” for products and services that are not truly needful. What “stuff” do you spend time collecting, maintaining, worrying about? Giving away that which one does not need is a practice of simplification, and is also consistent with world religions’ emphasis on sharing with those who are in need. Try fasting from media, from the constant barrage of commercials. Turn off the tv. Before buying something, ask “Do I really need this?” Reflect on what is truly needful. American culture confuses needs with excessive appetites, with created and sated wants.

#### **5. Reflection**

Reflection refers here to the focusing of attention on (and reflective study of) particular objects or experiences. These may be objects of inspiration or sacred writings, but there is a broader discipline of mindfulness in which one experiences and appreciates the present. One could focus attentive awareness on nature, art, music, or silence. When triggered by text, periods of reflective study may follow the intentionally slow reading of relatively short passages (a story, a parable) rather than digesting a whole chapter or book, but this, too, is flexible.

A common pattern is to focus intently on, to study, the object of awareness and to experience periods of silent reflection on what one observes. In attentive awareness, one seeks to be “fully present” to the object or experience, and to reflect on it. Such reflection may focus on physical attributes, associations, meaning, or feeling. Here are some forms of attentive awareness:

Singing or chanting can involve reflective awareness. Repetitive chanting (as from the Tai’ze community) is one form. One may also focus intently on the meaning of the words one is singing or speaking (as in a familiar hymn or prayer), words that may ordinarily pass the lips with automaticity.

For Catholics, the stations of the cross can be experienced in this way, walking in silence from one to the next, stopping before each in silent contemplation.

Lectio divina is a form of attentive awareness in the study of scripture, that is well known to spiritual directors.

Journaling is another form of reflective awareness, to write down one’s experience and to reflect upon it in recorded words. This can be combined with other spiritual disciplines; for example, keeping a journal of experiences that arise during meditation or prayer. Journals also need not be verbal. Art journaling is another way of recording and reflecting upon experience.

## **6. Solitude**

Most world religions encourage or require times of rest, of being apart and away from the routines of life, time along with God. The observance of sabbath rest stands as one of God’s ten commandments in Judeo-Christian tradition. Jesus regularly took time apart in “lonely” places for prayer and meditation – a common practice among great spiritual leaders.

Solitude is more comfortable and natural for some people than for others. Carl Jung’s personality typology differentiated people along a continuum of introversion-extroversion. The defining characteristic of this dimension was not sociable outgoingness, but rather where the person looks for truth and meaning – within, or to other people. Being in solitude is more comfortable for those at the introverted end of this spectrum. It comes more naturally.

Nevertheless, solitude facilitates spiritual formation for extroverts as well as introverts. For those less comfortable with solitude, there is a gradual process of developing tolerance for periods of aloneness, pushing out normal habits of turning on the TV or reaching for the telephone. A 10-day silent retreat is no place to start when even short periods of aloneness are uncomfortable. Practice may start with ten minutes of solitude. Is it possible to structure your life routine in a way to practice solitude regularly in your day or week?

Solitude is not only physical aloneness. Foster (1998) observed that it is more a state of mind than a place. It is “being away” (fasting) from normal routines, distractions, e-mail, media, demands. Solitude can be combined with and facilitates other disciplines such as meditation, prayer, and attentive awareness to the moment.

For some it will be useful to plan a longer experience of solitude; for example, to spend an afternoon or a day alone in silence. Retreat centers are available to facilitate such experiences. Some find that solitude is facilitated by being outdoors in nature. If such an experience is planned, use sensible precautions. A person going off to the mountains, for example, should let someone know when and where they are going, and take appropriate weather precautions. As with fasting, negotiated periods of solitude in this program should not be longer than 24 hours.

## **7. Acceptance**

Foster’s (1998) construct of “surrender” is understood here as a subset of the larger spiritual discipline of acceptance. There is a dialectic tension between accepting what is and seeking to change it, that is captured in Reinhold Niebuhr’s (1943) famous “serenity prayer” that has been adapted and widely used within Alcoholics Anonymous:

God grant us grace to accept with serenity the things that cannot be changed,  
Courage to change the things which should be changed,  
And the wisdom to distinguish the one from the other.

The merits of acceptance are also being recognized within the discipline of psychology, even within “behavior therapy” where change has been so heavily emphasized (Hayes et al., 1994).

Here are some varied words and images that are encompassed within the discipline of acceptance:

Appreciating  
Laying down a burden  
Letting go  
Obedience to a Higher Power (and related civil disobedience)  
Submission  
Surrender  
Trusting  
Valuing

## Yielding

There is also rich variety in the objects of acceptance, which might be directed toward:

- Authority
- Limitations
- Others as they are
- Past events
- Reality
- Responsibility
- Self as I am

As implied in the serenity prayer, not all forms of acceptance are healthy. There are personal behaviors and social realities that can be and need to be changed. Total acceptance of and detachment from present reality is an extreme form of this discipline.

