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[Introduction to this download.](#)

This download contains the Prologue and Appendix II from Richard's book *Addictions & Spiritual Transformation*. In the prologue he explains the quite complex nature of addictions, and the sincere and sustained perseverance you will need to overcome addictions, or to heal an addicted personality. Having poly-addictions is a given, where in years past, with the limited awareness people had of addictions, it was common for some people (professionals included) to adhere to a one-addiction theory. Having only one addiction is no longer a wise or tenable position for treating addictions. The Prologue is to "set the stage" for everything that follows in the book.

The *Manner of Presentation* is followed by Appendix II of the book — Five Spiritual Principles. These principles seem to generate much discussion attendant to recovery and have been prominent in Richard's work with people in recovery. The purpose of the first nine steps, and the following maintenance steps; the overall intent of the process of recovery, is to achieve a lifestyle that is governed by the Five Spiritual Principles. This download may have minor grammatical changes from what appears in the book.

[The Manner of Presentation](#)

The Prologue to:

[Addictions & Spiritual Transformation](#)

By Richard Clark

Addictions and spiritual transformation are multi-dimensional, interrelated, and layered. To say they are complex is a magnificent understatement. Imagine an intricate, three-dimensional spider's web where every point of intersection of web is somehow directly connected to every other point of intersection: nothing is linear; everything is connected to everything else. The dynamics of addictions and of getting recovered exist like a massive spider's web of symptoms and issues that are all connected, and it all happens at once. You get sick everywhere and throughout your entire personality all at the same time, and you become spiritual everywhere and throughout your entire personality all at the same time. This is why getting recovered is so painstakingly slow. Being addicted, like being spiritual, is a state of existence.

Everything in [*Addictions & Spiritual Transformation*], from discussing the many and varied issues that create a firm basis for understanding and exiting addictions, to embracing personal transformation, to becoming Spiritual, is important in the overall task at hand. And, it is complex. However, because of this complexity—the extreme subtlety of the material and the multi-dimensional topics, you may believe some topic of discussion in this book is out of sequence or better suited elsewhere. At times the segue from one item to the next may seem disjointed or random.

Outside of the specific steps, any one topic could be presented in several different places in the overall sequence of the information in the book. The flow of information may seem disjointed to you, but quite natural to someone else. And, while some people think I don't spend enough time explaining one particular point, others think I'm belaboring the same point and impatient I move on.

This happens because the information we each absorb is filtered through our perceptions and values (our ego¹). Each person who reads this book will have a different perception of it than anyone else who reads it. In addition to personal filtering, the subtle disjointedness you may experience is partly due to the limitations of a book—in fact, the limitations of education. Education requires that information be presented in some linear fashion, which isn't how addictions happen and certainly isn't how spiritual transformation happens. Nothing about this process is linear, but we can only write or talk about it that way.

I have been asked whether this book is for therapists or for ordinary people getting recovered. First there's this: Counsellors and therapists are ordinary people. Second: There have appeared two closely related and pervasive myths; not even myths exactly, but a malignant ambiance in the attitudes about addicts and alcoholics. These are that addicts don't really want to get recovered, and they're incapable of comprehending complicated things. Granted, there are exceptions, but for the most part, addicts are capable and do want to get recovered. However, this requires a determined and focused effort, over a long time, in a very specific direction. *"The unfolding of [person's] spiritual nature is as much an exact science as astronomy [or] medicine."*²

Understanding the progressive, ubiquitous, and destructive nature of addictions, and how psychology can assist but only spirituality can resolve them, is incredibly complicated. This requires discussion of subtle detail, the use of words that may be unfamiliar to some readers, and hard work. Therefore, this is not an "easy" read. Of those who read the first edition, close to 140 people were kind enough to offer thoughtful comments. Of that group, eleven were therapists, three were doctors, several never completed high school, and about 80% were in twelve-step programs. Understanding the content was well within the grasp of these "ordinary" people. What they had in common was patience and determination.

