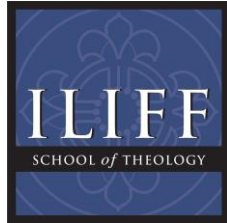
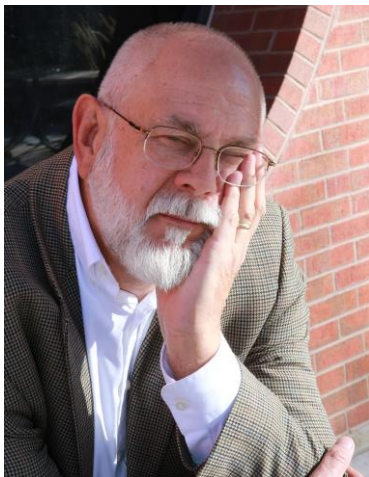


The Process of Spiritual Integration



Carrie Doehring, PhD

Stress



Where
do you
experience
stress in
your
body?

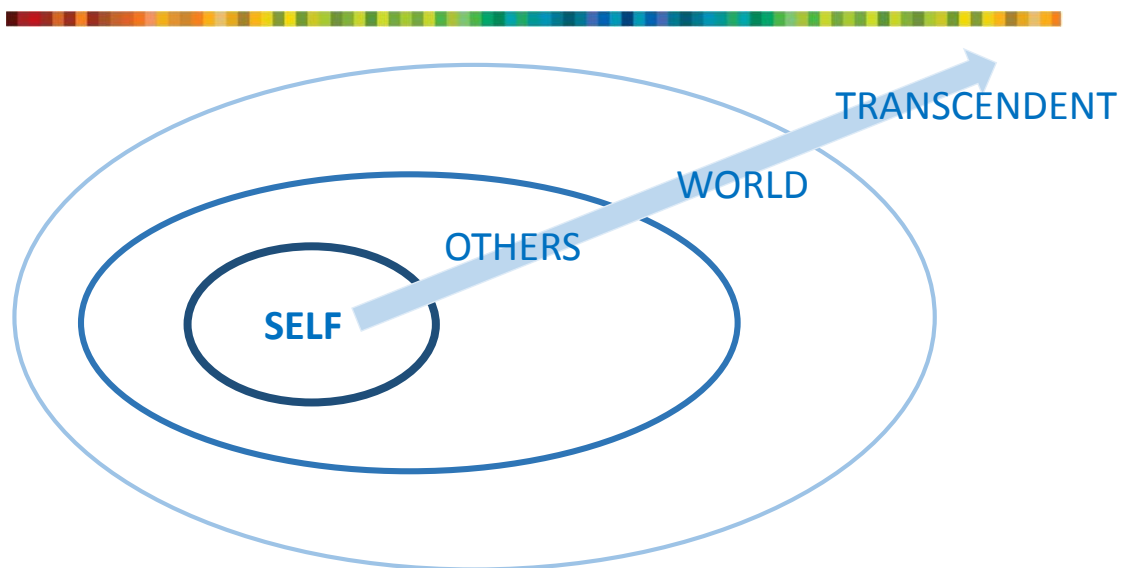


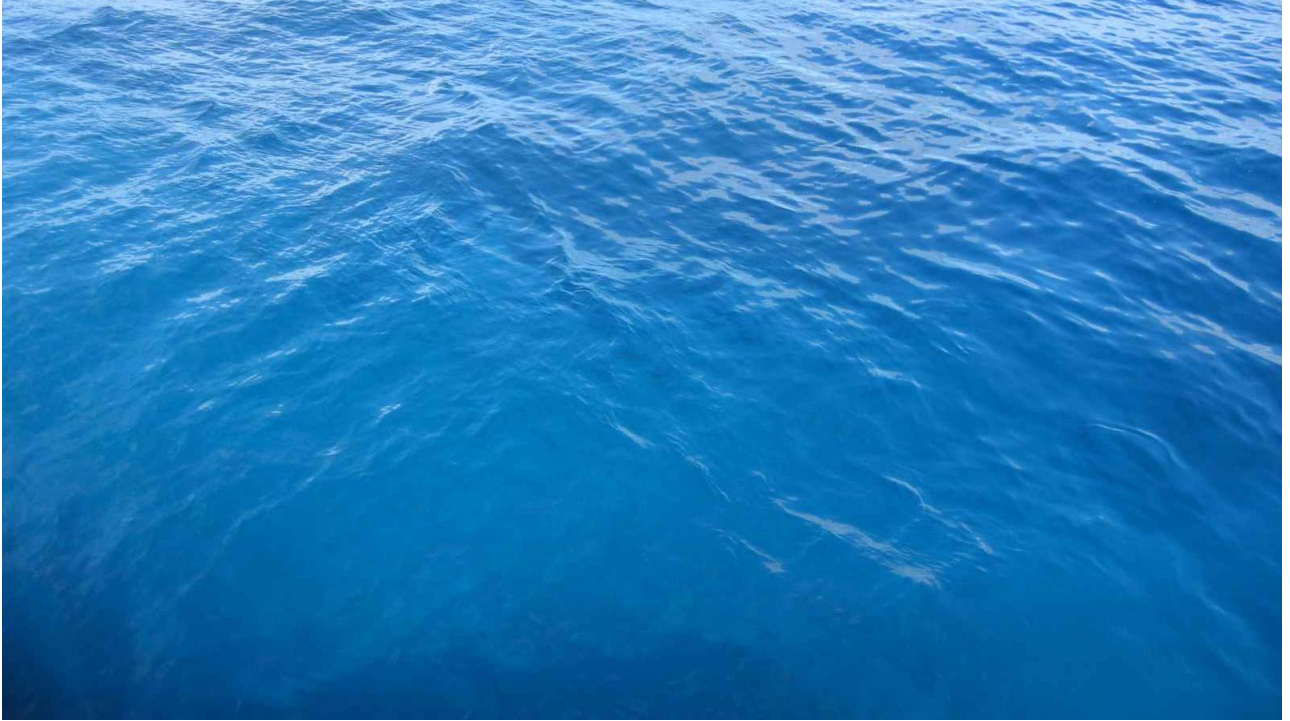
Religious & Spiritual Struggles & Moral Stress





