

The background is a solid light pink color. On the left side, there are several small white heart-shaped cookies scattered vertically. In the lower-left quadrant, there is a larger heart-shaped cookie with a golden-brown border and a pinkish-red filling. In the lower-right quadrant, there are three more small white heart-shaped cookies arranged in a loose cluster.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

**How to move towards
goodness and love ?**

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Spiritual development in this context is understood as a process, the end goal of which is to become a person that does not do anyone any harm and instead acts through love and tries to always be good. That goal is everyone's main purpose in life but it's hidden at first. Everyone is supposed to find and become aware of this purpose and goal. Usually it happens later in life but some people become aware of it at a young age. There are people who are lucky enough to have parents who teach this information to their child, which helps the child to become aware of his or her purpose in life and to start their journey of spiritual growth at a very young age. For them spiritual development is sort of a no-brainer. There are also people who will never find out the truth about life and its meaning.

The start of spiritual development

When a person becomes interested in spiritual things, such as, questions about humans, life, death and afterlife, it is a sign that the person has reached a certain level of spiritual development. Searching for information from different sources is part of spiritual awakening; reading, attending different events and introspection. Everyone develops in their own unique way, so there's no specific pattern that everyone follows. However, there is one important stage of spiritual development that everyone goes through, and that is awakening to love awareness i.e. understanding that love and goodness are the most important things in life and that there's no happiness or meaningfulness in life without love. The helpers in the spirit world and the God himself will let a person become aware of the meaning of love when the person has reached a certain stage in their development. That can happen very suddenly. Sometimes people reach love awareness when they experience adversity or become ill. I know that many people who have been told to visit, for example, a spiritual healing center in Brazil called Casa de Dom Inacio and after spending some time there they have realized the importance of love. Many people who have had a near death experience or been close to death in some other way, have realized the meaning of love. That can sometimes change people's lives and life values very radically. Being awoken to love awareness is a moment that should be celebrated because only after that can a person really start developing spiritually and learn to live in love.

People who are interested in spiritual development shouldn't stress about moving forward or set their goals too high because spiritual development can only occur when God and other helpers in spiritual world thinks that it's the right time. Being active, listening to your inner voice and trying your best is enough. Sometimes people will fail when they are learning about love and goodness but people should be more forgiving about those things and not become too disappointed in themselves. It's important that they keep trying.

Factors that help people develop

Introspection

The foundation of spiritual development is in self acceptance, self love and personal development. Personal development requires good self-management skills and taking responsibility for one's own actions. It requires a daily systematic control on life, especially in the early stages of spiritual development. If one wants to develop spiritually, he or she has to make a conscious decision to develop in goodness and love toward oneself and others. No one else can make that decision. If you are only in the early stages of spiritual development, you should start by taking care of your physical body and your health (eating, drinking, exercise, etc.) By taking care of their health people can express gratitude towards the universe for the opportunity to live on Earth and to learn and to develop as an eternal spirit and a soul. After that they can make sure that they are well spiritually and that their life is what they want it to be. Being happy and enjoying life every minute is important because if life is unpleasant and a person is unhappy and sad, he or she won't have the energy to develop spiritually because all of their energy is spent on getting through life. The before mentioned processes of personal development might include various types of needs for change, i.e. the development can be slow or fast; it all depends on the person himself and how actively he makes the required changes.

You can start a more thorough self-examination process by thinking about what kind of a person you are, what is important to you, what are your dreams, are you happy with your life so far or are you hoping for something new and different to happen. After thinking about all of these questions, you can set goals for personal development. For example, you could try to improve some of your characteristics or the way you react in certain situations. It's important to take things slowly because it makes it easier to evaluate the development and to be content with your own achievements. Sometimes we must stop to take inventory of our life; is there

still something that should be improved or changed.

Thinking, feelings and intuition

Thinking is very important when trying to develop in goodness and in love. Positivity is the first step on the journey of love. That is why it's good to start personal development by reducing negativity and increasing positivity. When people wake up in the morning, the first thing they should do in order to start the day in a positive way, is to think that the day will be great. They could also come up with different ways they could make someone happy that day. It would also be good if they learned how to send loving thoughts to their loved ones and friends. Believing and trusting that everything will always turn out okay is part of being positive. People should keep in mind that their thoughts usually come true. Positivity creates positivity and negativity creates negativity. That is why our thoughts should always be positive. If staying positive feels difficult sometimes it might help to think of all the things for which you are grateful. There are usually plenty of those things in everyone's life, and after a while it will be easy to continue being positive again.

Emotions have a strong effect on people's state of mind. It's good to only feel positive emotions (joy, love, compassion, happiness) and to avoid negative ones, such as, anger, envy, jealousy, bitterness, anxiety and depression. When a person is angry, it's hard for him or her to be positive and friendly to others. Being angry is not good for our health, so we should try to consciously get rid of that feeling as quickly as possible. We all have our own ways of controlling our emotions. For example, some of us listen to music, exercise or clean in order to release aggression and afterwards we can be in a positive mood again. We can also change our mood by thinking of things that we like. If someone has done something that makes us angry, we can forgive that person in our minds; that helps us let go of the anger fast.

One factor that helps us move forward on our path of spiritual development is noticing and listening to our intuition. By intuition, I mean the immediate understanding and knowledge that is not based on our observations or reasoning. It's believing and acting without evidence. Intuition can come as a thought or a feeling that suddenly consumes a person's mind and it causes the person to just know what he or she should do or say. Some people say that intuition is listening to our hearts. I personally believe that it's spiritual guidance. When you start to listen to your inner voice, you notice that intuitions are weak at first and they might be hard to notice. When you practice listening to them more closely they start to become stronger and it becomes easier to trust them; especially

after you realize that every time you haven't acted according to your intuition, you've made mistakes.

