

Prayer

Place of prayer in the treatment context

According to Sperry (2001), prayer is “the most distinctive and characteristically spiritual of all activities associated with the spiritual dimension” and can have significant impact—positive or negative—on the engagement process (p. 107). Prayer is an vital spiritual activity that is central to most people’s spiritual journey.

Ways to use prayer in treatment

Sperry (2001) notes four ways prayer can enter the treatment process:

1. Clinician prays for guidance about issues in treatment
2. Clinician actually prays for a client’s healing and well-being
3. Clinician prays with the client
4. Client is allowed or encouraged to pray during a session

However, because of the issue of boundaries, threatening both client and clinician, prayer continues to be a sensitive area.

Benefits to prayer

If a clinician chooses to utilize prayer with a client, this can have one or more of several benefits (Sperry, 2001):

- Hope and comfort continue beyond the session
- Expresses a sense that clinician cares for client
- Combats client’s sense of isolation and loneliness
- Enhances trust between client and clinician

What is prayer?

Prayer can be defined as the act of turning our minds and hearts to the sacred. Various religions and cultures pray in different ways, and prayer can be private or corporate, passive or active. Prayer may also be wordless. Various ways to categorize prayer have been suggested.

Types of prayer

Meadow and Kahoe (as cited in Sperry, 2001), describe six kinds of prayer: petitionary, intercessory, thanksgiving, adoration, confession, and meditation. Four different ways to categorize prayer are suggested by Paloma and Pendleton (as cited in Sperry, 2001): ritualistic, petitionary, colloquial, and meditative. Today, healing prayer has also been introduced in clinical settings, and could be considered a fifth type of prayer.

Active versus passive prayer

Categories of active prayer generally include: confession, petition, adoration, thanksgiving, intercession, lamentation, and invocation. Passive prayer is generally thought of as meditation, used by all religions to quiet the mind. We discuss meditation, including in particular centering prayer, elsewhere in this manual.

Evolution of prayer as spiritual intervention

The biomedical model of medicine in use during the past century by modern medicine tends to alienate people from the humanity of their physician and makes people view their treatment as unrelated to other aspects of themselves—mental, social, and spiritual areas. This is ironic, since medicine originally developed in religious contexts, with medicine and religion cooperating in the healing process over thousands of years (McKee & Chappel, as cited in Albert, 1998).

Only recently did the separation of sacred and secular take hold. Throughout most of human history prayer has played a key role in the everyday life of all cultures. The presence of God was felt in daily life; prayer wasn't just for church, but an ongoing experience. Not so with modern medicine, which generally views the entire realm of the spiritual with skepticism (Ameling, 2000).

Although the ancient healing practice of prayer is not generally available in today's healthcare system, a Time/CNN poll said that the majority of Americans believe prayer has healing power, 82% believe prayer can cure serious illness (as cited in Ameling, 2000). Similarly, a NEWSWEEK Poll showed that 72 percent of Americans would like to talk with their physician about faith, and they believe praying to God can cure someone—84% of Americans think praying for the sick improves their recovery chances (Kalb, 2003).

According to Dr. Larry Dossey¹ (as cited in Dubois, 1997), prayer is a scientifically valid spiritual intervention. The former co chair of the Panel of Mind/Body Interventions for the National Institutes of Health claims there is considerable scientific evidence that prayer works. Over 130 studies have examined intercessory prayer, and two-thirds of them report a positive, statistically significant difference (Dubois, 1997).

Dr. Dossey says compassion, empathy and love are the important components of effective prayer. Since Christians believe that God is love, any prayer offered in love has the presence of God.

Approaches to prayer in treatment context

Protocol for praying with clients

Koenig & Pritchett (as cited in Sperry, 2001) suggest a non-intrusive protocol to minimize risks:

- Determine whether prayer fits the client's worldview by asking a question such as, "Some clients find prayer comforting, others do not; would my praying with you be helpful to you?", and then ensuring that client gives clear permission before proceeding.
- If move forward, make prayer very short (one minute) if clinician prays. Preferably, the client prays, allowing clinician to listen, respond "Amen", and perhaps learn something useful during the prayer.
- If client asks clinician to pray, make it supportive, affirming, and hopeful.
- In a subsequent session, explore how client felt about the prayer.

¹ Dossey, Larry, M.D. (1993). *Healing words: The power of prayer and the practice of medicine*. New York: Harper Collins.

General indications for prayer

According to Koenig & Pritchett (as cited in Sperry, 2001), there are five general indications for determining whether prayer is advisable as an intervention:

1. Client clearly indicates importance of religion to him/her
2. Clinician and client are from same religious background
3. Client asks for prayer or does not hesitate if clinician offers to pray
4. Client is stable and has good ego strength
5. Prayer would appear to be helpful to reach treatment goals

Specific indications

Furthermore, Sperry (2001) suggests some specific indications for praying with a client: acute situational stressors such as death of loved one; serious distress, such as divorce or job loss; traumatic medical problems.

Risks to praying with clients

Likewise there are risks associated with praying with clients in treatment sessions. Sperry (2001) cites four risks:

1. Could be dangerous for clients with poor boundaries
2. Could threaten the therapeutic alliance
3. could negatively affect client's psychological stability
4. Could disturb the objectivity of therapist

Theophostic prayer ministries

One particular method of prayer that has met with considerable success is called Theophostic Prayer Ministry (Theophostic, 2005). Its proponents assert that present emotional distress results not from earlier life events themselves but rather from internal misinterpretations of these experiences. Renewal of the mind (*a la* Romans 12:2 in the Bible) should include not only cognitive learning but also *experiential knowing* based on the living presence of Christ through prayer.

In this approach, prayer ministers encourage the client to feel the emotional pain today that is like the pain they felt in an earlier life event which is "lie-based", i.e., based on a wrong interpretation of the event itself. The prayer minister then invites God or Jesus into the situation, and the client is encouraged to sense whatever God wants to bring them in this situation. Many therapists, counselors, pastors and lay ministers have reported consistent, valid results that brought about expedient healing and restoration in the lives of many hurting people (Theophostic, 2005).

In 1535 Martin Luther wrote in *A Simple Way to Pray* about the importance of listening to the Holy Spirit, "...If such an abundance of good thoughts comes to us (when praying) we ought to disregard the other petitions, make room for such thoughts, listen in silence, and under no circumstances obstruct them. The Holy Spirit himself preaches here, and one word of his sermon is far better than a thousand of our prayers. Many times I have learned more from one prayer than I might have learned from much reading and speculation..."

Value of prayer in groups

Prayer can help people in troubling circumstances overcome hopelessness and despair. They can tell their stories, confront issues, and perhaps define desirable outcomes to their problems.

When other strategies seem not to be working, perhaps prayer might be indicated to help clients communicate their hopes for recovery. Instead of simply asking "What is wrong?", therapists might try asking, "What do you pray for?" as a way to trigger new self-revelation in a client.

Self help groups use of prayer

A familiar and significant group-oriented approach that uses prayer in the self-help, 12-step groups. In Alcoholics Anonymous, prayer helps foster identity with the group and offers fellowship, hope and support. Perhaps most importantly, prayer encourages participants to reach beyond themselves to draw strength from a higher power and from other group members.

Other self-help groups have followed this approach, bringing prayer into the opening and closing process of meetings. These institutionalized prayers can give a sense of purpose and commonality to the process of mutual support.

Functions of prayer in group work

- A group leader (and other members) can use prayer to encourage engagement in the group process—especially for people new to group therapy.
- Prayer can encourage readiness for the personal change process by inspiring reflection on personal issues and hopes.
- By entering into the spirit of a group, a client may find prayer is a way to receive social support from the group.
- Expressing prayerful concerns can encourage people to open up and reveal private areas easier than talking self-disclosure.

According to Washington & Moxley (2001), the functions of prayer in group work include:

Prayer as an aspect of cultural diversity

While remaining very personal, prayer is a method of "self-expression that is reflected in culture, religion, social class, and other aspects of diversity" Washington & Moxley (2001). Through prayer, clients can connect to a higher power and reflect on their personal problems in the context of their spiritual beliefs.

Cultural identity affects a person's idea of, and relationship to, a higher power. African Americans at times use prayer (and general religious involvement) to help elevate their self-esteem, and to provide an element of personal control in dealing with broader society (Chatters & Taylor, as cited in Washington & Moxley, 2001).

Healthcare professionals who incorporate prayer into their group work may be responding positively to the culture of their clients. Prayer may interact positively with other modalities to strengthen and enhance the helping process for certain clients (Jacobs, as cited in Washington & Moxley, 2001). Prayer as an intervention may be an expression of holism—an important aspect of recovery and healing—integrating multiple modalities to address all aspects of a client's life. Ignoring spirituality can minimize this key element of recovery for clients who value spiritual interventions such as prayer.

