

==RESOURCES FOR RESILIENCE==

**BUILDING SPIRITUAL FOUNDATIONS FOR A
RESILIENT WORLDVIEW**

**INDEX OF
CORE SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES**

(INSPIRIT-R)

Self-Test Version

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Building Spiritual Foundations for a Resilient Worldview

One of the most valuable inner resources you can cultivate is a personally-meaningful approach to spirituality. Spirituality, of course, is not the only way to develop a resilient worldview. However, for countless generations and cultures, spirituality has been a primary source of resilience for individuals, families, and communities.

The following questionnaire will help you to clarify the degree to which you have developed your own personally meaningful spirituality. In addition, this **Index of Core Spiritual Experiences (INSPIRIT)** may help you to think about spirituality in new ways.

The essence of spirituality is not a set of doctrines or beliefs—or how often you attend religious services. Rather, it is **the way you experience life**. Spirituality is your awareness that life has a sacred dimension. People discover life's sacred dimension through personal experiences in many different aspects of their lives. These include:

- love for family, children, and friends
- commitment to social justice and the dignity of all peoples
- resonance with the natural world and environmental stewardship
- creative immersion in the arts, sciences, philosophy
- intuitive awareness of a transcendent dimension greater than self
- spiritual practices (e.g., prayer, meditation, mindfulness)

Over time, spiritual growth in these areas can produce a transformative discovery: **our profound interconnection to each other and to the fabric of life**. Some people describe the fabric of life as *God* (or *Goddess*). Others prefer an inclusive term like *spirit of life* or *ground of being*. Irrespective of the term we use, as we begin to experience life's sacred core in self and others, our worldview changes.

Our actions also begin to change. **Aware of life's sacred core as the center of our own being, we can respond to stress and conflicts with inner composure and confidence**. We begin to experience an empowered self, clarity of thought, inner calm, and compassionate concern for the needs of others. Rather than reacting destructively or impulsively, our internal composure helps us respond in new ways that promote well-being in self, others, and society.

The INSPIRIT can help you measure the strength through which you experience life's sacred core. It invites you to use your own words and images for this connective substrate. If your score is low, the INSPIRIT may spur you to explore the experiential, contemplative aspects of spirituality—in a manner that is congruent with your own belief systems and cultural identity. If your score is high, it will confirm your sense of connection to *the spirit of life*. In both cases, these results can help you determine how much your spirituality currently contributes to a resilient worldview.

QUESTIONNAIRE ON SPIRITUAL ATTITUDES AND EXPERIENCES

The following questions concern your spiritual or religious beliefs and experiences. There are no right or wrong answers. **For each question, circle the number of the answer that is most true for you.**

1. How strongly religious (or spiritually-oriented) do you consider yourself to be?

1. Not at all
2. Not very strong
3. Somewhat strong
4. Strong

2. About how often do you spend time on religious or spiritual practices?

1. Once per year or less
2. Once per month to several times per year
3. Once per week to several times per month
4. Several times per day to several times per week

3. How often have you felt as though you were very close to a powerful spiritual force?

1. Never
2. Once or twice
3. Several times
4. Often

PEOPLE HAVE MANY DIFFERENT IMAGES AND DEFINITIONS OF THE HIGHER POWER THAT WE OFTEN CALL GOD. **USE YOUR IMAGE AND YOUR DEFINITION OF GOD WHEN ANSWERING THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.**

4. How close do you feel to God?

1. I don't believe in God
2. Not very close
3. Somewhat close
4. Extremely close

5. Have you ever had an experience that has convinced you that God exists?

1. No
2. I don't know
3. Maybe
4. Yes

6. Indicate whether you agree or disagree with this statement: "God dwells within you".

1. Definitely disagree
2. Tend to disagree
3. Tend to agree
4. Definitely agree

7. The following list describes spiritual experiences that some people have had. Indicate if you have had any of these experiences and the extent to which each of them has affected your belief in God.

	NEVER HAD THIS EXPERIENCE	HAD THIS EXPERIENCE AND IT:		
		Did not strengthen belief in God	Strengthened belief in God	Convinced me of God's existence
SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES:				
A. An experience of profound inner peace	1	2	3	4
B. An overwhelming experience of love	1	2	3	4
C. A feeling of unity with the earth and all living beings	1	2	3	4
D. An experience of complete joy and ecstasy	1	2	3	4
E. Meeting or listening to a spiritual teacher or master	1	2	3	4
F. An experience of God's energy or presence	1	2	3	4
G. An experience of a great spiritual figure (eg. Jesus, Mary, Elijah, Buddha)	1	2	3	4
H. A healing of your body or mind (or witnessed such a healing)	1	2	3	4
I. A miraculous (or not normally occurring) event	1	2	3	4
J. An experience of angels or guiding spirits	1	2	3	4
K. An experience of communication with someone who has died	1	2	3	4
L. An experience with near death or life after death	1	2	3	4
M. Other (specify) _____		2	3	4

SCORING INSTRUCTIONS FOR INSPIRIT

Questions 1 through 6: The number you checked is your score for that question. Add these scores together. **Your sum should range from 6 to 24.**

Question 7 (items A-M): The **highest number** you checked for **any** of these items is your score for this question. **Your score for Question 7 should be 1, 2, 3, or 4.**

Sum of Questions 1-6: ____ + Question 7 (highest item) ____ = INSPIRIT Score ____

INTERPRETATION

High	=	25 – 28
Medium High	=	18 – 24
Medium Low	=	11 – 17
Low	=	7 – 10

Most adults from test sites in the USA score between 16 and 25. The average score is 20 ½.

Does your score make sense to you? If **not**, this test may measure concepts that have not been central to your spirituality. Review each question—and consider whether the INSPIRIT may be suggesting new areas of experience for you to explore. Some questions focus on experiences that convince you of God's existence. Others concern the strength of your relationship with *the spirit of life*—and the degree to which you experience God as the ground of your own being. **If your score does make sense to you, consider these interpretive guidelines:**

HIGH: You often experience a close and intimate connection with *the spirit of life*. You know, with deep conviction, that *the spirit of life* is the core of your being.

MEDIUM HIGH: You experience a close and intimate connection with *the spirit of life*. However, this experience may not take place on a regular basis. If your score is 22–24, you may have begun to realize, with a growing sense of conviction, that *the spirit of life* is the core of your being. If your score is 18-21, you may be testing this possibility.

MEDIUM LOW: You have had some experiences concerning *the spirit of life*, though they have not convinced you that God exists. If your score is 15-17, these experiences have deepened your awareness of life's spiritual core. If your score is 11-14, these experiences have had little effect on you.

LOW: You have had few experiences concerning *the spirit of life*. If you believe that *the spirit of life* is the core of your being, this belief has, most likely, not grown out of your personal experience. **NOTE:** A low score may also mean you have not acknowledged the spiritual or meditative experiences you have had. Perhaps these experiences seemed insignificant or coincidental. Perhaps it seemed embarrassing, or prideful, to admit having them. Keep in mind that experiences of the sacred are part of a human being's natural capacities--and a vital way to discover your link with God. Allow yourself to acknowledge moments of spiritual connection as they occur in your daily life.

