

Soul-scape

Nobody knows what the soul is

It comes and goes

like the wind over the water-

sometimes, for days,

you don't think of it.

Mary Oliver

Thomas Moore says we connect with the soul through our complaints. The symptoms of emptiness, meaninglessness, disillusionment, loss of values, yearning for personal fulfillment, a hunger for spirituality - all these can alert us to our soul's true hunger. These symptoms reflect loss of soul. They tell us what we truly thirst for. Yet we can get what we want, and still not be satisfied. Soul is the spark of eternity within us - the restlessness which alone finds its rest in God.

Spend some time noticing the symptoms of soul within you.

Rather than being afraid of them, see them as God-signs, signals pointing towards your need for what truly satisfies.

Such dissatisfaction or restlessness;

any feeling that there must be more;

any attraction towards living with more freedom or courage;

all these can be signs of the gentle movement and invitation of God.

In religious language the inner life is called "the soul", and the art of knowing it, healing it and harmonizing its forces is called spirituality. Religion should encourage us to become more aware of this inner life and should teach us to befriend it, for it is the source of our strength and storehouse of our wisdom.

Gerard Hughes

Philip Carter is a retired Anglican Priest. He was the inaugural president of the Australian Ecumenical Council for Spiritual Direction (AECSD). He ran the Julian Centre in Adelaide, an independent and ecumenical centre for spirituality, from 1997-2009.

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What are the things you find life-giving, or freeing?

What sustains and nurtures you?

What or who encourages you to care for this deep part of you?

Where are you at home, accepted just as you are?

Where are you at peace, least fragmented, most yourself?

Where do you find most meaning, most hope?

As you do this, you will also get in touch with where you are not at home, most fragmented, not at peace.

What deadens or inhibits your soul?

What causes you to get stuck or dry up?

What only makes life drain further away?

When I talk about soul, I get in touch with the often ignored and largely hidden and most sensitive and precious aspect of who I am. "I am" is God's first gift to me: to be able to say 'I am' is God-like".

Alan Jones

Soul language is a way of saying that I matter, a way of saying "I am somebody"! It is a way of valuing the human person. It is evocative rather than merely descriptive language, calling us out as unfinished beings who are somehow made for more. We are *capax Dei* - we are made with an inherent capacity for God.

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