References – Prayer

- Albert, M.L., (1998). *Spirituality and Healing in Medicine*. Paper presented at UC Irvine in 1998. Retrieved March 24, 2005 from: <http://www.learningplaceonline.com/illness/hope/spirit-medicine.htm>
- Ameling, A. (2000). Prayer: An ancient healing practice becomes new again. *Holistic Nursing Practice*, 14(3), 40-9.
- Dubois, C. (1997). Prayer—it's just what the doctor ordered. *U.S. Catholic* 61(10), 25-30.
- Kalb, C. (2003). Faith & healing. *Newsweek*, 142(19), 44
- Sperry, L. (2001). *Spirituality in Clinical Practice*. Ann Arbor, MI: Sheridan Books.
- Theophostic Prayer Ministries (2005). Retrieved March 28, 2005 from the website of Theophostic Prayer Ministries: <http://theophostic.com/displaycommon.cfm?an=3>
- Washington, O.G.M., & Moxley, D.P. (2001). The use of prayer in group work with African American women recovering from chemical dependency. *Families in Society*, 82(1), 49-59.

Centering Prayer

Background on centering prayer

Traditionally called contemplative prayer, Centering Prayer is drawn from ancient prayer practices of the Christian contemplative heritage, notably the Fathers and Mothers of the Desert, Lectio Divina, (praying the scriptures), *The Cloud of Unknowing*, St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila.

For a great part of the Church's history, contemplative prayer was the *goal* of Christian spirituality, but this living tradition disappeared after the Reformation. A spiritual awakening was inspired by the Second Vatican Council. Thousands of people, hungry for a spiritual way, flocked to India looking for spiritual teachers.

At St. Joseph's Abbey in Spencer, Massachusetts, Abbot Thomas Keating began a plan to put the contemplative monastic tradition into an acceptable form for these seekers. Along with two other monks in the abbey (Fr. Basil Pennington and Fr. William Meninger), Keating held retreats to teach centering prayer. Especially for people who were looking for a deeper spiritual experience of their faith, this method apparently met a real spiritual hunger.

Keating "retired" in 1981 to a monastery in Colorado where he continued offering retreats on centering prayer. He developed a series of books bringing together insights from contemporary psychology along with the Christian contemplative tradition. He uses the language of psychology to explain how St. John of the Cross was healed in the unconscious during his "dark nights" of the soul. Keating says contemplative prayer is really the healing of body, mind, and spirit (Olson, n.d.).

Understanding centering prayer

Also called contemplative prayer, centering prayer is a method of prayer that prepares us to accept the presence of God. We respond to the Spirit of Christ by yielding to God's presence and action within.

Not intended to replace other types of praying, centering prayer simply places these other kinds of prayers into better perspective. In contemplative prayer, we open our heart and mind, our entire being to God, the Ultimate Mystery. At the root of all prayer is interior silence. Expressing thoughts or feelings is only one type of prayer. In contemplative prayer we are silent, as we experience God's presence as the ground of our being, the source of our lives (Centering, n.d.).

Communion with God

In an article in Charisma magazine (Goll, 2004), author/minister Jim Goll says the practice of contemplative prayer is the most direct road to greater intimacy with God. An ancient Christian practice not widely known in evangelical groups, contemplative prayer aids in achieving a quieting communion with God—a much desired condition for modern seekers in today's noisy world.

According to Bernard of Clairvaux, the 12th century monk and mystic (as cited in Goll, 2004), there are three Christian vocations: Lazarus, the penitent; Martha, the servant; Mary, the contemplative. Clairvaux says Jesus indicated Mary chose the favored part—contemplation is preferred over activity. Goll notes that the complete Christian life is actually the union of all three.

Goll (2004) says "we must maintain the inner life to be effective in the outer life." In order to step out confidently to do God's will we must go to the abiding place of the Spirit in our hearts.

Three stages of prayer

Foster (as cited in Goll, 2004) summarizes contemplative prayer into three stages:

1. Recollection, releasing all competing distractions to come into the state of Psalm 46:10 (“Be still, and know that I am God”).
2. Prayer of quiet, what St. Theresa of Avila and others have called “the center of quiet” or the prayer of quiet. We wait before God as He embraces us with love and grace, and opens our hearts to receive.
3. Spiritual ecstasy, where we become detached from outer awareness and we are granted the gift of illumination, the spirit of revelation, as we become “filled with God’s pictures, God’s thoughts and God’s heart” (p. 89)

Guidelines for centering prayer

1. Choose a sacred word as a symbol of your purpose to consent to God’s presence and action within. During a brief period of prayer, ask the Holy Spirit to inspire you with a word especially suitable for you. Examples include, Lord, Abba, Father, Mother, Amen, love, peace, stillness, oneness, presence.
2. Sitting comfortably and with your eyes closed, settle briefly and silently introduce the sacred word as the symbol of your willingness to accept God's presence and action within.
3. When you become aware of thoughts, very softly and quietly return to the sacred word.
4. Don’t try to accomplish anything and avoid analyzing your experience.
5. When the prayer period is ended, continue in silence with your eyes closed for a couple of minutes. Two periods of 20 minutes each are recommended each day—one first thing in the morning and one in the afternoon or early evening (Keating as cited in Sperry, 2001, p. 160).

References – Centering Prayer

- Goll, J. (2004). Be still...and know. (adopted from The Seer by Jim Goll). *Charisma*,30(3), 85-89.
- Olson (n.d.). *Thomas Keating: Centering prayer as divine therapy*. Retrieved March 17, 2005 from: http://www.spiritualityhealth.com/newsh/items/article/item_2947.html
- Sperry, L. (2001). *Spirituality in Clinical Practice*. Ann Arbor, MI: Sheridan Books.

Silence

Historical tradition of silence

The religious tradition of silence exists in groups throughout the world—Native Americans, Hindus, Yoga, Zen, Chinese. The Christian tradition—from Abraham to Moses to Jesus—also considers silence to be important. In the New Testament, we read that Jesus often retreated to some solitary place of refuge from the crowds. His advice to followers was to pray in the quietness of a closet. This tradition of silence remains today in both Eastern and Western monasticism.

Historically, the practice of solitary silence existed with all the mystics from Origen to St. John of the Cross. According to Kierkegaard (as cited in Kelsey, 1976), a real Christian “often feels a need of solitude, which for him is a vital necessity—sometimes like breathing, at other times like sleeping” (p. 96).

In his book on positive thinking, Peale (1952) says the daily practice of silence is an effective way to develop a peaceful mind. Every person should spend at least 15 minutes daily in absolute quiet, not talking to anyone, not writing, not reading. Peale suggests throwing your mind into neutral and thinking as little as possible. Imagine your mind is the surface of a lake; see if you can make it appear to have no ripples. In this place of deep inner harmony, listen to hear what is in the essence of silence. Silence is associated with spiritual healing. Peale (1952) says that the rest that comes from a practice of utter silence is of paramount value.

The gift of silence

According to Kelsey (1976), the first step in finding an inner contact with God is learning to be alone and quiet. This process of introversion is the beginning of silence.

The goal of silence is to quiet the commotion of activity in the mind and body, and to center down into a condition of reflection. This means we must shut out intrusive noises from both the outside world and from our inner psychic world. To achieve true silence, we must simultaneously stop both inward and outward activities.

As related by Sperry (2001), people are better able to achieve a sense of calm and inner peace if they are less compelled by compulsions and less troubled by painful affects. Walsh (as cited in Sperry, 2001) says “this peace is the doorway to the sacred, when the mind is focused and unperturbed, if opens effortlessly to its Source” (p. 149). The ability to transform everyday “busyness” into moments of awareness requires regular practice of meditative and focusing methods.

The immediate goal for both Eastern and Western religious meditation is to help the individual achieve self-containment through detachment. For the Eastern religions—Buddhism, Zen, Yoga—detachment is the final goal. However, in Western religion the end goal of detachment is freedom for the individual to discover new, richer attachments to God and to other people (Kelsey, 1976).

Silence as intervention

The practice of introspection

The art of introspection is the ability to silence what is going on in you—quieting your thoughts about everyday things—and wait to see what comes up. It is the ability to examine your own thoughts and feelings. Introspection is not a self-absorbed preoccupation with our inner world,

which can lead us to think we are in total control of our lives and are masters of our own fate. Healthy introspection means we do a frank, truthful examination of ourselves to gain wisdom.

If we are to know what is going on inside others, we must first know what is going on inside ourselves. Knowing our own reactions and motives can help protect us from problems in this area.

Aids in the practice of silence

Kelsey (1976) suggests several ways to come into silence:

1. Writing your thoughts in a journal prepares you to slow down and become inner oriented toward feeling, intuition, and sensation. A journal also offers a place to log the thoughts that come as we attempt to become quiet—it's written down, now I can stop worrying I'll forget it.
2. Breathing is an important aspect to silence, since this function of the body is most sensitive to our inner state. Breathing is one internal function that the conscious mind can control. Deep, rhythmical breathing is both a method for attaining inner quiet and also a *result* of silent religious practice.
3. Eastern practices can be helpful for some people to turn inward—Yoga, repetition of a mantra, concentration on a mandala, or posing an illogical question (a *koan* in Zen) to put the analytical mind at rest.
4. Participation in a prayer group with like-minded people opens the way to silence for some people.
5. Dreams can offer a way back into the place of inner stillness where they originated.