A starting point in this discipline is to explore what your clients may need or desire to accept. What is there that cannot be changed, where letting go is needed? What does the client accept and not accept about himself or herself? What burdens is the person carrying? What relationship healing could occur by the client accepting another as she or he is?

Client acceptance of self and others may be facilitated by your own modeling and practice of acceptance in spiritual evocation. That is a cornerstone of client-centered counseling approaches, that experiencing an accepting therapeutic relationship enhances self-acceptance and (paradoxically) frees the person to change.

Beyond the general modeling and discussion of acceptance, it may be useful with some clients to develop a ritual of acceptance, or letting go. There are many symbolic forms for this. Some write that which they wish to release on a paper that is then burned. Some reflect on a sorrow or resentment while holding a small stone, that is then dropped into a body of water. Some burn letters, give things away, rearrange their living space, write and perhaps send a letter, forgive. The challenge here is to find the right ritual act or symbol that facilitates the process of acceptance for this particular client. Such rituals may be one-time or repeatable events.

Just as important, if not moreso, is the ongoing practice of acceptance in daily live. The practice of courtesy embodies appreciating, honoring and yielding to others. One common daily venue for practicing courtesy is driving in traffic, with endless opportunities for non-competition, yielding, allowing others space, and expressing appreciation. It is in daily life that acceptance truly becomes a spiritual discipline.

## 8. Service

The call for humanity to act lovingly on behalf of and in service to others is a fundamental commonality of world religions. To act with compassion is to move beyond oneself, and recognize our oneness and connectedness with each other.

As with other disciplines, this is more needful for some people than for others. There are those who overextend themselves in service to others at cost to their own spirit. Most spiritual disciplines, taken to extreme, can become unhealthy. One would not, of course, recommend more sacrificial service for someone who is already overstretched in giving to others.

Like other disciplines, service stretches in a continuum from a single discrete event to a daily practice. There can be spiritual value in planning an undertaking a particular event that increases one's salient awareness of the plight of others, and involves some concrete action to alleviate suffering. Such events can range from serving food one evening at a homeless shelter, to extended service trips to areas of poverty. For some, such experiences are eye-opening and life-changing.

But service is also a daily practice. It can be manifested in one's manner and behavior at work. At home it is present in simple tasks of family care and household maintenance. It may involve picking up trash in a neighborhood on a daily walk. There are numerous opportunities to express loving kindness through circumscribed or ongoing volunteer service in the community. Particularly for those whose lives are insular and self-focused, the practice of service to others can greatly enhance spiritual formation. Service can also fill meaningfully time that has been previously occupied with unhealthy or addictive behavior.

It is important to explore the person's motivation for service. The desire to earn "brownie points" with others or even with God can undermine the spiritual value of service. One common admonition is to serve with no hope or expectation of return. Another is to keep one's service anonymous or secret, rather than consciously parading or subconsciously boasting about it.

Consistent with the style of spiritual evocation, explore what types of service touch the client's heart, rather than prescribing particular kinds. A client may have only vague ideas or aspirations, and you can help by connecting those with concrete opportunities. It may be useful to have a menu of service opportunities available, from which clients might choose those that best fit their values and routines.

## **9. Reconciliation**

Foster's discipline of "confession" is here understood in a broader context of reconciliation, the healing of relationships with others and with God. There are reciprocal roles here of confession and forgiveness, both enduring themes in world religions (Worthington, 2003).

A starting point in this domain is to explore with your client the areas of her or his life where reconciliation is needed. Recognize that at the outset, the person may not *desire* reconciliation. Neither confession nor forgiveness is fun or easy. The larger question is where there are broken

relationships, separations of the person from others living or dead, or from God. Begin by asking about these, and listening at some length with compassion and reflection to understand the nature of the brokenness.

A next step is the question of whether the person desires healing of the relationship. Often the desire is there, combined with doubt about the possibility of healing. Be gentle here not to imply that the person *should* want reconciliation. Trust that the heart is there, and ask to what extent or in what ways the person might want this relationship to be healed.

Also be aware that unilateral, unreciprocated action is possible and may in some cases be the only action possible (e.g., when an alienated parent has died). It is, to be sure, more rewarding when reconciliation is reciprocal, when confession is met with forgiveness, or forgiveness with repentance. Nevertheless, much spiritual healing can happen even if acts of reconciliation are not or cannot be reciprocated.

