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*Chaplain, I'm Not Religious, but I am Spiritual:” Spiritual Paths for the Institutionally Suspicious, but Spiritually Hungry Non-Religious Patient*

“Religion as the response to the conflict of finitude” Prof. Alvin Reines

Spiritual quest: “human need to transcend oneself in search of answers to life’s existential questions” (Sonsino, p. 11).

**My definition of spirituality:**

Art of hugging God through one or more of six spiritual paths:

Acts of Transcendence, Study, Prayer, Meditation, Ritual, Relationship and Good Deeds.

“Finding and following your path not only will open a window through which you will see the world with a sense of awe and reverence but also will help you reach wholeness in your life. Not necessarily happiness or future, mind you, but a better understanding of your position in life, a greater appreciation for what you have and are, a contentment based on gratitude, and hopefully a desire to make things better for others. And this is nothing short of living in the presence of the God, the Source of all Life.” (Sonsino, p. 154).

**Brief Assessment Model that Conforms to Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations Assessment Recommendations**

1. I was wondering if spirituality or religion is important to you?
2. Are there certain spiritual beliefs and practices that you find particularly helpful in dealing with problems?
3. I was also wondering if you attend a church/synagogue/temple/mosque or some other type of spiritual community?
4. Are there any spiritual needs or concerns I can help you with?

Hodge, David. “A Template for Spiritual Assessment: A Review of the JCAHO Requirements and Guidelines for Implementation.” *Social Work*, (October, 2006), 51(4), 317-326.

## **Spiritual Assessment Questions Provided by JCAHO 2004**

1. Who or what provides the patient with strength and hope?
2. Does the patient use prayer in their life?
3. How does the patient express their spirituality?
4. How would the patient describe their philosophy of life?
5. What type of spiritual/religious support does the patient desire?
6. What is the name of the patient's clergy minister/chaplain/pastor/rabbi?
7. What does suffering mean to the patient?
8. What does dying mean to the patient?
9. What are the patient's spiritual goals?
10. Is there a role of church/synagogue in the patient's life?
11. Has belief in God been important in the patient's life?
12. How does your faith help the patient cope with illness?
13. How does the patient keep going day after day?
14. What helps the patient get through this health care experience?
15. How has illness affected the patient and his/her family?

## **Short Spirituality Bibliography**

- Korngold, Jamie. *God in the Wilderness*. New York: Doubleday, 2007.
- Kluger, Jeffrey. "Is God in our Genes?" *Time Magazine* October 25, 2004, 62-72.
- Matlins, Stuart, Ed. *The Jewish Lights Spirituality Handbook: A Guide to Understanding, Exploring and Living a Spiritual Life*. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2001.
- Reines, Alvin. *Polydoxy*. Buffalo: Prometheus, 1987.
- Sonsino, Rifat. *Six Jewish Spiritual Paths: A Rationalist Looks At Spirituality*. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2000.