

network:training

# Exploring the spiritual journey

September 2015 – June 2016

## **Network Training**

12 The Courtyard, Woodlands, Woodlands Lane, Almondsbury,  
Bristol BS32 4NQ

0117 950 7271

Email address: [info@network.org.uk](mailto:info@network.org.uk)

Website address: [www.network.org.uk](http://www.network.org.uk)

# Exploring the spiritual journey

<b>Course title</b>	Exploring the spiritual journey
<b>Award</b>	Attendance certificate
<b>Delivery</b>	Part time over ten months Eight Friday sessions and two Friday/Saturday workshops (i.e. 12 training days in all) All training days run from 9.30 am to 5.00 pm 90 hours of training in total
<b>Venue</b>	Network Training, 12 The Courtyard, Woodlands, Woodlands Lane, Almondsbury, Bristol BS32 4NQ
<b>Course ethos</b>	Person-centred
<b>Course fees</b>	£675 payable in one lump sum or in monthly instalments

## Introduction

What is spirituality? What do we mean when we speak of 'soul' and spirit? What forms can our spirituality take? What are the similarities and differences between religious and non-religious spirituality? How does our spirituality change and develop as we move through life? And how does our unique spirituality impact on our physical and mental health and wellbeing? These are just some of the questions we will explore together as part of this exciting new course. At a practical level, the course also seeks to develop our capacity for what we might call soul listening – in other words, our ability to tune into the innermost part of ourselves and to listen to each other's sacred stories. Finally, at a personal level, the course is designed to help us to 'live the questions' that are meaningful for us, to find our own ways of 'making time for soul' in the midst of everyday life and to identify and explore those paths to the Sacred that have the potential to nurture our souls. It seeks to resource our own spiritual journeying through giving us the opportunity to share our own sacred story with others and to explore our own developing spirituality in a variety of different ways.

The course stands on its own, but also forms the first year of the two year Diploma in Spiritual Accompaniment course. Those who wish to undertake training in spiritual accompaniment and **who have significant previous training in counselling skills** can progress on to the second year of the course. This involves a further three modules, each offering 30 hours of training. In total, therefore, the full two year programme offers around 180 hours of training.

## **What is the course ethos?**

The course ethos reflects a progressive spirituality which...

is open, inclusive and holistic

values difference and diversity

believes in the equality of all people, irrespective, for example, of gender, race, culture, sexual orientation and spiritual or religious tradition

believes that there are many paths which lead to the Divine (whoever or whatever we conceive the Divine to be) and many ways of expressing our unique spiritualities

honours all faiths and spiritualities as responses to the Divine and is committed and open to learning from genuine inter-faith and inter-spiritual dialogue

welcomes those from any faith or none who are searching for the Sacred.

The course ethos also reflects the person-centred philosophy of Carl Rogers with its emphasis on the importance of offering each other unconditional acceptance and understanding and of endeavouring to be ourselves with each other if we are to encourage each other's growth. We are committed to respecting and learning from each other's experience and ways of making sense of it. We also seek to value and draw on each other's gifts and resources in creating a learning community in which we are free to discover and be ourselves, and free also to explore and express our spirituality in those particular ways which are meaningful for us.

## **Who is the course for?**

The course is open to anyone with a strong interest in exploring spirituality and the spiritual journey from a broad perspective. You do not have to adhere to a particular religious tradition in order to do this course and it is not focused on any one particular spiritual pathway. All that is required is a desire to discover more of who you are as a spiritual person and a willingness to share that journey with others in an open-hearted, open-minded way.

The course will also be of interest to qualified counsellors and therapists wishing to develop their capacity to work with the spiritual dimension of experience and to those considering training as spiritual accompaniers.

## **What are the course's principal aims?**

There is strong evidence that spiritual and religious experience is of fundamental importance in many people's lives and, it seems, is becoming more so. Over the past twenty years in particular, there has been an upsurge of interest in spirituality. Many people are hungry for a greater spiritual reality in their lives. Many are searching for a deeper meaning and purpose, for an inner peace that often eludes them and for ways of nurturing their soul.

Many people find their spiritual home and live out their spirituality within the context of one of the world's major religious or wisdom traditions such as Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam or Taoism. But at the same time, more and more people are struggling with organised religion. Some no longer feel at home within its walls. Others feel so damaged by organised religion that they may be fearful of crossing its threshold again. An increasing number of people now describe themselves as 'spiritual but not religious' and are searching for or following alternative spiritual paths, often in relative isolation. All too often, this leaves them with nowhere to go for help and support when they experience difficulties or face challenges in their spiritual lives or when aspects of their spirituality are impacting adversely on their well-being and growth.

