

# Example of term paper on spiritual wellness

[Sociology](#), [Women](#)



Religion and spirituality continue to be unrecognized as effective strategies for coping against tragedies and life pressures and as essential factors in self-protection and psycho-emotional resiliency (Bryan-Davis, Austria, Kawahara & Willis, 2014). Despite that, these concepts constitute key pathways towards the holistic health and well-being of women (Bryant-Davis, Gray & Bhang, 2014). This paper explores the influences of religion and spirituality on women's wellbeing, the few specific forms of nontraditional spirituality (such as Astrology, Hinduism, Gnosticism, Yoga, and Meditation), the seven markers of spiritual wellness according to Pazzino (2014), my personal definition of spirituality, my personal spiritual wellness self-assessment, and the impact of spirituality in the field of nursing, specifically registered nurses.

### **Influences of religion and spirituality on women's wellbeing**

Harrell, Coleman, and Adams (2014) defined religion as 'human created' belief systems that provide "doctrinal teachings, symbol systems," and prescriptions on behavior as well as common rituals. In the field of psychology, it is understood as a 'coping resource.' It is often viewed externally due to its central public activities such as worship services (Bryant-Davis, Gray & Bhang, 2014).

Spirituality is experiencing the existence of an infinite, transcendent, and interconnecting energy beyond space and time that may be understood as God, the Creator, the Great Spirit, and the Higher Power, among others (Harrell, Coleman, & Adams, 2014). It helps women find meaning and purpose in stressful situations, which sustains psychological well-being and alleviates burden and depression as well as strengthen family relationships

(Kim, et al. 2011). It had been consistently viewed as an internal process guided by set of beliefs (Bryant-Davis, Gray & Bhang, 2014).

The central influence of religion and spirituality in the lives of women flows from the collective and individual sacred experiences that these practices provided (Bryant-Davis, Gray & Bhang, 2014). Consequently, both imbues women a valuable self-identity as religious and spiritual. However, there are three important influences these concepts brought to the lives of women: the shaping of the female belief systems; behavioral guidance, and; a connection to a personal Higher Power and to the community. All these three influences take critical roles in improving and keeping the women's well-being.

Belief systems that grew and received nourishment from religion and spirituality had constituted as an essential guide for women in their internal and external experiences both in the past and the present as well as in future possibilities (Bryant-Davis, Gray & Bhang, 2014). These systems provide women the vital framework in understanding their lives, attributing meanings to their experience, and in appreciating their challenges, their successes, and their failures.

## **Nontraditional spirituality**

Astrology: Meanwhile, astrology, a type of divination, involves forecasting of earthly and human events through the observation and interpretation of fixed stars, such as the Sun, the Moon, and the planets (Pingree, 2013).

Devotees believe that understanding the influence of the heavenly bodies on earthly affairs allows them to predict the future, their future, and that of their communities and nations. Having learned the prediction, they then

accordingly to favor the occurrence of the positive predictions and the avoidance of things warned about.

**Hinduism:** The pluralistic nature of the Hindu belief system is organic and multileveled (Smith, 2014). Its expansive view of truth or reality flows from its openness to any and all spiritual ideas, insisting that they come from various sources. It acknowledges several existential tensions, such as the relationship between the divine and the world; the disparity between its world-preserving ideal and its longing for release from a flawed world; the tension between the person's karmic destiny and his deep bonds to family, society, and the divinities. In practice, however, this lack of universally accepted standards of belief opened up the society from those who justify their dominance over another, using legitimate social systems of privileges and prejudices (Doniger, 2014).

**Gnostic traditions:** The Gnostic spiritual tradition is not homogenous (Williams, 2014). However, they tend to believe salvation as a reawakening of knowledge of mankind's divine identity. Its myths are highly dualistic, involving a more negative attitude toward the inferior creator god, the cosmos, and the human body as compared to a more transcendent god or order of beings. They also believe that a special group (class or race) of people who descended on earth from the transcendent realm and is destined for salvation and to return to its spiritual origins.

**Yoga:** Meaning "union," Yoga is essentially a philosophical system, one of six such systems in the Indian philosophy (Editors, 2014). It believes in the existence of God who shows the way of spiritual release. This spiritual liberation occurs when the self is freed from the bondages of matter, which

caused so much ignorance and illusions. Yoga achieves this by reversing the evolution of the world until the person reenters its original of purity and consciousness. To do that, the person needs to control and suppress mental distractions in an attempt to detach the self from material objects.

Meditation: Transcendental Meditation (TM) uses a specific Sanskrit mantra characterized by a short word or phrase (Melton, 2013). The mantra is repeated in the mind in order to achieve stillness of thoughts in an effort to reach a deeper level of consciousness. Through TM, the person finds deep peace and relaxation, which leads to “ inner joy, vitality, and creativity.”

