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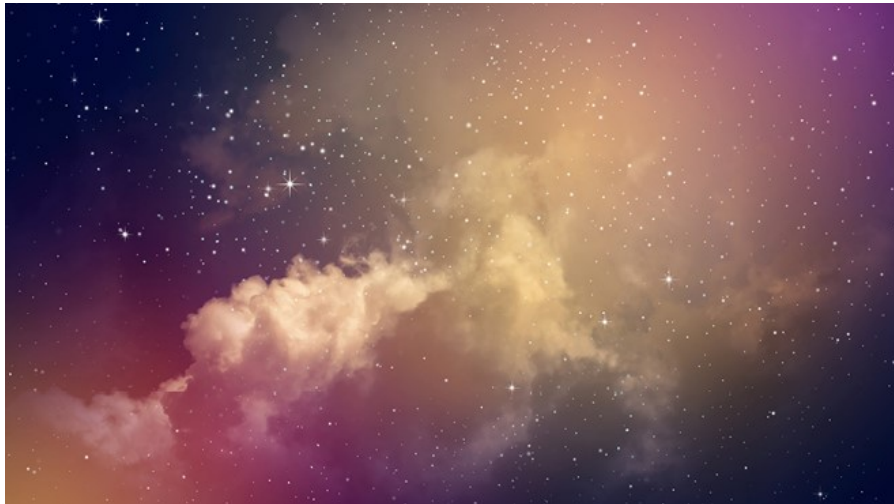
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Getting a spiritual checkup during the COVID-19 pandemic



A few years ago, I told my family care provider that I was here for my annual physical exam so I can go back at 'em for 3,000 more smiles. My physician instantly recognized the traditional car oil change schedule of 3,000 miles to smiles comparison.

In the same way that a physical exam benefits our physical bodies, it is important to have a spiritual checkup on an annual basis, as well. Our spiritual lives need regular fine-tuning to work at optimal efficiency.

While a physical exam helps to ward off serious illnesses, a spiritual checkup enables us to have better quality of life, helps with spiritual coping and secures overall peace in our lives.

The COVID-19 pandemic offers us the opportunity to give extra TLC to our spiritual lives. As you consider a spiritual checkup, it is good to start with baseline data that gives you insights on changes you may wish to make. In our spiritual lives, symptoms that something is wrong may go unnoticed and affect our lives in negative ways. You may not see the urgency of the moment and do something to fix it.

This article will examine practical ways of how you can fine-tune your spiritual life using a spiritual checkup. What an opportunity of taking a new spiritual journey — and there are no COVID-19 pandemic restrictions for this journey.

Here are tips to get you started on your spiritual checkup:

Make a commitment to the spiritual experience and stick to it.

In the sci-fi epic "Star Wars," the divine is pictured as a spiritual force that binds everyone together. One of the best examples of a spiritually healthy person in the franchise is Jedi Master Yoda. It is apparent to me that this character spent time growing in the spiritual force rather than neglecting his spiritual life. He saw the value of religious basis of the force and built his spiritual life by becoming one with the force.

For you, this commitment could look like promising to do good works or praying daily to your deity. This is not a one-size-fits-all and it is different from one person to the next.

Start with something and use it as a springboard.

Someone once told me that every person has an unlimited capacity for spiritual growth. For this reason, the key is to start with something as the springboard for spiritual growth. This could be attending a spiritual retreat, getting involved in a study of a good spiritual book or many other activities.

For me, this start began when I attended a discipleship course in the 1980s. I will always remember the outcomes that I experienced as a result of this experience. Like the derivative in calculus that tries to get closer and closer to a specific number, a diligent and vigilant-minded, faith-committed person will be devoted to their spiritual life and choose to make it a high priority.

I see religion and spirituality as noncompeting entities so a person's path to either should not be judged. After all, the purity of the heart is the key ingredient. God has a way of communicating the truth to people who have made a commitment to serving the spiritual one.

Examine past failures for growth opportunities.

At various points along this commitment journey of faith, it may seem like you are spinning your wheels or taking five steps forward followed by four steps back. Personally, I feel I am getting closer and closer toward perfection or maturity when I fail. Often, we learn more from our failures than our successes in the spiritual realm.

Your commitment moves you forward along the spiritual plain and you should look for results in the short and long terms. A good example is a jigsaw puzzle. It gets a little easier as more pieces fall into place. It doesn't just happen, but this can come in the form of acquiring new knowledge, attending religious activities and performing various service activities. With the COVID-19 pandemic, many activities must be completed virtually due to social distancing guidelines.

Set goals for spiritual development.

Yes, it is important to assess where you are now with your baseline spirituality. Maybe you made a commitment to do this in the past and you failed to continue the work, but it is never too late to get started again. However, setting a new goal moves you forward.

The COVID-19 pandemic enables you to develop new goals because our regular routines have been shaken. Remember to measure your goals so that you can celebrate your successes later. Best wishes on the journey ahead.

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