



## Signpost One

**"I am a spiritual being having a human experience."**

**"We are not human beings having a spiritual experience;  
we are spiritual beings having a human experience."**

**- Pierre Teilhard de Chardin SJ**

Signpost One.

The first of our 12 spiritual principles.

Signpost one invites us to look at who we believe we are, because who we believe we are is the lens through which we see everything else.

I've heard it explained like this: what you see isn't necessarily what is there, what you see is based on who is doing the seeing. We know that if ten people witness a car accident, there are ten different versions of what happened. So instead of asking what you saw, this principle asks, who is doing the seeing? Or, who do you believe you are?

"I am a spiritual being having a human experience" asks us to see ourselves as spiritual beings first and human beings second. It is the complete opposite of what the world offers us, a different way and order from what most of us were taught.

I lived a large part of my life focusing all of my time, energy and effort on my external self, my body. But this way flips the order. Spirit is primary and physical is secondary.

**Who do you believe yourself to be?** Do you think of yourself as your external self? What would happen if you put your spiritual self first and considered that your spirit is the reason you are here? And that your spirit moves about this place in a way only you can, to make the world a better, more loving place? That God created every single detail about you and placed a one-of-a-kind spirit and heart in the middle of your being?

What does it even look like if our spirit is primary and our physical selves are secondary?

**What is necessary to change a person is to change his awareness of himself.**

**~Abraham Maslow**

*My translation: for a person to change,  
they have to change who they believe they are.*

This is where I began my healing journey. I had to be open to seeing myself in a completely new and different way. Peeling back all the many layers of built-up images had to be done patiently, gently and compassionately. It was a painful and slow process, one that continues today. However, I always remind myself and others that the pain of this process is not nearly as painful as pretending to be someone else. I had to take the time to unwrap the packaging I had placed around myself and get to the original contents. I walked through beliefs, conditioning, masks, labels and lies to come back home to my spirit, my original essence, my true self, who God created me to be. The “me” before I started covering it all up.

If someone had asked, “Who are you? Who do you believe you are?” Oh, honey, I had all the right answers: “I am a child of God, I am a daughter of the King. I am God’s chosen one,” would have been one of my replies. The problem was that

none of these words aligned with anything in my life. They were hollow, memorized words.

I suffered.

And yet somehow I was eventually able to see how off-track and far away from my center I'd become. The gift of suffering has a way of showing us what we don't want. Our South Star, as Rob Bell calls it.

Recovery and healing are where the shift started moving in me. This contrast created a deep longing for something different and forced me to make different choices. How I got here could not be the way I got out. In A.A. they say, "the mind that got you here can't be the mind that gets you out." Albert Einstein said the same thing in a different way, "No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it."

I needed help, and I needed the courage to ask for it. Once I surrendered to this idea, help began showing up in the most unexpected ways. "Ask and it is given" is not an empty promise. My problem was that when I asked and it was given, I missed it. Because what I expected to receive as the answer is never the way God answers.

I wanted to live a life where my external way of showing up in the world was in alignment with my internal truth, my heart and soul. Allowing my spiritual life to be the focus and my physical self to fade into the background. I could no longer pretend to be someone I wasn't. I had no idea who I was, but I knew a hell of a lot about who I wasn't. I could no longer sleepwalk through my life, play it safe and pretend. It was time to come home to my spirit.

Change happens when we are willing to see ourselves in a different light.

**"We were born to make manifest  
The glory of God that is within us.**

**It's not just in some of us;  
It's in everyone."  
~ Marianne Williamson**

“For a person to change, they have to change who they believe they are.”  
This weaves its way into each one of the 12 Signposts.

Spirit first. Human second.

I am a spiritual being having a human experience.

For me, there is a right order. A one and a two. If I put two before one, things are out of order. It is that simple. I want peace and for me to experience peace, there is a one, then a two.

Spirit first, human second.

***“It is the True Self that lets us know what is authentic and what has become artificial, while the False Self is a diplomat of distrust, enforcing a lifestyle of guardedness, secrecy, and complaint.”***

**~ D. W. Winnicott from Mark Nepo’s book, *The Book of Awakening***

Most of us live only from the perspective of our external / five sensory/ doing self.

The neglected part of ourselves that most people only “know about” but don’t “know directly” is the internal part, the never-changing spirit. Our essence that goes beyond the five senses, external self.

“Knowing about” something is knowing it through our intellect.

“Knowing directly” is having a direct experience. So here we are again- the difference between our minds and our souls.

