

THE
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We sent notebooks to
people, asking them to 'be
a reporter' and ask
friends, contacts, and
family the following
question:

What does
Spiritual Support
mean to you?

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To have my beliefs
listened to,
respected and
acted on

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Pets and places can be significant in a spiritual sense, too. Animals are often deeply sensitive to mood and, as many stories show, often grieve for their owners long after that person dies.

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In my own care, although a regular church goer, I didn't have a single visit from the vicar - and asking in the village that is the norm. Bill had a visit from the vicar the day before he died in hospital and he was very comforting and supportive. I know I could have asked for help if I had wanted it, but I think it is sad that pressures on their time makes the old fashioned pastoral care impossible

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I guess being an agnostic/atheist I would define it as anything in the emotional or psychological arena - emotional support is a form of spiritual support

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We seem to select our own
friends for support, finding
it easiest to discuss the
challenges with those who
have already been through the
same loss

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For me, it's anything that makes the person feel themselves - whatever gives them meaning.

Therefore, it should encompass anything that may be associated with the things that give an individual person meaning or a feeling of purpose

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As a Hindu, the word
'spiritual' carries a number
of meanings for me. I see
that very much as care for
my soul, care for
reincarnation, care for my
spirit, not my body,
meditation, calm reflection,
inspirational verse,
devotional verse and song

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For me it's about the ability to recognise fundamental needs and key to this is the recognition that you don't know what a person's fundamental needs are if you don't ask! It's the classic "you don't know what you don't know". So, for me, I need to be asked what I want, what I need, how I want to be treated/cared for and other people's assumptions, no matter how well intentioned, just won't do.

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For myself I hope for care which is preferably in my home, from familiar people, and understands the sort of person I am and have always been. My faith is important and I would hope that someone would pray with and for me, as happened recently to me while awaiting a 999 ambulance. In whatever way was still possible I would want to participate in decisions about my care.

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For me I suppose it's not about religion or faith as such but it's about being able to facilitate being listened to without judgment and supported unconditionally. If a believer of something then given access to whatever the religion/faith is, and if not this too is understood and accepted.

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*I think for me it's about
care focused on the
issues relating to an
individual's sense of
purpose and their own
significance - basically
care of their spirit*

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To me, it's inner well-being and happiness. It goes beyond physical health to a person's mentality and attitude

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As a Christian I would like to have support to read the Bible, other books that may provide input if I were ill. I would like people to ask about my faith and support me in a way that I requested.

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Sites of special beauty,
association, history or
awe can provoke the
response: 'now I've seen
it, I've done all I
wanted to - I'm ready to
go!'"

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To me it means having something bigger than doctors, nurses and family etc to rely on and talk to. It's a release from the burden of all that is going on with me and around me. It puts things in perspective and reminds me that there is something bigger than everyone out there.

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Care for the whole
person - body,
mind, emotions,
relationships,
hopes/fears, 'the
spirit'.

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I would not want to have a minister around if I were dying. My mother didn't either, but the hospice assumed that she did. If a person does have a faith, then their beliefs should be taken into consideration.

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*In some situations
the tragedy gets in
the way of spiritual
opportunities*

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Giving time to a person/patient to explore, provide if necessary, and understand their needs in this area if appropriate. It should not be "pushed".

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Faith is different things to everyone and I tell my son that 'we don't get through the week if we don't visit Jesus' house'

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Spiritual need
can be met by a
touch, a glance or
just 'being there'

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Encompassing all faiths,
denominations, and indeed
those who have no
faith. It needs to be
person centred, whilst
also maintaining an
effort to be inclusive
of family and carers'
needs.

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I'd like to feel
that there
would be
someone to talk
to now and
someone waiting
for me when I
finally make
my special
Journey

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Every living thing begins
grows, declines, ends.

Some lives are long, some
very brief. My living and
dying is part of that
bigger pattern. I take
comfort from knowing I
go through the same
process as billions of
others, people, plants and
animals.

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I don't think that it needs to necessarily be provided by a 'chaplain,' but nurses and doctors should also be equipped to provide the necessary support tailored to the individual's needs. I believe that someone can also find comfort in inspirational writings and poetry, and comfort does not always need to be found in religion.