Spirituality: Experiencing goodness





Self-compassion



**The ability to hold one's
feelings of suffering
with a sense of warmth,
connection and concern**

(Neff, 2003)

Self-compassion



1. Self-kindness
2. Common humanity
3. Mindfulness

Spiritual self-care

Body scan/
relaxation

Attention
to breath

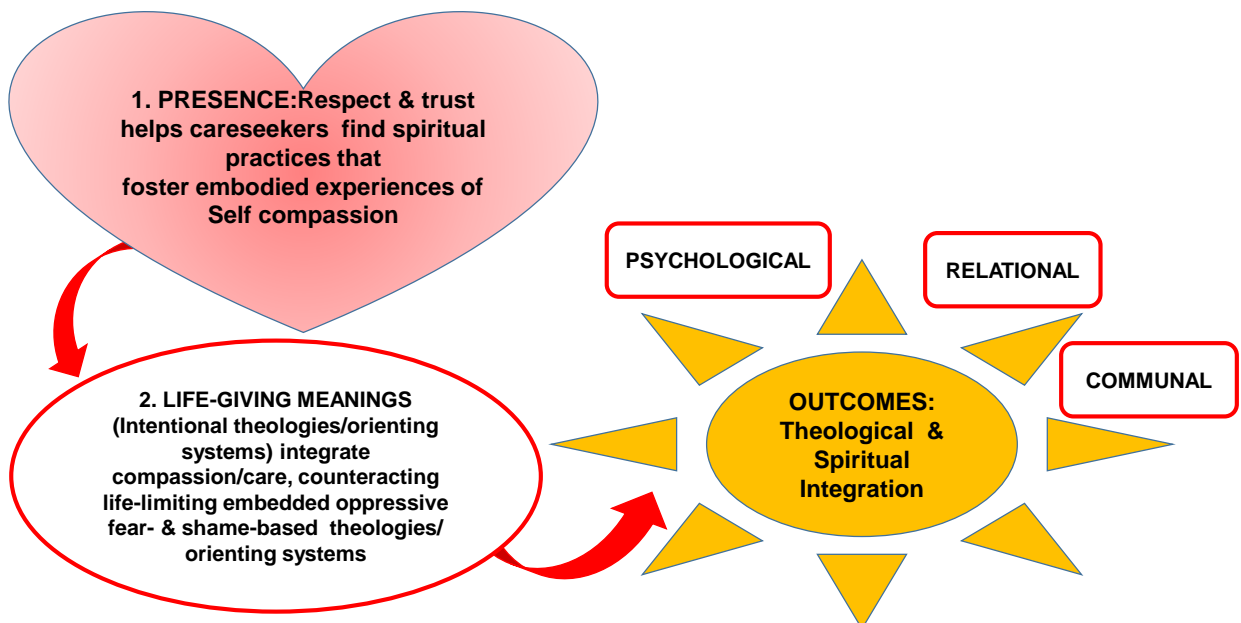
Welcoming
our
emotions

Recall
connection
to goodness

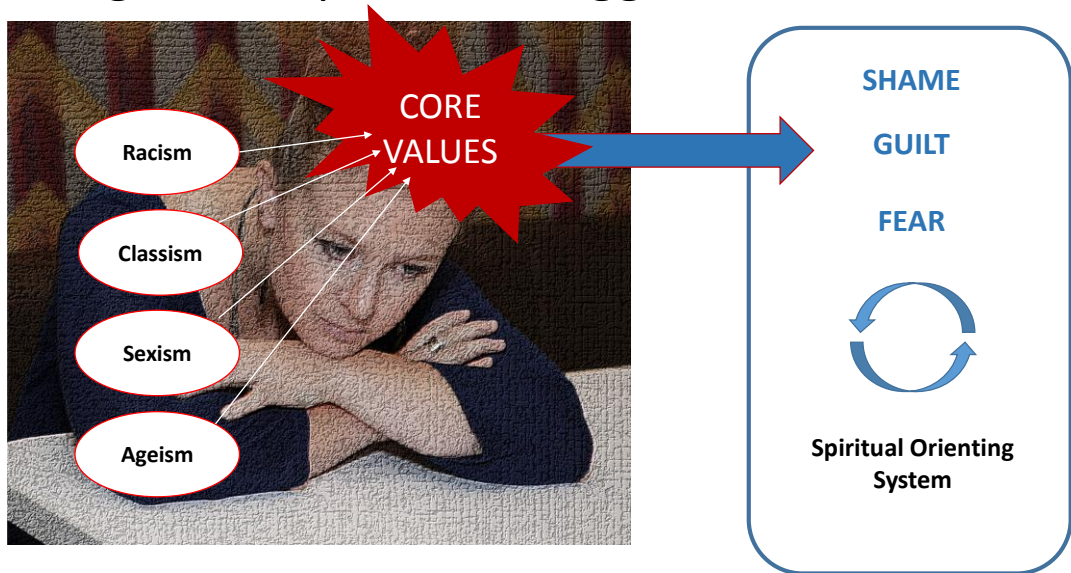
Spiritual Well-Being



