

# *The Spiritual Self Schema*

(3-S)

## *Development Program*

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## Theoretical Foundation Of The 3-S Program

Q: What is a self-schema?

Let's begin by defining how we are using the word "schema?"

In cognitive psychology, the word schema is used to describe a mental process for efficiently processing and organizing incoming information. Consider the following example of schematic processing:

*You are driving along the highway. You see flashing lights in your rear-view mirror. You immediately take your foot off the accelerator in readiness to brake.*

This automatic response is the result of a cognitive schema that most drivers have for what it means to see flashing lights in their rearview mirrors. Because of this schema, the driver doesn't have to stop and think "I wonder what those lights mean;" or recognize the vehicle, or see who is driving it. The driver's knowledge, beliefs, and past experiences with flashing lights on a highway are stored in long-term memory and are linked to emotional and behavioral response sequences. It is as if the flashing lights themselves caused the driver's foot to ease off the accelerator without any intervening conscious thought. It all happens seemingly automatically and in a split second.

Q: So what has responding automatically to flashing lights got to do with the "Self" or Spirituality?

Well, we also process information about ourselves schematically. This means that our brains store in memory feedback concerning our attributes and capacities that we get from various sources throughout our lifetime (e.g., from others, from our senses, our bodies), and it links this information to our emotions and physiology in a complex

interconnecting self-system that triggers automated scripts and behavioral action sequences that help us respond rapidly across situations. We don't have to stop and think "what kind of person am I" and "how would such a person respond?" Rather, cues in the environment trigger a schema that sets into motion an automated sequence of cognitive, emotional, and physiological responses. Let's look at an example:

If Pat believes himself to be an attractive and popular person based on prior 'knowledge' or experience, he is likely to perceive a stranger's stare as one of admiration. However, if Pat believes himself to be unattractive and unpopular, he is likely to perceive a stranger's stare as critical. Feeling admired rather than feeling criticized, of course, will elicit quite different thoughts and emotions, as well as potentially different behavioral responses. Furthermore, Pat will encode this stare and his response to it in his memory as further evidence of the accuracy of his beliefs about himself, thus further strengthening his self-schema for being attractive and popular (or unattractive and unpopular), which in turn will influence if and how he attends to and interprets future stares from strangers.

So in this simple example we can see how the same stimulus (a stare -- which, in fact, might have had absolutely nothing whatsoever to do with Pat) would be processed quite differently depending upon the self-schema that was activated. We can also see how a self-schema could perpetuate itself and could grow stronger and more elaborate with each activation.

Q: Do people have just one self-schema?

No, not only do we create and activate multiple self-schemas across our lifetime, any one of a number of self-schemas may be activated at any given time. For example, when we are in the company of our parents, our child self-schema may well become activated no matter whether we are 6 years old or 60; however, in the company of our own children, our parent self-schema takes over. Furthermore, the self-schema that is active at our place of work may be quite different from the self-schema that is active at home, and the one that is active when dating might be quite unlike the self-schema that is most active when we marry.

Q: What determines which one of our many self-schemas is activated at any given moment?

The self-schema that is activated is the one that is most accessible and easily triggered. The most accessible self-schema is the one that is most detailed and well-rehearsed in that particular context. Using our earlier example, if Pat has had many prior experiences in different situations that supported his belief that (a) he is attractive and popular (or unattractive and unpopular) and (b) that a stranger's stare is to be perceived as confirmation of his belief about himself, then over time his accompanying thoughts, feelings, and behavioral responses to a stranger's stare will have become quite detailed, finely tuned, and well-rehearsed, such that a stranger's stare now, seemingly automatically, triggers Pat's response. However, a stare from his own child or from his own parents or his boss or wife or girlfriend might activate quite different self-schemas, and might result in quite different thoughts, feelings, and behavioral responses. Clearly some self-schemas readily co-exist while others may temporarily dominate at the expense of another.

Q: Does this mean that each of us has multiple personalities?

No, not in the pathological sense. Indeed, for the most part, multiple self-schemas are extremely useful to us in our daily lives. Without our conscious awareness, they help us make rapid decisions and to behave efficiently and appropriately in different situations and with different people. They guide what we attend to, and how we interpret and use incoming information and they activate specific cognitive, verbal, and behavioral action sequences --which in cognitive psychology are called scripts and action plans -- that help us meet our goals more efficiently.

