

Tip Sheet for Associates' Resiliency and Self-Care

The ways we can care for our spiritual and emotional health are diverse. Resiliency in the face of stress and trials is possible. How do we find strength and peace during these difficult times?

Consider Psalm 1:3. The psalmist uses the image of a tree under environmental stress, encouraging the reader to gain resiliency by cultivating a relationship with the Divine, saying of those persons: "They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper."

"Life is not the way it's supposed to be. It's the way it is. The way you deal with it makes the difference." (Virginia Satir) The one constant in our world is change. The ever-present need is hope. It is during constant change, during times of crises in our world, or when life become hard for us personally, it becomes a time for us to search deep within seeking to reclaim our inner peace – to become spiritually resilient. If we do not, we risk experiencing compassion fatigue, burnout, and becoming distant from those whom we seek to connect at work, as well as at home.

It is spiritual resilience which will make the difference between simply surviving the circumstances in which find ourselves, and truly thriving in our lives as we move forward. Spiritual resilience become the catalyst for growth and development in each person's life. While spiritual resilience may have a religious aspect for many persons, it is about whatever brings us purpose and meaning in our life – that which is the foundation from which we both think and act. In other words, it resonates with that which we value and believe to be important for our lives.

What is spiritually meaningful to you? What generates inner peace for you? To whom do you turn to for support during times of distress or need? Who is part of your support network? Here are practices for wholeness to help you promote holistic health, wellbeing and wholeness:

Discovering Sacred Space: This first practice is entitled discovering sacred space. Consider the places you feel most at peace? For me it the ocean as there is something very soothing and healing about putting my worries and strains out to sea. I also have fond memories of the beach and enjoy returning there to find rest, relaxation, and solitude.

What is that holy place for you?

Image that location. Breathe in the surroundings, the sights, sounds, smells and how it makes you feel. You can claim the holy, sacred, hopeful feeling and revisit those holy places in your mind, heart, and spirit. Accessing these sacred places allow us to move positively forward in our lives and faith. The next time you are worn out and needing a breather, take a moment to take your sacred space to be refreshed and renewed. You can access those places as a means of hope, encouragement and peace at any moment, even now.

Choose how you wish to respond to circumstances, rather than simply reacting to the emotions of the moment. Plan ahead and prepare how you wish to respond in any given situation – then act instead of reacting.

This practice helps be more aware of how our emotions are contributing to our stress. The more aware we are the more we can name the feeling to move forward. Consider when you feel stressed, overwhelmed, or anxious. What is happening with people, places, and events? What triggered your reactions? Consider the emotions below:

***Abandoned Angry Annoyed Anxious Ashamed Bored Burdened Calm Cheated
Confused Concerned Defeated Disrespected Disturbed Edgy Empty Enthusiastic
Entitled Frightened Frustrated Glad Guilt Happy Helpless Hopeful Hurt Ignored
Intimidated Isolated Jealous Joyful Lonely Mad Miserable Nervous Overwhelmed
Pained Pleased Proud Rejected Relieved Remorseful Restless Sad Scared Spiteful
Stupid Tense Thrilled Worried***

Notice your body warning signs such as *muscle tension, headache, sweating, breathing difficulties, tingling, numbness, restless, upset stomach, trouble sleeping, clenched teeth, pain, hot or cold, dry mouth*. Consider how you can stay calm, maintain your power and control going forward. By using positive communication, walking away, meditating, using breath counts, talking to others, and distracting one's self with some other positive activity, you too can move from being only in your feelings to wholeness.

Yield to God, as well as the free will of mankind in order to experience inner peace. For persons of faith, recall the words of The Serenity Prayer. Cease trying to change what is beyond your power to control.

Practicing Spiritual Disciplines: There are a variety of spiritual practices or disciplines across faith traditions that can aid in reducing tension, providing wider perspective, and strengthening our resiliency. Here are a few to consider embracing as a personal practice.

- ***Accountability Partner-*** gives honest accounts to one's choices and priorities
- ***Breath Prayers-*** take a deep breath in and then let go
- ***Care of the Earth-*** honor taking care of creation
- ***Coaching-*** deepening through reflection into open ended questions
- ***Community-*** journey with others in life and faith
- ***Compassion-*** become part of the healing presence to others
- ***Confession-*** acknowledge what you have done and left undone
- ***Contemplation-*** consider the Divine presence in all things
- ***Conversational Prayer-*** open communication lines of speaking and listening
- ***Devotional Reading-*** reflecting and application on spiritual readings
- ***Sacred Texts-*** reading and mediating on what your sacred text says
- ***Self-Control-*** ask God to guide your thoughts, words, and deeds
- ***Fasting-*** letting go of an appetite to seek greater devotion and service
- ***Fixed-Hour of Prayer-*** stopping work or play to pray for a specific hour
- ***Gratitude-*** remembering, recalling, and counting one's blessings, thanksgivings
- ***Hospitality-*** offering grace, shelter, and care to others
- ***Humility-*** to commit to the needs of the greater good
- ***Intercessory Prayer-*** offer the concerns of self and others in prayer
- ***Journaling-*** awakening self through writing and reflection
- ***Justice-*** to enact the good and fair treatment of others
- ***Labyrinth Prayer-*** to make a quiet pilgrimage to God
- ***Liturgical Prayer-*** openness through established traditions of prayers and readings

- **Meditation**- to quiet the mind, body, and spirit through breathing
- **Prayer Walking**- to walk, hike, or journey open to spiritual renewal
- **Rest**- to make space, room, and rhythm to pause and take a break
- **Retreat**- dedicated time a part and away to lead to deeper devotion
- **Sabbath**- set a part at least one day a week for rest and worship
- **Self-Care**- to value and nurture one's self
- **Service**- help, care, and share with others
- **Silence**- to be quiet so to be more present and listen
- **Spiritual Direction**- guiding another in careful attention to our relationship with God
- **Stewardship**- to honor that all that we have are comes from the Creator
- **Teachability**- to remain a lifelong learner
- **Unplugging**- to be fully present to our lives and values
- **Worship**- to honor and adore the sacred
- **Yoga**- to open one's mind, body, and spirit to deeper

Challenge yourself to practice one or more disciplines for the next 30 days. Research has indicated that it takes a full month to alter our behavior, thinking and/or develop a new habit. Spiritual practices ground our lives and actions day by day, practice by practice.

Spiritual Journaling: One's spiritual journey is a lifelong journey to understand and claim one's self and purpose. Part of the way we discover our purpose, discover inner peace, and move forward in our lives. Journaling is one spiritual resource utilized across various faith traditions to center our spirits. We are going to introduce you now to spiritual journaling as well. Think about starting anew, a new discovery of yourself. Open yourself up to experiencing yourself and your potential in new ways and with new eyes.

Reflect upon these questions and write your responses.

- *What can we celebrate in you and where are you challenged?*
- *If time and resources were not a concern, describe things you long to do?*
- *How are you doing with self-care on a scale of 0-10, and what would raise it one notch?*
- *What do you need to honor? What do you need to disrupt? What do you need to realign?*
- *Identify one area you would like to change and how?*
- *Where would you like to go from here?*

Closing: The World Health Organization declared *"for many people, religion, personal beliefs and spirituality are a source of comfort, wellbeing, security, meaning, sense of belonging, purpose and strength."* (Geneva, 1998) It is our foundation of beliefs and values that we possess which brings us relief, as well as the strength to become resilient during difficult times.

We hope you enjoyed this opportunity to learn more about spiritual tools for wellness. You remain in our thoughts and prayers and we look forward to other ways we can help nurture faith and wholeness in your life and work.