

Second Reflection on Integral Life Practice

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The Body and Spirit chapters of an "Integral Life Practice" (ILP) are very much in alignment with my own views on how to cultivate universal development. We have become guilty in our modern world of over specializing in certain areas at the abandonment of others. ILP addresses a well rounded map of psychical and spiritual health that I personally aspire to. My aspirations however, have caused me to be wrongly critical of others and Chapters 10 & 11 in Ken Wilber's Integral Psychology have not only helped clarify my own definition of spirituality, they have also yielded further understanding of a past issue that I struggled with.

Believing it very important to not judge others, I was shocked when I found myself doubting a person's spiritual abilities because of their visible neglect of their body. When I once heard a large stature being described as a necessary tool to filter others malevolent spirits, I had to consistently remind myself that an area of specialization in the spirit world, does not need knowledge of the fitness one. I wrestled with the fact that a choice of lifestyle could impound my confidence in "higher" abilities, especially seeing the worlds of physical fitness and spirituality looked so far apart. ILP brings these worlds together, along with the worlds of mind and shadow. ILP feels like that the golden haired girl at school; angelic, good, top of class and excellent at sports. It is a perfect well balanced, and hard model to follow.

To be the golden girl you may need to develop many streams of development. ILP is a multi-tasking, cross training, fix for our modern world, it has you working mind, body, shadow, and spirit all at once, no easy task for anyone. My experience comes from taking one intuitive step through life at a time, giving each step my complete attention and energy. At age 35

events lead to the uncovering of my spiritual foundation. This foundation stems from Reiki theory and Ken Wilber's definitions of spirituality had me pondering where my own fitted. Chapter 10 about stages in spirituality had me leaning towards either definition 1 or 2; Spirituality is the highest level in any developmental line, or the sum total of the highest levels of the lines. The idea of an evolved being may have contributed to my critical judgment. At the time the struggle was resolved through definition no.3; a separate stream of development, but don't relate to this definition or no.4; an attitude. This experience, and chapter 11 on childhood spirituality, has clarified my own thoughts. Definitions 1 & 2 two leave my idea of spirituality, as superconscious and post-postconventional, with a negligible presence in children, not the way I feel. Thankfully definition no. 5; involving peak experiences and not stages, keeps an authentic spirituality in children and may also save me from future criticism.

My unplanned application to Antioch was completed after a "Peak" experience occurred when my three bodies, "Gross, Subtle and Causal" came together just after a very focused workout. Spirituality is my foundation, the discovery of a "transrational" structure. It was the springboard that led me to join the dots together. Since finding my deeper psychic being, I have skipped on a creative path, run along a fitness one, and lived in a shadowy one for a while. Each new path was explored in conscious isolation for a while before synthesizing it with others. I feel this process naturally brings a broader perspective, as you are always reviewing the old through the new and not the other way round. My own spiritual growth guided me to combine Gross body exercise with the Subtle energy practice of Reiki, a course involving deep Causal meditations and a self prescription to try and concentrate on the present moment. This lead to my studies at Antioch to explore and stretch my mind, these are the muscles I

consciously wanted to concentrate on. I did not arrive in this class ready to incorporate my body, spirit and shadow into my pursuit of knowledge and this has caused resistance.

However, I am interested in the things I have a resistance to, and the unexpected things that I fall into, like Antioch and this class. My 43rd birthday is imminent and ILP may just be the class to finish off this 7 year stage I have been going through. My attempt to put spirit, shadow and body aside in pursuit of investigating the mind has not worked out too well at Antioch. My shadow accompanied me from day one, Spirit showed its ever presence in a controversial ritual class, and I now have to put them altogether in a mind class that has me working out. Today I have decided to go after that scary 'Golden Shadow' that I may find through my integration of Mind, Body, Spirit and Shadow.

Everything we need is inside up, Wilber just maps it out, ILP is a "How to" book. Do I think ILP will be beneficial for others? I'm not sure! There is something about experiential learning, about connecting those dots yourself. It took me 7 long years to naturally put my 3 bodies together, ILP has come up with a similar recipe that has the potential to cut that journey time dramatically. If the practice is done diligently, the recipe has the propensity to gift us peak experiences. If we experience enough peaks, they should become permanent traits. But can we take this intuitive, miraculous, individual, collective journey, treat it like a cake and not risk losing something? There is a Native American belief that it is wrong to provide interpretation for their many traditional stories. Interpretation is meant to come from inside you, and only when you are ready. The intuitive element of my journey solidifies my spiritual foundation, My foundation gives meaning to my peak experiences. The foundation of ILP is ILP!