Q: If schemas are so useful, what's the problem?

There are several ways that schemas can become problematic. We are all familiar with the harm caused by using schemas to process information about other people (e.g., stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination); however, we usually don't see them as harmful to ourselves. Yet the schemas we have about ourselves can cause us suffering when we lose sight of the fact that they are no more and no less than cognitive constructs. In 3-S, we liken self-schemas to a high speed transportation system that can be very useful for transporting us rapidly towards our

goals, but, unless we are mindful what road we are traveling we could find that we are thinking, feeling, and behaving in ways that are at odds with our highest ideals. Let's look at a few examples:

*Pat has been smoking a pack of cigarettes each day for many years and now wants to quit having come to believe that addiction to any mind altering substance is harmful to himself and ultimately to his family and society. However, he is likely to have a very elaborate and well-rehearsed 'I am a smoker' or 'I am an addict' self-schema. This self-schema will include complex cognitive scripts and behavioral action sequences that lead to highly automated cigarette smoking. Even with the help of nicotine-replacement therapy, he may find that he still craves cigarettes and is unable to stop smoking. His inability to stop is not because he is weak-willed. On the contrary, his 'I am a smoker' self-schema has become connected to so many cognitive, emotional, and physiological links in his schematic self-system that almost anything can trigger the automated smoking behavior. Desperately wanting to stop smoking, Pat reaches for a cigarette, wondering why he is lighting it, and telling himself "I'm a smoker, that's just who I am, no use fighting it." We will examine the smoker's self-schema and what the smoker can do about it in detail in a separate section.*

Let's look at other examples of self-schemas that cause people to suffer and that may lead to behaviors that are harmful to self and others.

*Self-schemas that usually develop in childhood, like "I'm bad, worthless, or unlovable" or "I'm stupid or incompetent" set into motion extremely negative emotions and harmful behaviors throughout the individual's life, and no amount of reassurance from others seems to have any lasting impact. Such individuals may attempt to hide what they believe to be the fact of their 'badness' or 'stupidity' with additional self-schemas, some of which may be extremely destructive to self and/or others. They may even attempt to hide it from themselves, perhaps by creating self-schemas for perfectionism. However, this self-schema will inevitably become activated, perhaps in some contexts more than others, and it will trigger a chain reaction of thoughts, feelings, perceptions, and*

*actions that are likely to cause further suffering.*

Q: If my self-schema is not my true self, what is?

Many people equate their true self with their Spiritual self or Spiritual nature. How people describe their Spiritual nature differs from person to person, culture to culture, and will probably be influenced by an individual's religious beliefs. Some people may describe their Spiritual nature as the divinely inspired life force that not only flows through each of us, but ultimately defines us. Others may describe it as that which transcends ordinary human experience and connects all living beings. In the 3-S program, we do not presume to define it for other people, but we do begin with the proposition that our Spiritual nature is, at the very least, a source of compassion and insight that can provide each of us with a comfort, strength, and peace in our daily lives. It is often the case, however, that our multiple self-schemas, which create endless cycles of desire, craving, and suffering, are not only incompatible with experiencing and expressing compassion and insight, they also cause us to lose sight of our true nature.

Q: How can I experience and express my spirituality when faced with problems of daily life?

In the 3-S program, we view Spirituality as a precious, but often untapped, resource for coping with the problems of daily life. In the absence of a well-constructed Spiritual self-schema, our habitual self-schemas can obstruct our access to this resource. The goal of the 3-S program is therefore to construct a personal Spiritual path -- a Spiritual self-schema -- that will rapidly and efficiently provide access to our true Spiritual nature throughout daily life. Creating and maintaining this self-schema takes effort and practice. Vigilance is also required in order to prevent habitually activated self-schemas from intruding and transporting us away from our true nature. Care will also need to be taken not to confuse the self-schema that we will construct, as an expedient means of access, with our true Spiritual nature. As with any self-schema, it is simply a means to an end -- a process -- one that

utilizes both contemporary cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) techniques and religious practices that have been in use for over 2,500 years.

Readers interested in research on cognitive schematic information processing and on self-schema and self-regulation theories and therapies may wish to refer to the books and articles listed in the References section.



