

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

The inner path to emotional freedom and a thriving life

By Rick Wilkes

“When a person takes one step toward God, God takes more steps toward that person than there are sands in the worlds of time.”

The Work of the Chariot



HOW DO WE GROW SPIRITUALLY?

We begin to grow spiritually when we first become aware that there is *more to us than meets the eye*. As soon as we realize that there is a *non-physical* aspect to being alive, we are acknowledging a truth that is known by many names, including “God.” All of us are always connected with this source of creativity, compassion, and well-being. Growing spiritually means we are making a *conscious* choice to deepen our awareness, experience, and trust of this innate part of *who we are*.

Our spiritual connection helps us to feel inspired, uplifted, joyful, guided, healed, forgiven, and loved beyond all description.



DO I HAVE TO USE THE NAME “GOD” TO DESCRIBE THIS SPIRITUAL CONNECTION?

I use the term God to describe what can and is called by many names, including “that which is nameless, faceless and beyond human comprehension.” Alas, terms like God, trust, faith, and even love carry a lot of baggage sometimes -- and limiting or painful beliefs. Here is the first place we’ll use EFT to find some inner peace. Tap the following:



Even though I don't know what to call this spiritual connection I seek, and I'm not sure I like -- and sometimes definitely do not like -- what "God" has meant to me up to this point in my life, I ask to be guided through my spiritual connection to a name that feels right in my heart.

Even though others have defined what "God" means to me, I choose to be open to a broad range of new spiritual experiences. I want to grow. I choose to grow. I intend to grow. I love to grow.

As we go forward, feel free to use the name of your choice, one that resonates closest to your beliefs and your heart. God is known by literally hundreds of names including:

All That Is	I Am
Allah	Inner Being
Alpha & Omega	Jehovah
Beloved	Jesus
Christ	Lord
Creator	Messiah
Divine Intuition	Mother of All
Earth Mother	Savior
Goddess	Source
Godhead	Spirit
Heavenly Father	The Field of Infinite Intelligence
Higher Self	and Energy
Holy One	Universe
	Yahweh

It is my experience that God doesn't really care what name you use. We see evidence of this in all the names that have been used through the ages to connect with spiritual energy. Call Him Bob. Call Her Angel. Just call.



HOW CAN I START HAVING SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES?

All roads lead to God, to Spirit, to Source energy. Some people will become aware of God as part of a peak experience; they feel so incredibly *Good* that they feel *God*. The experience leaves them feeling so alive that their hearts open in deep felt gratitude and appreciation. Indeed, if you have *ever* felt gratitude and appreciation, you have felt God.

Others will connect through misery and suffering -- the “Dark Night of the Soul,” when all is lost and we give up hope of personally resurrecting our lives. In surrender, we let go, expecting to fall, crash, and burn. We suddenly realize God is present and is uplifting and supporting us.

Some people are born with a clear awareness of God. Others will find it through simple, day-to-day events such as a friend’s embrace, a lover’s smile, or a flower growing where none could possibly survive.

Some will hear the voice of God within. Others will see a vision. Others will feel it in their body. Some simply know God’s truth and have an abiding faith and love.

If you are feeling *left out* or are having a hard time believing such an experience is possible for *you*, try EFT with these statements -- or make up your own.



Even though I don’t feel God -- and I am not even sure I want to -- I choose to be open to a loving connection with all of who I am.

Even though I feel left out because I don’t know where God is in my life, I’ve decided to be open to spiritual growth anyway.

Even though I feel hurt, and skeptical, and doubtful -- and I have my reasons -- I’ve decided to find out for myself, and I deeply and completely accept all of me.



IS BLIND FAITH REQUIRED?

No. Indeed, I find spiritual growth the most *practical* of practices. It connects us with a greater wisdom. It lets us tap into a source of guidance that has a broader perspective and deeper knowing than our logical mind has on its own. It puts us into the flow of creativity with ample support to help us live our dreams. Spiritual experience manifests in wondrous ways across our entire life -- physically, emotionally, mentally, and in our relationship to everyone and everything.

