

Are You Ignoring This Crucial Element for Any Addict's Recovery?

Spirituality is a crucial element in an addict's recovery. The human being is spiritual, and that part of the human must be nurtured. The spirituality of the addict may not have been nurtured or experienced during his growing up years. Addiction robs the addict of emotional, relational, vocational and sometimes of social and spiritual development. For some addicts, spirituality is a new concept.

Spirituality has minimally two very large facets. The first is the spirituality of just being human. This is our natural ability to be honest, open-minded and able to hear and connect with others in a spiritual sense. By learning to nurture these traits, our intuition can grow back into place. Intuition is the inner part of ourselves where we sense something without having all the information. We recognize something by the feeling or the sense of it. When we violate this "inner voice," we tend to pay heavy consequences.

My intuition has become very crucial in my recovery. It tells me when I am around safe or unsafe people. This intuition is part of my spiritual recovery, which has been a great gift to me. Over time in recovery you need to nurture and develop that voice so that you can hear your spirit—your inner self—talking to you. Spiritual recovery is a dynamic experience, especially in 12-step groups where we are honest with each other and have a sense of empathy and compassion, a sense of genuine willingness to encourage another addict. Spirituality is living in congruence with ourselves.

Spirituality is also the part of us that relates to "a power greater than ourselves." Note that it does not state "a higher

power" in the 12 steps; it says a greater power than ourselves. This is a single power that is greater than all of us. This is not a human power. Those who are past step 2 have come to the concept of having a relationship with God.

Coming into a relationship with God can be a scary thing for some addicts. Many have run away from God or have compartmentalized Him to only one part of their lives. Others with religious backgrounds may have God in a box and bring Him out on Sunday and Wednesday nights. God wasn't in the addict's sexuality, finances or relationships, nor was the addict able to be intimate with God.

Spirituality came to me in a nonreligious experience with the Lord Jesus Christ. This relationship has become a whole-person relationship over the period of my recovery, which has been essential to my sobriety. Many others find this essential also in their recovery. I have worked with many sex addicts who start off from scratch having had no spiritual background whatsoever. Some are antagonistic toward God and have been avoiding Him through their addiction. Others have felt too ashamed to believe God would ever love or accept them again. To those I would only say, stay with your recovery long enough to enjoy the spiritual recovery. Opening up yourself to God, no matter what your belief system, can start as simply as following the first of the five commandments: praying in the morning by asking God to keep you clean today. If this is all you can begin to verbalize to God, that is a great start.

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