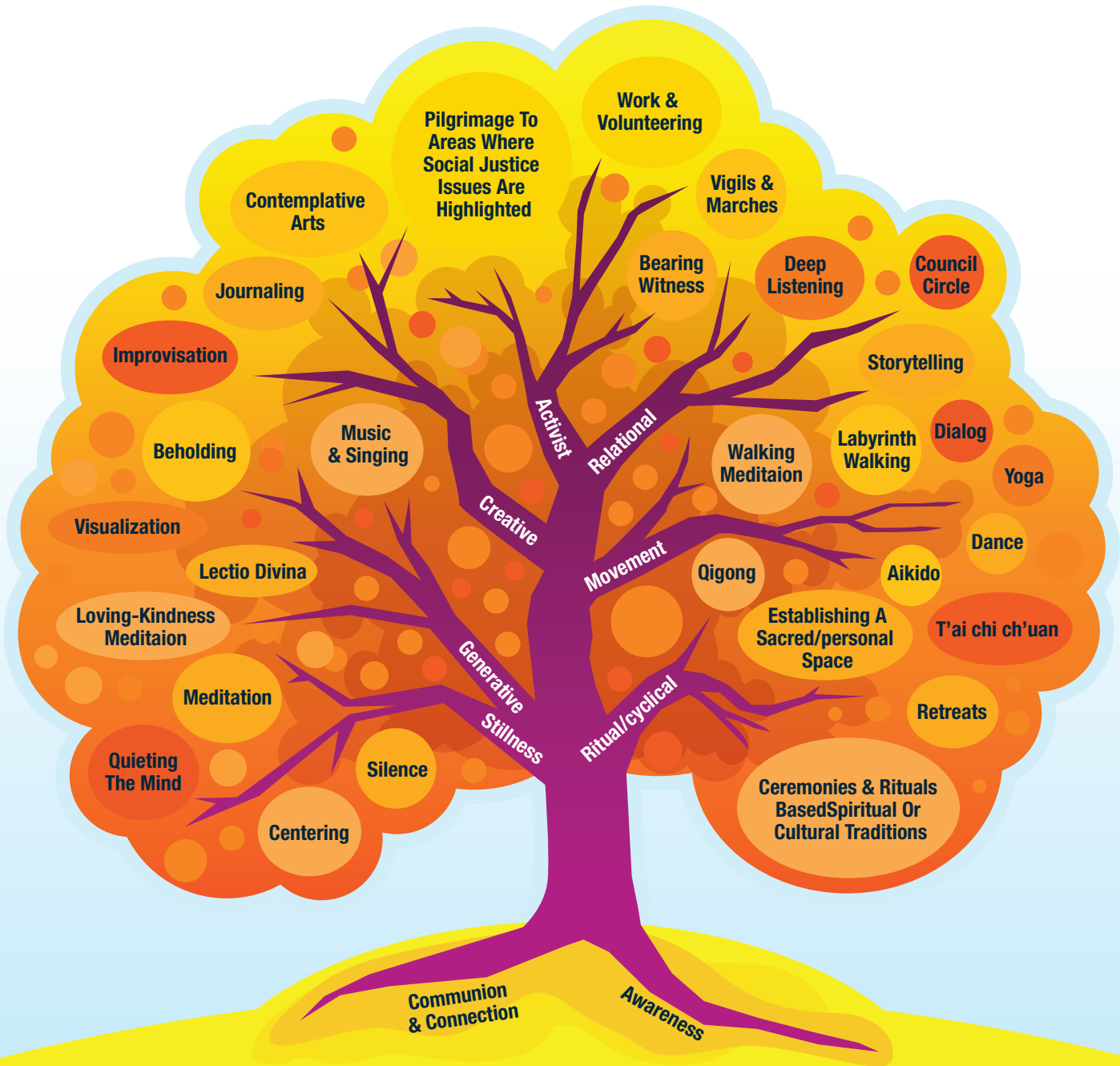


BOLSTERING SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING IN LAW WITH CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICES



The Tree of Contemplative Practices

Graphic adapted from Duerr (2004)



SPIRITUAL PRACTICES ENHANCE WELL-BEING

We express our spirituality through our beliefs, values, traditions, and practices (Garcia et al., 2024). There are many types of spiritual practices that play an important role in supporting not only spiritual well-being but also emotional, social, and psychological well-being (Pawar, 2024). One prevalent type of spiritual practice is contemplative practice.



