

Spiritual /Global Psychology Essentials

Coherence: the experience of the dynamic and ongoing integration of many diverse elements in a system, be it an individual, group, culture, nation, into an harmonious whole that is powerful and creative and aligned with the spiritual forces of the soul, or souls, in that system.

Kosmos: the experience of differentiated union with the Universe in which no detail is lost, and yet there is interconnection among all aspects of Life. This can happen at all levels--person to planet-- and is an experience of spiritual union that does not depend on religious belief, and/or practice, but is embedded intrinsically in our human nature. It is the immediate and total apperception of the beauty of the Universe, of which we experience we are an indelible part.

Resistance: the experience of separation from the Universe, generated by psychological and spiritual experiences that limit consciousness and contribute to fear and ignorance within human beings, and their concomitant reactive attitudes and behaviors. These are endemic to the human species from person to planet, and need to be embraced and studied in detail and worked with so that gradually coherence and kosmos are restored and strengthened at all levels.

Process: the experience of a natural flow of life force within body, feelings, mind, and soul-- again at all levels-- in the present moment that moves us toward coherence and kosmos. It includes all elements of our experience, including all levels of resistance, and works with these elements in ways that lead naturally in time and space to healing, expanded consciousness, and constructive behavior in individuals, groups, cultures, nations, and the species as a whole.

Mystery: the experience of the Unknown being ever-present and an ally in this work; the challenge to welcome it and to cultivate our capacity to embrace it as a constant aspect of our existence, again at all levels.

Responsibility: the experience of acknowledging that there is no one to blame, neither neighbor nor God, for our condition, and that we have the freedom to choose, as human beings, how we respond to the circumstances we find ourselves in.

Body: the experience of our bodies as holy and expressive of spiritual force and as bearers of the myriad sufferings that spring from our resistance and separation. Physicality is integral to spiritual experience.

Death/Rebirth: the experience of constant change and transformation, leading to new development and evolution moment to moment and over the course of life-- again, at all levels. Death/rebirth underlies process and works with resistance toward greater coherence and kosmos.

Presence: the experience of being in the present moment, which touches the Eternal Now, and of learning to rest there and return there again and again, when we are distracted, as the touchstone of spiritual life on earth.

Planet: the experience of participation in, and inter-connection with, all Life on the earth and with the Life of the earth herself. This experience enhances our individual uniqueness while simultaneously providing an experience of being an integral part of the communal Life of the earth.

Love: Love embraces patterns, principles, and practices that express, or reflect, its essence but it is a foundational element in and of itself. It is a force that operates in and through the sense of separation between human/nature and spiritual/source, unifying them and elevating them within an experience of consciousness unavailable in any other way. Love, as a state of consciousness and expression thereof, is a mirror of the human condition -personally and globally.

The power of the experience of love, its transformative power, is the primal life-changing power of beauty when it is freely expressed and fully released. That primal life-changing power is both glorious and terrifying, embodying the paradoxical truth that love is the means by which our hearts are cracked open to our own joy and our own despair. It means that love can, and does, wound and is at the same time the only cure for the wound itself.

In *THE POWER OF MYTH* (text version), Joseph Campbell states, "...Love is the burning point of life, and since all life is sorrowful, so is love. The stronger the love, the more the pain. Love itself is a pain, you might say- the pain of being truly alive."

I suggest that love is the lubricant with which the soul hones itself upon the whetstone that the spiritual adversary so generously, and eagerly, provides.(Sue)

Diversity: The more difference the better, held in a context of union, of course. Healthy systems thrive on difference, less healthy systems attempt to reduce it in order to be in control, predictable, whatever. A spiritual practice is the constant welcoming of difference and holding both sides of any polarity in doing this. (Tom)

Compassion: the ability to look deeply and from one's heart space respond to what is being presented. This experience connects us in an authentic way with others. (David)

Community: A group drawn together by a common past, present interconnectedness or shared hopes for the future; an inclusive whole celebrating the interdependence of public and private life and of the different callings of all. (Robert Bellah, Habits of the Heart)(Lallie)

Justice: Restoration of relationship through the amelioration (by opposition, containment, confrontation) of behaviors, attitudes, and social structures that harm, oppress, alienate, or marginalize people.(Lallie)

Hope: A sense, image, or vision of a future reality that nourishes the spirit and strengthens the soul in the present moment (Lallie)

Forgiveness: Perhaps forgiveness should be classified under Presence, because I can only experience forgiveness in the NOW moment, and I often have to "do" it over and over and over again. Forgiveness is not done for someone else. It is done for me. Forgiveness doesn't mean I have to continue interacting with the person, or situation, that has hurt me, and they may need to take the consequences of their actions, but forgiveness means I'm not throwing the person out of my heart. Forgiveness is not something I do, it's something I am. It's keeping my insight, awareness, intuition about a person/situation, but giving up my judgment and fear. I don't know beforehand what the form my forgiveness takes, but whatever action I take in peace, in the now moment, without fear, will be right.

