



Today's Lesson

The Great Discovery

Power Point notes available at:

www.unityofbakersfield.org

The Great Discovery



“What’s in it for me?” A statement we have heard or may have used ourselves when one is deciding weather or not they want to get involved with something or someone.

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Who hasn't asked this question at some point during their lives as they seek answers to life's questions? And yet, the answers to all their questions isn't that far away. The answer is God. As someone once said, "When you seek God, seek Him in your heart."

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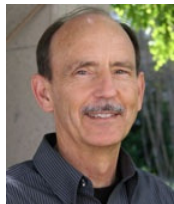


I think we can agree that life is not always easy. Even the Master Teacher said, "In this life you will have trials and tribulations. But be of good cheer you can overcome them."

How does one begin to overcome the challenges that life gives to us?

-Stephen Harris-
medialiveapps.com

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In his book, Essential Spirituality, Roger Walsh, M.D., Ph.D writes:
Life is difficult to understand. We are born dazed and helpless, finding ourselves in a world overflowing with mystery. Yet our world is only a speck of cosmic dust in a remote uncharted corner of a vast, unfathomable universe. No wonder life feels so mysterious and we sometimes reel in bewilderment.

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Yet life can be exciting and joyful. There are countless wonders to explore and people to meet, and the world holds places of breathless beauty. We all have opportunities to love and play, to learn and heal. Our lives are rich with opportunities and our challenge is to live them to the fullest extent possible. All of us can be the creative artists of our lives, all we need to is unveil the sacred within us.

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In our effort to unveiling the sacred we need to distinguish between two crucial terms: religion and spirituality. The word religion has many meanings; in particular it implies a concern with man-made dogma, doctrine, rituals, rules and regulations deemed necessary to live a sacred and moral life. The term spirituality, on the other hand, refers to direct experience of the sacred, of God – the great discovery that all great spiritual teachers found.

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Spiritual practices are those that help us experience the sacred—that which is most central and essential to our lives – so that we may realize for ourselves the great discovery.

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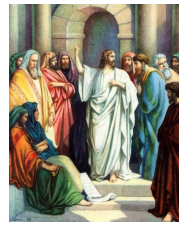


“Be of good cheer I have overcome the challenges and you can too!” So how did he do it?

Jesus knew about the difference between religion (letter of the law) vs spirituality (spirit of the law).

When we look at his life as recorded in the new testament we find that he violated many of the rules, regulations, doctrines and ritual that told Jews how to be good Jews.

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He hung around thieves, prostitutes, the unclean, and tax collectors; he worked and healed on the Sabbath, he threw the money changes out of the temple, he chastised those who prayed in public.

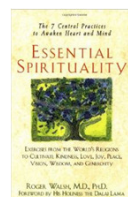
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His message was about love. The love of God, then oneself, then to others. To worship God in spirit and in truth. Then to let your light shine for others to see. After a year of teaching and healing, I think his message to the people of his day was:

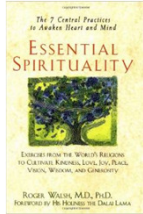
You can be spiritually more in 34!

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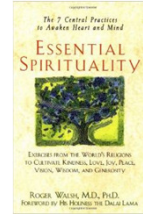
Dr. Walsh shares his great discovery: *There, within ourselves, we finally find the most profound, the most meaningful, and the most important discovery any human can make. Within ourselves we find our deepest self, our true Self, and recognize that we are not only more than we imagined but more than we can imagine.*

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We see that we are a creation of the sacred, intimately and eternally linked to the sacred, and forever graced and embraced by the sacred. This is the greatest of all discoveries, the secret of all secrets, the priceless gift that is both the source and goal of the great spiritual teachings.

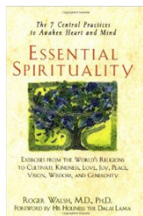
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There are seven principles that can help anyone find and realize their own great discovery:

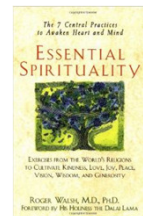
- 1. Start easy.** Change of any kind can be very challenging. Start with one goal in mind.
- 2. Decide how long.** Commitment is crucial to any change of habit or behavior. Set a realistic time line that fits you.

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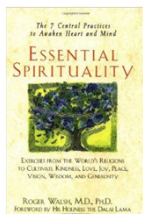
3. Make no exceptions. Excuses are the cancer that destroys all good intentions. So until the new habit is established make no exceptions to your commitment. If it is to learn how to stay in the silence for 5 minutes, then just do it. No exceptions, no excuses. Ego plays very hard in this area of our lives.

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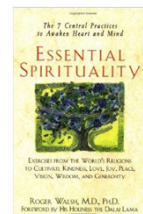
4. Look and learn. As you move through the process look at what you are feeling, experiencing. What are the resistances that ego is placing in front of you? Then learn as much as you can from experiences so you can use it later. Keeping a journal of your process is part of recording your experiences and resistances. In this way you can go back and see what worked and didn't work.

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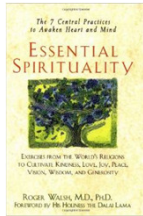
5. Be gentle. Be kind and forgiving with yourself. Mistakes are a part of the learning process and need no condemnation. After all these are spiritual practices, and if you could do them perfect then there would be no need to practice them.

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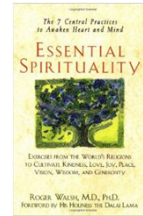
6. Start Again. So what if ego got the best of you on Thursday and you didn't practice 5 minutes of silence. Start again on Friday. In order to be successful, you have to have the courage and strength to start again, no matter what.

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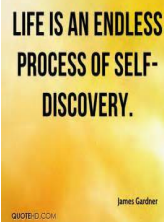
7. Enjoy yourself, you're not alone. This is spirituality, not religion. You're suppose to have a good time with it and those who are on the path with you. A religious life as Jesus saw it was one of teeth-gritting sacrifice, and of solemn martyrdom to a punitive God. He stood up and said, "No! God is a God of love, not sacrifice. Let's enjoy life, and let's do it together."

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So when you are faced with a challenge while practicing your spiritual principles and you don't have someone to call, turn to one of the many spiritual teachers who have gone before you and in prayer and meditation ask for guidance, support, strength to see it through. Enjoy yourself, you're not alone.

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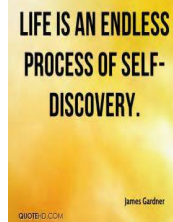


All our great spiritual teachers found the great discovery of self-discovery and it was this:

From Confucianism:
Those who know completely their own nature, know heaven.

From Buddhism:
Look within, you are the Buddha.

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From Judaism:
He is in all, and all is in Him.

From Jesus we have:
The kingdom of heaven is within you.

From Mohammad: *Those who know themselves know their Lord.*