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Simple one-on-one
ceremonies such as
baptism, consecration,
communion, anointing,
blessing, last rights
can give such comfort
- even to those who
seem to profess no
faith

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It means having
my head in a good
place, feeling
settled, peaceful,
calm and without
anxiety - whatever
the circumstances

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Having just celebrated the Jewish New Year with my family, most of whom are atheist, we talked about what we meant by spirituality. I think most people thought that there is something more than the body and there is out there some force for good and beauty that we try to tap into. Trying to find these values helps us to make sense of our lives.

A friend who lost her father last year has been overwhelmed by the sensitive, constant and appropriate support from her Buddhist Community.

They ensure that she has people she can turn to who know her story and are happy to see her informally at any time she would like.

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Being supported by
someone who
knows me,
understands the
process of dying or
end of life care but
not a health care
professional

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Taking into
consideration a
person's religious
beliefs if they
have any.

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Someone who
knows when to talk
and when to just
be there. White,
pink and fluffy

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My father received many visits from his minister, discussed his illness with him and planned his funeral, which made things a lot easier for us, as we are not church goers.

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Two Jewish friends lost their wives within a few weeks of one another after 50 and 60 years of marriage. For both of them the Rabbi was merely a person performing a task. The friends, while Jewish in tradition, were very secular and family centred. They both however, sat Shiva for their wives and feel slightly superstitious about their actions.

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I am a christian and attend church occasionally. I firmly believe and have told my vicar that I believe that one can be a christian and not go to church! A few raised eyebrows! I would like my vicar to be aware of how I am feeling and what I would like from him at any one time. Again no pressure. Home visits, communion if asked for, prayers if appropriate and just someone to be there if needed and to be able to share desires about dying and the funeral process. It really depends on the individual and it again shows how important talking about all of this enables appropriate intervention and support.

I knew a highly intelligent Indian professional who remained firmly atheist while dying, who was disconcerted by routine visits from the CoE priest and felt strongly about his vulnerability to such visitors whilst trapped in a hospital bed. On the other hand, most of us are terrified by the 'aloneness' of approaching death and need encouragement and acknowledgment.

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Non Religious but
support from someone
who is empathetic to the
needs of the dying, can
guide me during
difficult and emotional
times

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I would expect it to possibly take the form of a type of counselling or befriending. Someone to talk to mainly, who would help me make sense of the thoughts that surround you after a terminal diagnosis. It could also take the form of advice and support to ensure your wishes were carried out at the end of life, either in practical ways or in emotional ways.

Listen to me

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Tai Chi in hospices please

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My mother wasn't offered any formal support but had many detailed discussions with a senior member of the church.

The discussions were more around evidence of the after life and the concept of purgatory. She did a lot of reading around the theology and felt very threatened by her sense of having lost her faith. This lasted for several years.

The freedom to
pursue my own
values regardless
of any religious
beliefs

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A great friend of mine (not
a committed faith person)
lost a close friend in a car
crash. She had always
loved robins. At her funeral
a robin flew into the
church and perched on her
coffin. Spooky for some and
comforting for others.

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For me, it means thinking, talking and taking care of your inner soul and being - not physically but emotionally. Not just yourself but also others around you - loved ones, family, friends. It doesn't have to mean religion, but for me, it is about knowing there is a greater purpose to life; knowing that there may be some kind of afterlife and acceptance of who and what we are and have been in this world.

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Acknowledgment of the personality within the physical body, and the interconnectedness of both. Gentleness and kindness are spiritual qualities, not always accessible within formal religious or health professional sources although they can sometimes be found there.