Again, it is important to recognize that this spiritual discipline is more needful for some than for others. While from a Judeo-Christian perspective sin is inherent in human nature and therefore all are in need of reconciliation, there are surely those who are already overburdened by guilt and demoralization, and who all too readily acknowledge and accept fault. For these, the need is not for more guilt, but rather for experience of the reciprocal side of grace and reconciliation.

The first step on the confessional side of reconciliation is to recognize and acknowledge one's own role (wrong, sin, shortcoming, responsibility) that led to the need for reconciliation. This is a process of "admitting to oneself" at least partial responsibility for relational alienation. Most traditions add to this the acknowledgment (confession) of wrong to another human being, and/or to God. Sometimes the process of recognition does not precede, but emerges from a counseling relationship. The condition of radical acceptance provided by a spiritual director -- listening to burdens and shortcomings without judgment -- may make it possible to admit to oneself responsibility. This places the spiritual director in the role of confessor. It is in the very process of counseling that the person is admitting to self and another person the nature of shortcomings.

It is appropriate to inform clients, as they undertake confession, of whatever obligations you have to report wrongdoing. What are the conditions under which you would have to disclose to someone else what the person has revealed. Most professionals acknowledge a responsibility to report revealed child abuse, and also a duty to warn of the intent to harm another person.

Next is a step of releasing. Here Christian theology assures forgiveness as God's response to genuine confession and repentance. The spiritual director is an interpreter of providence but not the agent of this release. In interpersonal relationships, the reciprocal human role is also one of forgiveness. In human discourse, however, acknowledgment of responsibility is necessarily given without guarantee of reciprocal forgiveness, "without expectation of return." Confession does not oblige forgiveness, but can nevertheless be spiritually important.

After releasing, then what? The 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous prescribe a process of making amends whenever possible. Amends are not about meriting or earning forgiveness, but rather a matter of doing what is right. It is a process of completion for the individual, whether or not the act is ever known, acknowledged, or reciprocated. Again there is the theme of acting without expectation of return.

## **10. Worship**

Worship is the process of acknowledging and praising greatness. Although the usual context of worship is communal, private worship is also long recognized as valid.

As with other disciplines, exploration here begins with the client's autobiography of worship, a history of what experiences of worship the person has had. This emerges into consideration of worship as a spiritual discipline for the present and future. What are the person's inclinations regarding worship? What about communal versus private worship?

With regard to communal worship, one possibility is to sample services of worship from the wide range of traditions that are available in larger communities. This could involve not only traditions that are familiar and comfortable, but also exploration of other ways in which people worship together. Communal worship styles range from introverted to extroverted, liberal to conservative, quiet to boisterous, humanistic to theistic, and relative emphasis on the journey inward (personal spiritual growth) and the journey outward (social action and service to others). For people in recovery, there are also the 12 Step fellowships that contain minimal elements of communal worship (e.g., corporate prayer) and strong support for sobriety. Like places of worship, the 12 Step groups vary widely in style and practices.

Exploration of private worship involves potential experimentation with a range of practices. Some people build an altar or other designated spot of worship at home. Various rituals can be incorporated. The practice of private worship may be enhanced for some by incense, music, prayer or meditation. Rather than prescribing, evoke from your client what may be his or her natural elements of private worship.

## **11. Gratitude**

The spiritual discipline of gratitude can be a particularly helpful antidote to a culture of acquisition, materialism and greed. The focus here is on appreciation for what is, thankfulness for one's life and experiences, satisfaction without attachment or envy.

For what is your client grateful? Collecting "flowers" of gratitude through the style of motivational interviewing can be a good starting point. Ask the open question, reflect what is offered, continue with "What else?", and provide a summary reflection. If "grateful" is not the right term, try "thankful," or ask what the person truly appreciates in life. Look for the places in the heart of deep gratitude, and spend some time exploring them.

Gratitude is most valuable not as an event, but as an ongoing practice. What would be the experience of taking five minutes at the end of each day to count blessings? A regular time of prayer is a natural time to remember that for which one is thankful. Try reflection on specifics of the day and week, rather than formulaic prayers of thanks.

## 12. Guidance

For those who choose guidance as a spiritual discipline, there are endless teachers. Buddhists encourage coming to each new experience with a “beginner’s mind,” seeing it afresh and learning from it. One may, for example, watch a bird with the intention of learning what it has to teach. With this mind, sources of guidance are all around us.

Another source of guidance is from historical records and writings of spiritual pathfinders, models of the kind of life and spirituality to which the person aspires (Oman & Thoresen, 2003). Whom does the client admire as a spiritual model, guide or leader? Among the many possibilities are:

- Buddha
- Dorothy Day
- The Dalai Lama
- Francis of Assisi
- Jesus Christ
- Mahatma Gandhi
- Martin Luther King
- Thomas Merton
- Mohammed
- Julian of Norwich
- Oscar Romero
- Mother Teresa of Calcutta
- Desmond Tutu
- John Wesley
- Simone Weil

Clients who are readers may benefit from autobiography, biography, or writings of a cherished spiritual model.

