

SPIRITUAL SELF-CARE



Headington Institute

Humanitarian work is an occupation that carries the potential for great spiritual growth in one hand, and the risk of great spiritual disruption in the other. Paying attention to personal spirituality is therefore important for humanitarian workers, although we generally have little training on how to go about “caring for” and “exercising” our souls.

This sheet offers some simple suggestions for how spiritual self-care:

Clarify your values

Values clarification involves seeking a clearer understanding of what we value in life and why. This is a unique source of energy - it fuels purpose, focus, direction, passion and perseverance.

Clarifying your values means asking and answering questions that help you clarify your life mission and your road map. Questions such as:

What am I doing?

Why am I doing it?

How is it coming along?

What do I embody most?

What is it I want to embody most? What are the things, qualities, attributes, attitudes I value most in life?

What do I wish I was doing more? Why?

Who am I at my best?

Think of someone you deeply respect. Describe three qualities in this person that you most admire.

What one sentence inscription would I like to see on my tombstone that would capture who I really was in life?

When I look back at the end of my life, what do I expect the three most important lessons I've learned to be, and why are they so important?

Seek out soul food

Exercising the soul also involves actively seeking out things and activities that make us feel whole, alive, joyful, and connected with something beyond ourselves. Soul food tends to shift the way we view life and the life around us. Some common sources of soul food include:

Prayer, meditation, solitude, guided imagery, relaxation, yoga

Reading scriptural or inspirational texts

Listening to lectures, sermons, or inspirational speakers

Listening to music, singing

Being creative — writing, drawing, composing music

Spending time in nature

Contemplating art

Spending time with the people most dear to you

Consulting with a spiritual director

Participating in a small communal group involving sharing, discussion, accountability, and/or teaching

Participating in traditional practices associated with your faith, family and background

Acts of service involving giving time, expertise, or money to others in need.