Suggested opportunities for silence

- In group therapy, at the beginning and/or end of every group, have a few moments of silence.
- As an intervention, a clinician might assign a particular client a period of silence each day (or even multiple days), where they do not talk to anyone. Remaining silent for a length of time fosters an inner quieting that helps them get in touch with themselves.
- In a treatment setting, 30 minutes of silence during the day, say just before lunch, gives clients an opportunity to come into themselves. An area set aside for meditation during this time can be helpful.
- Clinicians may find it helpful to take a few minutes immediately before and/or after a therapy session to become silent themselves.

References – Silence

- Kelsey, M. T. (1976). *The other side of silence: a guide to Christian meditation*. New York: Paulist Press.
- Peale, N. (1952). *The Power of Positive Thinking*. New York: Prentice-Hall.
- Sperry, L. (2001). *Spirituality in clinical practice*. Ann Arbor, MI: Sheridan Books.

Mindfulness: Practicing The Presence Of God

According to Sperry (2001), recognizing the sacred in all is one of the essential seven spiritual practices based on material from *Essential spirituality: The seven central practices to awaken heart and mind* by R. Walsh, (1999). *Mindfulness* is a key example of recognizing the sacred in all.

Mindfulness has to do with being totally aware of the present moment, paying full attention to whatever is here *now*. We experience things immediately and directly, accepting whatever is present, focusing on each moment as it is. Mindfulness is rooted in an attitude of acceptance, without judging whether anything is good or bad, valuable or not, worthwhile or not—just experiencing things as they are, in *this* moment. No evaluation, no assessment, just acceptance. Things just *are*.

Deikman (as cited in Sperry, 2001) refers to an “observing self” that sensitively observes feelings and thoughts as they arise in the present. Sperry suggests that this can be a beneficial clinical application of mindfulness because the observing self connects between meditative activities and cognitive therapy strategies.

A great value of mindfulness work is that it allows us to view our behavior somewhat objectively. Being mindful means we are stepping away for the moment from usual judgments and evaluations to simply observe, thereby putting a little distance between us and our usual compulsive behaviors. This helps us take an attitude that allows us to say, in effect, I am not my thoughts; I am not my emotions; I am not my current feelings; they just *are*; I am not required to obey those thoughts or feelings.

“God’s self-disclosure to Israel and the world was mediated not so much by strange prophetic visions such as those of Isaiah and Ezekiel as it was by the intimacy of the inner word and dreams. Israel’s God chose to inhabit the interior recesses of the human spirit—consciousness, memory, and the attunement of wills. The pinnacle of religious observance thus came to be neither pilgrimage nor sacrifice, but recollection—the sharpening of inner and loving attentiveness, the practice of the presence of God” (Woods, 1996, p. 18).

Note: Books by Jon Kabat-Zinn offer more specific details and instructions on how to exercise the spiritual practice of mindfulness with clients.

References – Mindfulness

- Sperry, L. (2001). *Spirituality in clinical practice*. Ann Arbor, MI: Sheridan Books.
- Woods, R. (1996). *Christian spirituality: God’s presence through the ages*. Allen, TX: Christian Classics division of Thomas More Publishing.

Meditation

Meditate means to dwell on anything in thought, to contemplate deeply and continuously; to ponder, to reflect; the turning or revolving of a subject in the mind. Because reaching toward meaning is inherent in human lives, meditation is a generic human activity. It is a way to stop the mindless movement of our lives in order to reflect on the significance of life, refocusing our relationship to its contents and its movement.

Both spiritual and research literatures describe two types of meditation: external awareness meditation, and concentrative meditation. The goal of concentrative meditation is to limit external awareness by focusing on a specific object, such as a candle flame, one's breath, a mandala or spoken mantra. A common form of concentrative meditation is Transcendental meditation (TM)—which some Christian clients may view negatively (McLemore, as cited in Sperry, 2001, p. 159).

According to Sperry (2001), the focus of external awareness meditation is on 'opening up' one's awareness of the external environment. Known as insight or mindfulness meditation, this form of meditation centers on one's awareness of a sacred word, image, or feeling as they consciously occur on a moment-to-moment basis. One of the more commonly practiced forms of mindfulness meditation is Centering prayer, which is acceptable to most Christians (p. 159).

Deemed to be a spiritual practice, meditation is a way to bring oneself into an atmosphere of deep quiet and centeredness. Kelsey² (1976) states that "the goal of Christian meditation is to bring the creative power of the Risen Christ to bear upon the totality of our confused inner being. In this way, growth can begin and one can keep moving toward wholeness, which is one of the marks of the sons of God" (p. 175).

Interestingly, the word "meditation" closely resembles the root meaning of the word "medication." According to Sperry (2001), meditation is thus a method for relaxing the body-mind, reducing blood pressure, relieving stress, bolstering self-esteem and reducing the symptoms of anxiety and depression.

Marlatte and Kristeller³ (as cited in Sperry, 2001) offer guidelines for incorporating meditation into clinical practice—including indications and contraindications. Although clinicians may be involved with teaching spiritual meditation to clients and/or meditating with clients, the quality and spirit of the experience is the most important element of meditation—not teaching doctrines or concepts.

² See Kelsey, Morton T. (1976). *The other side of silence: a guide to Christian meditation*, for "The Hound of Heaven" by Francis Thompson, a derelict, a drug addict, whose inner vision led him through the stench and agony within him until, through a powerful and religious friendship he was saved and transformed (pp. 270-276).

See Kelsey, Morton T. (1976). *The other side of silence: a guide to Christian meditation* for some excellent meditations taken from themes in the Holy Scriptures: *The Birth of the Christ Child: The Image Becomes Man* (pp. 239-242); *The Soul-Room and the Kingdom* (p. 242-246); *The Paralytic* (pp. 246-250); *The Last Supper Together* (pp. 251-254); *The Garden of the Tomb* (pp. 255-257); *The Road to Emmaus*, (pp. 257-261); *The Man Who Fell Among Thieves* (pp. 261-264); *Reflections on the Raising of a Man from Death* (pp. 264-267).

Kelsey (1976) also has a number of other meditations suitable for all audiences, such as a story about a princess, (pp. 267-269).

³ The source for the Marlatte and Kristeller citation from Sperry (2001) is: Marlatt, A., & Kristeller, J. (1999). Mindfulness and meditation. In W. Miller (Ed.), *Integrating spirituality into treatment. Resources for practitioners* (pp. 67-84). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Lectio divina

A particular form of meditation that has been around for centuries is *Lectio divina*, a method of praying with sacred texts, especially Scripture. Described by Pennington (as cited in Sperry, 2001) as the “art of letting God speak to us through his inspired and inspiring Word”, lectio divina is two-way communication, involving a response. Actually, it is a relatively simple three-step process: take a sacred writing and ask the Holy Spirit for guidance; read (or have someone else read) the text for about ten minutes, listening to the Lord speaking through it, then reflect on it and respond; select a word or phrase from the text for reflection throughout that day (p. 162).

A Meditation by Julian of Norwich

God is everything
that is good

And the goodness that everything possesses is God (Doyle, 1983, p. 32).

Stanzas of the Soul

On a dark night, Kindled in love with yearnings—oh, happy chance!—
I went forth without being observed, My house being now at rest.

In darkness and secure, By the secret ladder, disguised—oh, happy chance!—
In darkness and in concealment, My house being now at rest.

In the happy night, In secret, when none saw me,
Nor I beheld aught, Without light or guide, save that which burned in my heart.

This light guided me More surely than the light of noonday,
To the place where he (well I knew who!) was awaiting me—
A place where none appeared.

Oh, night that guided me, Oh, night more lovely than the dawn,
Oh, night that joined Beloved with lover, Lover transformed in the beloved!

Upon my flowery breast, Kept wholly for himself alone,
There he stayed sleeping, and I caressed him, And the fanning of the cedars made a
breeze.

The breeze blew from the turret As I parted his locks;
With his gentle hand he wounded my neck And caused all my senses to be suspended.

I remained, lost in oblivion; My face I reclined on the beloved.
All ceased and I abandoned myself, Leaving my cares forgotten among the lilies.

St. John of the Cross, *Dark Night of the Soul*.

Meditation: Meister Eckhart

My children, mark me, I pray you. Know! God loves my soul so much that His very life and being depends upon God’s loving me whether He would or not. To stop God from loving me would be to rob Him of His Godhood (Meister Eckhart, as cited in Chalquist, 1997).

Meditation: Mystical Emotions, Albert Einstein

The most beautiful and profound emotion we can experience is the sensation of the mystical. It is the sower of all science. The one to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead. To know what is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself as highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty which our dull faculties can comprehend only in their most primitive forms—this knowledge, this feeling is at the center of religiousness. (Quoted by Lincoln Barnett in *The Universe and Dr. Einstein*)

➤ Exercise: mystical moment

Think of a time when you experienced the feelings of awe or of a mystical moment and write about it in your journal. (Howard & Howard, 1985, p. 109).