People also respect and seek guidance from living spiritual leaders. If the client has a faith tradition, it may be helpful to link her or him with a rabbi, priest, pastor or other religious leader, or to meet a range of potential guides from that tradition. Spiritual evocation is, of course, itself a form of individual guidance.

Another source of guidance is the corporate wisdom of a group. Quakers convene a “clearness committee” when facing a difficult choice or decision. Members of Alcoholics Anonymous respect and use the “group conscience” as a source of guidance. Communal decision-making is common in Mennonite and Presbyterian traditions and in democratic organizations. The emphasis here is to look to a group of respected peers for guidance.

Perhaps most vexing and pitfall-laden is the process of searching within for the “still, small voice” of guidance, differentiating it from the louder voices of personal wants, beliefs and passions. It is a common question, “How do I know God’s voice when I hear it?” One key is first to put

oneself in a place where it is possible to hear, drawing on other disciplines such as meditation and solitude. The process of knowing is varied for different people. The dialectic process of spiritual evocation may help the individual discover and recognize the inner voice of guidance.

### **13. Celebration**

Finally, Foster (1998) names the spiritual discipline of celebration, to honor that which brings us joy and inspiration. Celebration is a choice, and joy a practice.

Finding non-drug sources of joy and celebration may be particularly helpful for people who have become dependent on psychoactive drugs. Ironically, alcohol intoxication is itself linked in society to the concept of celebrating.

As with many other disciplines, there are both event and ongoing versions of this practice. The word “celebration” is more often associated with particular events that mark and observe special occasions. Some services of worship celebrate particular historical events, and tend to draw larger attendance than routine worship. Some celebrations and rituals represent a purification process, a fresh start.

Celebration can also be an approach to life, to attend to and affirm that which is good and beautiful rather than burning energy on worry, rage, anxiety and resentment. It is a conscious mindset, a choice to find the goodness in life and people, a commitment not to miss opportunities for joy and affirmation. Old life stories and scripts can be rewritten to see the peaks instead of or in addition to the valleys. How might this mind become part of the person’s routine? Some families take turns at evening meal sharing a high and a low from the day. Some parents seek with their children to “catch them doing something good” and affirm it. In this way, a positive mindset of celebration may be passed on to the next generation.

## Chapter 8

### The Final Session

Your work of spiritual evocation with a client can come to an end in one of four ways:

- You complete 12 sessions, the maximum included in this program
- You reach 4 months from the date of randomization, the end of eligibility for further sessions
- You and your client decide together not to continue, or
- Your client unilaterally decides not to continue, by not returning for sessions. Normal procedure is to permit three missed sessions in a row before considering the client as unilaterally terminated.

It is good practice to anticipate an end of your work together, and prepare yourself and your client for it. From the beginning, your client should understand the limit of 12 sessions within 4 months as the maximum that will be provided within this program. As you approach the end of your sessions, perhaps around session 9 or after 3 months, remind your client of the end-point of your program work. Never spring it on a client that “this is your last session.” A session or two before your last, you should also begin planning what the client wants to do to continue her or his spiritual journey after your work together is finished.

A principal task of your final session is to recapitulate and celebrate the client’s work with you. Particularly emphasize what *the client* has done, and affirm specifics. You don’t need to deny your own role in the process if the client acknowledges it, but your focus should be on what the client has done.

Connect your client with appropriate resources to continue his or her spiritual development. Ideally this will have happened along the way, but be sure that the client has opportunities and resources to maintain and continue the process you have begun. You may recommend an additional reading or two, or connect the person with particular resources for further support and guidance. It is permissible, if you both wish, for you to continue working as a spiritual director with the client. Any further work beyond the twelve sessions of this program would not be constrained by the limits of this intervention, and would be subject to your normal practices with regard to matters such as place, sessions, and fees.

## Appendices and Forms

Appendix pages are unnumbered in order to facilitate copying and use of these forms in sessions and as handouts for clients.