One measure of spiritual growth is how integrated it is into a person's day-to-day activities -- work, play, family, and friends. God truly is in the *details*. Of course, early on in our spiritual practice, the growth is often occurring below the surface, just as some seeds germinate for a full season before sprouting visibly at the perfect time.

Spiritual growth is an emotional journey first. While faith helps, EFT can also assist us in releasing the fear, impatience, and doubt. Tap the following:



Even though I am afraid, and I fear what I'll find, or not find, I choose to be calm and confident as I embark on my spiritual journey.

Even though I have little or no conscious experience of God, and I am not sure I'll know what to do and that makes me feel anxious, I choose to relax and allow spirit to guide me.

Even though I have my doubts, and who wouldn't if they had my life experiences, I've decided to be open to the possibility.

Even though I am impatient, because I need help now, I choose to allow my life and spirit to unfold at a pace that is perfect for me.



DO I HAVE TO BECOME RELIGIOUS TO BE SPIRITUAL?

Religions are organizations with an *external* doctrine to guide and direct *internal* spiritual development. They provide community and context

for spiritual growth. Spiritual development itself is, however, intensely private. Even poets are unable to express the beauty and intimacy we feel when loved unconditionally by All That Is.

If a religious organization or group meeting best serves you, wonderful. If silent meditation and prayer -- alone in your personal, sacred space -- serves you best, wonderful. Like any journey, some prefer to travel with a group -- large or small. Some prefer the freedom to explore on their own.

Many people grow up or marry into a religious tradition and find later that God seems to be taking their heart in a different direction. That can create anxiety and fear. You may have dozens of different concerns if this is the case for you. I encourage you to write them down and use EFT on inner conflicts. Turn within to your own inner guidance on the best next step for *you*.



Even though I am really uncomfortable with what they will think, what they will say, and whether they will still accept me, and I don't even know exactly where I am going, I deeply and completely accept this conflict and choose to become an acute listener to my own intuition and divine guidance.

For others, their experience of “God” has been hurtful, restricting, and even abusive. People have killed and worse “in the name of God.” It is enough to make someone reject and turn away from their own inner source of well-being and guidance. If this is your situation, I’d like to offer you this thought and round of EFT.

What if “God” is not what *he* said, *she* proclaimed, or *they* insisted?



Even though I don't like his “God,” and I can't stand her “God,” and their “God” turns my stomach and leaves me cold, I am willing to open my heart to a true Source of well-being, a true friend, and a compassionate, forgiving, pervasive love.

Even though I tried religion and it didn't work for me, I am open to a personal spiritual journey.

Even though I am afraid I will become like them, I've decided to discover the spiritual best of who I really am.

Even though they hurt me, in the name of the "God" they said, I'd decided to introduce myself to the real God within me and trust my own heart connection.



SO, HOW DO I CONNECT WITH GOD?

1. Ask and set a clear and strong intention.
2. Know that God always answers.
3. Allow yourself to experience God in your uniquely personal way.
4. Practice!

If you have doubts, which is completely normal, try EFT with this:



Even though I have many doubts, and I have my reasons, I deeply and completely accept myself, and with all my being I choose to be open to the possibility that God accepts me too, and God will answer in a way that is perfect for me.



HOW DO I ASK TO GROW SPIRITUALLY?

Prayer is the most formal way to ask. Tapping while praying adds a physical component so that we align *body* with *mind* and *spirit*. Here is a simple prayer request. If your heart guides you to different words, by all means, use yours.



(Top of head point) Dear God,

(Eyebrow point) I want to grow.

(Side of eye point) I choose to hear you.

(Under eye point) I want to see signs of our connection.

(Under nose point) I am open to divine guidance to lead me on this path of spiritual growth.

(Chin point) I appreciate and am grateful for my life.

(Collarbone point) I relax and allow your love and comfort to flow into my heart.

(Under arm point) I accept your forgiveness.

(Top of head point) Guide me God to feel and to be closer to you, the Source of my well-being. Amen.

Let me add that by the very act of reading this, you have already asked to know your Spirit more closely. Nothing else is *required*. God knows that only sincere seekers read chapters on spiritual growth.