To understand this book, some people will need a dictionary near to hand and will have to ponder carefully the information in its considered detail. Both recovering and helping others to recover from addictions is incredibly complex. If you aren't willing to work enough to understand this book, you're probably not willing to work as hard as is required to get recovered, or to effectively help addicts to get recovered. Comprehension has to be earned. Nothing is free.

This book presents ideas and perspectives that will generally contradict (a) much of what is presently, commonly thought to be "addictions" treatment, and (b) most of what is routinely said and done in modern twelve-step groups. Misconceptions about twelve-step programs and addictions are reflected in the media, treatment modalities, and in the carnival-like atmosphere of many twelve-step meetings.

Respect cannot be offered to people, nor can this subject be held in the regard it deserves, when people and addictions are treated in a superficial or trite manner. Your rewards will be commensurate with your efforts. When someone desires to transform themselves, and they undertake to resolve their addictions, throughout that process, they gradually become more graceful in assimilating deeper awareness. The further along they are towards achieving spiritual integrity, the more they can appreciate spiritual nuance. It's very complicated.

You have the difficult task of trying to assimilate extremely complicated information that is multi-dimensional, interrelated, and layered—and it all happens at once: the three-dimensional spider's web. Many of you are trying to do this with an ego that will resist much of what's in this book. By reading this slowly and thoughtfully, you will eventually sense how it all fits together.

Be kind and patient with yourself. Be gently determined. From wherever you are right now, at this immediate point in your own transformation, you are a newcomer to the rest of your life.

[prologue ends]

¹ Ego is discussed at [Appendix IV](#).

² *Secret Teachings of All Ages*, Manly P. Hall, Tarcher/Penguin Books, 2003, p. 120. Procrastination and working grudgingly, which are characteristics of an alcoholic/addict (*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, p. 49), should not be preemptively interpreted as disinterest. These can be overcome, which is a specific part of the process of getting recovered. *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, and *Alcoholics Anonymous*, and this book, are an explanation of that process.

The Five Spiritual Principles

Appendix II of:

Addictions & Spiritual Transformation

By Richard Clark

These are principles that appear to me, to govern ethical spiritual endeavor. And, as I understand it, underneath the complex beauty of parables, metaphors, and mysticism, Spirituality is very practical.

There are five universal principles that, when willingly complied with and taken together, create spiritual integrity in a spiritual pilgrim. These principles would also comprise the underlying, inherent qualities that would be required for an organization, or an applied philosophy, to be spiritually ethical. Again I refer to the Manly Hall quote cited at p. 197: *“The unfolding of a man’s spiritual nature is as much as exact science as mathematics...”*. Yes, the varied manifestations of *The Ground of All Being* may be mysterious, and the debates and discussions may be esoteric, but the everyday application of spirituality is neither of these.

The Fundamental Qualities of a Principle

“Principles, unlike values [or rules], are objective and external. They operate in obedience to natural laws, regardless of conditions.”³

A spiritual principle would be an authentic truth, and hold within itself a universal theme, that is applicable beyond personality or culture. It would also be the foundation out of which arise beliefs and attitudes that would enable a person to rise above (be spiritual), or descend below (be soulful), the ego-constructions of self-serving convenience—beyond psychology and the related, limited vision of personal insight. Additionally, a bona fide spiritual principle would be universal enough to embrace all of the generally recognized virtues, regardless of the folk-tradition through which they are perceived, and include (in this instance) whatever virtues recovering addicts would evince to be recovered. And finally: A spiritual principle would have to be authentic enough to hold up under close scrutiny.

The general chaos and confusion around spirituality occurs most often when people take something as fundamentally universal as “spirituality” or “God”, slant interpretations to cater to their coveted prejudices and insecurities, then claim that their own personal interpretation is superior to others’ interpretations. Spiritual principles must be broad and flexible enough to be available to everyone at a deeply personal level. Therefore, to allow some guideline to qualify as a spiritual principle (as opposed to a rule, which is secular and limited) is no mean feat. Each spiritual principle is exactly *what* it is because it is:

- Universal enough to accommodate and embrace all spiritual endeavor, beyond the narrow limits of culture,
- Respectful of any personal symbolism of deity,
- Broad enough to encompass the generally recognized virtues,
- Restricted enough to exclude the more universal vices,
- Tested enough over the centuries to be trusted,
- Simple enough to comprehend,
- Complex enough to perpetually require attention,
- Demanding enough to require continuous effort to evince it,

³ *Principle-Centered Leadership*, Stephen R. Covey, A Fireside Book, Simon & Schuster, 1992, p. 19.