Appendix 1. Some Spiritual Practices (bubble sheet)

Appendix 2. Some Styles of Prayer

Appendix 3. Some Model Prayers

Appendix 4. Preparation for Fasting

Appendix 5. Physician Release Form for Fasting

Appendix 6. Resources for Further Seeking

Appendix 7. Consent Form

Appendix 8. Session Report Form

Appendix 9. Adverse Event Report Form

Appendix 10. Session Log

## Some Spiritual Practices

**Meditation**

**Prayer**

**Celebration**

**Acceptance**

**Gratitude**

**Fasting**

**Service to  
Others**

**Worship**

**Reflection**

**Solitude**

**Self-Care**

**Guidance**

**Reconciliation**

## Some Styles of Prayer

The desire to communicate with and relate to the divine is common to almost all world religions. Styles of prayer vary widely among and within religions. Here are some common varieties of prayer.

### Ritual Prayer

Some prayers are said or sung from memory. Commonly memorized prayers include in Christian tradition include the Lord's prayer (Our Father . . .), the serenity prayer used in Twelve-Step groups (God grant us the serenity . . .), prayers recited at meal times or bedtime. Jewish tradition includes morning and sabbath prayers, and those associated with particular religious observances such as Seder.

Some ritual prayers are also repeated. Catholic tradition uses rosary beads to prompt the repetition of certain prayers. The short prayers are sometimes repeated in chant-like form. The French Tai'ze and other monastic traditions include sung chanting of prayers. Other traditions include prayers expressed in repetitive or dance movements.

### Conversational Prayer

Another broad form of prayer is conversational. Rather than memorized words, the person speaks spontaneously. Such prayers may follow a general outline, or be completely open-ended as themes arise. Four common themes in conversational prayer are:

**Worship.** The prayer expresses adoration, acknowledging the greatness, goodness, and wonder of the divine.

**Confession.** Here the focus is on recognition and admission to the divine of one's shortcomings. This may be combined with expressions of regret and of intention for change (repentance).

**Thanksgiving.** The theme here is gratitude and appreciation for one's life and blessings.

**Petition.** These prayers expressing what one longs for, often asking for particular things to happen. In times of desperation, these are quicksand prayers. Intercessory prayer is petitioning on behalf of others, often for healing - to hold others "in the light." Some offer "flash prayers" on behalf of acquaintances or strangers they meet during the day.

### Centering Prayer

This is silent prayer in which one seeks to clear away obstacles to centering attention on the divine. It is listening more than speaking. It is also called meditation or contemplative prayer.

## **Some Model Prayers**

God grant us grace to accept with serenity the things that cannot be changed,  
Courage to change the things which should be changed,  
And the wisdom to distinguish the one from the other.

Reinhold Niebuhr, 1943

Our Maker in heaven, holy be your name  
Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread  
And forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil  
For yours are the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.

**Jesus of Nazareth**, ca 30 AD

Lord, make me a channel of your peace  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love  
Where there is injury, pardon  
Where there is doubt, faith  
Where there is despair, hope  
Where there is darkness, light  
And where there is sadness, joy.  
Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console  
To be understood as to understand  
To be loved as to love;  
For it is in giving that we receive  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

St. Francis of Assisi

## Preparation for Fasting

To fast is to voluntarily abstain from a pleasure that you normally engage in automatically, often without thinking about it. The most common fast is from food. For thousands of years, people of faith in various world religions have fasted for spiritual reasons. Fasting is often used in combination with other disciplines such as prayer and meditation. Fasting is also an experience of self-control. It is intentionally abstaining from a pleasure (most commonly food) rather than indulging it. Practicing self-control in one area seems to strengthen one's ability to withstand temptation in other areas.

A usual starting point is to fast through one meal; for example, to fast from breakfast to dinner or from sunrise to sundown without lunch, or from lunchtime until the following morning when you break your fast. The longest fast that we encourage while you are in this program is 24 hours.

Your reasons for fasting are important. Dieting to lose weight or in preparation for blood tests is not the same as a spiritual fast. Some people find that fasting increases their awareness of the extent to which they are normally controlled by physical desires, and strengthens their ability to be free from such domination. They discover that one need not eat immediately in response to a growling stomach, and many are surprised at how easy it is, and how freeing of time. For Jews and Muslims it is done in the spirit of obedience to God's commands. Still others find that fasting intensifies their prayer and awareness of God. There is a long history of individual and communal fasting in spiritual preparation, or in time of urgent need.

There are some practical precautions to be taken before a food fast as a spiritual discipline.

1. Before beginning a fast, consult with your doctor to make sure that it is safe to do so. There is a special form for your doctor's signature. If you do not have a primary care physician, we will try to link you up with one. Do not begin a fast in this program without first getting your doctor's signature on this certificate.
2. In this program, do not fast from food for any longer than 24 hours: from breakfast to breakfast, or lunch to lunch. For the vast majority of Americans a 24-hour fast is health-promoting rather than hazardous, but there are some medical risks associated with longer fasts.
3. During your fast, be sure to drink enough liquids so that you do not get dehydrated. For a complete fast, this would be water, but some people fast with fruit juices.
4. Decide when you will begin and end your fast. In general it is best to begin a fast after a light meal, not with a heavy meal. It is also advisable to end a fast with a simple light meal.