## **Markers of spiritual wellness**

Marker 1: Self-love: Fazzino (2014), on the other hand, noted that the foundation of loving other people is to love ourselves first. Self-love is about building in your capacity to love by self-nurturance so that with that capacity you can love others too. It is the overflow of your self-love that lets you love others. Self-love is critical because loving others deplete your positive energies, especially when loving people who do not love you back. Patients need a nurse’s love but oftentimes may not love back. Self-love is also about learning to say “ No” when your cup is running empty. It is about setting aside a time for you to nurture self and enjoy life.

Marker 2: Integrity: Moreover, a spiritually well person walks his talk (Fazzino, 2014). Integrity is about keeping your promises and to not promise if you are not sure you can fulfill it. It is about saying, “ YES,” and mean it; or “ NO” and meant it. It is also about convincing yourself that saying “ YES” to be nice, when you should say “ NO,” is not nice at all. It is dishonoring yourself and those who you promised something and not deliver.

Marker 3: Healthy boundaries: Clear boundaries constitute healthy boundaries. Setting boundaries is about identifying the limit of what you can do and what you should not do. Physical boundaries are visible such as the walls of your office; while non-physical boundaries are invisible, accessible only through mental awareness and feelings.

Marker 4: Self-respect and self-worth: Choices are only truly free when done under the foundation of self-respect and self-worth. Self-respect defines your tolerance boundary; while self-worth defines your self-directed perceptual boundary. Fazzino (2014) believed that both self-respect and self-worth are mutually dependent to each other.

Marker 5: Self-forgiveness: The staunchest obstacle to forgiveness is ego. Ego convinces the person that he or she cannot be wrong in anything, especially in public. Ego derides at the person when things get out of hand as having failed. Moreover, ego wants to beat someone up even if that one is you. Being in the right 'always' absolves the person from asking forgiveness or giving one, the ego goes (Fazzino, 2014). That is true even about personal weaknesses and mistakes where harsher verdicts are made. Ironically, self-forgiveness liberates the person from the bondage of hatred and sufferings. It gives a fresh start, a clean slate with which the person can start over again with compassion to self. Furthermore, there are essentially no mistakes; but mere opportunities to learn, to grow, and become better persons.

Marker 6: Reflection: The ability to set aside time to pause, think, and soak in life is a mark of a healthy spirituality. A fast world imprints experiences in a blur, like eating food without digesting it. Taking time to pause gains you time to visit that inner stillness where you can be fully yourself and fully

available to your life's experiences. Fortunately, anyone can visit stillness anytime, anywhere if a decision is made to make that happen. Stillness is about being available to your mind and bodily sensations in silence.

Marker 7: Availability to your life: Showing up to your life is about being present, really present and available, to yourself in every moment and aspect of your life. Showing up is about going beyond your comfort zone and explore the world beyond. Showing up is also about taking risks with yourself in encountering life to the fullest in every worthy opportunity it presents you.

### **A personal definition of spirituality**

In the meantime, spirituality, as I define it, consists of my awareness of a special spiritual connection between me and God in every facet and aspect of my personal and professional life each moment, each day. It puts value and meaning in all that I do beyond the direct benefits of my actions and decisions. Helping a patient, for instance, no longer look to me like only doing my job but also invites me to care for my patients with all the love I have for myself. I came to know that the patients are not just numbers in medical records; but they are persons, my own brothers and sisters in the same human bloodline, people that I should take care in the same way that God takes care of me with all His love. Spirituality is the environment wherein I responded to God's call to me to let His love flow to others, including my patients, through me.

### **Spiritual wellness self-assessment Q&A**

What is your purpose in life? I believe the purpose of my life is to learn and equip to help make this world a better place to live, make other people

experience the love of God through me.

What activities do you do regularly that bring you joy? I love interacting with my friends through the social media when I cannot leave home. If I can, I tend to join with my friends over food and common activities talking about lot of things. I also love watching movies and reading mystery novels.

Do you believe in a higher power? I believe in the Christian God, the Father and Creator of all things in this world and beyond.

Who can you count on for encouragement and/or rapport? I can count on my family for encouragement and rapport. I feel close to my dad and talks with him about non-personal matters such as career, spirituality, philosophy, books, and movies. We tend to love some authors such as Jack Higgins, David Baldacci, Patricia Cornwell, John Saul, and the late Stephen King. I talk with mom about female issues and relationships.

Who loves you? Lots of people love me. Those whose love I can depend upon anytime anywhere includes God (the Trinity: God, Father, and Holy Spirit), my parents, my siblings, and my best friends. For many times in my life, I have seen them beside me in my struggles and tribulations and behind me in my personal and professional pursuits.

Whom do you love or care about? I tend to love those who loved me first and those who loved me back when I first loved them.

**In what areas are you growing? I believe I am growing fast academically/professionally, moderately socially, and gradually spiritually.**

What activities nurture you? I feel most nurtured in my spiritual readings and in my prayer life. These are special moments when I felt most relaxed and at



peace within, when joy is most profound. In addition, I also feel nurture in special times when I talk with my parents about spiritual and personal matters and

Is there something that you do just for yourself every day? I treasure moments when alone I read books (novels or spiritual) often over a few dishes in my favorite neighborhood restaurant or cafeteria. When I have no class or work, I can spend half a day doing just that, and leave the place very relaxed and tranquil in spirit, mind, and body.