HOW does pastoral/spiritual care help people change?



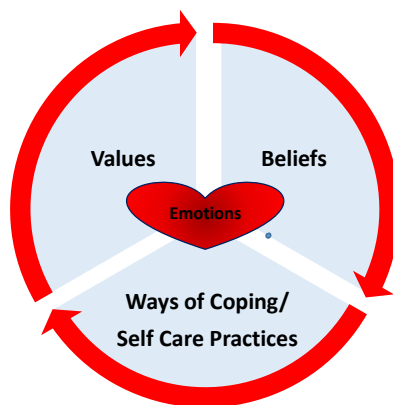
Religious & Spiritual Struggles & Moral Stress



Spiritual Orienting System

Core Values are

- Intrinsically meaningful principles
- Qualities/aspects of life (e.g., responsibility, achievement, and belonging)



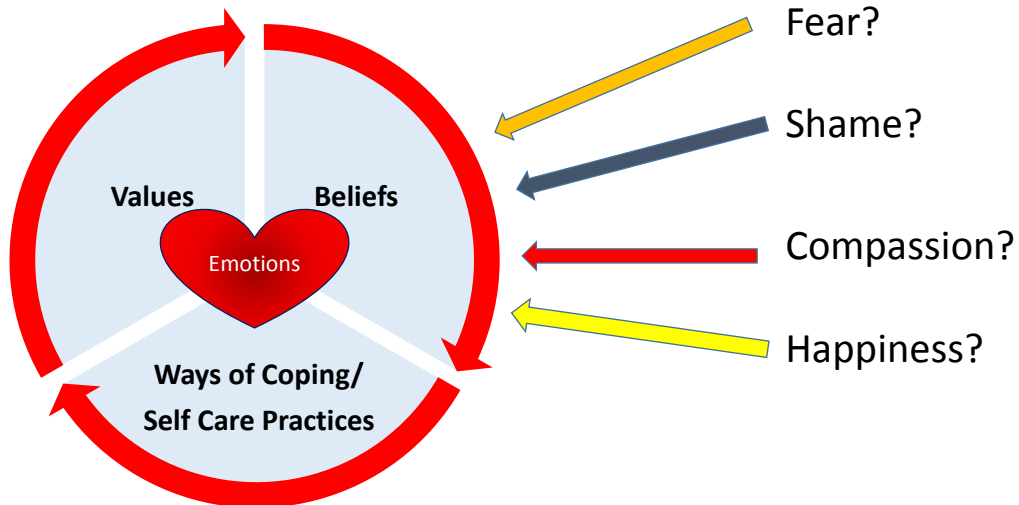
Ultimate beliefs are

convictions or worldviews about

- life/death
- one's purpose
- the meaning of suffering
- whether there is a God or a transcendent dimension of life