- Idealistic enough to be always worthy of respect, and just out of reach—to keep people humble in their pursuit of it,
- Specific enough that it can be approached with confidence,
- Achievable to a degree that people can demonstrate or realize personal progress; and,
- Profound enough to be above pettiness.

The five principles I recommend each satisfy each of the twelve qualifications noted above. Additionally, because there are only five, there are few enough of them so people can apprehend their interrelatedness. What may be more important is that these five allow the adherents of different faiths to peacefully interact, while maintaining different beliefs. These principles can be internalized and become the behaviors of truly spiritual people.

Regardless of the circumstances people find themselves in, they would aspire to demand of themselves adherence to these principles as non-negotiable standards of behavior. To the uninitiated, the principles are probably overwhelming, and for addicts they are often viewed with disbelief and thought to be literally untenable. However, with willingness, patience, and labor (or desire, devotion, and diligence), and Right Association, they are within reach of anyone who is desirous of a truly Spiritual way of life beyond the conventionally enlightened.⁴ The five principles are:

Principle #1: Respect for the Body-Temple—Respectful Self-Care

It is long known in the perennial philosophies that the Atman-Brahmin resides within, and access to *It* is through ourselves.⁵ Our souls, from one perspective, are the access point to, and the residence place of, the dark void out of which we arise. From there, we are animated in a manner that allows integrity in two seemingly opposite directions. People can be drawn into a appreciation of the dark, sublime mysteries of primal life and love (soulful) or can rise above to the call of light and spirit (spiritual). Harmonizing these may be the intended journey of Life.

Either way, the selfish trappings of personality and culture must be left behind. Being soulful is quite a bit different than being spiritual. Spirituality might be described as manifesting the action of a deity within each of us “out” towards the world. Soulfulness is sincerely demonstrating and honoring the strength, frailty, mystery, and power at the core of our being.

Because all access to “God” ultimately begins with challenging ourselves, and ends *within* ourselves, it is our bodies, our emotions, and our thoughts through which this deity acts. Our bodies are the temples within which the essence of God resides. Contact with the soul or the spirit *begins* through and within our own physical being. Your body is literally the home of your soul and spirit, as is everyone else’s the home of their own. The “body-temple” must be cared for.

Respect for the body-temple, as demonstrated by respect and healthy caring for our physical being—for others as much as ourselves—is essential. Not damaging ourselves or others through squalid living, violence, addictions, greed, or physical or emotional abuse is crucial. Nurturing the residence of the spirit is the starting place for all spiritual transformation. If you’re damaging or otherwise neglecting the

⁴ Marshall Frady, in his book *Martin Luther King, Jr.*, Viking/Penguin Books, 2002, p. 186, offered this observation about Dr. King: “*King was indeed passing now into that far country of all true prophets ultimately: that lonely region beyond the conventionally enlightened...*” People in twelve-step programs don’t have to be prophets; however, the decision at Step Three has no limits attached to it. It was voluntary, and so the standard to aspire to is that set by “God” and not by mediocre social conventions (meaning socially acceptable levels of spiritual irresponsibility associated with twelve-step psychobabble). Go beyond the pale; it’s worth it.

⁵ According to *Alcoholics Anonymous*, in the final analysis, it is deep within us that the Great Reality is found (p. 55). Additionally, as was mentioned earlier, there are two similar views of God residing within us, found in *Mysticism In Religion*, by Rev. W.R. Inge, University of Chicago Press, 1948, Chapter 3: Attributed to St Paul: “...*the spirit dwelling in us, or of our bodies as the temple of God... ‘the body’ as the ‘tabernacle’ of the soul while we live here [on earth].*” And, from Rev Inge: “*The body must be revered and preserved from defilement... it is the temple of the Holy Spirit.*” I do not intend Christian hegemony in this. *The Kabbalah* teaches similarly, that what we consume or use (good or not good), so it is that we become. Many other religious traditions, and Buddhism, promote respectful self-care with equal style and grace.

care of the body-temple (your own or another's physical and emotional health), you are damaging the home of the Atman-Brahmin, and therefore cannot be spiritual.

