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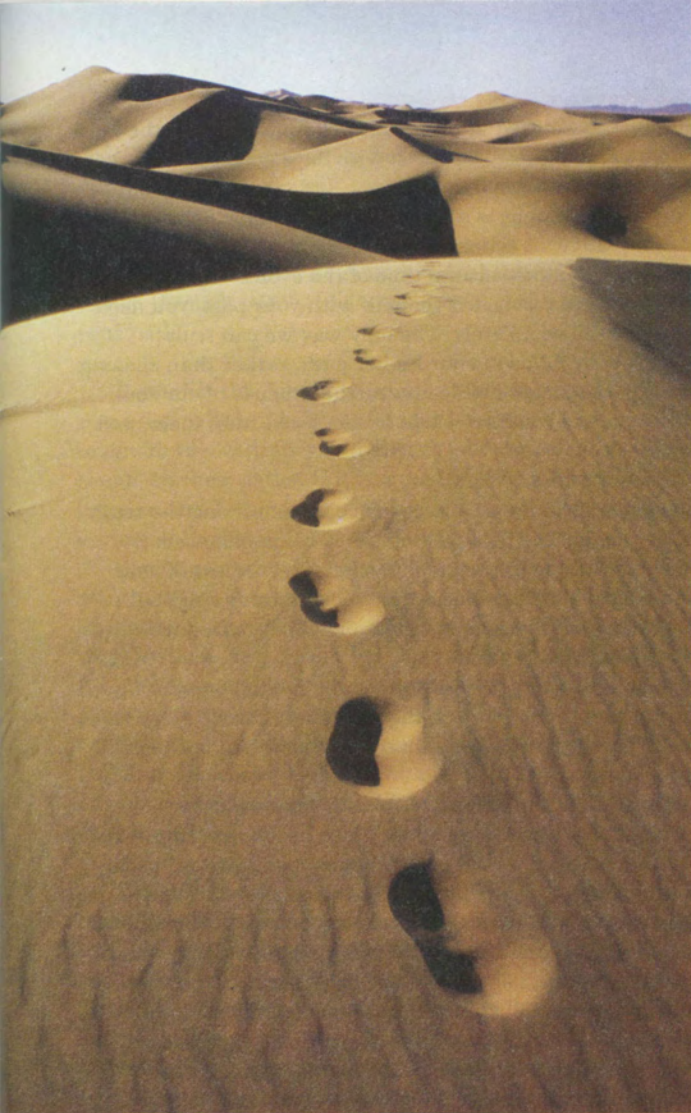
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Mapping a Path to Spiritual Consciousness

by Dawn Mellowship

Spiritual growth can only take place when an individual follows their higher path. This means doing what is right for them. The only way to genuinely know what is right is through our own inner wisdom, our connection to our higher self.

For many years people have pondered on the true meaning of happiness and spiritual consciousness, desperately wanting to realize at least one of them, but often lacking a concrete understanding of how to go about it. There are many views on what spiritual consciousness means, such as the classical beliefs of Gnosticism, Hinduism and Buddhism, and then there are individual's perceptions of what spiritual consciousness means.

What most of these beliefs have in common is that spiritual consciousness is the gaining of spiritual knowledge through correct thought and action.

Spiritual growth can only take place when an individual follows their higher path. This means doing what is right for them. The only way to genuinely know what is right is through our own inner wisdom, our connection to our higher self. This state is within the grasp of all of us, but we have to be prepared to put in the work to achieve it. Spiritual consciousness comes to those who not only seek it, but embrace right living and right thinking, following and implicitly trusting in their intuition.

The path to spiritual consciousness and happiness can seem troublesome, but it is a route that is available to all of us, should we choose to take it. I have broken this path into seven stages.

Seven Stages to Spiritual consciousness

1. Spiritual Bonding

The first stage is spiritual bonding. We are born into a blissful state of oneness and peace with the universe. As we go through life

and experience emotional traumas, as our upbringing, relationships and society affects us, for many of us, these three once united bodies begin to drift apart and become disconnected. We can no longer hear our intuition and instead rely on our physical and emotional bodies for guidance, which are a poor substitute for the voice of our soul.