Practices are ways of
Coping and Connecting with a sense of the sacred

Emotions: The energy of Spiritual Orienting Systems



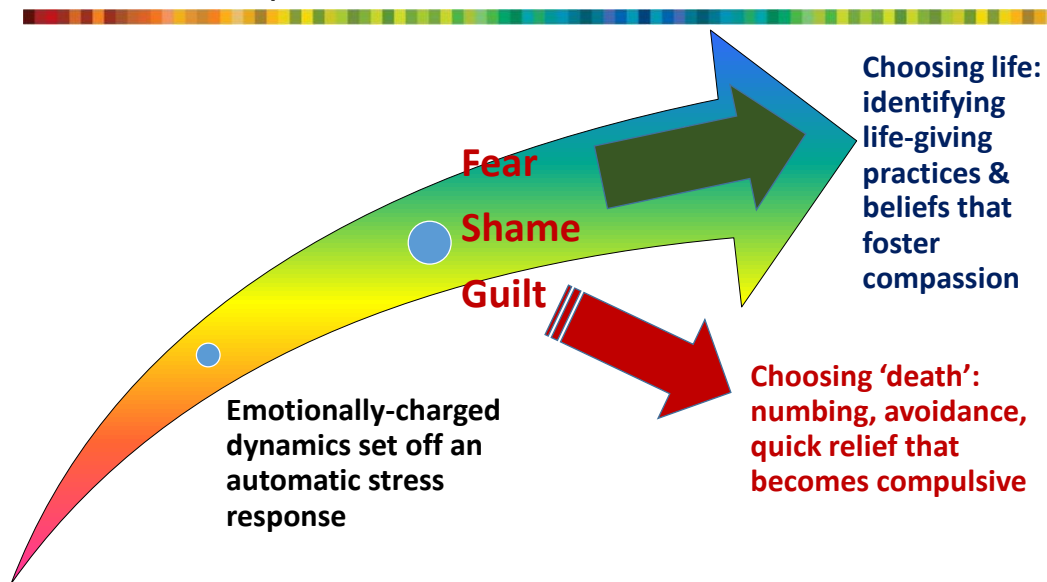
© Carrie Doehring

Moral Stress: Fear/shame/guilt related to causing harm



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Automatic/unconscious reactions



Moral and spiritual struggles

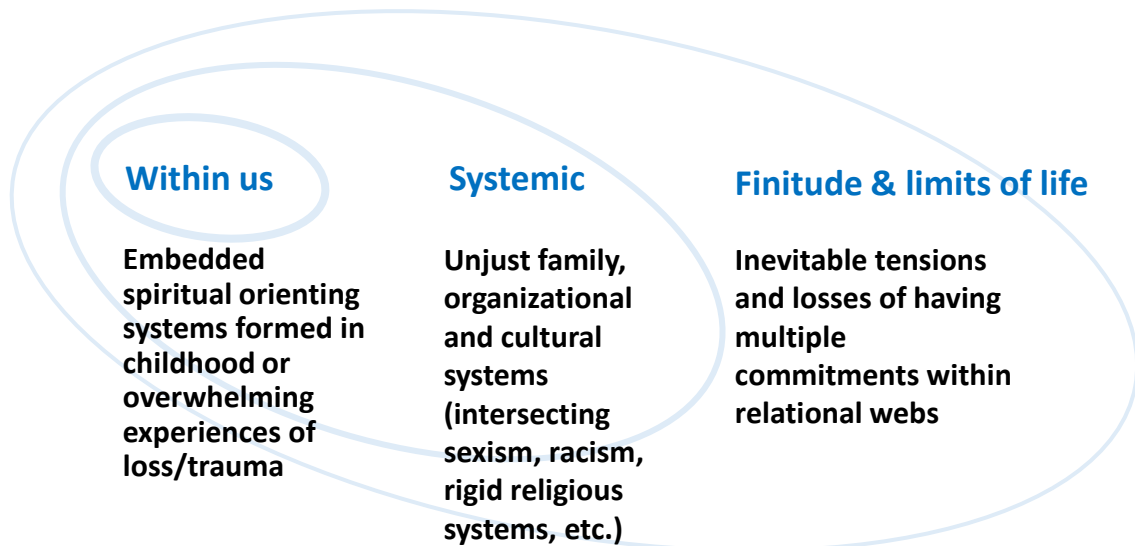
- “Many people experience religious and spiritual struggles, which affect their mental health and well-being.”
(Exline, Pargament, et al., 2014, p. 208)
- Religious struggles are common, especially concerning ultimate meanings and moral struggles.
- Such struggles are privatized and chronic: religious and spiritual struggles do not go away over time and people may be reluctant to seek help or may be unable to find help.

Illustrating with a case study

Identifying and evaluating
underlying conflicts in values
(personal and organizational)
that give rise to moral stress



Sources of moral stress



Identifying sources of moral stress



Internal moral stress

Feeling **responsible** for monitoring a family member's health; knowing when to intervene and how to get help

Fear about further harm that could result from family member's deteriorating health

Guilt about not getting the right kind of help soon enough, **guilt** about tragic irrevocable losses

Shame from not feeling good enough (in both family and professional roles)



My embedded spiritual orienting system

STRESS Traumatic stress reactions from caring for family member

EMOTIONS

- Shame about the nature of the health crisis
- Guilt about not being good enough in family/work roles
- Fear/guilt about causing further harm by not monitoring health