Speaking and acting

When a person wants to live through love and show love to others, speaking is the key. No one can read minds and that is why speaking is the best way to convey our thoughts to others. Good communication requires respecting others. When we respect other people we don't think that we are better or smarter than them. Respecting others also means that we think that all people are equal and they should be treated well. For example, oppression, condescendence, yelling, commanding, scolding, blaming and undermining are not part of good and loving communication between people. Positivity and friendliness can be expressed in speech by not saying anything hurtful, not judging anyone, paying more attention to other people's positive traits and using positive expressions. Saying thanks and bringing up other people's accomplishments creates a positive atmosphere. It's also important to tell your loved ones that you love them.

People are meant to do things and work actively. By doing different things people can let the universe know what they want and what they are trying to accomplish in life. So, we should only put effort into the things that are important to us. That helps us get what we want and what we are hoping for in life. Life offers everyone opportunities to face challenges. We should take every opportunity that we get because they guide us in the right direction and make us happier and more content, which is important if we want to move forward on our path of spiritual development.

Actions can help us express love to others. Helping others is important. Most of us have people in our lives who need help and support with getting through life. But if we don't know any people like that, we can also help strangers, for example, by doing volunteer work.

Universal laws and interaction

Because spiritual development is easier and possible when people are happy, it's important to live life following the universal laws. I have already brought up some of the so-called laws of nature, such as, love, gratitude, forgiveness, freedom of choice and taking responsibility for our own lives. I have also mentioned the so-called law of attraction which means that people attract what they think, talk about and do; both in the good and in the bad. It's also important to remember the law of karma,

according to which you reap what you sow. That means that every bad deed needs to be redeemed either during our current life or after we are born again. So, we should focus on the good and avoid doing bad things altogether. When we do that, we can be happy with our lives even after they have ended.

The key factor in personal development is being in contact with other people. Many things that relate to becoming a better and a more loving person, have something to do with speaking, acting and reacting during interaction with others. That's why interacting with others is an important part of spiritual development. Marriage and family, friends, relatives and neighbors, co-workers and other people in our life give us the opportunity to improve ourselves.

Factors that support development

Silence and taking time to think about life is a necessity if one wants to learn more about love and goodness and to become a better person. Introspection requires silence and having alone time. Nowadays, people are often very busy with work and hobbies. When people are busy they don't have time to think about their lives, to develop spiritually or to make the required changes. That's why it's important to always have some alone time, even when you are busy. For example, spending time in the nature is a good way to enjoy silence and being alone.

When a person wants to develop further in spirituality, it's important to understand that connecting with the universal energy supports the development and helps the person to believe and to stay on the right track in every life situation. That connection expands our mind, nourishes us spiritually, and gives us strength and energy to live the kind of life that's full of love. That's why everyone who wants to develop spiritually during their time on Earth, should meditate at least for about 20-30 minutes every day. The universal energy in it's nature includes also the healing element. According to research, being in regular connection with this energy makes the heart stronger, reduces obesity, strengthens the immune system and slows down the aging process. Meditation also improves the mood, calms people down and reduces anger, which makes it easier for people to get along with others. The universal energy also increases creativity. Expressions of gratitude and empowerment can be used during meditation in order to develop and to visualize certain things in the person's life.

During their time on Earth, everyone has their own guardian angel and spirit guides in the invisible spirit world. Initially, this arrangement was supposed to reduce people's feelings of loneliness by

always having someone there to help them. However, over time, people have started to cooperate with the spirit world less and less for some reason. That's why most people are trying to cope with the challenges that life throws at them completely alone. Every person who is on the journey of spiritual development should know that the spirit world is more than happy to help anyone in any situation, but people need to learn to ask for help first. Asking for help is easy. We just need to close our eyes for a moment and focus on the request for help. Praying is another way to ask for help. We always get help when we need it, but the way we receive it can sometimes be surprising.

People should spend their free-time with like-minded people. People who are interested in spiritual development should also spend time together, so that they could discuss the challenges and the joys of the school of life. That way they could get new ideas on how to develop further. They could also receive encouragement, guidance and support from others, especially from those who have reached higher levels of development. Most of the people who are trying to develop spiritually are very alone and don't know any other people who would be interested in spiritual things. They are usually surrounded by sceptics with whom discussing spiritual topics is impossible. If they don't have the opportunity to talk to anyone about those things, life can become very boring and incomplete, because no one supports them. The gatherings don't get organized on their own, though. Someone has to be the one who invites everyone to the event or to the meet-up. There should be more of that kind of events.

Why is personal development important?

Efforts to improve communication skills is a big part of personal development and helps us communicate with people more easily. It also helps us to succeed, for example, at working life where having good social skills is emphasized very much today. Understanding that personal development is the main purpose of life, makes life seem more meaningful. It also helps us find peace. Accomplishments and a friendly spiritual competition increases our happiness and life feels more fulfilling. Some people might also find their medial skills at some point of their spiritual journey, which should be taken as a reward for all the work that has gone into the personal development. It has been said for example in Bible that living in love and working towards it will eventually be rewarded; that in itself can be considered a motivator for personal development. From a global point of view, it's important that as many people as possible are good and living a life full of love; that makes the world a more positive and peaceful place.

Maybe the best reward for personal development will be get when the life on Earth ends and we will move in the spirit world. I believe that when we arrive in the spirit world we will go through and analyze our previous life with our own wise spirit guides. It's clear that if we have lived a love-filled life and tried to become a better person, we can be satisfied in ourselves and in our efforts during that kind of discussions. All in all, personal development is very meaningful and always worth to pay attention.

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