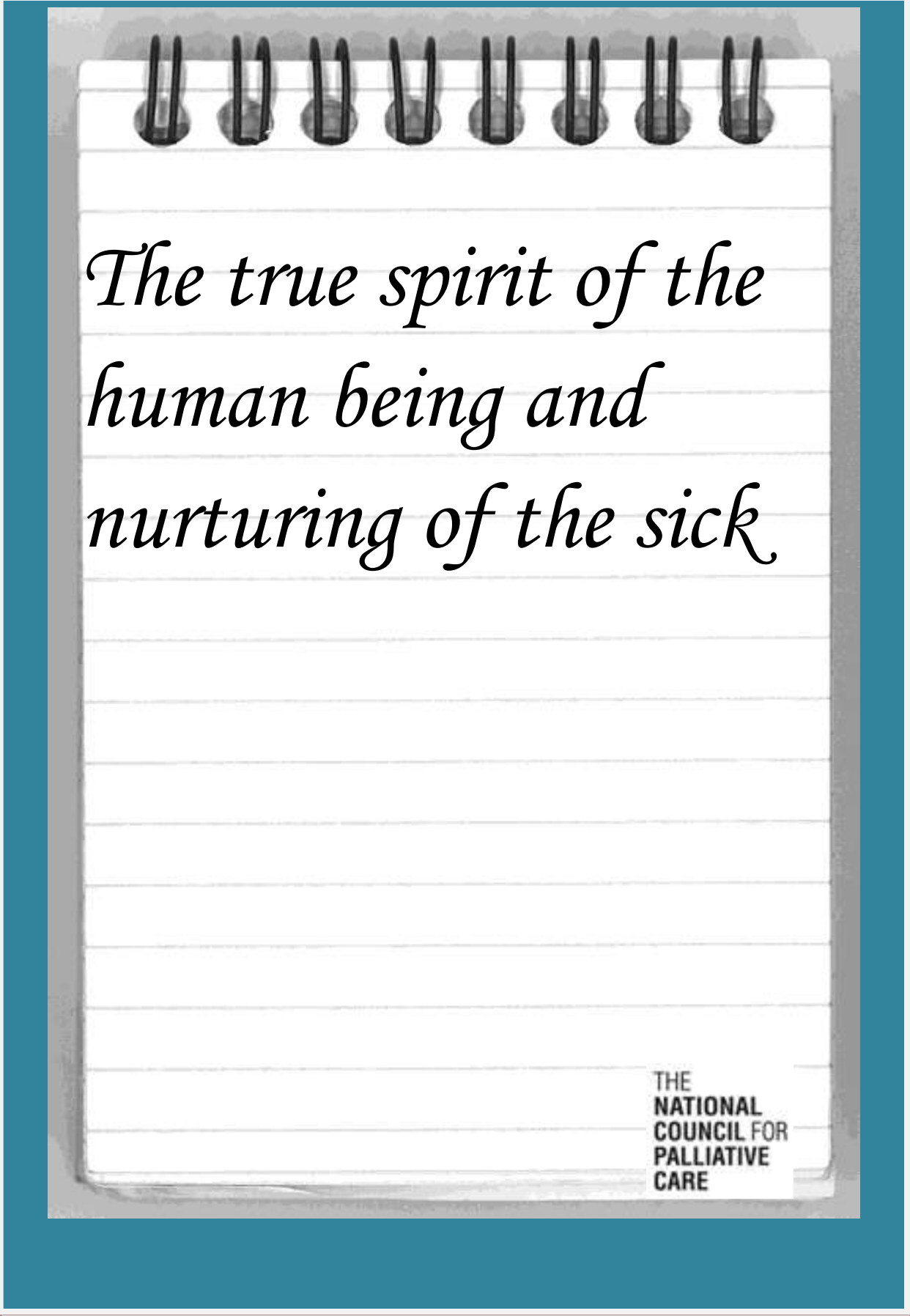
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Like a will,
maybe there
should be a
system where
you write
down your
spiritual
needs. This is
what I want.

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*It's not about rituals
like grace before meals*

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*The true spirit of the
human being and
nurturing of the sick*

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*Looking after a
person's needs,
cultural, physical
and emotional -
not just religious
needs*

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I went to a spiritualist church. It is too far away now to attend. A spiritual carer spoke to me there. They seemed very responsible. They were happy to give me comfort and lifted my spirit

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God is my No. 1 spiritual carer and I turn to him when in need. I do have a church visitor who comes once a week but I don't feel I can open up to her

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It is food for the soul. The support from the spiritual care which is included and organised by volunteers has been invaluable. People to discuss issues with and give me peace and support, and helped me develop a positive attitude

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I've never really
thought about it,
to be honest. What
does it mean?

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I don't know what spiritual care is but I think the people here are very good at looking after us, coming to talk to me and seeing if I'm all right

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