Principle #2: Veracity

This is a style of presenting honesty, and describing your perception of truth, that incorporates gentle trustworthiness. For many years, with the advent of the social movement towards health and enlightenment in the 1960s, truth was quite rightly encouraged. "Let it all hang out" became a euphemism for honesty—blunt, brutal, or otherwise. Venting was the order of the day. However, being honest and presenting your truths without regard for others is cruel and not a part of veracity. Honest communication that is angry or without respect and consideration for others will be received as abusive. The speaker will be viewed as selfish or rude, and the truth will be held suspect because of the manner in which it's delivered.

Spiritual people always speak the truth—they are consistently and *gently* honest—with all people, in all situations, at all times, regardless of the cost to themselves. This disables Impression Management. In microscopic truth-telling they always offer respect, courtesy, and kindness to others, regardless of the nature of what needs to be told.⁶ You cannot be spiritual and dishonest, or be spiritual and mean while being honest. Spirituality always requires gentleness, trustworthiness, and courtesy in microscopic truth-telling; no exceptions. That is veracity.

Principle #3: Humility

Often largely misunderstood, especially by people with addictions, humility is rare and elusive, and becoming ever more so. As soon as anyone talks about humility as a personal endeavor, it slips away. There are two aspects of humility that must be incorporated in both behavior and attitude in order for it to have integrity.

The **first** (too often ignored) requirement for humility involves adhering to a sincerely egalitarian philosophy as the foundation of all interaction. Being sincerely egalitarian, in attitude and outlook, must be universal, and operate generously and willingly regarding gender, age, health, ability, talent, culture, religion, politics and affluence; egalitarian about *every* category that people use to classify people and animals. [This extends out to other living things and the earth as a matter of respect and stewardship.]

Humility requires the fundamental prerequisite to all interaction be sincere egalitarianism. To interact with anything less than this fails to honor the universal truth of unity that underlies all intellectual categorizations of Life. An egalitarian philosophy for *all* of life is the spiritual issue at hand.

The **second** requirement for humility—which is the usual focus of any discussion about humility, which is itself an ego tactic to avoid egalitarianism—is participating in the sincere honoring of some form of deity, by whatever cultural manifestation. Recognizing that there is a universal spirit (by many names), and willingly incorporating a devoted and regular appreciation of *It* in your private and social behavior, is the second requirement.

Humility is the primary requisite for judicious participation in community. Humility requires a deeply willing participation in an egalitarian lifestyle *and* the regular and sincere appreciation of a Universal Cohesiveness that animates life, without regard to the inconvenience or awkwardness that this requires of you. As an aside: If you are truly humble, there is never any awkwardness or inconvenience.

⁶ Microscopic truth-telling is a descriptive phrase that I find particularly applicable. It is from *Conscious Loving*, Gay Hendricks, Ph.D., & Kathlyn Hendricks, Ph.D., Bantam Books, 1990, Chapter 4.

Principle #4: Charity

Charity, common in the jargon of religious people, is generally understood to be some variation of “giving things away”—giving away your time, giving away money, volunteering your expertise, donating old clothes. What qualifies or disqualifies charity as having spiritual integrity is the ego-agenda underneath the “charitable” behavior (which agenda is often *invisible* to the individual in self-introspection).