There are many things we need to know about and many things we need to know directly. I have learned that what is most important is to know the difference between the two. Years ago, I heard Dr. Wayne Dyer explain it in the simplest of terms that resonated with me:

**Inspiration** means (in spirit) the heart [formless]

**Information** means (in form) the mind [form]

Understanding the difference between my mind and my spirit was pivotal for me to see how much I focused on the external and operated from my mind, and how little time I spent focused on my spirit and in my heart. No wonder I had a set point of suffering and always came back to it. I was on an external path and always felt empty inside. The peace and contentment I was longing for would never be found “out there,” which was the only place I was searching for it. It could only be found “in here,” where I didn’t even know to look.

I did not have the tools, but I did have a great desire to find my internal path that all the great mystics talk about. I tried for many years and in many different ways to fill my internal longing with external things, so I knew I didn’t want to keep choosing those empty things. We all know that repeatedly choosing the same thing yet expecting different results leaves us frustrated, angry and deeply unfulfilled.

I have always wanted to share my authentic gifts with the world in a real and honest way. But I didn’t understand the process. So, I pursued what I thought would get the most attention, praise, adoration and make me a “big success”: being a competitive athlete. For years I pursued external achievements around my body, power and strength through Olympic weightlifting, bodybuilding and powerlifting. While there were brief and short-lived moments of feeling like a success, the underlying feeling was failure. And almost the entire time I was bulimic, depressed, an alcoholic and on steroids. There is such violence and suffering in striving, forcing and controlling.

This spiritual principle reminds me I have to allow myself to love what I love, and then the energy of giving flows outward into the world. The internal longings of peace, joy, creativity and wanting to make a powerful contribution naturally happens and flows from the inside outward.

I wanted to experience my spirit. I wanted to know what it felt like and looked like in my life.

Wayne Dyer explains these concepts in a very simple and clear way. Most importantly, he wasn't just teaching others how to do this, he was doing it himself. I wanted this. I wanted a life of depth and truth and purpose and meaning. Sharing not just my packaging but also my contents with others. I also needed his example when I started living this way and I was misunderstood or rejected. I needed to know how I would keep going in the direction of allowing my spirit to lead the way. I needed to know how to keep choosing what was in my heart. Wayne Dyer gave me this.

In his many books and recorded talks, Dyer repeatedly explains our external nature: "Our ego says that we are what we have, what we do, and what other people think of us. Our external self is everything that changes."

But he goes on to say, "Our internal self never changes. It was in us at 8, 18 or 80." Slowly, after many hundreds of times hearing this, it started making sense to me.

I could easily see myself as a child around five or six years old, still free and expressing what was inside of me. As children, our spirits express and create in whatever way is natural to us. The world hasn't gotten ahold of us yet and told us that we aren't worthy, or how we express ourselves isn't good enough.

So, we are just ourselves.

Somewhere along the way we forget our truth, we forget who our inner being really is, and what our essence is all about. We forget we are *love*.

We lose the connection to our spirit. The link slowly becomes layered with gunk and becomes corroded. Our link gets covered up with layers of all kinds of things. Slowly we lose who we were created to be and start watering ourselves down. We strive to be like others, who we think the world wants us to be, and who will be best liked and get the most attention and applause.

We are often taught by wounded people, who've lost their connection to their own spirits, how to live and operate from our physical/external selves. We think we have to earn love and our worth through doing. We forget that deep inside of us is our worth and our truth, at the center of our hearts where no one can take it away.

Worth. I can't add to it or take away from it; however, I did spend many years covering it up. The breakdowns we experience externally are not about our external circumstances. They are really about forgetting we are spiritual beings having a human experience.

Our worth and our truth are at the center of our hearts. The mind will tell us all the reasons we need to work harder, and it will confuse us and make us believe that our worth and how lovable we are is based on how much we can accomplish through all of this doing. The big lie is the more I do, the more I am.

We become restless and discontent because we were created for something different.

The world offers us an enticing four-lane, fast-moving highway and tricks us into believing this is the only road. Meanwhile, our soul longs for something different, maybe a country dirt road, but we keep hauling ass down the highway to a place we don't even want to go.

So we do more, accomplish more, and get more. And the longing remains, sometimes until the end of our highway.

We've been on the hunt for something to satisfy our soul, and yet we never considered our soul, only our external self. We are God's masterpiece, and our soul yearns to express what existed inside of us even before we were born.

It is internal.

It has always been inside of us and will always be found there.

My mind can never get me to this internal place where my spirit, heart and soul reside.

The bridge that one must cross to get there is stillness. Stillness is the way.

The only way I could learn to access what was at the center of my heart was in stillness. In the silence is where I could finally hear the whispers that had always been there; the quiet voice of who I was, what I loved and what needed to come through me to be shared with the world. I could only remember this when there were brief pauses in between the thoughts of my mind.

**“When you lose touch with your inner stillness, you lose touch with yourself.**

**When you lose touch with yourself, you lose yourself in the world.”**

**~ Eckhart Tolle**

I need my mind, I need my thinking, my rational mind. It is a gift, a beautiful thing.

