

GUIDELINES FOR LIVING A SPIRITUAL LIFE

1. Awareness

I resolve to be more aware and responsive to the spiritual dimensions of my being and my nature. I intend to accept and to embrace the self-evident truth that the very life force that is within me is the same life force that moves, propels, and governs the universe itself, and because of this, I must approach life with a new sense of awe, humbled by the mystery of this truth, yet elated and confident by its consequences. I am alive! I am part of life! And, because of this, I must act in ways that encourage and support this fact, and I must act in ways that are responsive to its requirements and demands.

2. Cultivation of the Spirit

Because I am both an individual and a collective part of the life force that moves, propels, and governs the universe, I have serious responsibilities including acting and behaving in ways that sustain life in all its forms. I have an individual responsibility to do this. To this end, ***I resolve to perfect the spiritual dimension of my being because it is in this pursuit that I can discover and fulfill my unique destiny in the larger cosmic plan whose details remain unknown, but whose intent seems clear -- the promotion of an evolutionary harmony, balance, and synergy among all life forms.*** To this end, I intend to do all I can to fulfill and actualize my potential as a human being conscious of the power of choice and conscious of the virtue of cultivating the enduring life values of peace, beauty, truth, justice, and civility.

3. Living Within the Passions of Our Time

Because spiritual maturity and perfection must be pursued through behavior, ***I resolve to actively participate in the world in which I live, and to be a force for life through the conscious support of those people, ideas, and institutions that serve life through humanistic action.*** To this end, I intend to live within the passions of my time, and not to be a passive bystander. I intend to make a difference in solving those life problems and challenges I can, whether they be big or small, using whenever possible the very energies generated by these challenges to derive my strength and determination.

4. Promoting Life

Because humanistic action is a pathway to spiritual perfection, and because the pursuit of spiritual perfection is the pathway revealing my place and role in the larger cosmic destiny and order, ***I resolve to commit myself to those beliefs and actions that will illuminate, affirm, and promote the value and power of life,*** including: (1) A recognition of the interdependency of all things; (2) A recognition of the importance of the process or way we do things rather than simply the product or outcome; (3) A recognition of the importance of promoting inner and outer peace as a means of promoting and preserving life; (4) An appreciation of beauty in all its manifestations and forms and, (5) A fostering of the impulse to penetrate into the nature of things for the sheer delight of inquiry, without any need to conquer or to subdue that which is learned.

5. Constant Renewal

Because the spiritual dimension of life is at once the most self-evident dimension of our being, and simultaneously the most hidden and mysterious, ***I resolve to constantly acknowledge my spiritual nature, to revel in it, to preserve it, and to renew it,*** so all of my thoughts and behaviors will reflect and appreciate the simple yet profound joy of this truth.

* These guidelines were first published as part of other articles in Marsella, A.J. (1994). Making important new year resolutions. *Honolulu Star Bulletin*, December 30, p. 10; Marsella, A.J. (1999). In search of meaning: Some thoughts on belief, doubt, and wellbeing. *The International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*, 18, 41-52.