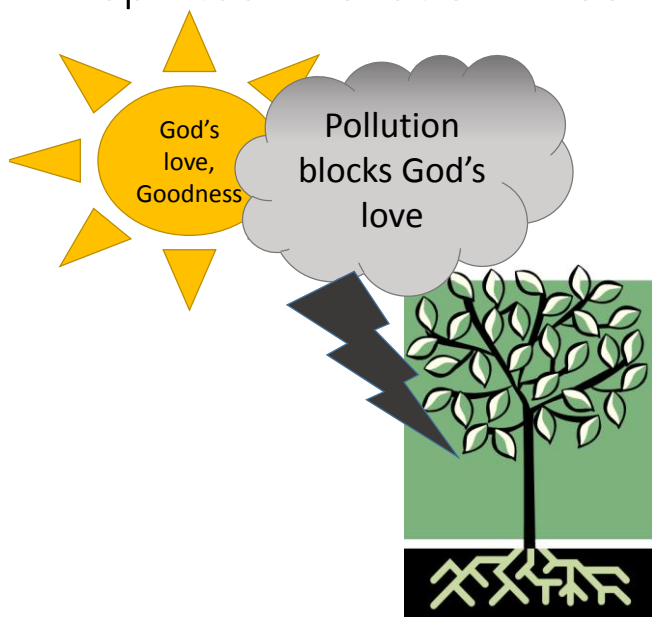
Embedded/automatic BELIEFS/VALUES

- I need to be responsible and self reliant
- Suffering is a consequence of personal wrong-doing/sinfulness

Automatic ways of COPING

- Work harder at job/family responsibilities, monitoring crisis
- Provide whatever stability is possible for the family (be the emotional anchor for everyone)
- Defer to health professionals, even when care is inadequate

Spiritual “Pollution” Blocks & Distorts Goodness/God



Spiritual and religious struggles are exacerbated by spiritual “pollution”, that blocks love within us, in our relationships from God.

Examples:

Family/ cultural beliefs that

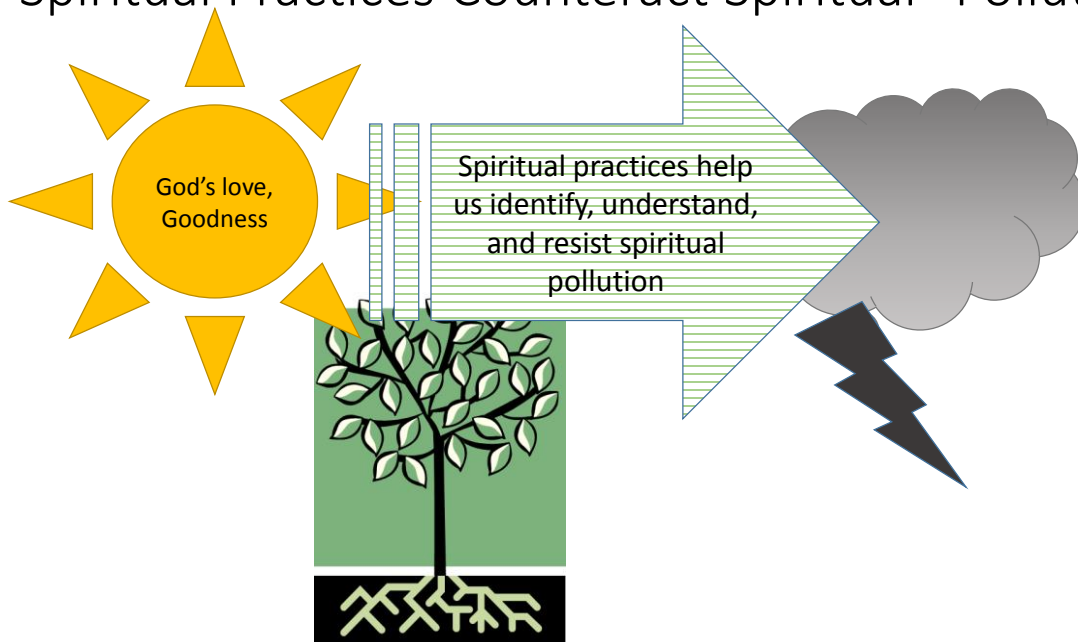
- We suffer because we are bad, there is something wrong with us.
- We suffer because God is punishing us for our wrong-doing
- If we just worked harder and/or took better care of ourselves we/those we love would not suffer