Meditation: "Amazing Grace" by John Newton (1725-1807).

This hymn was written by former captain of a slave ship after he survived a violent storm where he feared his ship would sink, and he cried out to God, "Lord, have mercy on us." As he reflected later on this experience, he believed God had touched him with grace (Rogers, 1996).

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved.
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come;
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far
And grace will lead me home.

When we've been there ten thousand years
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we've first begun.

Confessions

by St. Augustine

Late have I loved you, O Beauty ever ancient, ever new!
Late have I loved you! And behold
You were within, and I without,
 And without I sought you.
And deformed I ran after those forms of beauty You have made.
You were with me and I was not with You.
You called; You cried;
 And You broke through my deafness.
You flashed; You shone;
 And You chased away my blindness.
You became fragrant;
 And I inhaled and sighed for you.
I tasted, and now hunger and thirst for You.
You touched me; and I burned for your embrace.

(Howard & Howard, 1985)

An Appointed Time For Everything

Ecclesiastes 3:1-13

- time to give birth, time to die
- time to plant, time to uproot what is planted
- time to kill, time to heal
- time to tear down, time to build up
- time to weep, time to laugh
- time to mourn, time to dance
- time to throw stones, time to gather stones
- time to embrace, time to shun embracing
- time to search, time to give up as lost
- time to tear apart, time to sew together
- time to be silent, time to speak
- time to love, time to hate
- time for war, time for peace

➤ **Exercise: Journal Questions**

Which times or seasons are you in?

How do you feel about it?

What pain or joy do you experience because of it?

Identify which times or seasons you have already experienced.

What did you learn from them?

Affirmation: I Am...

My Body

I have a body, but I am not my body. My body may be in different conditions of health or sickness. It may be rested or tired. But it is not my real "I". My body is my precious instrument of experience and action, but it is only an instrument.

My Emotions

I have emotions, but I am not my emotions. They are countless, contradictory, changing, and yet I know that I always remain I, myself, in times of hope or despair, in joy or pain, in a state of irritation or calm. Since I can observe, understand and judge my emotions, and then increasingly direct and use them and bring them to a transforming center to be changed, it is evident that they are not myself. I have emotions, but I am not my emotions.

My Desires

I have desires, but I am not my desires. They, too, are changeable and contradictory, with alternations of attraction and repulsion. I have desires, but they are not myself. They give me energy and power, but they are not me.

My Intellect

I have an intellect, but I am not my intellect. It is more or less developed and active, it is undisciplined, but teachable; it is an organ of knowledge & judgment in regard to the outer world as well as to the inner world. But my intellect is not myself. I have an intellect, but I am not my intellect.

My Psyche

I am a psyche capable of growth, infinite growth. I have an ego and a will, but they cannot bring the growth. I need them in order to bring me to the transforming center, the divine Lover, the Christ, and He will give me growth. He will heal my body, quiet my emotions, empower the desires which lead to growth, enlighten my intellect and make me gradually into the likeness of Him upon whom I look.

I am not this divine lover, but I can be transformed into His likeness and image as I bring myself before Him. I can become an instrument of that kind of love toward myself and toward others.

I am a psyche capable of infinite growth when I come and remain in His presence. (Kelsey, 1976. p. 269-270)

Meditation: To Risk

To laugh is to risk appearing the fool.
To weep is to risk appearing sentimental.
To reach out is to risk involvement.
To expose feelings is to risk exposing your true self.
To place your ideas and your dreams before the crowd is to risk their love.
To love is to risk not being loved in return.
To live is to risk dying.
To hope is to risk despair.
To try is to risk failure.
But the greatest hazard in life is to risk nothing.
The one who risks nothing does nothing and has nothing — and finally is nothing.
He may avoid sufferings and sorrow,
But he simply cannot learn, feel, change, grow or love.
Chained by his certitude, he is a slave; he has forfeited freedom.
Only one who risks is free!

Author Unknown

Scriptures To Meditate On For Healing

1. **Exodus 15:26** He said, "If you listen carefully to the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, who heals you."
2. **Psalms 6:2** Be merciful to me, LORD, for I am faint; O LORD, heal me, for my bones are in agony.
3. **Psalms 30:2** O LORD my God, I called to you for help and you healed me.
4. **Psalms 41:3** The Lord will sustain him on his sickbed. In his illness, Thou dost restore him to health.
5. **Psalms 41:4** O LORD, have mercy on me; heal me, for I have sinned against you.
6. **Psalms 42:11** Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.
7. **Psalms 91:9,10** If you make the Most High your dwelling—even the LORD, who is my refuge—then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent.
8. **Psalms 103:2** Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits...who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases.
9. **Proverbs 3:7,8** Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.
10. **Proverbs 4:20-22** My son, pay attention to what I say; listen closely to my words. Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart; for they are life to those who find them and health to a man's whole body.
11. **Isaiah 53:4** Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.
12. **Isaiah 53:5** But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.
13. **Jeremiah 17:14** Heal me, O LORD, and I will be healed; save me and I will be saved, for you are the one I praise.
14. **Jeremiah 29:11** For I know the plans I have in mind for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare, not for woe (calamity); plans to give you a future full of hope.
15. **Jeremiah 30:17** I will heal thee of thy wounds.
16. **Malachi 4:2** But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall.
17. **Matthew 4:23** Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.
18. **Matthew 4:24** Jesus healed every kind of disease and every kind of sickness (possessed with devils; lunatics (moonstruck); palsy (feeble, paralyzed); divers (various in character) diseases (maladies) and torments (through the notion of going to the bottom--fear has torment); healed those oppressed by the devil.
19. **Matthew 7:11** If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children,

- how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!
20. **Matthew 8:13** Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go! It will be done just as you believed it would." And his servant was healed at that very hour.
 21. **Matthew 8:17** This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: "He took up our infirmities (*Astheneia*, a feebleness; lacking strength; weakness, infirmity, indicating inability to produce results) and carried our diseases."
 22. **Matthew 9:12,13** It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick...go and learn what this means, 'I desire compassion and not sacrifice', for I did not come to call the righteous but sinners.
 23. **Matthew 9:29** Then he touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith will it be done to you"
 24. **Matthew 9:35** Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.
 25. **Matthew 14:14** When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.
 26. **Matthew 15:30** Great crowds came to him, bringing the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute and many others, and laid them at his feet; and he healed them.
 27. **Matthew 17:21** Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting (KJV).
 28. **Matthew 19:2** Large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.
 29. **Mark 1:34** and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.
 30. **Mark 5:34** He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."
 31. **Mark 9:23** "If you can?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for him who believes."
 32. **Mark 10:52** "Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.
 33. **Mark 11:22** "Have faith in God," Jesus answered.
 34. **Mark 11:23** "I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him."
 35. **Mark 11:24** Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.
 36. **Luke 4:18** God sent Jesus to heal the brokenhearted & set at liberty them that are bruised. God sent Jesus to bring us restoration, salvation & redemption.
 37. **Luke 6:19** and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all.
 38. **John 10:10** The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.
 39. **John 14:13** And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father.
 40. **Acts 10:38** ...How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

41. **I Thessalonians 5:23** I pray your whole spirit & soul & body be preserved blameless.
42. **Hebrews 13:8** Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.
43. **James 5:15** And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven.
44. **1 Peter 2:24** He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.
45. **1 John 4:4** You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.
46. **3 John 1:2** Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.
47. **III John 1:2** Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health (*Hugiaino*: healthy, sound, in good health – whole), just as your soul prospers (*Zekuwkiyth*: transparent, translucent – cleanse, be clear).

Struck By Grace

...We cannot transform our lives, unless we allow them to be transformed by that stroke of grace. It happens; or it does not happen. And certainly it does not happen if we try to force it upon ourselves, just as it shall not happen so long as we think, in our self-complacency, that we have no need of it. Grace strikes us when we are in great pain and restlessness. It strikes us when we walk through the dark valley of a meaningless and empty life. It strikes us when we feel that our separation is deeper than usual, because we have violated another life, a life which we loved, or from which we were estranged. It strikes us when our disgust for our own being, our indifference, our weakness, our hostility, and our lack of direction and composure have become intolerable to us. It strikes us when, year after year, the longed-for perfection of life does not appear, when the old compulsions reign within us and they have for decades, when despair destroys all joy and courage.

Sometimes at that moment a wave of light breaks into our darkness, and it is as though a voice were saying: "You are accepted. *You are accepted*, accepted by that which is greater than you, and the name of which you do not know. Do not ask for the name now; perhaps you will find it later. Do not try to do anything now; perhaps later you will do much. Do not seek for anything; do not perform anything; do not intend anything. *Simply accept the fact that you are accepted!*" If that happens to us, we experience grace. After such an experience we may not be better than before, and we may not believe more than before. But everything is transformed. In that moment, grace conquers sin, and reconciliation bridges the gulf of estrangement. And nothing is demanded of this experience, no religious or moral or intellectual presupposition, nothing but *acceptance*...