Our physical body wants us to enjoy physical pleasures and delights. It is interested in money, possessions, fame and power. Our emotional body longs for unconditional love, but without the connection to our intuition, it cannot perceive that love and looks for it elsewhere, in all the wrong places. Sometimes our emotions grow attached to physical desires, because it is easier than communicating with our soul. Our spiritual body is struggling through this, because though it shouts, its guidance falls on deaf ears.

Our aim should be to re-unite these three bodies, so that our physical and emotional bodies are guided by our spiritual body, our intuition. Where our intuition goes, our thoughts and actions follow.

2. Facing Life, Being Truth

The second stage is about facing up to reality and taking responsibility for your actions. Only you can take the steps necessary to transform your life for the better. No one else can do it for you. If they did, you would never learn anything.

Everyone makes mistakes in life and we shouldn't spend our whole lives punishing ourselves for these errors. Instead, we should see them as opportunities for learning and growth.



There are steps we can take towards facing up to the truth. Initially we need to learn to understand and channel our anger in the right way. We have all been through emotional traumas in our lives and most people hold on to these, if not on a conscious level, then on an energetic level. We need to learn and truly understand that there are only certain things that we can change. We have a burning desire for control over our lives, but in reality we are subject to the will of the universe and when we succumb to this will and let it guide us, we become much freer and happier.

Secondly, we need to let go of the worries that plague us on a daily basis. We agonize over so many things in our lives and this leads to an array of health concerns. We rarely seem to take the time to stop and take stock of our lives, yet it is only when we look inwards and take time out for ourselves, that we grow spiritually and become happier.

We need to remember the simple things that bring us joy and make a concerted effort to follow our spiritual path. Once we surrender to this cause, our worries begin to dissipate because our path takes precedence above all else, our awareness expands and we seek our answers within, instead of looking externally.

Thirdly, we need to be grateful for what we have. As the adage goes, we need to count our blessings, by which I mean everything that happens to us in life, whether we perceive it as bad or good. With this acceptance comes genuine happiness.

Fourthly, as I briefly mentioned before, we need to take responsibility for our actions. We cannot learn from life's lessons if we refuse to take responsibility for our own lives. Whatever predicament we find ourselves in, we need to look at our actions and say to ourselves, "how have my actions contributed to this current state of affairs?" You have choices and by taking responsibility for yourself you can readily make the right ones.

3. Self Healing, Self Love

Stage three is about healing yourself physically, emotionally and spiritually and ultimately learning to love yourself unconditionally. Our own personal self-healing is the most important part of our path. We have to accept that we have good and bad, or dark and light within us and without punishing ourselves, allow the light to lead the way out of the darkness.

To self-heal, we need to free ourselves from living in the past. If we are constantly obsessed with days gone by, we forget to focus on where we are here and now and where we should be in the future. Hindsight is a wonderful thing, but unfortunately it only comes after an action and is based on what you know now, not what you knew at the time of the event.

Once you have reconciled yourself with your past, you need to accept yourself completely. The only way we can truly achieve this is by following our higher path, rather than chasing our physical and emotional desires at the expense of our soul. Accept the choices you have made in life, learn from them, and move on.

4. Being Truth, Living Truth

The next stage on your journey is being and living the truth in all that you do. The first part of this is being balanced. By this I mean adhering to your true purpose, regardless of your environment and circumstances and allowing your spiritual body to guide your physical and emotional body, without neglecting your higher path.

Sometimes as you progress spiritually, it can be tempting to retreat into your shell and lock the world out, but we all have work to do here on earth; we all have to function in our mortal bodies.

Following on from balance, within it comes awareness, a deep grasp of the universe and your place in the universe. This comes with hard work and a dedication to your spiritual path. As you progress, you find that answers come to you as and when you need them. With awareness comes unconditional love for yourself and others. Unconditional love means doing what is right for people's souls above and beyond what their physical and emotional bodies' desire. This means being honest and caring for people in a detached way. Sometimes it means physically helping someone, sometimes it involves telling people harsh truths that may upset them in the short term, but are beneficial for their overall journeys and sometimes it means doing absolutely nothing, to teach people that they need to take responsibility for themselves rather than relying on you. Loving unconditionally means loving in a higher way, being able to see the bigger picture and being objective in all situations.

