

CONNECTING

Healthy Information from the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center  OCT/NOV/DEC 2013

The Healing Power of Spiritual Connections

How do you see yourself? Are you primarily a physical being with occasional spiritual encounters, or are you innately a spiritual being encountering the world through the gifts of body and mind? The way you answer that question offers insight into how you relate to the world, what's important to you, and how you might take care of yourself.

We are offered all kinds of advice on caring for our bodies. Eating well, sleeping well, getting enough exercise; these are all important for our well being. Likewise, keeping mentally sharp, exercising our brains, being mindful are ways of keeping ourselves healthy and in tune with the world around us. While it may seem obvious what we mean when we talk about taking care of our body and mind, it may be less clear when it comes to caring for our spirit/spiritual self.

Spirit, because it works uniquely within each person, can be referred to by different names. One person may call it God, Holy One, Higher Power. Still another, eternal presence or higher consciousness or the higher self. Others may refer to qualities such as love, peace, essence, truth, goodness, life force, depending upon their own religious backgrounds, life experiences, or personal seeking.

Spirituality, then, refers to one's own unique and personal journey in life and how one relates and opens to spirit in everyday living. Spirituality can contribute to the richness of one's life by helping one recognize and build qualities such as resilience, hope, patience in times of waiting, trust and faith in a power greater than oneself. For some spirituality may be closely connected to their religious tradition and beliefs, while for others, no such connection exists.

There was a time when spirituality and religion were once used synonymously. Over time, the word spiritual gradually came to be associated with a private realm of thought and experience while the word religious became a way to understand public membership in religious institutions, participation in formal rituals, and adherence to official denominational doctrines.

The rising group of individuals who identify themselves as "Spiritual But Not Religious" (SBNR) has been criticized by some as being too egocentric. In that sense spirituality has been deeply misunderstood. A growing spirituality leads to a letting go of false ego, an awareness of the essence of love that is at the heart of each person, and a deepening relationship with all

that is holy. This inevitably leads outward to greater concern for the "other" and the desire for well being and peace everywhere. In a world full of brokenness, growing attention to spiritual life may be exactly what is needed to find healing in our religious institutions, our communities, and our world.

At the Center, we find that those who seek counseling come because they are experiencing some kind of brokenness that affects their sense of wholeness and consequently their quality of life. This brokenness might express itself in conflicted relationships, in physical ill-health, or in an inability to care for themselves in some primary way. Most likely, it has affected how they feel about and see themselves, as well as their sense of belonging, and the meaning and purpose that make life worth living.



In the midst of life's struggles, attending to one's spirit may offer healing connections with one's self, the Divine, others and the world. These connections are unique to each person and come in many different ways. One might insist that healing connections come within community. Another may say that connections with the holy discovered in the beauty of the natural world, the sound of a baby's cry, the touch of a caring friend are what are most needed for healing to occur. However they come, spiritual connections are unseen forces or energy, threads that weave through and give life to each person's unity of body mind spirit. They cannot be measured or quantified. They can, however, be accessed, discovered, experienced, and developed to help each individual open to his or her potential.

One core value that guides the work of the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center is appreciation and respect for the wholeness of each individual, a wholeness that embraces body mind spirit. Individual and group spiritual direction are available. [PrairieFire](#), a two-year spiritual immersion program, is another path offered for this exploration. [PrairieFire](#), which began in 2008, will welcome its fourth class in the fall of 2014.

Kathy Reardon, R.N., M.S.
Diane McClanahan, B.S.N., M.Div.

Kathy Reardon is a holistic nurse, spiritual director, and Healing Touch Practitioner. She holds a bachelor of nursing degree from the College of St. Scholastica and a Master of Science degree in counseling from Drake University. Kathy combines Healing Touch with other holistic approaches to assist her clients in growing in self-responsibility, empowered well-being, and wholeness. She has a special interest in working with those in trauma, life threatening

illness, grief and loss, and critical life transitions. As a spiritual director, Kathy plans and facilitates retreats, and presents programs on prayer, spirituality, and adult faith formation.

Diane McClanahan is the Director of the Institute for the Practice of Ministry at the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center. Diane holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing from Duke University and a Master of Divinity degree from Yale Divinity School. An ordained elder in the United Methodist Church, she has served congregations in Connecticut and Iowa. Diane is a spiritual director, clergy coach, church consultant, and conflict mediator. Her interest is in providing spiritual and educational programs and consultation to assist spiritual leaders and their congregations to meet the needs of their communities.

Further readings:

Nepo, Mark. *The Book of Awakening*. San Francisco, CA: Conari Press, 2000.
Taylor, Barbara Brown. *An Altar in the World: A Geography of Faith*. NY: Harper Collins, 2009.