It is such moments that make us love our life, that make us accept ourselves, not in our goodness and self-complacency, but in our certainty of the eternal meaning of our life. We cannot force ourselves to accept ourselves. We cannot compel anyone to accept himself. But sometimes it happens that we receive the power to say 'yes' to ourselves, that peace enters into us and makes us whole, that self-hate and self-contempt disappear, and that our self is reunited with itself. Then we can say that grace has come upon us.

The above material is a quote from Paul Tillich's work called *The shaking of the foundation*, (as cited in Howard & Howard, 1985, p. 120-121).

Reflection: What does it mean to you to be struck by grace?

Grief and Loss Imaginative and Meditative Exercise

The garden tomb

This exercise uses the story of the garden tomb in the Bible as the source for an imaginative experience to address issues of grief and loss. In preparation to facilitate this exercise, read the following scriptures: Matt. 27 & 28; Luke 24; Mark 16:1-10; and John 20:11-18.

Loss and grief are part of living. There is a time to grieve, a time to mourn, and a time to weep. There is a time to heal, a time to laugh, a time to dance. There is time to keep silent and a time to speak. As a child you could not speak about these things or grieve, but now as an adult there is a time to speak and grieve (Eccl. 3: 1-8).

Some people will make a choice not to grieve, because they are not able to bear it. It would destroy them. To encourage people to go through their grief, read Isaiah 53:3-12.

Definitions

- Loss: the damage, trouble, disadvantage, deprivation, etc. caused by losing something.
- Grief: intense emotional suffering caused by loss, misfortune, injury, or evils of any kind; sorrow; regret.
- Grieve: to give pain of mind to; to afflict; to cause to feel grief; to distress.

What have you lost?

Share your most painful loss.

Who owes you something?

Symbolic Images in the story

Tomb: a place where dead things are buried: our potential, aspects of ourselves which died in the past or were buried—perhaps by trauma and neglect, or by some immediate needs of bringing up children or other aspects of our outer life; fears we face; unconscious family influences.

Trapped in tomb: illustrates a withdrawn or autistic aspect of self—a part trapped by fears or pain; how we bury our living potential by withdrawing from difficulty, pain, or life.

Angels: messenger from God in vision

Empty tomb: resurrection life

Gardener: Jesus

Go to the tomb with Mary Magdalene and the other women

Go with me, to the garden in Jerusalem. See Mary Magdalene standing outside the tomb weeping and mourning her loss of relationship with the man who cast seven demons out of her.

Now follow her as she stoops down and looks into the darkness of the tomb carved out of rock.

She sees two angels standing inside (a vision of two angels).

Watch the angel as he asks her a question: "Woman why are you weeping?"

Listen as she answers: "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where He is laid."

The angel tells her: "Do not be afraid; for I know you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified." He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said.

Then the angel invites Mary to come and see the place where He was lying.

Mary looks in and sees the empty place. But the reality does not penetrate her heart swollen with her grief and loss.

She slowly turns around and makes her way out of the tomb. Lost, forlorn, rejected, confused, in pain.

Then she sees another person standing there just outside the opening of the tomb. She thinks he is a gardener. (It is Jesus, but she does not recognize Him.)

Now he is asking her a question: "Woman why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking? "

(Not believing the angels), she answers: "Sir, if you have carried Him away tell me where you have laid Him and I will take Him away." Mary wants to carry the weight of the burden of the dead body of Jesus.

Jesus calls her by her name: "Mary".

At that moment, Mary stops in her grief and sorrow and turns around. She recognizes Him and says to Him in Hebrew, *Rabboni!* Teacher.

She throws herself onto Jesus. Her heart was open and she was now ready to receive this incredible news. Death was swallowed up by life. The soil of her heart was receptive.

Jesus gently responds with pleasure at her love and devotion: "Mary, stop clinging, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. I want you to go to the others and tell them that I have risen from the dead. I am alive. I have life for all who believe in me."

Go with Mary Magdalene as she runs off to find the others. See her as she leaps with joy, shouting out the good news: "He is not dead, He is risen!," she calls forth.

But then they did not believe her when they heard her say that he was alive and that she had seen him. Later, Jesus reproached them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed (Mark 16:11, 14-15).

Now replay the scene:

1. This time it is *you* who goes to the tomb.
2. What do you answer? Why are you weeping? Who are you seeking?
3. What pain and grief and loss are you holding in your hands?
4. What does Jesus say to you? Does he call you by name?

Processing

- Is your heart a tomb, holding dead things from the past? What are these dead things: first husband, boyfriend, children, injuries, fantasies, pain?
- The women were looking for the body of Jesus? What are we looking for?
- Who rolled away the stone and opened up the door to the tomb?
- How open is the door to your inner heart?
- Can you see yourself standing at the dawn of a brand new day?

An Imaginative Meditation: Light

Instructions about the meditation

- Never force anything
- There is no right or wrong way to do this; go with whatever comes.
- Use words such as *allow*, *let*: give them permission
- This is about using the imagination—your mind's eye
- No conversation

Five phases of the meditation

- 1. Breathing phase: relax through conscious breathing**
- 2. Relaxing the body phase**
- 3. The imaginative phase: three parts**
 - First part: My part guiding you and leading you.
 - Second part: This is your part, your own creation.
 - Third part: Will be whatever God wants it to be.
- 4. Reflection Phase**
- 5. Sharing Experiences Phase**

The Meditation: Light

1. Breathing Phase: relax through breathing

Use words: allow, giving permission

- Sit comfortably
- Sit back in chair

Repeat 3 times:

- Breathe in
- Let go

Say:

- God before
- God behind
- God above
- God below
- God within
- God without
- God surrounds us
- We are safe

2. Relaxing the Body Phase

Say: Sit comfortably; let all the tensions drain out

- Let your body sit relaxed
- Let all the tension in your feet drift away
 - Behind knees, thighs, let it all go
 - Base of spine
 - Solar plexus
 - Temples
- You're safe, protected, quiet, let it flow out
- Let all the tension in your heart drift away, relax
 - Feel your heart; you are centered in your heart
 - Allow your heart to open and know your heart
 - Your heart beats by the will of God.
- Go to your arms, allow tension to flow out
 - Bless all that you hold, held, and carry
- As you let...

3. The Imaginative Phase

Say: Go from sitting here in this room to another place.

Say: You are perfectly safe, surrounded by light.

Say: Image your self in safe place, a place you know of or a place you create.

- What is the source of light in this place?
- If there is water, what is the source of the water?
- What does the ground feel like below your feet?
- Get the feel of it.

Say: Picture yourself before a door,
What does the door look like?

Say: Look to your right, about 20 feet away

Allow yourself to see a small pinpoint of light.

- Allow it to approach you & watch it, as it grows larger and larger.
- Allow it to stop 3 feet in front of you,
- And watch as out of that light steps Jesus (or whoever you want there).
- Let yourself greet Jesus in whatever way feels comfortable.
- Allow Jesus to tell you whatever you need to know
- What does Jesus want to do now?
- What does Jesus want to tell you now?
- Watch Jesus as He turns and goes back to where He came from: watch as He steps into the light
- Watch as the light grows smaller.

Say: Prepare yourself to return, to your place

Say: Know that you can return here any time

4. Reflection Phase

Give quiet time for this.

Say: Journal it, draw it.

5. Sharing Experiences Phase / Prayer

The Stable Meditation

Imaginative and meditative exercise:

Purpose is to heal wounds from infancy.

- Join Jesus in the scene of his own birth. Jesus is so eager to share with us His experience of being loved as an infant that we don't even have to know what memory he wants to heal. Experience the perfect love of a mother and father missed in your early years.
- Jesus knows where we need to be healed: we don't have to remember our hurts—**go where we are most hungry for love** and Jesus will meet us there.
- Ask Jesus to show us a memory from 0-2 years old: sit silently, share memory
- Bethlehem Prayer: Each person has been hurt differently; and is healed differently.

(Bethlehem Prayer is taken from: Linn, M., Fabricant, S., & Linn, D. (1987). *Healing the eight stages of life*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press.)

Creating the Christmas crib scene

1. Close your eyes and breathe deeply, breathing in the healing love of God, as you understand God.
2. Now image that you are creating a Christmas crib scene. You have all the materials you need to create it in any way you wish. How would you design it? What surroundings, animals or other creatures would you include? Who would be there?

(If you are not a Christian, image creating the most welcoming birthplace you could wish for. How would you design it; what surroundings, animals, or other creatures would you include?)

3. Now image yourself in the scene you have created. Breathe deeply, breathing in love from the people you have placed there, from the animals or other creatures you have included, and from God.
4. Draw what you have imagined.

