

CONSIDERING SPIRITUAL MATURITY

Generosity

Spiritually mature persons are those whose hands, metaphorically and otherwise, are open to receive gifts and to give gifts. There is no hording of any of it; time, treasure, or talent. No one is holy who is a miser.

Kindness

There is no calculus, no discrimination. Kindness is who you become for everyone (including yourself).

Patience

Patience has to it a kind of constancy of spirit and acceptance of what is before one. One learns to be comfortable with time and even comfortable with feelings of discomfort.

Compassion

We become present to others in their pain, without fear, without pity. We learn to lean into it.

Humility

Spiritually mature persons experience their contingency deep down and they are aware of their own shortcomings. The closer we are to God the more humble. It's all grace at the end of the day.

Selflessness and Self-Possession

There is a kind of paradox in the spiritual life. The more selfless we are the more self-possession we have.

Questioning

Spiritually mature persons are not afraid of questioning because they are not afraid of what is true. Questioning is not the opposite of confidence; it is an expression of it.

Realistic

Idealism imagines the spiritual life as though it exists in some pure Platonic spiritual plane of existence. Humans are complex, relationships are complex, the world is complex.

Holistic

A spiritually mature person looks to the whole of her or his life as the field of growth. Perhaps the great task for us could be restated: it is not how to become a holy person, but how to become a human person.

Comfortable with Ambiguity

Jack Kornfeld, a psychologist and renown Buddhist teacher, once noted that "spiritual maturity is that of *embracing opposites*, a capacity to hold the contradictions of life in our heart."

Personal and Unique

Authentic souls shine with their own truth, their own particular soul. We shine with our own creativity only when we are not trying to advance a *persona*. Then creativity becomes the natural expression of ourselves.

Equanimous

Mature spirits have a kind of *flexible-stability*, whereby one stands stably for the deepest self and yet engages in life with skillful fluidity.

Deeply Embedded in a Tradition.

Spiritual development is painstaking work, and I believe that it succeeds best when it is done within the care of authentic leaders and a supportive faith group. At the end of the day, if you want to be holy or at least spiritually mature, pick a path and walk it.