

Can Spirituality Blend with Science?



Many researchers believe that certain beliefs, attitudes, and practices associated with being a spiritual person influence health. According to the University of Maryland Medical Center, in a study of people who had faith in God, compassion toward others, a sense of inner peace, and were religious had a better chance of surviving for a long time than those who did not live with such belief systems. Qualities like faith, hope, and forgiveness, and the use of social support and prayer seem to have a noticeable effect on health and healing.

Faith

A person's most deeply held beliefs strongly influence his or her health. Some researchers believe that faith increases the body's resistance to stress.

Hope

Without hope -- a positive attitude that a person assumes in the face of difficulty -- many people become depressed and prone to illness.

Forgiveness

A practice that is encouraged by many spiritual and religious traditions, forgiveness is a release of hostility and resentment from past hurts.. Some researchers suggest that emotions like anger and resentment cause stress hormones to accumulate in the blood, and that forgiveness reduces this build up.

Love and Social Support

A close network of family and friends that lends help and emotional support has been found to offer protection against many diseases. Researchers believe that people who experience love and support tend to resist unhealthy behaviors and feel less stressed. Researchers concluded that the strong social support network helped protect this population from heart disease.

Prayer

The act of putting oneself in the presence of or conversing with a higher power has been used as a means of healing across all cultures throughout the ages. Today, many Americans believe that prayer is an important part of daily life.