C.O.O.L. Corner

Children Overcoming the Obstacles of Life

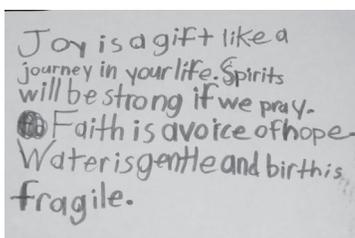
"Spirituality Through the Eyes of a Child"



- nature
- outside
- play
- relationships
- prayer
- water
- loving
- magical
- intentional moments
- peace
- sunrays through the clouds

While playing a game in his counselor's office, a 9-year-old boy noticed something unusual at the top of a tree swaying in the wind outside. He and his counselor tiptoed quietly outside so as not to disrupt the animal trying to keep its balance in the tree. As the two squatted to gaze in wonder at this animal seemingly too big to be at the top of a slender tree, a baby deer and its mom stopped in the trees to stare at the two humans. While appreciating this special moment with the animals, the boy noticed a squirrel in the grass nearby who

also had stopped all activity to watch the humans. Several quiet, peaceful minutes passed with all of the animals being one in spirit with each other before scurrying on to their own individual journeys.



BICYCLING and GRATITUDE

He did it! Ellery Duke, Ph.D., executive director of the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center, fulfilled a long held ambition of his – to ride his bicycle across America. By luck and grace and sheer determination, he managed to pedal every



inch of the 3,571-mile route over the 32-day journey! Some of it was very rough going. (pictured here in Wyoming)

THANK YOU to the 177 individuals who joined "Team Ellery" by making a donation to the Center's Counseling Assistance Fund. Your support of Ellery's extreme effort on the bicycle provided an emotional boost through the really rugged patches. In Ellery's own words from his blog on the final day of

the journey: *"I am delighted to have accomplished this, and overwhelmed with the support of so many. You will never know how much your prayers, messages and thoughts have meant."*

Ellery's hope was to bring attention to the needs of the many individuals and families who cannot afford counseling and to inspire others to help us make counseling available to them through donations to the Center's Counseling Assistance Fund. Bravo! Mission accomplished! Ellery's Ride raised over \$30,000 for the Counseling Assistance Fund. We could not be more grateful!

"Having something to anticipate, even if accompanied by anxiety, creates new energy."

To read all of Ellery's REFLECTIONS on his cross-country ride, please visit the Center's website, <http://dmpcc.org/whats-new/>.

Working with the Neurobiological Legacy of Trauma – A 10-week Course

Dates: November 23, 2013 - February 7, 2014 (no class 11/29 and 12/27)
Time: Fridays, 8:00 – 10:00 a.m.
Location: Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center
8553 Urbandale Avenue, Urbandale 50322
Cost: \$100 plus optional texts
Facilitator: Susan Ackelson, LISW
To Register: Contact the Center ~ 515-274-4006 or info@dmpcc.org

Susan Ackelson, LISW, will be facilitating a professional conversation around the viewing of Janina Fisher's 10-week webinar. Topics to be covered include:

- Implications of the neurobiological research for trauma treatment
- "The body keeps the score:" the somatic legacy of trauma
- Using mind-body techniques in traditional talking therapy
- Disorganized attachment and the therapeutic alliance
- Dissociative phenomena in the everyday lives of survivors
- Working with shame and self-loathing
- The challenges of self-destructive behavior

Spring 2014: Soul Care for the Professional Listener – A 10-week Course

Fridays, February 14 – April 18, 2014
Instructor: Kathy Reardon, R.N., M.S.; 15.00 CEUs; \$200

The Center Welcomes a New Counselor



We are delighted to be welcoming Christine Dietz, Ph.D., to the Center. To make an appointment with Christine, please call the Center, 515-274-4006.

Christine Dietz is a Licensed Independent Social Worker, spiritual director and Reiki Master. She received her M.S.W. from the University of Iowa and her Ph.D. in Sociology from the State University of

New York at Buffalo. She is a graduate of the Lev Shomea Training Program for Spiritual Direction in the Jewish Tradition.

Christine's focus in counseling is on helping people reconnect to their innate wholeness and renew their sense of hope and possibility. She works with people experiencing anxiety, depression, OCD, trauma, life transitions, chronic illness, grief and loss, and relationship issues. She also offers individual and group spiritual direction to people from all faith traditions. She is a member of the National Association of Social Workers and Spiritual Directors International.