When charity is offered as a social grace, or with any underlying agenda of personal advancement or salvation, then the charity lacks spiritual integrity. Yes, it’s generous, but it’s spiritually suspect. Charity, in other words, may be socially admirable but unspiritual when offered because the giver feels guilty; feels sorrow or pity for the recipient; tries to impress anyone (most often and especially themselves); rescues the recipient out of some responsibility that is the recipient’s to meet; tries to collect salvation points with God; offers it with self-serving personal distinctions of who’s worthy of charity and who isn’t; offers charity to live up to other people’s expectations (especially shadow-expectations from the past); or vies for social admiration through the charity. These unrecognized unspiritual ego-machinations that motivate “charity” are insidious.⁷

“St. John of the Cross put the whole matter [of charity] in a single question and answer. Those who rush headlong into good works without having acquired through contemplation the power to act well—what do they accomplish? Little more than nothing, and sometimes nothing whatever, and sometimes even harm.”⁸ Within the giver of charity, without appropriate self-love/respect, veracity, and both aspects of humility (which are the first three spiritual principles), all as prerequisites to the charity, the charity is selfish and harmful to both the giver and the receiver.

Principle #5: Responsibility & Obedience

These two attributes, which together comprise the final spiritual principle, are usually abhorrent to addicts in general, to angry people, to Victims, and to social do-gooders. This principle doesn’t harbor well in our culture of victim-hood, disposable consumerism, and greed. Certainly these two attributes are easily viewed as separate qualities, but in regards to spirituality they are so closely related and interdependent that I present them together.

If people value an idea, and are obedient to that value (uphold it), then they would be responsible in relation to it. And, if someone is responsible, then they would be willing to be held accountable for not following the values they proclaim they have.⁹ For example: If people hold kindness as an important value, then they “should” be obedient to that. They would be kind. They would be responsible (to themselves) to offer kindness in trying or awkward circumstances. More importantly, they would hold themselves fully accountable if they weren’t kind. If they were kind only when it was convenient, or only to certain people, or were unwilling to be taken to task when they weren’t kind, then kindness wouldn’t be a value; it would be only a convenience and used for Impression Management.

In Chapter 11, I referred to Boethius’ statement that “A wise [person] ought no more to take it ill when [they] clash with fortune than a brave [person] ought to be upset by the sound of battle.”¹⁰ And I add this: A person who willingly pursues a relationship with The Divine ought not to take it ill or complain when they clash with their human nature and defects. A spiritual pilgrim, who volunteered at Step Three, and became willing at Step Six, would view all inner-personal struggles with their unspiritual impulses only as an opportunity to be devoted—an opportunity to gain faith. *“This is why virtue gets its name, because it is firm in strength and unconquered by adversity.”* [Boethius]

⁷ Joshua Loth Liebman, in his book *Peace of Mind*, Simon and Schuster, 1946, speaks to this in an anecdote about “victims of humility,” pp. 38-39.

⁸ *Huxley and God Essays*, Aldous Huxley, cited earlier, p. 175.

⁹ Willingness is explored in detail in Chapter 5.

¹⁰ *The Consolation of Philosophy*, Boethius, translated by V.E. Watts, Penguin Books, 1969, p. 144.

You are responsible for things that belong to you. If you are given a magnificent gift that you declare you value highly, you are [would be] responsible to take care of it. Your life was given to *You*. As an addict/alcoholic in recovery, your “recovery life” was also given to you, and not to anyone else. Your life, your health, your pilgrimage, belong to You, and only you are responsible to take care of them. And since you volunteered for the job of being spiritual (at Step Three), all the related responsibilities and hard work are all self-imposed.

Responsibility: Truly spiritual people are willingly and completely responsible for themselves, their conduct, their thoughts, and their feelings—for their very life, and everything in it—*without complaint*. Granted, at times you are not responsible for what is done to you (calamity is random), but you are responsible for cleaning up after it—again, without complaint. Always hold only yourself responsible for the entire state of affairs in your life, and never surrender this responsibility. Anything less prohibits your being Spiritual and denies you inner serenity.

Obedience: If you aspire or claim to be spiritual, then you will desire to adhere to these five principles, which are embodied within the maintenance steps of the original twelve-step program. Obedience is mandatory because it's obedience that proves you hold them of value and proves that you are spiritually responsible. Be completely responsible for yourself and obedient to the principles of spirituality; otherwise, you're not obedient, responsible, or spiritual.¹¹

These five spiritual principles are applicable to every aspect of every situation and relationship in your life. Haphazard adherence to them is not evidence of spirituality, it's evidence of convenience and Impression Management. For addicts and alcoholics getting recovered, they are not negotiable or optional unless you're willing to embrace shallowness and hypocrisy. Then, in short order, your abstinence will be at risk. A person cannot disregard any part of any one of these principles and claim spiritual integrity.