References – Meditations

- Chalquist, C. (1997). Retrieved March 16, 2005 from: <http://www.tearsoflorona.com/eckhart.html>
- Doyle, B. (1983). *Meditations with Julian of Norwich*. Santa Fe, NM: Bear & Company.
- Howard, A., & Howard, W. (1985). *Exploring the road less traveled : A study guide for small groups*. New York : Simon & Schuster.
- Kelsey, M. T. (1976). *The other side of silence: a guide to Christian meditation*. New York: Paulist Press.
- Linn, M., Fabricant, S., & Linn, D. (1987). *Healing the eight stages of life*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press.
- Rogers, A. (1996). *Amazing grace: The story of John Newton*. Retrieved March 16, 2005 from: http://www.anointedlinks.com/amazing_grace.html
- Sperry, L. (2001). *Spirituality in clinical practice*. Ann Arbor, MI: Sheridan Books.

Rituals

Rituals as spiritual intervention

Rituals are spiritual practices such as fasting, reading sacred writings, and service. A ritual can be a means to experience a life transition, instill devotion, or work through feelings of grief, anxiety, or guilt.

Rituals can often be used to address problems. The intensity of problems may be attenuated when clients engage in certain rituals, such as prayer, workshop, family devotions, scripture reading, music, participation in faith-based activities such as Promise Keepers, youth mentoring programs, etc. (Hodge, 2001b, p. 44)

Spiritual rituals can be an important factor in fostering recovery from mental illness (Carson & Huss; Falot, as cited in Hodge, 2004a). Taking sacraments, praying at regular times, listening to worship music, etc. can help foster a sense of structure and organization, countering the disorganization that often accompanies mental illness (Hodge, 2004a). However, when a ritual is carried out repetitiously and compulsively to ward off anxiety, it may deteriorate into a symptom (Joseph, 1984, p. 18 as cited in Sahlein, 2002).

Other ritual activities to consider

- Developing ritual as a clinical intervention (house blessings, visiting graves of relatives)
- Participating in client's rituals as a clinical intervention
- Serenity prayer at the end of a group
- A moment of silence at the beginning of a group

References – Rituals

- Hodge, D. (2001b). Spiritual assessment: A review of major qualitative methods and a new framework for assessing spirituality. *Social Work, 46*(3), 203-214.
- Hodge, D. R. (2004a). Spirituality and people with mental illness: Developing spiritual competency in assessment and interventions. *Families in Society, 85*(1), 36-44.
- Sahlein, J. (2002). When *religion enters the dialogue: A guide for practitioners*. *Clinical Social Work Journal, 30*(4), 381-403.

Sacred Writings—The Bible

One of the founders of modern cognitive therapy is Albert Ellis, who had formerly been one of the harshest critics of Christianity (Ellis, 1980). It is significant that Ellis stated more recently that the Bible has “probably enabled more people to make more extensive and intensive personality and behavioral changes than all professional therapists combined” (Ellis, as cited in Hodge, 2004b, p. 251).

The Bible has probably enabled more people to make more extensive and intensive personality and behavioral changes than all professional therapists combined (Ellis).

Biblical narratives

By taking advantage of a client’s spiritual worldview, a clinician can help the client construct a new positive view of events previously seen as negative. Different, more empowering narratives can be developed based on the spiritual perspective of the client (Pargament, as cited in Hodge, 2004b). A method that uses stories from the Bible for addressing compulsive-addictive behavior and traumas is suggested by Dobbins (as cited in Hodge, 2004b).

Biblically-based cognitive therapy

Modification of traditional cognitive-behavior therapy with Christian tenets has been a fairly widely researched intervention (Hawkins, Tan, & Turnk; Johnson, Devries, Ridley, Pettorini, & Peterson; Propst, as cited in Hodge, 2004b). According to Johnson et al. (as cited in Hodge, 2004b), therapy modified along Biblical principles has seen success in treatment of depression and has helped people adjust their negative thinking patterns and minimize irrational thinking and general pathology.

(For a more thorough development of this topic, see the intervention called “Spiritually-modified cognitive therapy” in a separate section of this manual.)

Reading the Bible

Reading scripture with clients can assist in the therapeutic healing process. Many verses of Scripture offer positive views of life, encouragement for times of doubt and confusion, and promise the presence of God in the midst of our troubles.

For mentally ill clients, reading the Bible encourages them that God is concerned about disenfranchised and marginalized people in our society, and gives them hope for the future (Hodge, 2004b). Furthermore, it expands their view of life, ameliorates isolationist feelings, and can help regulate their emotional conflicts.

Suggested Scriptures to meditate on

1. **Psalms 6:2** Be merciful to me, LORD, for I am faint; O LORD, heal me, for my bones are in agony.
2. **Psalms 41:3** The Lord will sustain him on his sickbed. In his illness, Thou dost restore him to health.
3. **Psalms 41:4** O LORD, have mercy on me; heal me, for I have sinned against you.
4. **Psalms 42:11** Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.
5. **Psalms 91:9,10** If you make the Most High your dwelling—even the LORD, who is my refuge—then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent.
6. **Psalms 103:2** Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits...who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases.
7. **Proverbs 3:7,8** Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.
8. **Proverbs 4:20-22** My son, pay attention to what I say; listen closely to my words. Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart; for they are life to those who find them and health to a man's whole body.
9. **Jeremiah 17:14** Heal me, O LORD, and I will be healed; save me and I will be saved, for you are the one I praise.
10. **Jeremiah 29:11** For I know the plans I have in mind for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare, not for woe (calamity); plans to give you a future full of hope.
11. **Jeremiah 30:17** I will heal thee of thy wounds.
12. **Malachi 4:2** But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall.
13. **Matthew 7:7** Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.
14. **Matthew 7:11** If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!
15. **Matthew 8:13** Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go! It will be done just as you believed it would." And his servant was healed at that very hour.
16. **Matthew 9:12,13** It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick...go and learn what this means, 'I desire compassion and not sacrifice', for I did not come to call the righteous but sinners.
17. **Matthew 9:29** Then he touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith will it be done to you"
18. **Matthew 17:20** He replied, "Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."
19. **Mark 5:34** He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."
20. **Mark 9:23** "If you can?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for him who believes."
21. **Mark 11:22** "Have faith in God," Jesus answered.
22. **Mark 11:23** "I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him."
23. **John 10:10** The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.
24. **John 14:13** And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father.

25. **Romans 10:17** Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.
26. **I Thessalonians 5:23** I pray your whole spirit & soul & body be preserved blameless.
27. **1 John 4:4** You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

References – Sacred Writings

Hodge, D. (2004b). Developing Cultural Competency With Evangelical Christians. *Families in Society*, 85(2), 251.

Connect With Religiously-Based Social Support

Social support can be a key factor in overcoming problems. Maton & Salen (as cited in Hodges, 2001b) report a longitudinal study of an Evangelical congregation that shows this community offered a supportive and empowering environment that gave the people increased connectedness, self-worth, and positive view of the future (p. 44).

Clients should be made aware of the value of associating with religiously based social support groups. They should be encouraged to join local church bodies, fellowship groups, and other faith-based communities. According to Ellison & George (as cited in Hodges, 2001b), religiously based social support appears to offer superior support compared with other forums.

This is especially true for people with mental illness, who often live lonely, isolated lives and have significant social needs. Connecting these types of clients with churches and other faith communities can be a useful intervention (Shiffrin, as cited in Hodge, 2001b). Church congregations can help meet the needs of these clients with caring support programs.

Faith communities also offer an opportunity to reestablish associations with spiritual roots and with family members. As noted by Walsh (1999), “restoring vital bonds with a family’s religious heritage is healing and empowering” (p.43).

Hodge, D. (2004a). Spirituality and people with mental illness: Developing spiritual competency in assessment and interventions. *Families in Society, 85(1)*, 36-44.

References

- Hodge, D. (2001b). Spiritual assessment: A review of major qualitative methods and a new framework for assessing spirituality. *Social Work, 46(3)*, 203-214.
- Hodge, D. R. (2004a). Spirituality and people with mental illness: Developing spiritual competency in assessment and interventions. *Families in Society, 85(1)*, 36-44.
- Walsh, F. (1999). *Opening family therapy to spirituality*. In F. Walsh (Ed), *Spiritual Resources in Family Therapy* (pp. 28-58). New York: Guilford.

Surrender And Acceptance

Rebellion versus acceptance

Rebellion weakens the forces of life and healing within us. Acceptance of our diseases, our infirmities and the limitations imposed upon us by our nature and the circumstances of our existence, is the condition of that inner harmony which can play a decisive part in maintaining physical and moral health. (Paul Tournier, *The Healing of Persons*.)