Sacred Pause: Refreshing Body, Mind and Spirit



The Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center's Institute for the Practice of Ministry is pleased to offer Sacred Pause, a retreat for clergy, scheduled during the natural pause in seasons between Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter. The retreat will include a workshop and group time as well as space for individuals to choose

from a variety of ways to nurture body, mind and spirit. Yoga, Massage, Spiritual Direction, Coaching, Energy work including Healing Touch and Reiki will be available along with free time for walks or a needed nap. The retreat will take place on the beautiful grounds of the Christian Conference Center in Newton, Iowa, where each participant will have a private hotel style room and bath.

Dates: Arrival – Sunday afternoon, January 5th, 2014
Departure – Tuesday afternoon, January 7th, 2014
Place: Christian Conference Center
(5064 Lincoln St. Newton, IA)
Cost: \$250 Includes the cost of the workshop, room and all meals. Participants may choose additional opportunities:
• Spiritual Direction: \$40.00
• Coaching: \$40.00
• Energy Work (Healing Touch, Reiki): \$40.00
• Massage: \$15.00; Yoga: No additional fee

Faculty: Kevin Pokorny, Kathy Reardon, R.N., M.S., Dianne McClanahan, B.S.N., M.Div. Registration is limited to 12 people on a first come first served basis. Contact the Center at: 515-274-4006 or info@dmpcc.org

PREPARE/ENRICH Training

A PREPARE/ENRICH training will be offered at the Center for those who do premarital and/or marital counseling with couples. PREPARE/ENRICH is a customized on-line assessment that identifies a couple's strengths and growth areas. Training will prepare clergy and counselors to interpret and help couples discuss and understand the results of their assessment. Through this process, relationship skills are built as couples:

- Explore strengths and growth areas
- Strengthen communication skills
- Identify and manage major stressors
- Resolve conflict
- Develop a more balanced relationship
- Explore family of origin issues
- Discuss financial planning and budgeting
- Establish personal, couple and family goals
- Understand and appreciate personality differences

The 1-day training includes all the materials you will need to get started using PREPARE/ENRICH in your setting, as well as a complimentary online scoring credit.

Date: Friday, January 17, 2014
Time: 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Location: Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center
8553 Urbandale Ave., Urbandale
Fee: \$175
To Register: Contact the Center at (515)274-4006 or info@dmpcc.org

About the Trainer: Daniel Earle, Psy.D., is a clinical psychologist at Glen Haven Counseling Resources. He works with individuals, couples and families with anxiety, depression, stress, interpersonal conflict, marital relationships, vocation, and life transitions. He is also very active in providing outreach and educational resources on topics such as premarital preparation, marriage enrichment, parent skill building, blended families and career assessment.

PrairieFire A Program of Spiritual Renewal and Formation A new two-year class begins in September 2014

This program is for those who want to gather with others to:

- explore contemplative spirituality
- deepen spiritual awareness
- create new ways of building community and living authentically in an increasingly challenging, unpredictable, and chaotic world.

Class is limited to 26. Application materials are available online, www.dmpcc.org, or by contacting Kathy Reardon, RN, MS, at the Center: (515) 274-4006 or kreardon@dmpcc.org. Applications will be accepted beginning 12/1/13.

CONNECTING

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Counseling Center

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Mediating Congregational Conflict

“Diffusing the Dynamite: Leading congregations through conflict to transformation”

Save the date: Friday evening Feb. 21 – Saturday, Feb. 22, 2014 Kay Kinkle, M.A., and Diane McClanahan, B.S.N., M.Div., bring together their training at the Lombard Peace Institute with resources from a variety of experts to help pastors and lay congregational leaders learn and practice skills to de-escalate conflict situations and identify healthy ways to foster respectful discussion of disagreements that can lead to congregational transformation.

Innovation!

“Churches desperately need innovative thinking, whether they’re struggling to stay alive or building on their positions of strength.” (Tom Dicklemen)

Tom Dicklemen, author, pastor and director of The Center for Innovative Ministry (<http://centerforinnovativeministry.com>) will offer a workshop for clergy and members of their congregations to develop an innovative project for their ministry. Plan ahead! Save the Date: Thursday, March 20, 2014.

Year-End Giving

The holidays can be difficult emotionally for many people. The Center is able to offer help through quality counseling on an ability-to-pay basis thanks to donations from individuals like you. Please consider a year-end contribution of cash or stock to support our work with clients who could not otherwise have access to the hope and healing of counseling. Call Kathleen Murrin at (515) 274-4006 or mail your tax-deductible gift to the Center.

Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center FOUNDATION

One very prudent resolution for the New Year would be to find out more about the fiscal advantages to you and your heirs in naming the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center FOUNDATION as beneficiary for all or part of your IRA/401(k)/retirement fund assets. These are tax-deferred, not tax-free, assets. Leaving all or part of your retirement funds to the FOUNDATION means your hard-earned savings would not be diminished by estate or income taxes. Your tax adviser or financial planner can help you with this.