Moral stress: Fear/shame/guilt related to causing harm

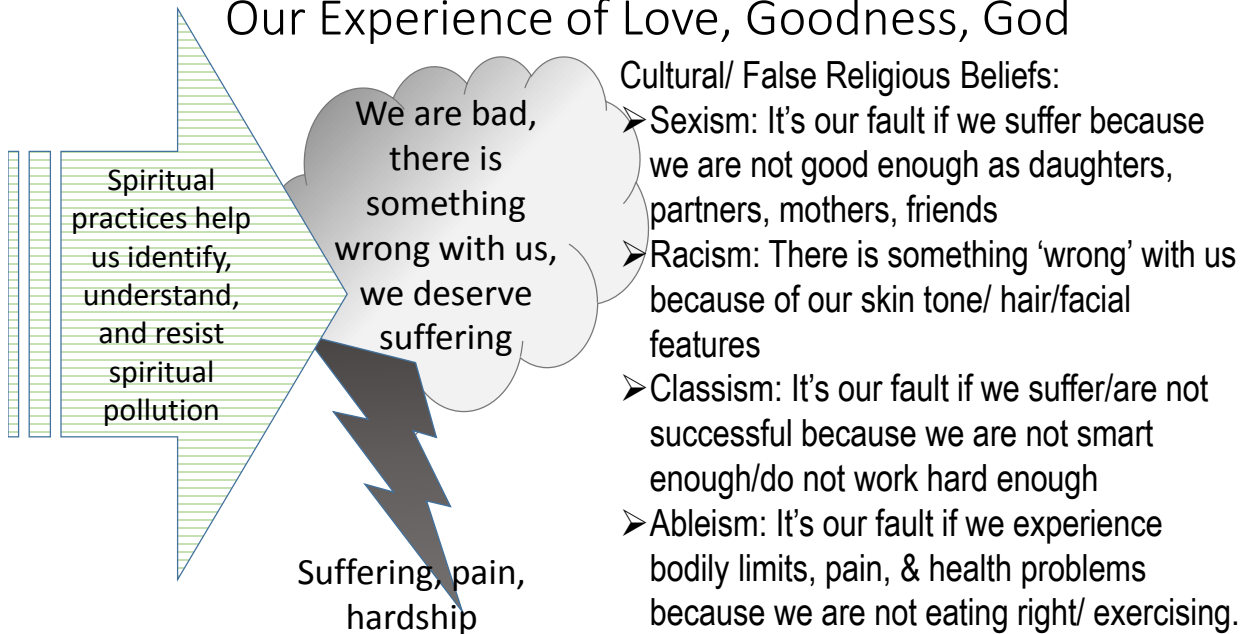


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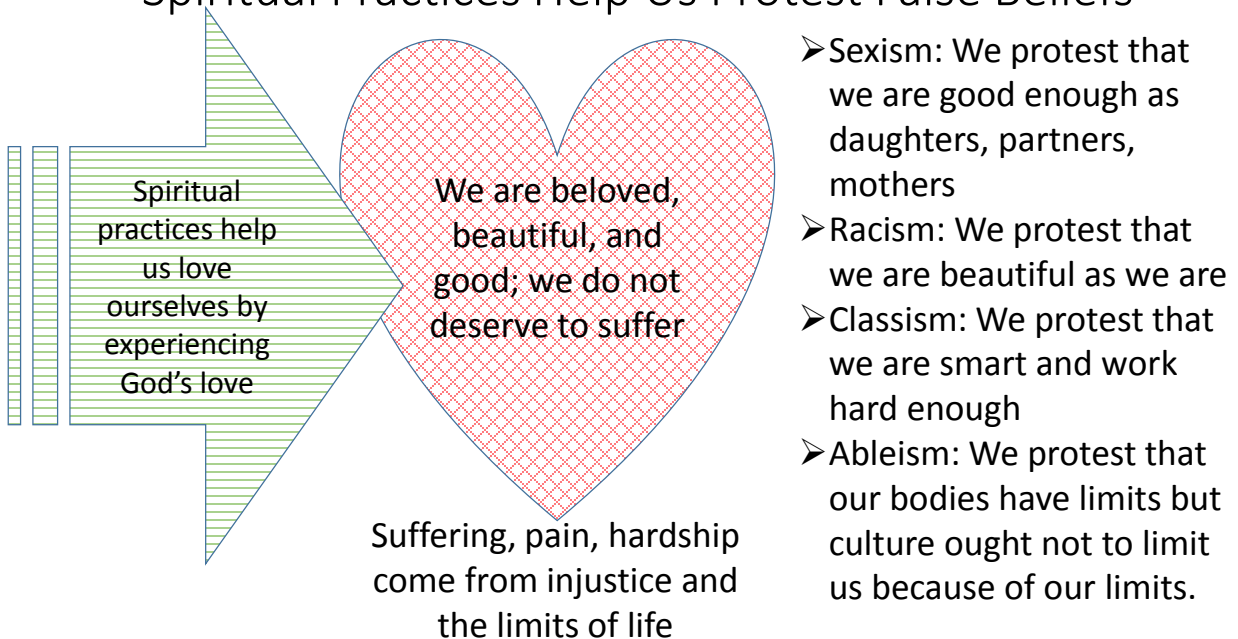
Spiritual Practices Counteract Spiritual “Pollution”