However, my mind can never give me what is in my heart, my soul and my spirit.

When I get out of rhythm, lose my grounding and lose my way, I have usually spent too much time hanging out in my mind.



What is most needed to get me back on track is to balance mind time with some heart time. The volume of my mind needs to be turned down and the volume of my spirit needs to be turned up. I can't do what I was created to do if I don't share some mind-time with some heart-time.

The spirit's voice usually doesn't make sense to the mind. The spirit's voice usually isn't practical; it doesn't operate in this way. Maybe this is part of the reason why we drown out the voice of the spirit ... it doesn't make sense to our mind. It isn't supposed to. "Sense" comes from our senses, our five senses, which is the language of the external self.

Can you feel the difference in your energy when you are in your mind/physical self/doing and not present? Versus when you are in your spirit/inner being present and awake? Simply being aware of the two can make all the difference.

We know our bodies need oxygen, food, and water to survive. What does your spirit need? What does your spirit need to be nurtured and come to life?

I have learned that my spirit needs regular doses of a few things:

She needs nature ... a deep, reverent connection to nature.

She needs communing and being with animals.

She needs interaction with horses, with them and on them.

She needs play and lots and lots (and lots) of laughter.

She needs to create beautiful things ... just for the joy of creating, using my hands to help my mind slow down and be with my heart.

She needs intimacy with her husband.

She needs deep conversation.

She needs alone time ... lots and lots of time alone in stillness.

Most importantly she needs communion with God, and all the things above are exactly that, communion with God. A life made up of what Richard Rohr calls a "Christ-soaked everyday ordinary life."

**"When you forget your true identity as a beloved child of God, you lose your way in life. Insecure and frightened, you act not freely, but out of fear. You become preoccupied trying to please others and you lose the confidence to be yourself. You work hard to avoid rejection, or abandonment, and you may cling to people more from fear than freedom. In making compromises you may please people but lose touch with your original blessing, the connection to the deep and everlasting love of God."**

**~ Henri Nouwen**

Henri Nouwen calls it our "Original Blessing, our Connection to the love of God."

What is this for you?

What is your connection to the love of God?

God put it inside of you, whatever it is.

What is your Spirit crying out for?

**"What we do comes out of the belief of who we are."**

**~ Rob Bell**

What are you drawn to? What gets you excited like a child on Christmas morning? What lies at the bottom of your heart? Do you believe that allowing yourself these

things is like breath to your spirit? That if you don't allow yourself these things that light you up, you will be like a branch cut off from a tree?

When I choose to live from my spirit, a different way of being in this world unfolds.

It is magical, unworldly, and I can feel the Holy Spirit within me. I can be with God and experience God in a way I never have before.

When I started this journey of remembering my spirit, I couldn't have imagined it would lead me to the kind of trust I experience throughout each day. This communion with God led me to a deeper experience with every single thing that God has created. The world started coming to life from the inside out and hasn't stopped. I am beginning to understand what God created each of us for and what he keeps asking of us:

To Love God, in our own unique individual way.

To Love others, all others, whoever is placed along our path.

And to Love ourselves in the way God loves us.

**“You undoubtedly have faults, but they are not you. You may have a disease, but you are not your diagnosis. You may be rich, but you are not your credit rating. You are not your resume, your neighborhood, your grades, your mistakes, your body, your roles, or titles. All these things are not you because they are changeable. There is a part of you that is indefinable and changeless, that does not get lost or change with age, disease, or circumstances. There is an authenticity you were born with, have lived with, and will die with. You are simply, *wonder-fully, you.*”**

**Elisabeth Kubler Ross**

## ***Life Lessons***

### **Resources**

“The Shift” by Wayne Dyer (movie)

*Falling Upward* by Father Richard Rohr

### ***The Practice, Sewing It to Your Heart***

We know our bodies need oxygen, food and water to survive. What does your spirit need? What does your spirit need to be nurtured and come to life?

Take some slow, long deep breaths. Read Henri Nouwen’s “Original Blessing, Our Connection to the Love of God.”

What is this for you?

What is your connection to the love of God?

God put it inside of you, whatever it is.

What is your spirit crying out for?

Breathe deeply, read Rob Bell’s quote: “What we do comes out of the belief of who we are.”

Can you see that what you do (your choices that you make throughout each day) comes from who you believe you are?

Can you spend some time breathing, contemplating or meditating on this and journal what your heart reveals?

What are you drawn to? What gets you excited like a child on Christmas morning? What lies at the bottom of your heart? Do you believe that allowing yourself these things is like breath to your spirit? That if you don’t allow yourself these things that light you up, you will be like a branch cut off from a tree?

Using Wayne Dyer’s definitions, what inspires you? What informs you? Can you feel the difference?

Inspiration means (in spirit) the heart [formless].

Information means (in form) the mind [form].