DEFINING CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICE

- Contemplative practice is a practice undertaken with the intention to quiet the mind and to cultivate a personal capacity for deep concentration, presence, and awareness. Ideally, the insights from contemplative practice that arise from the mind, body, and heart can be applied within everyday life. (Duerr, 2004).
- The two essential ingredients of contemplative practices are that they are undertaken with an intent to (1) cultivate a personal capacity for deep concentration, presence, and awareness and (2) develop a stronger connection to one’s inner wisdom and/or God/Spirit/the Divine.
- These practices have the potential to bring different aspects of oneself into focus, to help develop personal goodness and compassion, and to awaken an awareness of the interconnectedness of all life.
- Although often practiced in silence, these practices exist on a continuum and can include many forms of single-minded concentration, such as meditation, mindful movement (i.e. Hatha Yoga, T’ai Chi, walking meditation), contemplative prayer, reading of sacred texts (i.e. Lectio Divina), focused experiences in nature, contemplative physical or artistic practices (i.e. Buddhist sand mandalas), and certain forms of social activism in a context of mindfulness. These practices may be done in solitude, but they may also take a communal form.
- Various kinds of rituals and ceremonies designed to create sacred space and to mark rites of passage and the cyclical nature of time are forms of contemplative practice.
- The intention with which a practice is done is more important than any one form or technique. Many everyday activities (e.g., gardening, practicing a musical instrument, taking a bath) could be considered contemplative practice when done with this intention (Duerr, 2004).



QUALITIES CULTIVATED THROUGH CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICE

People who regularly engage in contemplative practices describe many positive qualities that they cultivate:

AUTHENTIC		CONTENTMENT		LOVE	
Listening	Clarity	Equanimity	Insight	Mindfulness	Self-knowledge
Awareness	Compassion	Focus	Less anxiety	Presence	Sense of
Calm	Concentration	Forgiveness	Less judgment	Relaxed alertness	interconnection
		Gratitude			Spaciousness

(Duerr, 2004)



TYPES AND EXAMPLES OF CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICE

PRACTICE TYPE	EXAMPLES
Active Practice: Service, work, and activism as practice.	Work, service, volunteering and community service, pilgrimage to sites where social justice issues are highlighted, gatha practice, vigils, marches.
Creation Process Practices: An artistic manifestation of contemplation, in which process is emphasized more than product.	Singing, chanting, contemplative music and art, mandala art.
Generative Practices: Practices done with the intention of generating devotion to God/Spirit/the Divine, or evoking compassion, lovingkindness, etc.	Prayer, tonglen meditation, lectio divina, loving-kindness meditation (metta), petitionary prayer.
Movement Practices: Practices that emphasize movement as a path to awareness and connection.	Qi gong, t'ai chi chuan, martial arts, Sufi dancing, yoga, walking meditation, contemplative movement.
Relational Practices: Practices that involve communicating either with others or oneself in a reflective process.	Dialogue, deep listening, storytelling, journaling, council circle, shared meals.
Ritual/Cyclical Practices: Practices done either alone or in community to mark passages of time or milestones in a person's life, to acknowledge and/or catalyze change.	Shabbat/Sabbath, building an altar, creating a sacred space, ceremonies/rituals based on cultural or religious tradition, vision quest, sweat lodge.
Stillness Practices: Practices that cultivate stillness, with the intention of quieting the mind, increasing awareness, and/or creating space for God/wisdom to come forward.	Silence, centering, centering prayer, insight meditation, sitting meditation, quieting and clearing the mind, spending time in nature.

(Duerr, 2004)

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