HOW CAN I KNOW THAT GOD ALWAYS ANSWERS?

That's easy. See, if you ever spent even a nanosecond *completely* disconnected from source energy -- from God -- you'd cease to exist. The intelligence that keeps your heart beating, your lungs breathing, and your tissues renewing is all God. It is our spiritual essence that animates us. It is what is present the moment before death that defines us as "alive" and that departs this bag of bones, organs, blood, and brains at the moment of death.

To develop spiritually is to grow and blossom in ways that may or may not be observable to the average person. Yet, we *feel* spiritual growth in our experience of life.

In other words, you are *already* spiritually connected whether you know it or not. The practice is to make it *conscious* and *intentional*.

But you may not feel God yet, so tap:



Even though I do not feel at all connected to God, I deeply and completely accept that there is more to me than meets the eye.

You may not believe God yet, so tap:



Even though I do not believe I am connected to God. I feel so alone. I feel so sick. I feel so poor. I feel so fearful. I deeply and completely accept all my feelings.

You may not trust God yet, so tap:



Even though I do not trust God, and I have my reasons, I choose to be open to trusting all of me, including any or all of me that might be connected to God consciousness.

You may think God isn't *in you* yet, so tap:



Even though God must be “out there” (point up or away from you) and not “in here” (tap over your heart), I’ve decided to find God wherever I look, touch, hear, and smell, and I look forward to feeling Spirit flow within me and through me to bless my life and the world.



HOW DO I ALLOW MYSELF TO EXPERIENCE GOD AND GROW SPIRITUALLY?

Notice that the key word is to *allow*. Most people forget that we are human *beings* not human *doings*. To grow we must allow our spiritual connection to rise to our conscious awareness from deep within us.

To *allow* means relaxing, opening, expecting, and patiently receiving. I remember meditating for several months before I started receiving clear communication from my inner guide. The more I tried to force it, the more I tried to *do something* instead of allowing myself to *be who I am already*, the more distant God felt. During the natural unfolding process -- which never ends by the way -- EFT can help considerably to address feelings of doubt, fear, impatience and “not doing it right.” Here are tapping phrases.



Even though I have all these doubts, I choose to relax and allow spiritual growth to unfold for me.

Even though I have these fears because I don't know what to expect or even what it is going to be like, I choose to be calm and confident and allow myself to relax and be open.

Even though this isn't happening fast enough for me, I have decided to relax and enjoy the process without rushing because I am an eternal being after all.

Even though this isn't working for me, as usual, I'm open to allowing myself to feel the way God does -- accepting, patient, forgiving, and unconditionally loving of who I am becoming.

Even though I have to do it now, I have to do it right, and I definitely have to be the perfect spiritual student, I've decided to "let go and let God."

Another technique is to simply tap through the points alternating expressions of spiritual energy. For example, start at the top of the head, say one of these choices, and then move to the next EFT point and the next choice. Or, tap a full round on whatever word or phrase allows you to feel spiritually connected:



Relaxing
Allowing
Connecting
I choose peace
Let go and let God
Listening
Trusting
I am forgiven
Be still and know
I am
Grace
Kindness
Love
Appreciation
Gratitude



WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT TO FEEL AS I ALLOW?

Well, have you ever used EFT to go from a 10 to a zero? At the end of those rounds, what did you feel? What words do you use to describe the

feeling? For me, there is *relief*. There is *peace*. There is a calm, patient *stillness*. There is the sensation of being a part of the *flow of well-being*. Those are just some of the qualities of God that we tap into with EFT.



DOES SPIRITUAL GROWTH REQUIRE MUCH PRACTICE?

That depends. Do you want more peace, joy, and well-being in your life? Do you want to *thrive* rather than just *survive*? If so, intending spiritual growth and being in a state of spiritual awareness will bring those, and more, *much more*.



WHAT ARE SOME OF THE PRACTICES I CAN USE FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH?

The truth is, almost any human experience can be used for spiritual growth. There are, however, some that have been shown through time to be fruitful across many traditions. Two of these are meditation and mindfulness.



