

Eleven

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5 Things Worth Doing to Keep Your Spirit Alive

by Linda Morgan-Clement

Like brushing your teeth or learning a language, spiritual growth requires

repetition. There are many approaches and practices from which you create your unique combination. Here are **5** essentials for spiritual health no matter who you are.

1) **Practice generosity**; give your time, compassion, and money to friends and strangers alike on a regular basis. During these “best years of your life” it is too easy to be self-indulgent and self-centered. But people who live that way are usually lonely, unappreciated, and fairly unhappy.

2) **Plan for interruptions** each and every day, because miracles reside in the margins of to-do lists. “Interruptions” are the real tests of the values that we espouse but rarely live up to. They are opportunities for generosity, genuine smiles, and life-changing encounters.

3) **Collect stories**, for they are the stuff that gives your life meaning and binds it to the billions of other lives on this planet. Stories are the wealth of culture, the complexity of beauty, and the simplicity of abiding passion. Through them we discover commonalities and understand important differences. The stories that you tell, collect, and create while at Wooster will form the contours of your entire existence.

4) **Keep a Joy Journal**. You are in the process of learning to become a critical *thinker* – don’t let this make you a critical person. Keep a journal of the gifts that have come your way each day. Journaling is intentional attention that records the small details that get lost in the rush until you go back and read across a semester or even four years. Generosity, patience, passion, and attention all require the kind of joy that opens our souls and eases our fears. As you journal, ask yourself this follow-up question, “How can this joy add to the lives of others?”

5) **Develop a community** that will love you enough to speak truth and hold their silence. Love deeply and courageously, for your spirit cannot live in isolation. Find companions who feel familiar and some who are radically different. Reach out to the woman who serves the noodles, the man who cleans Lowry, someone whose racial features differ from your own, a person whose religious language is unfamiliar. Always remember that you are probably less important than you think you are and more amazing than you have ever imagined!



This issue is by Linda Morgan-Clement, Chaplain and Director of Interfaith Campus Ministry. She enjoys talking with students about life’s biggest and best questions (see #1–#5 below). Feel free to visit at Overholt house, or email her at lclement.