A concomitant truth is whenever a spiritual pilgrim's own life is unsatisfying, conflicted, or lonely, they're not (consistently) living within these principles.¹² They're being ignored in favor of influence, affluence, petulance, sex, revenge, or power. That's the paradigm of the human condition. Being Spiritual seems monumentally difficult to many. Corruption appears easier, but that's an illusion, only because corruption is more popular and we're trained early to live that way. It's the transition into Spirituality that seems insurmountable. Once you are well on the way to achieving it, being Spiritual is much easier and more graceful than corruption.

It appears that these five principles are somehow innate and exist *a priori* to intellect. When children are allowed to be spontaneous, they eat when they're hungry, stop doing something when it hurts, and sleep when they're tired. The impulse to self-care and self-respect is innate. Honesty is natural and makes sense—it takes no effort. Truth is graceful and the facts are friendly.¹³

Children are taught how, why, and when to deceive. Many times I've heard an adult counselling a child to be dishonest and the child asks innocently: “But why can't I tell?” It's also natural to be egalitarian. People are taught racism, and all forms of prejudice. They're taught arrogance about culture and God: “My way is better and you're wrong.” Likewise, people are taught to disbelieve the mysterious power of unity that underlies everything. Humility is natural; arrogance is cultural. Greed is taught. Responsibility is as natural as honesty: “Who did this?” “I did.” Through fear, people learn how to blame others and minimize their accountability. It seems to me that being Spiritual is innate and doesn't really need to be taught.

Being Spiritual often generates insecurity in other people, especially regarding veracity. Rather than examine their own dishonesty, they justify their own insecurity and attack someone else. Be wary of

¹¹ St. Augustine wrote that Spirituality is not efficient. It is the most difficult journey that anyone can undertake. And, as explained by Aldous Huxley in *Huxley and God: The Essays* (cited at an earlier footnote), that's why there are so few saints.

¹² One of the more unique and exasperating facets of any addiction is the ego-posture that tells an addict their unhappiness or conflicted life is someone else's fault. In order to be Spiritual you will be required to willingly and definitively abandon this mindset.

¹³ “The facts are friendly” is an expression attributed to the American psychotherapist Carl Rogers, referred to in an earlier footnote.

the unregenerate person whose propensity to blame and disrespect others creates a dark labyrinth that keeps them off of the path of Spirituality, even though it appears (to them) that they're on it. Being spiritual is an all-encompassing lifestyle; a state of existence. You will miss the mark, which is the nature of being human, but you only have to make amends and diligently refocus your energy and intellect onto these principles. According to *Alcoholics Anonymous*, this is the proper exercise of willpower.

As I said in the Manner of Presentation [at the beginning of the book]: From wherever you are right now, at this immediate point in your own transformation, you are a newcomer to the rest of your life. This is the inherent uncertainty in Life. In the face of this uncertainty, in order to appreciate the implacable grandeur of Life, exactly as you have been given it, consistently and voluntarily demonstrate respect for the body-temple, veracity, humility, charity, and responsibility & obedience.¹⁴

[appendix ends]

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¹⁴ As I reflect on how these five principles coalesced in my mind, I'm very aware of my gratitude to the monks, mystics, imams, priests, ministers, and rabbis I have the pleasure of knowing, who were *very* generous with their knowledge and wisdom. I'm also grateful to the authors of the many books I've studied; of these, especially to: William James, for his book *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, (various publishers)—my most recent edition is Modern Library Classics, 2002; to Huston Smith, for his book *The World's Religions*, HarperSanFrancisco, 1991; to Aldous Huxley, for two of his books: *The Perennial Philosophy*, recently by Harper Collins, 1994, and *Huxley and God Essays*, Jacqueline Hazard Bridgeman editor, HarperSanFrancisco, 1992; and to Gerald May, for his book *Will and Spirit*, Harper Collins, 1982.