HOW DOES MEDITATION HELP?

Meditation is the cornerstone of my practice because it helps quiet my mind so I can hear my spirit. Even 10 minutes of sitting and *being* in meditation can be of great help. (Note: I did not say *doing* meditation.)

I typically meditate any chance I get. When I was starting out, I sat comfortably in a straight-backed chair for 20 minutes, twice a day, focusing on the breath. Within just 30 days the level of inner chaos had already started to shift.

Can you allow yourself to sit still and simply listen to your breathing for 20 minutes? If you are feeling resistance to the idea, you might try tapping:



Even though there is no way I can sit still and do nothing because it's a waste of time, I have too many responsibilities, there are things to do and places to be, and there's that show I want to watch on TV, I deeply and completely accept my busy mind and give it permission to take a short meditative rest and renewal break.

In my experience, 20 minutes of meditation yields the equivalent benefits of rest and renewal as two full hours of sleep. You *have* the time to meditate. Just get up 20 minutes earlier.



WHAT ROLE DOES MINDFULNESS PLAY IN SPIRITUAL GROWTH?

You may find that *mindfulness* practices, bringing focused awareness into the *now* and becoming fully present with whatever you are doing, takes you deeper into your spiritual connection. Conveniently, daily meditation practice leads naturally to greater mindfulness in our everyday lives.

So imagine for a moment that you have a dirty dish to wash. You are going to be completely present and mindful as you *just wash that dish* with all your attention. You feel the warm water, you smell the slippery soap, and feel your hands grip the hardness of the dish. You feel appreciation and gratitude for being alive to feel these simple sensations.

If you are like most people, when doing “autopilot” tasks like dishwashing, your mind is consumed with other thoughts and worries. If so, you can use EFT to help your energy system focus on the present:



Even though there are so many worries demanding my attention, I choose to simply be in the present moment and allow myself the pleasure of God's company.

Remember: God's present to you is the present moment.



WHAT IS THE ROLE OF PRAYER?

If meditation is listening to God, our prayer time is an opportunity to express our feelings to God. Sure, most people pray when they are suffering and want divine intervention and relief. Do that and tap along with the prayer if you want to add a body component.

In addition to prayers that make a request, I also want to encourage you to prayerfully offer appreciation and gratitude. Appreciation and gratitude are such *healthy vibrations*. Practice them every day. I often take a short “gratitude walk” where I notice and give honest thanks for what is in my life that feels good to me.

It may be nearly impossible to reach all the way to gratitude on some days. *And that’s okay*. On the really tough days, the gratitude might be as minimal as, “Well, at least tomorrow is another day.” You will find that offering even a modest acknowledgement of gratitude brings relief. I assure you, as you grow in your communion with God, you will find that Spirit helps you notice all around you the many blessings that are in your life. And by the Law of Attraction, the more you consciously appreciate, the more you will have in your life *to* appreciate. Tap:



Even though things don’t seem to be going perfectly well for me now, and I feel more wrung out and beaten than grateful, I choose to beat the drum of appreciation for my life and for the loving support God offers to my heart.



WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE?

Your spiritual path will be unique to you. The good news is that the perfect teacher is *always* with you, right there in your heart. Know that God speaks to all of us through our emotions. The thoughts that feel good and peaceful are the thoughts closest to where God’s emotional guidance system is directing us. With practice you will learn to discern the difference between your inner critic and your divine inner guide. Once you do, your life will be transformed.

You will notice that books, coaches, friends, and opportunities “show up” at the perfect time. Rather than exhausting yourself in struggle, you will *allow* God to take care of so many of the hard details, so you can relax and play in the river of abundance and well-being. You will find it easy to appreciate both what you love in your life and the opportunity that challenges bring to grow and dream.

It has been my honor to share with you these thoughts and the energy that EFT can bring to our spiritual growth. My prayer for you is a thriving life filled with joy and co-creation in partnership with God. I welcome your stories and look forward to hearing from you.

I close with these simple instructions my teacher shared with me:

Go within. Listen. And follow your heart.

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Rick Wilkes' biography at the back of the book.*