A common piece of advice is not to tell others you are fasting. The spiritual benefits of fasting may be undermined by boasting or complaining to others about the practice. Keep it to yourself.

Finally, fasting as a spiritual discipline is not restricted to food. One may fast from anything that is habitually indulged on a daily basis (e.g., watching TV, sweets, accessing the internet).

## Physician Release Form for Fasting

As part of a voluntary program of spiritual direction, \_\_\_\_\_ is considering fasting from food (not liquids) for a period no longer than 24 hours. The medical risks of fasting are almost all associated with fasts of longer than 72 hours, and for many a fast can be health promoting. Nevertheless, we require a physician's release for anyone who wishes to practice a fast of up to 24 hours as part of spiritual direction.

The spiritual direction in which this person is participating is part of a study being conducted at the University of New Mexico to determine the effects of spiritual direction on health outcomes. This research has been reviewed and approved by the Human Research Review Committee of the UNM Health Sciences Center. The Principal Investigator is Dr. William R. Miller, UNM Distinguished Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry. Office telephone: 505-925-2378.

### Physician's Opinion

In my professional opinion (check only one):

there are no significant medical contraindications for this person to undertake a spiritual fast from food lasting no more than 24 hours, and such a fast is reasonably safe

this person should *not* undertake a fast of up to 24 hours

Physician's name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Physician's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Office Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

## Resources for Further Seeking

Judy to assemble list xx

Yoga tai chi

- Eknath Easwaran (2003). *God makes the rivers to flow: Sacred literature of the world* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Tomales, California: Nilgiri Press. ISBN 1-58638-008-7 [www.nilgiri.org](http://www.nilgiri.org)
- Mark Harris (1999). *Companions for your spiritual journal: Discovering the disciplines of the saints*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press. ISBN 0-8308-2214-3

## *CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH*

### *Spirituality in Recovery and Treatment*

#### *INTRODUCTION*

You are asked to participate in a research study, *Spirituality in Recovery and Treatment*, being conducted by Dr. William R. Miller from the Department of Psychology at the University of New Mexico, and Mary O'Leary, a Ph.D. student in clinical psychology from the Fielding Graduate Institute.

You were selected as a possible participant in the study because you have entered addiction treatment at Turquoise Lodge and:

- are at least 18 years of age
- have used alcohol, cocaine, opiates, or stimulants within the past 30 days
- have completed or will soon complete any necessary detoxification
- do not plan to enroll in methadone or buprenorphine maintenance after treatment
- live within acceptable driving distance of Albuquerque and plan to remain in this area for at least the next year
- could arrange transportation to or within Albuquerque to participate in treatment and research sessions that are part of this study.

#### *PURPOSE OF THE STUDY*

Many professionals believe that spirituality is a significant factor in recovery from addictions. This study is designed to test the value of additional counseling that is specifically designed to help you explore and develop your own spirituality during the process of recovery.

#### *PROCEDURES*

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be invited to take part in the following procedures.

1. *Initial Interview.* You will be interviewed by a research staff member and asked to complete several questionnaires that provide important information needed for this study. This information pertains in particular to your own recent alcohol and drug use and consequences, your spiritual and religious background and beliefs, your current psychological and emotional health, and your prior experience (if any) with Alcoholics Anonymous or other 12-step programs. The interview will be completed here at Turquoise Lodge, and will require approximately 3 hours of your time.

2. *Information to Help Locate You.* You would also be asked for information to help us locate you, should we lose contact, including the names and addresses of three people who do not live with you, and who would know how to reach you should we lose contact with you during this study. These people would not be told anything about the nature of the study or your participation in it, and would be contacted only if we are unable to reach you.

3. *Assignment to One of Two Groups.* Upon completing the interview and questionnaires, you will be assigned at random (similar to the tossing of a coin) to one of two research conditions. Regardless of the group to which you are assigned, you will receive all of the treatment services to which you are otherwise entitled at Turquoise Lodge. One group will simply proceed through treatment as usual at Turquoise Lodge, and participate in the follow-up interviews described below. The other group will be offered, in addition, up to 12 free individual sessions with an expert spiritual counselor. You would have an equal chance of being assigned to the treatment-as-usual group or the group receiving additional spiritual counseling.

4. *Spiritual Counseling.* Those assigned to the spiritual counseling condition will meet with their counselor once or twice while still in residence at Turquoise Lodge, and after discharge will continue individual visits at the counselor's office. The primary purpose of these sessions would be to help you explore and develop your own spirituality. The counselors will not promote any particular religion, but rather would encourage development of your own spirituality as you experience it. They will offer a range of spiritual exploration methods that people have used over the centuries, without requiring you to practice any particular approach.