Something that many people find difficult is accepting their higher path, once they are aware of their purpose. It can seem daunting and challenging. It inevitably involves making lots of changes and as I said earlier, we find change very scary. Yet, however difficult it seems to turn your life around, nothing is more rewarding than embracing your spiritual path, nothing else can ever bring you such happiness and love.

5. Being Wise, Having Faith

The next stage towards spiritual consciousness is being wise and having faith. Both are essential. Wisdom comes from learning from our lessons in life and allowing our intuition to guide our thoughts and actions at all times. Spiritual wisdom has nothing to do with intellectual ability, or your life's experiences, or how old you are. Having a great intellect does not mean that someone is trusting their intuition implicitly, going through much suffering in life, does not mean that the individual has learned their lessons. Their suffering, may in some cases, be entirely self-inflicted and a result of their unwillingness to learn from their mistakes. Being older does not mean being wiser, for the same reason. If we are acting against our intuition and still going through the same vicious cycles of behaviour, then we have not learned from life.

By the same token, pronouncing our spiritual credentials does not make us wise. It is not enough to declare "I am a spiritual person", because spiritual means living your life in a spiritual way.

With wisdom comes faith in your path, in your intuition, an unshakable faith that no matter what happens to you and what you go through in life, you will be ok, because you are following your path.

6. Being the Way

If you get this far, the next stage is being a guide for others. Some feel called to help others and no matter how hard they try to ignore this call, they will always feel compelled to aid other people on their paths. If it is a part of your journey it will happen, and helping other people will enrich your life as well as enriching theirs.

Sometimes you will need to tell people things they do not want to hear, but if your intuition guides you to do so, do not be afraid to tell the truth. The key is to show someone a door and then let them decide whether they want to walk through it or not. We cannot make people's choices for them, but we can show them their choices and make it easier for them to decide.

We should all be helping other people, whether it is by standing back from a situation, listening, showing empathy, offering objective advice or just being there when the situation calls for it.

7. Spiritual Consciousness

Once you have journeyed through all these stages you will begin the phase of spiritual consciousness, which is a process in itself. Your physical, emotional and spiritual bodies will become one. There will be no inner discord or struggles, just peace, humility, happiness and eternal wisdom. Unconditional love will prevail and awareness of the universe and your place in the universe will govern your every thought and movement. When you can stop looking and know that all your questions are already answered, you know that spiritual consciousness is beckoning.

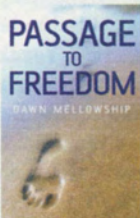
Finding happiness is much simpler than it seems at the outset. The founder of Reiki, Mikao Usui developed five precepts. He studied all the major religions and believed that the core messages of all religions could be broken down into a few simple principles. These are:

- Just for today, I will let go of anger;
- Just for today, I will let go of worry;
- Just for today, I will give thanks for my many blessings;
- Just for today, I will do my work honestly and;
- Just for today, I will be kind to my neighbour and every living thing.

If you can stick to these as much as possible, you will be well on your way to achieving happiness and spiritual consciousness.

About the Author

Dawn Mellowship is the author of three books on self-help and spirituality, as well as being a journalist, ethical stylist and Reiki teacher and practitioner. Her first book *Passage to Freedom: A Path to Spiritual consciousness* (published by O Books) is available now at Amazon.co.uk and bookstores nationwide. She may be contacted via info@dawnmellowship.com; www.dawnmellowship.com

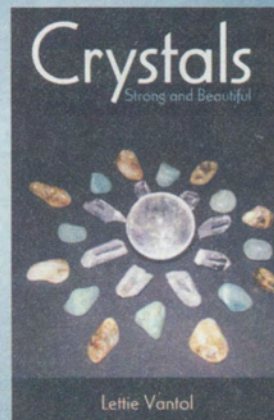


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