Here are some general categories of things we need to accept:

1. Acceptance of living—one of the most important factors in healing.
2. Acceptance of our weaknesses & failures
3. Acceptance of our wounds, our pain, our anger
4. Acceptance of our lack, our deprivation
5. Acceptance of our self-centeredness
6. Acceptance of our guilt and our fears
7. Acceptance of our mistakes, our wrong choices
8. Acceptance of our sin
9. Acceptance of our rage, our self-hatred
10. Acceptance of our laziness
11. Acceptance of our neurosis; i.e., our compulsions, obsessions, phobias

Some more things we need to accept

1. Acceptance of one's sex; celibacy, menopause
2. Acceptance of the passage of time and the loss of youth
3. Acceptance of growing old, of the limitations called for by their age
4. Acceptance of changes in customs as time passes
5. Acceptance of new things, computers, etc.
6. Acceptance of one's parents, their failings, their psychological make-up, their illnesses, their social class; our heredity, ancestors
7. Acceptance of our children, their temperaments, failings, character & their sex
8. Acceptance of social stigmas
9. Acceptance of our families
10. Acceptance of our place in society

11. Acceptance of reverses of fortune, injustices
12. Acceptance of the sin of others which causes us suffering, accepting their nerves, their reactions, enthusiasms, & even the talents and qualities by means of which they outshine us
13. Acceptance of our fellow workers
14. Acceptance of the country in which we live
15. Acceptance of our own bodies, our physical make up, digestion system
16. Acceptance of one's partner, as they are
17. Acceptance of the marriage

Reflection Point

From the miracles that are wrought through acceptance, it can be seen that spiritual strength is the greatest strength in the world. It can transform both peoples & individuals. It alone can ensure victory over the negative forces of selfishness, hate, fear, & disorder, which destroy peoples & undermine the health of individuals. It alone gives the joy, energy, & zeal needed in the battle for life & for the defense of health. (Paul Tournier, *The Healing of Persons*.)

Acceptance is the real key to happiness

However, acceptance of one's life does not mean resignation, running away from the struggle. It means accepting things as they come, with all the limitations of one's heredity, personal suffering, and injustices done, and psychological problems. Acceptance means saying an affirmative *yes!* to life, and a response to life from the totality of one's personality.

Forgiveness, A Gift From God—And A Therapist's Tool

According to McCullough, Paragament & Thoresen (as cited in Hodges, 2001b), there is growing empirical evidence of the value of forgiveness interventions. Virtually all the major world religions endorse forgiveness as an expression of orthodox faith.

Forgiveness is an ideal tool to identify conflicted family relationships and tap into the necessary spiritual resources to foster healing. An article by DiBlasio⁴ (1993) provides a good overview of the use of decision-based forgiveness interventions within the context of intergenerational therapy.

Guilt and faith

O. Hobart Mowrer⁵ (The New Group Therapy) suggests that the feeling of guilt is more destructive in one's life than deprivation in childhood.

Much of what people call faith is not really faith, but simply obedience, choice, habit. We choose to act, but lack assurance and confidence. Genuine faith comes from receiving something from God. Similarly, we tend to forgive others without addressing root issues, so we are not released from the problem and the emotions they trigger in us.

Points about Forgiveness

- Forgiveness is not a way to change the other person, but only has the power to change the forgiving person.
- It is normal to be angry for an injustice to done to us, but we must release the anger before we become free.
- However, one cannot forgive the wounder until the damage done is assessed and recognized.
- Forgiveness has nothing to do with restoring relationship; it deals with removing indebtedness.
- The debtor cannot repay the debt; the wounded person cannot look to the abuser for repayment.
- Forgiveness is the stirring up of divine love in one's heart.
- Forgiveness is the divine result of receiving truth and compassion.

⁴ DiBlasio, F. (1993). The role of social workers' beliefs in helping family members forgive. *Families in Society*, 74(3), 163-170.

⁵ Source material came from author's own notes, which included some information from Mowrer, but is not properly cited here because origin of the source material is lost.

➤ Exercise: Interaction

- Who do you need to forgive?
- Who has wronged you?
- Whose faces make you feel uncomfortable?
- Who do you dislike, disapprove of?
- Who has disapproved of you?
- Who has hurt you?

Encourage clients to reflect on the following questions:

Suggested resource: Weinberg, N. (1995). Does apologizing help? The role of self-blame and making amends in recovery from bereavement. *Health & Social Work, 20(4)*, 294-299.

References – Forgiveness

Hodge, D. (2001b). Spiritual assessment: A review of major qualitative methods and a new framework for assessing spirituality. *Social Work, 46(3)*, 203-214.

Affirmation Therapy, i.e., Blessing

Seeing the highest good in people

Seeing the goodness and potential for health in someone is the most important thing we can do for them. When we can see the highest potential of good in someone, it is as if we have learned to “see the Christ” in them—we release that good and free them to be a child of God. Fortunately, this capacity to see the highest potential in everyone can be learned.

By seeing the highest good in someone, we are able to actually bring it out, so that it is manifested in healing. We can recreate a person by observing and calling forth the potential Christ-power in the person.

Interesting, the single most important factor in psychotherapy is how much the therapist loves the patient, i.e., how much the therapist provides *affirmation* and appropriate emotional *intimacy*. Only someone who can be moved inside by our goodness can actually affirm us. According to Baars (as cited in Linn, Fabricant, & Linn, 1987), lack of affirmation is the most common of all hurts. Furthermore, until we are affirmed, we cannot become our true selves. We discover who we are by someone reflecting back to us how they view us in love (p. 155).

Four moments of affirmation

1. Affirmation begins when someone affirms us so we can see the goodness in ourselves. Until we see goodness in ourselves, we won't see it in others.
2. We notice the unique goodness and loveableness of someone and are quietly present to it. This capacity demands inner stillness and a receptivity to goodness in all of creation.
3. We are inwardly moved and delighted by someone's goodness, without desiring to possess them or change them for our own needs. All our emotions must be healthy and integrated, otherwise we will be out of balance as we relate to the other person.
4. We express our delight in the other person's goodness, particularly in non-verbal ways (because 93% of the impact of communication comes from nonverbal behaviors such as facial expressions and voice tones.

(Linn, Fabricant, & Linn, 1987, pp. 156-157).

Affirmation therapy

Everyone has an intrinsic need for human love, and it is essential to receive that love in order to feel worthwhile. Furthermore, we must first *be loved* in order *to love*. Stunted emotional growth results if one has been ignored, neglected, criticized, or abused by primary caregivers early in life. Before they can develop into emotionally mature adults, unaffirmed people must first receive authentic affirmation from someone else. The process of seeing oneself as worthwhile, good, and lovable is called *affirmation* (Baars & Terruwe, n.d.).

Affirmation therapy can be formally described as a way of being *affectively* present to another human person in a therapeutic relationship in which the therapist reveals to the client his or her intrinsic goodness and worth (Baars & Terruwe, n.d.). This does not mean simplistic techniques like shallow compliments or a pat on the back. True affirmation is a way of simply *being* with a person, not doing something for them—actions are healing only in the context of the nurturing, affirmative environment the therapist creates.

Authentic concern and care for the client is expressed through the therapist's facial expressions, eyes, and other nonverbal communication, and also through encouraging words. Instead of just trying to believe intellectually based on words, the client can receive affirmation via the affective presence of the therapist. Emotional growth happens quite naturally as the client accepts this affirmation.

The therapist's role in affirmation therapy is like that of a parent—understanding, teaching, nurturing, and recognizing the client's emotional, intellectual and spiritual needs. A client shares his/her emotions, experiences, fears, and anxieties in this therapeutic relationship, but *most importantly, the therapist reveals the goodness of the client through his/her gentle affective presence*. This enables the client to receive affirmation that leads to inner growth and the gradual subsidence of symptoms.

Despite there being no actual techniques in this type of therapy, certain strategies can be effective:

- Early childhood/parent relationships are explored to understand what affirmations the client received.
- Therapist teaches the client the importance of accepting all of one's emotions as necessary for wholeness.
- Therapist guides client's emotional growth to foster increased awareness of, and healthy integration of, feelings and emotions.
- Therapist considers carefully the areas where the client feels badly about him/herself, and identifies in a nonjudgmental way to the client any irrational beliefs.

Notes

The material in this section came mostly from the writings of Drs. Baars & Terruwe.

Conrad W. Baars was a Catholic psychiatrist who studied human nature, man's psyche and spirit, and the healing of emotional illnesses. He blends in a wonderful synthesis Saint Thomas Aquinas' points of view with his research, especially in relation to emotions. In Holland, during the dark hours of the II World War he was captured by the nazis and taken to the concentration camp in Buchenwald. A fertile perspective of human integral health saw its way into several books and conferences.

Dr. Anna A. Terruwe was a Dutch psychiatrist with very deep ideas of how psychotherapy and healing had to reach the whole person, including the spiritual dimension. Any fragmentation of man runs the risk of his dissolution and brings many ailments upon him.

Together their therapy involves the healing of the whole person—body, mind and spirit. Recognizing emotional deprivation disorder is the first step in correcting, through affirmation, many grave individual and more general ills.

Two books of their work are noteworthy:

1. Terruwe, Anna A. & Conrad W. Baars (1981). *Psychic wholeness and healing: Using all the powers of the human psyche*. Staten Island, NY: Alba House. (Dr. Terruwe and Dr. Baars take a refreshing look at the human person and healing from a Christian perspective. Essentially this book integrates modern psychological discoveries with the psychology of St. Thomas Aquinas.)

