



**Caring about the quality of your relationships.**  
**Brenda Montani, MSC. RCC**

**Another Important Ingredient for Self Love**

Spiritual issues are often contentious and yet I need to deliver a message. The message comes with the greatest respect to each individual's beliefs and choices.

Increasingly, I am aware that our spiritual needs are as integral to our lives as our psychological and emotional needs. In my practice I often question people about their spiritual beliefs. Many people are reluctant to adopt any spiritual beliefs or aren't really able to articulate what they do believe spiritually. The reasons for this are varied and often understandable.

For some clarification of the word spirituality, the Canadian Cancer Society writes, "Spirituality may be defined as an individual's sense of peace, purpose, and connection to others, and beliefs about the meaning of life. Spirituality may be found and expressed through an organized religion or in other ways. Many patients consider themselves both spiritual and religious. Some patients may consider themselves spiritual, but not religious. Other patients may consider themselves religious, but not spiritual."

Our western culture chooses more and more to downplay spirituality and promotes instead, a more secular belief in self-sufficiency. I believe a disservice has been done and that each of us needs a belief system that offers spiritual answers and acts as a rudder for giving meaning to our lives. It is time to suspend the disbelief that many harbour, long enough to allow for an exploration that leads to a belief, that integrates values like truth, goodness, love, compassion and gratitude. Dr. Peter Kalder did research determining the effects of a spiritual belief in one's life. He discovered that, "Those with a spiritual orientation have a greater sense of purpose in life, a greater oneness to personal growth and more optimism about life."

This has been my observation, as well, in my work with individuals. And so because of this I encourage each person to journey to a place where they can name what they believe spiritually and believe what they name.



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I know that people who face dark times and have no spiritual beliefs or understandings have trouble making sense of the suffering. I know that people struggling with addictions have their best chance for recovery when the healing is spiritual. Alcoholics Anonymous recognizes substance abuse as a spiritual illness and has had great success helping people recover by offering them faith in a higher power.

People who are searching for spiritual answers can read, meditate, become involved in various religions, talk to others about their beliefs, and so on. Finding, developing and living your spiritual beliefs can be one of the most empowering things you ever do. Many great people's lives have been defined by their spiritual beliefs: Mother Teresa, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela and so on. I encourage you, too, to attend to your spiritual needs.

**PARENT'S TIP**

Like adults, children have a spiritual side that requires nurturing. Today's children, it has been proven, are overscheduled and too much defined by accomplishment. As much as we need quiet, reflective time, children need time to feed their souls. They need time for spontaneous play both by themselves and with their peers. They need time to be creative in an unstructured way and they need opportunities to be childlike and lighthearted. Be aware of over scheduling and over committing your child to structured activities that have specific expectations around them. There is much wellness for a child that gets to enjoy some the simple freedoms of childhood.