



Spiritual guidance is a subtle compass rooted in intuition, flowing from within and beyond, urging us toward truth, compassion, and the mysteries of existence. It moves without words as light in dark places and warmth in cold spaces and leads us, not by certainty but by trust, nudging us to listen deeply, see beyond what is visible, and feel the presence of something greater.

## Chapter 5: Spiritual Faith & Inner Guidance

As I contemplated, wrote, and edited this book, I was conflicted about whether or to what extent I should focus on where spiritual beliefs come into play vis-à-vis the topics I'm discussing. You see, I don't subscribe to certain mainstream ideas about the Judeo-Christian God. I have my ideas, instead. Yet, I don't want readers to turn away because we have different views and beliefs about supreme beings. Regardless of my views, religion plays an important role in most cultures. So, I acknowledge the need to tread thoughtfully and carefully in this chapter.

While these pages touch on religious faith, the book does not rely on religious principles. While the general principles of spirituality often align with my ideas, the book's broader themes are not rooted solely in faith in a supreme being or spiritual entity. This work invites you to consider these ideas independently, with or without a belief in a higher power, and to engage with the reflections in a way that resonates with your experiences.

### Early Curiosity

I grew up in a family whose members didn't necessarily believe in God or practice organized religion. My parents never took us to church or participated in religious ceremonies. Nonetheless, I was always curious about what faith meant to other people, especially because friends at school talked about



their church experiences. In high school, I often went to church with my friends to understand what they were experiencing. I didn't feel drawn to any belief, but I wanted to better understand what meant so much to them. Attending church gave me a window into different ways of thinking about life and purpose, even though church involvement wasn't a part of my family's routine.

Something changed one summer when we came up from Florida to visit my grandma in New Jersey. My mother, who had always been somewhat agnostic, suddenly announced to my dad that she wanted my brother and me to be baptized "just to make sure." To this day, I'm not entirely certain what prompted her change of heart. Perhaps it was her version of spirituality, a precaution against the unknown. I was around twelve, and my brother was five, so we didn't fully understand the gravity of my mother's decision. Still, I recall feeling a sense of excitement mixed with curiosity.

During one trip leaving New Jersey to return to Florida, my





mother decided it was time, so we turned into a random Lutheran church. The stop at this church was spontaneous, unplanned, and a bit surreal. However, the experience was defining, even though I don't know the church's location. We were baptized on the spot—a quick, unceremonious ritual that left me feeling like I'd been anointed by something significant, even if I couldn't define what that was.



Years later, after I'd married and had my daughter, I thought about the day we pulled into a church in New Jersey. I was living in northern New Jersey, and having my daughter made me want to reconnect with that part of my story. I decided to take a drive to see if I could find the church as if finding it would tie together these fragments of belief, memory, and family legacy. My daughter, wife, and I headed out to see if I could find the church.

Strangely, the car seemed to guide us directly to the church as if it knew the way. I was struck by familiarity when I arrived as if the church had been waiting for me to return. It was one of those moments that felt like a miracle, a serendipitous event that seemed too meaningful to ignore. Standing in front of that church with my daughter in my arms, I felt connected to something larger, a force that had gently woven this experience into my life.

We went inside, where my daughter and wife were baptized, bringing the journey that began in my childhood full circle. It wasn't about converting to a religion or committing to a particular faith. It was about honoring the feeling of a guiding presence in my life, something beyond my understanding that led me back to the church. It was one of many moments in my life that felt like small miracles, moments that, over time, became the basis of my spiritual belief.

### Serendipity & Faith

As I grew older, I began taking notice of these small miracles, unexpected encounters that seemed to carry a deeper meaning. I started to believe that life guided us and that there were forces at work we couldn't see or fully comprehend. While I may not have adopted a traditional sense of God, my spirituality grew from these serendipitous experiences. They seemed to urge me toward certain places, people, and decisions. Although such moments weren't always dramatic, they stayed with me, shaping my view of the world and helping me embrace life's journey.

These experiences also taught me that spirituality doesn't have to fit into a specific doctrine or belief system. It can simply be a quiet awareness of the mysterious and the miraculous in everyday life. The feeling that something greater is at play, even if we can't name or understand it, became a comfort and inspiration for me. For some, such a feeling stems from their faith in God; for others, it is tied to a sense of universal connection, intuition, or inner wisdom. Whatever our spirituality connects us to, it invites us to trust our journeys and be open to the unexpected.



### Unexpected Miracles

Looking back, I realize my mother's spontaneous decision to have us baptized wasn't about subscribing to a particular belief. It was her way of acknowledging the unknown and saying, "Just in case." Perhaps that's what faith is: a willingness to believe, just in case, and a gentle openness to the possibility of something greater.

Ultimately, each of us builds our beliefs based on our unique experiences. My path to spirituality has been a mosaic of small moments, often unplanned and sometimes bewildering. These small moments have shaped my sense of purpose and connection. I believe that these experiences, these "miracles" of my life, are not just chances but rather part of a guiding presence that helps me find meaning, especially when life becomes challenging or uncertain.





I hope you find something meaningful, no matter what you believe. Faith, spirituality, and serendipity aren't about strict definitions or doctrines. They're about finding your compass, your way of making sense of the journey. Whether religious, spiritual, agnostic, or simply open to life's mysteries, you may find inspiration here to embrace your journey with curiosity, courage, and gratitude.



“In faith there is enough light for those who want to believe and enough shadows to blind those who don’t.”

– *Blaise Pascal*