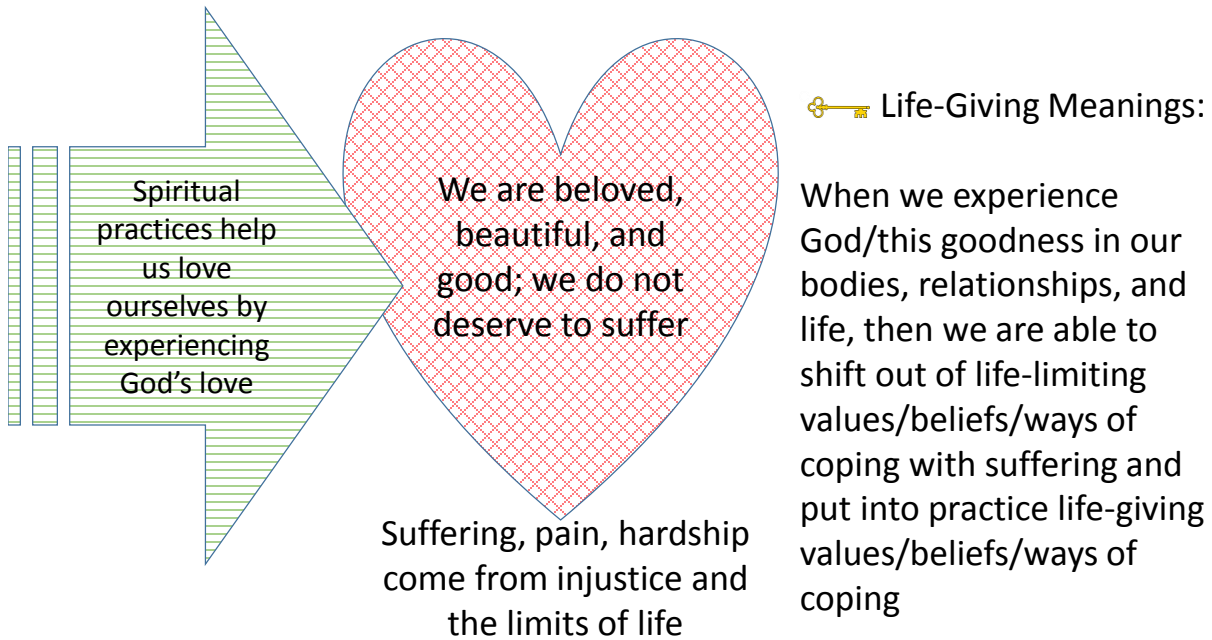
Understanding Sources of Spiritual Pollution that Distort Our Experience of Love, Goodness, God



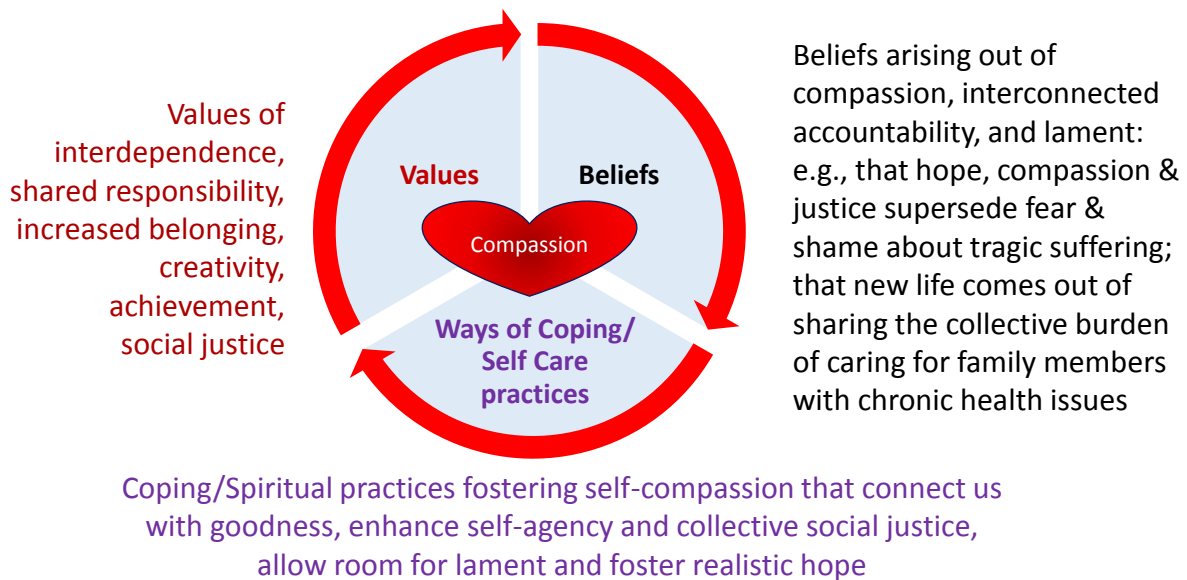
Spiritual Practices Help Us Protest False Beliefs