"Forgiveness doesn't excuse behavior; it looks past it to a greater truth."
(Hugh Prather) (Ava)

Complexity: The principle that, as blocks to the fuller expression of Soul are removed, we are able to hold more divergent aspects of our experience. The qualities of dark and light, good and bad are then less often viewed as

dualities and subject to projection. We can thus acknowledge and embrace a broader range of our own attributes, as well as the attributes of others, and of life itself. (Tom)

Reverence: We hold the person/client and all of their experience with reverence. The idea that no aspect and no experience of the person is to be considered any higher or more spiritual than any other--but that all parts of the person, all of their experiences and each moment of their lives are to be held with equal reverence. Trusting that in each moment and through each experience it is their soul incarnating more fully. (Karen)

Patience / Quiet: These involve a trust that the natural movement of spirit is steadily towards consciousness. Often our efforts at drawing out spirit fill the very space that is needed for spirit to enter. This is distinguished from passivity, in that as we patiently and quietly wait, we are vigilant, awake to the first words or stirrings of spirit in ourselves and others. (Jeff)

Reconciliation: Actions that bring about healing and well-ordered relationships between and among the selves of the self, individuals, groups, species and all of the natural environment. (Lallie)

Solitude/Being: the experience of removing oneself from the active world of doing, to allow time to just be. to be with oneself without distraction, to allow our being to explore the mystery of the unknown in us and the world around us in an unfiltered silence. (Joe)

Simplicity: The simplicity of the Now in direct contrast to the complexity of the not-Now. This simplicity is most often experienced in nature when observing something completely. Animals, trees, rivers, etc. It has a particularly powerful effect if my system has been recently immersed and blinded by the complexity of personality conflicts within myself and with others. When I return to the mountains, for example, after an apparent struggle with intra/interpersonal relationships, I'm always immediately reminded of the simplicity of it all. The essence of this simplicity facilitates an ability to let go and life is again taken less seriously. (Knowles)

Intensity/ serenity: Intensity is the experience of extreme energy, strength, feeling, or force. Serenity is the experience of utter calm, or quietude. When serenity exists simultaneously with intensity, the soul is in

the zone of being fully alive. It is those rare occasions when we know this moment in time; it is the one place and the one activity we were born to. We are fulfilled, everything is in balance, and the universe is aligned.(Joe)

Trust/Faith/Surrender: "Trust" and "Faith" are often used interchangeably. The Dictionary and Thesaurus offer the following words to describe both trust and faith-- to believe, accept, or assume without needing verification, assurance, reliance, conviction, confidence. As students, we accept, believe, and rely upon with confidence, the principles of certain psychological thought. We trust (have faith in) these principles and they guide and determine us to trust them more and more. This trust is, in itself, a choice, an act of will and a letting go (of fear). I see that the two (trust/faith and surrender) cannot be separated. To trust requires an act of "surrender". It is a choice and act of will.

Inherent in the term "spiritual" is the recognition and acceptance of a greater "mystery" or "unknown", and to this we must continuously surrender. To return, over and over again, to the present moment requires both at rust/faith in the process and a belief in the wisdom of such a choice. It also requires the ability (practice!) to surrender into the unknown present moment. This surrender is again a choice, a willingness that comes out of faith, or trust.

There is also the act of choosing to "trust" (and surrender to) our moment to moment experience. This comes as we develop skills of self-reflection and "being present". We "surrender" to "what is" and let go of what we want, or fear, trusting that the process will move us towards health and wholeness. (Kay)

Respect and Non-Judgment : A Spiritual Psychology assumes the sacredness of all beings. Active expressing a respect for all life, however it unfolds and materializes, then follows as an "essential". We come to each moment and each being with an attitude of respect and non-judgment, trusting the Soul to be there...guiding and expressing itself, as best it can in every moment. (Kay)

Joy/Laughter: Being present to the delight of life - - an often fleeting yet intense experience of actually enjoying being alive. This sensation is uplifting, vital, radiant, peaceful, creative, fulfilling, harmonious. Experiences of joy are spontaneous. They are moments of grace. The moment between despair and the desire for life is often transmuted by a memory of joy.

Laughter heals, nourishes, and renews. True laughter is the alchemical process that transforms us into radiant beings, uplifting the spirit and restoring balance and fullness. We learn to breathe in the place we thought we could not breathe. The breath of spirit.

Joy and laughter are essential for an experience of full humanness.
(Joanne)

Note: This incomplete and growing compilation of Essentials was put together by students in an advanced course in teaching and group leadership at the Concord Institute.