5. *Tape Recording.* All counseling sessions will be audiotape recorded for purposes of supervision and research. This allows us to ensure that the counselor is providing services as planned, and to study how any benefit from counseling is related to what happens during sessions.

6. *Confidentiality.* All information that you provide, including these session tapes, will be carefully protected to ensure your anonymity and confidentiality. Original records will be kept in locked storage within a locked facility at the University of New Mexico. All information will be entered into an anonymous electronic data file, that does not identify you. The audiotaped sessions will be listened to only by research staff, and after use will be destroyed within six months of the date on which they were recorded. We are required by scientific standards to retain paper records for a period of seven years after the results of this study are published, after which they will be destroyed.

7. *Follow-up Interviews.* You will be asked to come in person for three follow-up interviews at 4 months, 8 months, and 12 months after your initial interview, in which you will be asked about and complete questionnaires regarding the same kinds of information as in your original interview. These interviews will be conducted by a research staff member at the University of New Mexico

Center on Alcoholism, Substance Abuse and Addictions (CASAA). These interviews will require about 2 hours each.

8. *Payment.* You will be compensated for the time and inconvenience involved in participating in this study. At the first (4 month) follow-up interview, you will be paid fifty dollars (\$50) for the time involved in both your original interview and the follow-up interview. For completing the 8-month interview you will be paid thirty dollars (\$30), and for completing the 12-month interview you will be paid forty dollars (\$40). Together these add to a total possible payment of one hundred and twenty dollars (\$120). Once you have entered the study, you will be eligible to complete and be paid for these follow-up interviews regardless of your group assignment or the amount of counseling you completed. If for some reason you do not complete an entire follow-up interview, you will be paid for the amount that you did complete, as a proportion of the total information needed.

### *POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS*

9. *Privacy.* In this research project you would be disclosing private information, including facts about your own drug use and related activities. As described above, we carefully protect this information in order to prevent accidental violation of your privacy. In addition, to help us protect your privacy, we have obtained a Certificate of Confidentiality from the National Institutes of Health. With this Certificate, we cannot be forced to disclose information that may identify you, even by a court subpoena, in any federal, state, or local civil, criminal, administrative, legislative, or other proceedings. We will use the Certificate to resist any demands for information that would identify you, except as explained below.

The Certificate cannot be used to resist a demand for information from personnel of the United States Government that is used for auditing or evaluation of Federally funded projects. Your records must also be made available for confidential audit by research officials of the two Universities involved: the University of New Mexico (Albuquerque) and the Fielding Graduate Institute (Santa Barbara, California).

You should understand that a Certificate of Confidentiality does not prevent you or a member of your family from voluntarily releasing information about yourself or your involvement in this research. If an insurer, employer, or other person obtains your written consent to receive research information, then researchers may not use the Certificate to withhold that information.

The Certificate of Confidentiality does not prevent the researchers from disclosing voluntarily, without your consent, information that would identify you as a participant in the research project under the following circumstances.

if we judge your own life and welfare to be in immediate danger, and the risks could be reduced by release of information

if you disclose your intention to endanger another person's life

if you disclose information regarding child abuse or neglect

*10. Counseling.* There are no known significant risks involved in the type of counseling being tested in this study. If you choose, during counseling, to make use of the common spiritual practice of fasting (abstaining from certain foods for a period of time), you will be asked to first consult a physician to determine that it is medically safe for you to do so. If you do not have access to a personal physician for this purpose, we can arrange for a medical evaluation at no cost to you.

### ***POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND TO SOCIETY***

It is possible that you would experience personal benefit from the additional counseling offered in this study, should you be assigned to that condition. No such benefit can be guaranteed, however; the purpose of this study is to determine the extent of benefit from spiritual counseling.

Participants in studies such as this have sometimes found the interviews and questionnaires to be helpful in themselves. They might, for example, cause you to be more aware of and reflect on your personal situation.

In any event, there is clear potential benefit to society in discovering new and effective methods to help people recover from addictions.

### ***PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL***

You can choose whether or not to participate in this study. If you volunteer to participate, you may withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you might otherwise be entitled. You may also refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.

By signing this consent form, you are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

### ***INVESTIGATOR AND REVIEW BOARD***

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact the Principal Investigator: Dr. William R. Miller at the Department of Psychology, University of New Mexico,

Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131-1161 (505-925-2378 during normal business hours). If you wish, you may receive a copy of the report of findings from this research by contacting Dr. Miller at the above address after January, 2006.