The Transformative Power of Knowing We Are Beloved



Energized by compassion



Four Markers of Spiritual Integration

1. Spiritual practices (communal/personal) help care seekers experience ***love or goodness or benevolence from God*** (in theistic traditions) and others, especially in one's body
2. Experiencing goodness reveals the life-limiting embedded orienting systems shaped by intersecting social oppressions, prompting care seekers to co-create ***complex intentional meanings about suffering (differentiated meanings)***
3. Experiencing goodness and complex meanings make care seekers use more ***flexible coping*** that counteracts consumerism
4. Integrating spiritual practices and intentional meanings in our daily life has ***spiritually integrative liberative ripple effects*** (Doehring, 2015)

CARITAS

Compassion comes from spiritual practices

Awareness and Acceptance of what is going on in our bodies and emotions

Reflecting on our values and beliefs

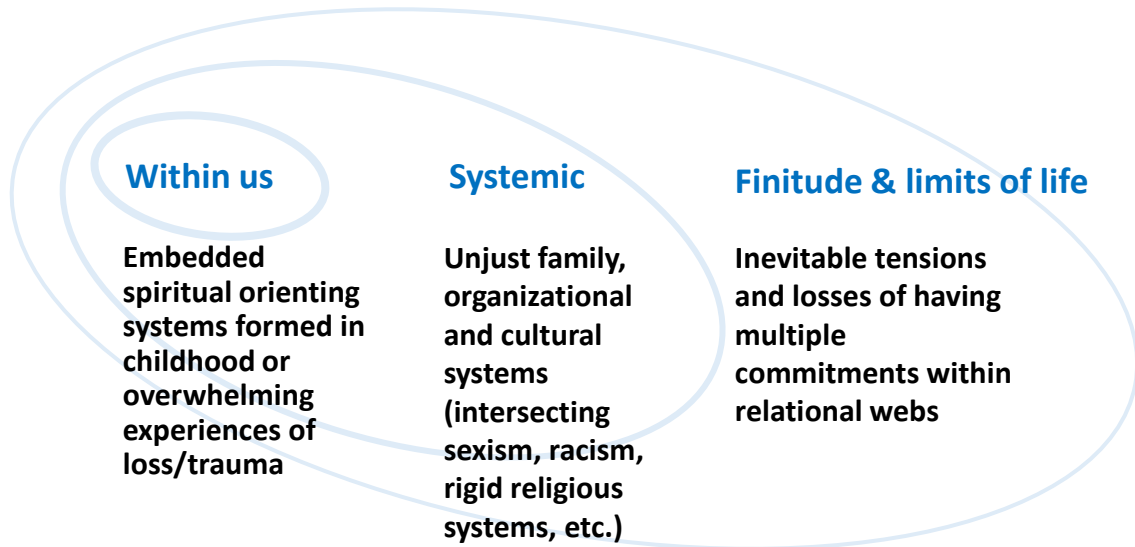
Intentionally Identifying what we truly value and believe

Trying out life-giving spiritual practices to foster self-compassion

Accountability for living out our intentional values and beliefs

Spiritual renewal ripples out

Sources of moral stress



Systemic moral stress

Unjust family, organizational and cultural systems (intersecting sexism, racism, rigid religious systems, etc.)

Attitudes towards disabilities?

Religious sexism?

Classism? Shaped by Germanic-American ethnic values of independence, self-reliance, emotional containment, avoidance of relational conflict, hard work=success; relational failure=not working hard enough



CARITAS

1. **Compassion** comes from spiritual practices
2. **Awareness and Acceptance** of what is going on in our bodies and our emotions
3. Spiritual **Reflexivity**: Reflecting on our values and beliefs (identifying our embedded theologies from childhood/culture)
4. **Intentional** (identifying what we truly value and believe, and spiritual practices that are life-giving)
5. **Trying out** new routines and spiritual practices to foster self-compassion and change
6. **Accountability** for living out our intentional theology
7. **Spiritual renewal** ripples out: care of persons interconnects with care of world; personal justice=social justice

Seeking Care and Justice

1. Seek relational and community support, especially through ongoing meaning-making, rituals, liturgies that hold us and help us lament loss
2. Use CARITAS process to accept and understand the ways we react, lament loss, and to live out intentional
3. Seek spiritual care and counseling when relational and community support isn't enough
4. When there is injustice, protest and seek justice with others

Spiritually Integration



PRESENCE:
Experiences
of
compassion



Theological reflexivity and co-creation
of new meanings and intentional
theologies



How Pastoral Care Helps

Connect with
God/the sacred
through
compassion-
based practices



Identify
embedded
theologies and
intersecting
social systems



Co-create
**spiritually
integrated**
theologies



Flexible

Integrated

**Capable of
complex
meanings**

**Connected
to life-giving
webs of
relationships**

Concluding Thoughts on the Process of Pastoral Care



1. Building trust
2. Empathically understanding religious and spiritual struggles and moral stress
3. Helping care seekers explore spiritual coping that enhances a sense of safety, goodness, & self-compassion
4. Helping care seekers identify fear- & shame-based values/beliefs/ways of coping, and shift from fear/shame to compassion in ways that increases integration, flexibility, tolerance of ambiguity, and the experience of goodness