

## 10 Ways to Nurture Your Spiritual Life – By Deepak Chopra

Intention is the starting point of any spiritual path. Intention includes will and purpose, aspiration and highest vision. If you set your intention toward material existence, that will grow instead. Once you plant the seed of an intention, your soul's journey will unfold automatically. Here are several basic intentions that mark a spiritual life:

***I want to feel God's presence.*** This intention is rooted in the discomfort of being isolated and separate. You can mask it by developing friendships and family ties. Ultimately, however, each of us needs to feel a sense of inner fullness and peace.

***I want God to aid and support me.*** God's presence brings with it the qualities of spirit. At the source, every quality – love, intelligence, truth, organizing ability, creativity – becomes infinite. The growth of these things in your life is a sign that you are getting closer to your soul.

***I want to feel connected to the whole.*** The soul's journey takes a person from a fragmented state to one of wholeness. Events start to weave into a pattern. Small details fit together instead of being scattered and random.

***I want my life to have a meaning.*** Existence feels empty in separation. This gets healed only by moving into unity with God. Instead of turning outward to find your purpose, you feel that just being here, as you are, is the highest purpose in creation.

***I want to be free of restrictions.*** Inner freedom is greatly compromised when fear exists, and fear is a natural outcome of separation. As you come closer to your soul, the old boundaries and defenses start to melt away.

If these basic intentions are present inside you, God takes the responsibility for carrying them out. Everything else that you do is secondary. However, you can still exert a great deal of influence through your everyday conduct. Here are the ground rules for spiritual life that have proved effective for me personally and that I feel will work for many people.

### 1. **Know your intentions.**

Don't let your false intentions remain masked. Root them out and work on the danger and fear that keep you attached to them. False intentions take the form of guilty desires: I want someone else to fail, I want to get even, I want to see bad people punished, I want to take away something not my own. False intentions can be elusive; you will notice their existence by the feeling connected with them – a feeling of fear, greed, rage, hopelessness or weakness. Sense the feeling first, refuse to buy into it and then remain aware until you find the intention lurking beneath.

### 2. **Set your intentions high.**

Aim to be a saint and a miracle worker. Why not? If you know that the goal of inner growth is to acquire mastery, then ask for that mastery as soon as possible. Don't strain to work wonders, but don't deny them to yourself either. The beginning of mastery is vision; see the miracles around you, and that will make it easier for greater miracles to grow.

3. **See yourself in the light.**

The ego keeps its grip by making us feel needy and powerless. From this sense of lack grows a hunger to acquire everything in sight. Money, power, sex, and pleasure are supposed to fill up the lack, but they never do. You can escape this package of illusion if you see yourself not in the shadow fighting to get to God but in the light from the first moment. The only difference between you and a saint is that your light is small and a saint's is great. You are both of the light.

4. **See everyone else in the light.**

The cheapest way to feel good about yourself is by feeling superior to other people. From this small seed grows every manner of judgment. A simple formula may help here. When you are tempted to judge another human being, no matter how obviously he or she deserves it, remind yourself that everyone is doing the best he or she can from his or her own level of consciousness.

5. **Reinforce your intentions every day.**

Everyday life is a kind of swirling chaos, and the ego is entrenched in its demands. You need to remind yourself, day in and day out, of your spiritual purpose. For some people it helps to write down their intentions; for others, periods of regular meditation and prayer are useful. Find your center, look closely at yourself and do not let go of your intention until it feels centered inside yourself.

6. **Learn to forgive yourself.**

We all fall into traps of selfishness and delusions when we least expect it. The chance remark that wounds someone else, the careless lie, and the irresistible urge to cheat are universal. Forgive yourself for being where you are. Apply to yourself the same dictum as to others: you are doing the best you can from your own level of consciousness. ( I like to remember one master's definition of the perfect disciple: "One who is always stumbling but never falls.")

7. **Learn to let go.**

The paradox of being spiritual is that you are always wrong and always right at the same time. Life is change; you must be prepared to let go of today's beliefs, thoughts, and actions no matter how spiritual they make you feel. Every stage of inner growth is good. Each is nurtured by God.

8. **Revere what is holy.**

Our society teaches us to be skeptical of the sacred. But every saint is your future, and every master is reaching over his shoulder to look at you, waiting for you to join him. Human representatives of God constitute an infinite treasure. Dipping into this treasure will help you open your heart.

9. **Allow God to take over.**

Most people are addicted to worry, control, over-management, and lack of faith. Resist the temptation to follow these tendencies. Don't listen to the voice that says you have to be in charge, that constant vigilance is the only way to get anything done. Let spirit try a new way.

Your intention is the most powerful tool at your disposal. Intend for everything to work out as it should, then let go and allow opportunities and openings to come your way. The outcome you are trying so hard to force may not be as good for you as the one that comes naturally. If you could give one percent of your life over to God every day, you would be the most enlightened person in the world in three months. Keep that in mind and surrender something, anything, on a daily basis.

10. **Embrace the unknown.**

Over the years you formed likes and dislikes; you learned to accept certain limits. None of this is the real you. The unknown is awaiting you, an unknown that has nothing to do with the "I" you already know. Some people reach the edge of illusion only at the moment of death, and then with a long look backward, one lifetime seems incredibly short and transient. The part of us that we know is the part that flickers out all too fast.

When you feel a new impulse, an uplifting thought, an insight that you have never acted upon before, embrace the unknown. Cherish it as the newborn baby. God lives in the unknown, and when you can embrace it fully, you will be home free.



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