Mary O'Leary, the Co-Investigator on this research project, is supervised by Dr. Charles Elliott of the Fielding Graduate Institute. The address of this educational institution is: 2112 Santa Barbara Street, Santa Barbara, California 93105. The phone number is (805) 687-1099. The Institutional Review Board of the Fielding Graduate Institute retains access to all signed informed consent forms. Strict confidentiality will be applied to all information regarding participants in this study.

If you have other concerns or complaints, contact the Institutional Review Board at the University of New Mexico, Professor José Rivera, Scholes Hall, Room 255, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131 (505-277-2257).

*SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT*

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been provided a copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of participant

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/20\_\_\_\_

*SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR*

In my judgment the participant is voluntarily and knowingly giving informed consent and possesses the legal capacity to give informed consent to participate in this research study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Investigator obtaining and witnessing consent

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/20\_\_\_\_



## Session Report Form Instructions

Complete one session report form for every scheduled session, including sessions that are cancelled or for which the client did not come.

1. Print your client's ID number. Do not write your client's name on the session report form.
2. Print your counselor ID number here.
3. Print the date of the scheduled session, whether or not the session was held.
4. Indicate whether the session was held (1). If not, indicate whether the client (2) notified you the day before, (3) notified you before the session on the same day, or (4) did not come, and gave no advance notice. If you cancelled the session (5), indicate the reason.

If the session was cancelled, stop here. If the session was held, complete the rest of the questionnaire.

5. Indicate where the session was held: at Turquoise Lodge, at CASAA, or at another location. If another location, indicate where.
6. Indicate whether the client was on time, and if not, indicate how many minutes late.
7. Indicate the session number. Sessions are numbered sequentially. Also enter session date in the Session Log.
8. Record the clock time that your session started and the time it ended. Do not round to the nearest 5 minutes. It is not necessary for you to compute the number of minutes; we'll do that for you.
9. Circle one number to rate the extent to which your counseling in this session was consistent with the style and spirit of motivational interviewing.

In the Spiritual Discipline blocks, indicate what spiritual disciplines you discussed in this session. Include up to three, starting with the one on which you spent the most time. Use only these codes:

Acceptance	Celebration	Fasting	Gratitude	Guidance
Meditation	Prayer	Reconciliation	Reflection	Self-Care
Service	Solitude	Worship		

In the Specific Practice Notes box, briefly note what you discussed, particularly a home practice assignment.



## Instructions for Adverse Event (AE) Reporting

Whenever you learn of an adverse event in a client's life, you should file an Adverse Event Report Form within 24 hours. This is so regardless of whether you regard the event to be serious, or to be related in any way to the spiritual evocation you have been providing. Some examples of adverse events that you would report are:

- An arrest, or other adverse contact with the police or courts
- Separation of an intimate relationship
- Disturbing nightmares
- Any hospitalization or emergency room visit
- Exacerbation of depression or anxiety
- Resumption of alcohol/drug use after a period of abstinence

When in doubt as to whether something constitutes an adverse event, report it. The form includes:

The date on which the event occurred (as nearly as possible). If this is an event that has occurred over time, such as exacerbation of depression, report the period over which it has occurred.

The date on which you learned about the event.

The date on which you completed and filed the report.

Your printed name and signature.

In addition to these, you should give a clear narrative description of the adverse event, including sufficient detail of what happened to allow judgment of its severity and whether any further response is needed. Also give your own opinion as to whether the event could appear in any way to be related to participation in this study. This could be in relation to initial evaluation, volunteering and consenting to be in the study, receiving spiritual evocation sessions, etc.

Send your AERFs to Bill Miller by email ([WRMiller@unm.edu](mailto:WRMiller@unm.edu)) or fax (505-925-2379).

# Adverse Event Report Form

Date the event occurred: \_\_\_\_\_

Date you learned about the event: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Detail the nature of the adverse event, and how you learned about it. Continue on back if necessary.

In your opinion, is there any conceivable connection between this event and the person's participation in this study?      \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Yes      If yes, describe the possible connection.

Reported by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

Date of this report: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date report received: \_\_\_\_\_ by: \_\_\_\_\_

# Session Log

Client ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Counselor ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Randomization Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Last Possible Session: \_\_\_\_\_

Session #	Date	Session Length (min)	Session Location	Notes
1			TL CASAA Other	
2			TL CASAA Other	
3			TL CASAA Other	
4			TL CASAA Other	
5			TL CASAA Other	
6			TL CASAA Other	
7			TL CASAA Other	
8			TL CASAA Other	
9			TL CASAA Other	
10			TL CASAA Other	
11			TL CASAA Other	
12			TL CASAA Other	