

Mountain Tops Are Not Where It's At

It took me back to a conversation I had with God many years ago when I was at a crossroads about making a commitment to my spiritual path. I remember specifically saying to God that I really believed the only way anyone could live a spiritual way of life was if they lived far away on a mountain top away from all of life's distractions and a voice said to me, "That's the easy way. The real challenge is learning how to be on a spiritual path while all of life is going on. You need to do it here, not off someplace where there are no challenges."

I was full of "yeah, buts" and "as soon as"--"as soon as my job got easier," or "yeah, but I don't have time to meditate" or "as soon as I get all my bills paid" or "as soon as I get in a good relationship" or " yeah, but I need to finish the laundry or mow the grass or exercise or lose 10 pounds first." It seemed as if there was always something to tend to first. Setting aside time to pray (talking to God) and meditate (being one with God) seemed impossible.

A friend suggested I get up a half an hour earlier and have prayer time, but that didn't work. I bought books to read on meditation, but could never find time to read them. I kept thinking maybe when I got a bit older and more settled down, living a spiritual way of life would come easier, but the way it was going, time kept passing, I was getting older and life just seemed to get busier.

Books and friends shared what worked for them, but none of their solutions fit for me. Perfectionism was also getting in the way. I told myself I had to create the perfect place to pray at and I needed to be disciplined enough to sit in the silence for 30 minutes every day at the same time. I was setting up rigid rules and they were not realistic for my lifestyle. I also had to let go of all the guilt about not doing it right and tailor-make my own prayer and meditation time.

Have Fun Practicing Prayer Daily

The thing about my relationship with God that I didn't like was that I only seemed to talk to Him when I was in a crisis. A good friend of mine said having daily contact with God was a great way to build a reserve tank of faith for times of crisis and that during times of calm, I could develop a great relationship with God based on wanting one, not needing one.

I purchased a daily meditation book (I recommend "In God's Care") so that I had something to focus on each day and that turned out to be a great tool to help remind me of my spiritual goals. I started to talk to God several times a day, having conversations similar to those I had with my best friend. I asked Him if He could show me some kind of proof that he was really a part of my life and that's when the fun spiritual experiences began happening. In the beginning, I wondered if some of them were simply coincidence, but after awhile I realized the synchronistic experiences were always somehow related to the things I had talked to God about that day.

Developing a personal relationship with God became a really fun part of my life. Prayer time was no longer so serious. Over time, I built up a huge reserve tank of faith which felt great.

Meditation, on the other hand, was not that easy. Finding time to sit in the silence was very hard for me and I knew I had to find a solution because I knew it was equally important to have conscious contact with God also.

Forget Perfectionism

I started keeping the radio and television off while cleaning the house, taking a shower, folding the laundry, washing the car, mowing the grass, running on the treadmill, driving the car, sitting in traffic, riding my bike, going for a walk, or anything else I had going on in my busy lifestyle that I didn't need my full concentration for. I would focus on the still, small voice within for direction and it would come. In spite of all the hecticness of the lifestyle I was living, I was finding in order to have a relationship with God or walk a spiritual path, it wasn't necessary to live on a mountain top. It was workable as long as I didn't get into perfectionism about how it was supposed to be. What's so much fun about living on a spiritual path is that it never stays the same. Over time, prayer and meditation time has continued to change and I'm sure it will always be that way. What's been most helpful is finding what works with my lifestyle and going with that rather than doing what the experts say to do. We really can live on a spiritual path as we move into a new century. As far as I'm concerned, it's the only way the go!

Unknown