How do you go about forgiving yourself? I tend to be a harsh self-critique in my minor mistakes and weaknesses, which I usually perceive as a result of my negligence, carelessness, or sheer folly. In larger ones, I tend to recall my familiar limitations, things I exert my best about and still fail to achieve what I want to achieve. With that, I then come to recognize my limits, my imperfections, and my need to accept all these and forgive myself.

How do you go about forgiving others? In minor things, I simply let the offenses of others go, or effectively ignored and forgotten. In larger things, particularly those that are personally very valuable to me, I tend to hold a grudge and have difficulty forgetting the offense. Eventually, I gradually learn to accept those offenses as outcomes of the other person's limitations and weaknesses; and then forgive them for all those offenses.

What do you hope for in the future? I tend to hope for the best possible for myself, for my family, for my friends, and for all those people whom I meet every day. May all blessings be with them all the time, especially when they need it the most. I prefer to do my best today, and hope that the future will offer me equally the same opportunities.

What do you do regularly just for fun? I tend to joke around people I trust: my family, my friends, and a few acquaintances I feel I can trust. I simply throw jokes at them, and when I see them laugh in turn, that's already so much fun for me.

## **Impact in nursing profession**

Apart from my spirituality, one central impact of spirituality in the nursing profession stems from the significant influence a nurse's spirituality has on patient care (Kim, et al. 2011). In elderly care, for instance, nurses need to expect psychological burdens in the elderly, such as grief, loneliness, anger, depression, and declining psychological state (Kim, et al. 2011). These spiritual loads often resulted from many forms of losses that the elderly had to face during the course of their long life. Death of loved ones (oftentimes that of the spouse); declining physical health, mobility and functioning; loss of job opportunities and the consequent financial strains – these burdens can suck out the spirit of any elderly, which may eventually lead to a serious compromise of their well-being. Nurses who provide them medical care and general well-being, either in the hospital setting or at home, must also deal with these burdens, which constitutes aggravating conditions that eat at the elderly's well-being. The nurse's spirituality determines her effectiveness in nourishing her charge's well-being. A nurse with healthy spirituality, for instance, communicates (often very subtle manners) a sense of joy, peace, and self-confidence to the elderly. The elderly will feel lighter spirit when interacting with a nurse with vibrant spirituality. That influence alone may turn out to be very strong so that the elderly may later on start to feel renewed in her outlooks in life. The nurse also, through casual conversations,

may help the elderly meaning and purpose in the stressful situations in life and even make sense of a new purpose in a rather unproductive life.

Spiritual care also has positive impact on the nurses' attitudes and knowledge, making them more adaptable to changes in clinical practice such as documentation of patient spiritual needs and encouraging patients to receive visits from their chaplains (Vlasblom, et al., 2011).

Moreover, spiritual nursing intervention impacted positively in sparing the memory of elderly patients suffering from dementia (Ennis & Kazer, 2012).

Involving the spirituality of the patient had showed best treatment response.

Furthermore, spirituality training also resulted to positive outcomes, not just to patients, but also to healthcare providers, such as caregivers, nurses,

physicians, midwives, and the like (Ennis & Kazer, 2012; Attard &

Baldacchino, 2014). Such expansive benefits provide a more holistic impact in the healthcare profession in general.

Finally, spiritual nursing care also has specific impact on the nurses

themselves. It increased their self-awareness of their own spirituality and

nursing care (Baldacchino, 2011). They also came to recognize their role as

change agents in implementing holistic care in collaboration with a

multidisciplinary team.

The influences of religion and spirituality on the wellbeing of women are

undeniable. Both provided them coping resources, which allowed women to

deal with the challenges of life with sufficient guidance. However,

nontraditional spirituality appeared to have limited impacts on women,

owing to its esoteric orientations and at times vaguely defined scope and

limits, making them confusing to follow, except perhaps for Hinduism and

the general practice of meditation, not the specific movements such as TM. Meanwhile, Fazzino's (2014) most recent work in spiritual wellness provides seven markers that involved both the psycho-spiritual and the physical aspects of the person and a sensible guide towards achieving spiritual wellness.

My personal definition of, and direct experience with, spirituality tended to be towards the Christian conceptualization of spirituality instead of the esoteric kinds. It had been an integral part of my life and living, my choices and my most cherished values.

Finally, five impacts on the professional nurses had been determined: better capability in dealing with the spiritual burdens of patients; a wide-ranging impact beyond the nursing care providers; increased adaptability with the changing environment of patient care as well as better attitudes and knowledge; definite preventive and treatment impacts on patients, such as those with dementia), and; an increased self-awareness among nursing professionals in their spirituality and roles as change agents for holistic patient care.

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