2. Baars, Conrad W. (2003). *Feeling and healing your emotions* (Rev. ed.). Gainesville, FL: Bridge-Logos. (Written with the nonprofessional in mind, this book is also an important aid for mental health professionals, pastoral counselors and teachers. It includes such topics as anger, guilt, repression and will-training, and discusses what is helpful and harmful to the developing and growing individual—emotionally, intellectually and spiritually.)

References – Affirmation Therapy

Baars, C.W., & Terruwe, A.T. (n.d.). Retrieved March 20, 2005 from: <http://www.conradbaars.com/affirmation-therapy.htm>

Linn, M., Fabricant, S., & Linn, D. (1987). *Healing the eight stages of life*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press.

Affirmations: Thought Conditioners

The idea of affirmations is based on the principles of cognitive therapy, which asserts that “wrong thinking” is the source of much of the grief and pain people experience. Through affirmations a person can substitute positive thoughts for destructive negative thoughts, thus enhancing faith and courage for living. Things are affirmed and stated as true, instead of denying or negating them.

Affirmation simply affirms a positive statement as fact. The practice can be used anytime, in any situation, for any type of problem. This resource is the practice of retraining the mind to think in a new, different way.

According to Dr. Karl Menniger (as cited in Peale, 1952), “attitudes are more important than facts”. Peale then says, “Any fact facing us, however difficult, even seemingly hopeless, is not so important as our attitude toward that fact. How you think about a fact may defeat you before you ever do anything about it. You may permit a fact to overwhelm you mentally before you start to deal with it actually. On the other hand, a confident and optimistic thought pattern can modify or overcome the fact altogether” (p. 13).

Because words are the vehicle used to express ideas, thoughts do create words, but words also directly affect thoughts. They help shape attitudes, even creating them. Affirmations are words, statements that outline a condition you want to make happen — an emotion, attitude, or life situation. An affirmation then is a kind of goal, leaving it up to the person to then determine how to set about achieving the goal. By using affirmations, you can actually help produce the conditions required for accomplishing the goal. Words create pictures in the mind, which believes what it envisions (Peale, 1952).

Recognizing God as the source of life and truth, affirmations help prepare us to accept God’s life within us. Affirmations can turn on the creative flow of God’s power within us. Viewed as a faith technique, affirmations are a practice that help generate our inner powers that can help turn us from defeat to victory (Peale, 1952).

According to Sanford (1972), spiritual affirmations can be used to release God’s healing power into the body. Affirmations allow us to fill our minds with God’s presence and imagine life flowing in like a light. Sanford declares that the “basis of all healing is to affirm the presence of God in you, the indwelling God” (Sanford).

A cautionary note here: affirmations should not be used to avoid painful situations. Clients should not simply stop thinking and just make positive statements about life. They need to deal with the painful thoughts in a health-giving way.

Some benefits of the practice of making affirmations

1. Help cope with stress.
2. Lower blood pressure, promote relaxation.
3. Help minimize worries, help relax, quiet our minds.
4. Become aware of source of life outside us, concentrate upon the reality of God.
5. Break lies within us, release truth at a deep level of our being.

(Source unknown)

Structure your affirmations using the following guidelines

- **Use present tense.** Express what you want as if it has already happened. For example, say: *I am well-organized. I am learning to be organized. I am setting up to conditions to be well-organized.*
- **Use the personal.** Always say I or your name. I make time regularly to practice relaxation.
- **Use the positive.** Say, *I stay relaxed during work.* My emotions are appropriately expressed. Picture yourself maintaining a balance at work. (Don't say, *I will not lose my temper at work,* because that forms a picture in your mind of losing it.) Instead of denying your anger feelings, get in touch with why you are angry, then use affirmations to help you relax.
- **Be specific.** Although general affirmations are very helpful to relax, not feel time pressure, stay focused, state a clear goal whenever you can. Use visualizations along with your affirmations.
- **Be realistic.** Set reasonable goals. Also, affirmations must align with God's will.

(Source unknown)

Guidelines to using affirmations

Since affirmations are an active process, it is important to say them with emotion, energy, and belief. Repeat them with feeling and conviction. Visualize the desired goal, and believe it can happen. Because they take time to become effective, use affirmations daily. Affirm the truth instead of the lie.

1. Ten minutes per day makes a difference.
2. Affirmations can be said out loud or simply thought, anytime.
3. Work with just three or four affirmations at a time, and keep a record of these. Note any changes you observe, and give yourself credit for any achievements, no matter how seemingly small.
4. Notice if you sense opposition with your affirmations, as evidenced by inner disagreement or tension. What are you feeling? Examine your negative beliefs that might prevent you from embracing the goal you are stating. Is a particular affirmation too far removed from reality? Consider either changing the wording of the affirmation or reducing it to smaller, more easily achieved results.
5. Acknowledge that you are opening yourself to change, and affirm that you are releasing obstacles to success.

(Source unknown)

Additional suggestions for making affirmations part of your day

1. Say them before you retire and when you awake. As you drift off to sleep or when you first awake, you are more open to suggestion. Try to put in positive information. See yourself having a positive, productive day, accomplishing your goals, and feeling good about your day.
2. Say your affirmations after doing your relaxation exercises or after meditation.
3. Since hearing affirmations reinforces the message, say them aloud—listen to what you say.
4. Record your affirmations, then listen to them again. You may want to listen first to a relaxation sequence, then do your affirmations.

5. Writing down your affirmations helps establish a strong visual connection. Write them out ten or twenty times, noting your thoughts and feelings (morning, when you are first awake, is the best time to do this).
6. Repeat your affirmation while looking in the mirror. Your real feelings about the affirmation will show on your face. A very powerful exercise is to tell yourself in the mirror that you love yourself (a very difficult task for many people).
7. To help you overcome feelings of helplessness before an event (test, presentation, audition, asking for a raise, anything stressful), use affirmations. Use affirmations in combination with mental rehearsal for the event.

(Source unknown)

➤ Exercise: learning to do affirmations

1. Get comfortable, sitting or lying down. Close your eyes and focus inward.
2. Observe your breath for a few minutes. Slow down your breathing using a breathing technique.
3. Progressively relax, going through your body, sensing and releasing each part. Start with your feet, then legs, buttocks, abdomen. Experience your extremities as being heavy.
4. Repeat, *I am calm and relaxed*, 3-4 times, on inhalation and exhalation.
5. Use a general affirmation, if you are working with one, repeated 3-4 times: *Everyday, in every way, I am getting better and better; or, I am filled with healthy energy.*
6. Use your current 3-4 affirmations, repeating each of them 6-10 times.
7. Again, observe your breath, and repeat calming affirmations while deep breathing.
8. Affirm that the changes you desire will happen, that you will achieve your goals.
9. Open your eyes and stretch.

(Source unknown)

Suggested affirmations

1. "Abba, Father, I belong to you."
1. "God is with me; God is helping me; God is guiding me."
2. "I am growing in favor with God and men; I am increasing in wisdom and stature."
3. "Because Jesus lives, I can live my life today and face tomorrow."
4. "I say yes to my life."
5. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Phil. 4:13)
6. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom 8:31).
7. "I am in God's hands." "The Kingdom of God with me" (Luke 17:21).
8. "Let nothing disturb you. Let nothing frighten you. Everything passes away except God. God alone is sufficient." (16th century mystic).
9. "In Him we live, and move, and have our being." (Acts 17:28).
(Peale, 1952).

Positive thinking means positive living

Positive thinking is very effective, surrounding you with positive energy that has an impact on people and things you contact (The power, n.d.). Suggested positive thoughts you might start with include:

- In every day in every way I am getting better and better
- I am a worthwhile and a loveable person as I am
- I am an attractive person, I like myself
- People love me for who I am
- There is no limit to how good I can feel
- I deserve the best
- I can achieve my goals
- I can find the good within me and express it freely
- I am letting go of the past, and reaching for the future
- I am attracting more and more love/joy into my life
- Today will be full of exciting opportunities

Suggested web site for further study of affirmations:
<http://www.mental-health-today.com/articles/aff.htm>

Note: Much information about affirmations comes from a widely read book by Norman Vincent Peale. "Translated into fifteen languages with more than 7 million copies sold, *The Power of Positive Thinking* is unparalleled in its extraordinary capacity for restoring the faltering faith of millions. In this insightful program, Dr. Peale offers the essence of his profound method for mastering the problems of everyday living. You will learn...how to climb above problems to visualize solutions and then attain them... Simple prayerful exercises that you can do every day, through-out the day, to reinforce your new-found habit of happiness... an inspiring program that will help you create a positive change in your life" (Peale, 1952, from the publisher).

References – Affirmations

Peale, N. (1952). *The power of positive thinking*. New York: Prentice-Hall.

Sanford, A. (1972). *The healing light*. New York: Ballantine Books.

The power of positive thinking (n.d.). Retrieved March 19, 2005 from:

<http://www.valmillscounselling.co.uk/The%20Power%20of%20Positive%20Thought.htm>