This course seeks to resource and support those of us – whether religious or non-religious – who are hungry for a greater spiritual reality in our lives; who want to know what it means for us to be 'a spiritual self'; who are reaching for a deeper understanding of our own and others' spiritual journeying; who are eager to explore and learn from spiritual traditions other than our own; and who are seeking in John O'Donohue's words, to 'make time for soul'. It offers us a sacred space in the midst of our busy lives in which there is time simply to be; time to hear and honour each other's sacred stories; time to reflect on our own spiritual journey and on how we are living out our unique spirituality; and time to connect at a deeper level with our innermost self, with each other and with the 'More' which lies both within and beyond the self.

It is a space in which there are no 'right' answers, a space which is free from unhelpful demands, expectations or restrictive rules, which is not concerned with converting each other to a particular way of thinking or of living out our spirituality and which reflects a fundamental trust in each other's inner resources for change and growth at all levels of our being, including the spiritual.

## **What will the course cover?**

The course will cover the following key areas:

## **Understanding spiritual language and experience**

exploring the meaning of such terms as religion, spirituality, soul, spirit, the sacred or transcendent and what it means to be 'a spiritual self'

looking at our spiritual needs for meaning, purpose, ultimate values, connectedness and self-transcendence

exploring the richness and diversity of human religious and spiritual experience, belief and practice and individual differences in spirituality

considering how our gender, culture, personality and life experiences shape our unique spiritualities

## **Understanding the spiritual journey**

exploring a number of different ways of thinking about and mapping the spiritual journey, including a person-centred perspective, and considering how well they fit with our own personal experience

exploring the concepts of 'spiritual intelligence' and spiritual wholeness

looking at a range of different paths to the Sacred, both religious and non-religious

## **Spirituality, mental and physical health and wellbeing**

exploring the complex inter-connectedness of body, mind soul and spirit and what we know about the potential physical and mental health benefits of particular forms of religious and spiritual belief and practice

looking at healthy and unhealthy forms of religion and spirituality

considering how we can become disconnected from our core self or soul and how this experience may impact on our psychological and spiritual growth and wellbeing

exploring what is meant by the term 'spiritual abuse' and how the experience of such abuse can impact on us physically, psychologically and spiritually

## **Exploring our own spirituality and spiritual journey**

engaging with and honouring our own sacred story and those of others

exploring our own personal experience of soul and spirit

developing our awareness, understanding and acceptance of the shape of our own unique spirituality

mapping our own spiritual journey

learning to 'live the questions' that matter to us

## **Developing the art of soul listening**

exploring the ways in which the soul speaks to us and learning to listen and attend to the voice of our own soul

learning to create a sacred space for others in which the soul can be listened into disclosure

## **How will the course be structured?**

The course will take the form of eight Friday workshops and two Friday/Saturday workshops in three separate modules over a ten month period. Other than the Friday/Saturday workshops at the beginning and end of the course, it involves a commitment of no more than one day per month. Sessions will be held from 9.30 am – 5.00 pm.

The course will be primarily experiential and reflective in nature but will also include teaching on various aspects of spirituality. The workshops will include short teaching sessions, practical soul listening sessions and personal and spiritual development work.

## **Is there any course work or assessment?**

There is no assessment at all and the only coursework we strongly encourage you to do is to keep a personal soul journal for the duration of the course. You will be given a broad-based reading list as a resource but there are no prescribed texts. From time to time you will also be offered a variety of experiential and self-reflective course exercises to draw on as part of your own journeying but it will be up to you whether and how you engage with them.

## **Where and when will the course take place?**

The course will take place at Network Training's premises in Almondsbury, Bristol. The course dates are as follows:

### **Module 1 Understanding spiritual language and experience**

Workshop 1	25 <sup>th</sup> and 26 <sup>th</sup> September 2015
Workshop 2	16 <sup>th</sup> October 2015
Workshop 3	13 <sup>th</sup> November 2015
Workshop 4	4 <sup>th</sup> December 2015

### **Module 2 Understanding the spiritual journey**

Workshop 5	8 <sup>th</sup> January 2016
Workshop 6	5 <sup>th</sup> February 2016
Workshop 7	4 <sup>th</sup> March 2016

### **Module 3 Spirituality, mental and physical health and wellbeing**

Workshop 8	15 <sup>th</sup> April 2016
Workshop 9	13 <sup>th</sup> May 2016
Workshop 10	10 <sup>th</sup> and 11th June 2016

## **Course fees**

The fee for the course is £675. We ask you to pay a non-refundable deposit of £75 on acceptance of a place. The remaining £600 may be paid either in a lump sum at the start of the course or on a monthly basis over 10 months.

## **Withdrawing from the course**

Should you decide to withdraw your application **before the first session of the course**, you may, at Network Training's discretion, be eligible to have your course fees waived (excluding the initial deposit) unless the financial viability of the course would be jeopardised by so doing.

Unfortunately however, should you decide to withdraw after the course has started, it will not be possible to waive the year's fees as course staffing, venue arrangements and resources are planned around student numbers.

## Entry Requirements

There are no specific entry requirements. Some previous training in basic listening/counselling skills would, however, be an advantage.

## Applications and interviews:

Application forms are available from Network Training on request. They can also be downloaded directly from the Network web site at [www.network.org.uk](http://www.network.org.uk).

The deadline for applications is **Monday 6th July 2015**. Late applications will be considered subject to availability of places.

Interviews for the course will be held on **Friday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2015**. These will be relatively brief and informal. They are primarily designed to give you the opportunity to find out more about the course, to discuss any concerns you may have about doing the course and to help make the decision as to whether this is the right course for you.

## About Network Training

Network Training is an open and inclusive learning community which seeks to be both open-hearted and open-minded. It is rooted in the progressive Christian spiritual tradition but also draws on a wealth of other traditions and inspirations in seeking to make sense of the mystery of life.

## The course tutors

### Kaitlyn Steele

Ma Hons Psychology; M Phil Clinical Psychology; Diploma in Spiritual Accompaniment

Author of Sacred Space: Embracing the spiritual in person-centred therapy published in 2014 by CreateSpace Independent Publishing.

I have been involved in the world of counselling and therapy for most of my adult life. I qualified originally as a clinical psychologist in the early 1970s and worked for a number of years in the NHS before eventually moving into working as a person-centred therapist, supervisor and tutor on a full time basis. I have taught for over twenty years on Further and Higher Education counselling courses in the UK and as Director of Training at Network Counselling & Training in Bristol for more than sixteen years, was responsible for developing an innovative four year university-validated professional counselling training programme with a strong emphasis on working with the spiritual dimension of experience.



I am an experienced person-centred therapist and spiritual accompanier and over the years, have had substantial experience of teaching and leading groups of varying kinds – for example, therapeutic groups, personal growth and encounter groups and meditation groups. My approach as a tutor and group facilitator is fundamentally a person-centred one. I believe that we learn and grow best when we encounter an environment in which we feel accepted, valued, heard and understood; in which we are free to be ourselves and to express our own unique experiences and perspectives; and in which we are able to voice and find ways of meeting our own particular needs. I am committed, therefore, to creating a safe space that enables us to learn from each other's experience, to draw on each other's gifts and resources and to facilitate each other's learning and growth.

At this point in my own spiritual journey, I would say that I am most closely drawn to a progressive form of Christian spirituality which emphasises the value of personal and subjective spiritual experience, inclusiveness, love and compassion. I am deeply committed to engaging in genuine, open-minded dialogue both with scientific and psychological thinking and with the truths to be found in other faiths and spiritual and philosophical traditions. In later years, I have also become increasingly drawn to a more mystical and contemplative spirituality and to some of the insights of the Celtic tradition which points to the inter-connectedness of all of life.

Currently, I teach on the Network Training Diploma in Spiritual Accompaniment course and have a small private practice as a therapist, spiritual accompanier, freelance trainer and group facilitator. I am also the founder of Spaceforsoul, a newly emerging, inclusive spiritual community which aims to support and resource those people who are making their spiritual journeys outside the walls of organised religion.

For further information, please visit my website at [www.kaitlynsteele.co.uk](http://www.kaitlynsteele.co.uk).

### **Stephan Griffiths**

LLB; Postgraduate Diploma in Counselling; MSc in Counselling

Postgraduate Diploma in Research Methods

I have been involved in the counselling world for over fifteen years and am an experienced integrative counsellor, trainer, supervisor and spiritual accompanier. For a number of years, I have been involved in teaching counselling on Further and Higher Education counselling courses in the UK, all of which have had a strong emphasis on working with the spiritual dimension of experience. I am currently tutoring on the Network Training Diploma in Spiritual Accompaniment and have a small private practice as a counsellor and supervisor. I also have considerable experience of facilitating both supervision and personal development groups. My current areas of interest lie in

the inter-connectedness of body, mind and spirit and in researching the part that spirituality plays in recovering from and being reconciled to traumatic life experiences.

I am drawn to multi-faith approaches to understanding what it is to lead a religious or spiritual life and am interested in the exploration of how in a modern world each of us finds a way to live that out. I am drawn to the Sikh concept, which holds that God or the Divine transcends all religious distinction and I am fascinated by the truths that the world religions and spiritual traditions have in common rather than those that divide them. I believe that there are many paths to the Divine and that there are truths to be found in the sacred texts, stories and myths of all religious and spiritual traditions, each of which deserves to be honoured and respected. I am from a Judaeo-Christian background and am interested in progressive forms of Christianity which draw on metaphor and simile as ways of understanding the truth beyond literal truth and which offer us signposts that point towards the Sacred.