## **An overview of the 3-S approach**

*"I am often confronted by the necessity of standing by one of my empirical selves and relinquishing the rest ... the seeker of his truest, strongest, deepest self must review the list carefully, and pick out the one on which to stake his salvation."*

*William James, Principles of Psychology (1890-1950). NY:Dover Press, pp. 309-310.*

### **What is *Self*? ... What is *Me*? ... What is *my personal Path*?**

Who has time for such questions in the course of a day that requires going on automatic pilot in order to survive? The notion of a personal path now seems passé. Nowadays a more apt metaphor would probably be a high-speed super-highway that takes one rapidly towards ... what? -- happiness? ... misery? Yet more questions, with no time to reflect on an answer.

This high-speed mental "highway" that takes us rapidly through life may appear to be externally generated and perpetuated (i.e., by the fast-paced society in which we live). However, if we were to examine it more closely, we would find that it is constructed primarily of habitual patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving that uniquely characterize each of us as individuals. Psychologists refer to the underlying structure of these habitual patterns as 'self schemas.'

As described in the section Theoretical Foundation for 3-S, self-schemas filter incoming information, they differentiate and generate judgments about sensations (e.g., as self-relevant -- desirable/pleasurable, undesirable/aversive, or neutral), and they guide action, at the most primitive level, in pursuit of sensations that are desirable and avoidance of those that are aversive. Thus, through this self-schematic process, we create "the world" of our personal experience believing that this is "Me;" this is my "Self;" this is how "I" respond predictably and consistently to sensory contact with an otherwise unpredictable, impermanent external world.

It seems that once accessed, a habitual self-schema, just like a high-speed highway, can be extremely difficult to exit. If we were able to stop and examine it carefully, we may find that it is actually not taking us anywhere that is personally meaningful. That you are reading these words suggests you are someone for whom the word "Spirituality" has personal meaning. However, you, like many others, may be finding it difficult to experience and express your Spirituality in your daily life while being transported rapidly, automatically, through each day by your habitual self-schemas.

Even if you have found a Spiritual path that is capable of providing meaning and relief from suffering, chances are that you are finding it difficult to travel this path in the normal course of a day in which it has to compete with the high-speed highway of your habitual self-schemas. In comparison, your Spiritual path may seem like a narrow and overgrown trail through a thicket, difficult to access, and once accessed, slow to travel; its destination often hidden from view.

In the 3-S program, the concepts of "self-schema," "path," and "highway" are regarded as useful metaphors for the purpose of personal transformation. They do not, of course, reflect the complexity of the concepts of "the self" or "spirituality" as psychologists, philosophers, and theologians might discuss them (the interested reader is referred to the literature cited in the References). In the 3-S program, a Spiritual self-schema (i.e., the individual's Spiritual path) is viewed as a cognitive structure which, when carefully and elaborately constructed and maintained, provides the individual access to the experience and expression of what will be referred to in the 3-S program as, Spiritual nature. The 3-S program makes no attempt to define Spiritual nature for the individual. Qualities and characteristics attributed to it, such as a sense of interconnection with all living things and/or with a Supreme Being or Higher Power, will vary widely. However, in seeking some common ground, the program does begin with the proposition that individuals who seek to understand their Spiritual nature will, at the very least, view this intrinsic aspect of their being as wholly compatible with compassion, and wholly incompatible with causing harm to self or others.

Thus, the Spiritual Self-Schema (3-S) program seeks to help individuals

- to discover their own Spiritual path that leads to compassion for self and others and to relief from suffering;
- to make their unique Spiritual path increasingly accessible in their daily lives;
- to use their Spiritual path to cope with adversity and to change behaviors that cause harm to self or others.

The 3-S program has three phases ...

You may work on each phase sequentially, at your own pace.

**The goal of Phase 1 is as follows:**

to become aware of the readily accessed, high-speed path (or highway) one typically takes (the habitual self-schema) that defines how one experiences and expresses one's "Self" in the normal course of daily life, and to determine the compatibility of its automated pattern of thought, feeling, and behavior with the attainment of one's personal Spiritual ideals.

**The goal of Phase 2 is as follows:**

to construct (or strengthen) one's unique Spiritual path and to transform it into one that is easily accessed, well-maintained, and convenient for daily use. This path is referred to in the 3-S program as the "Spiritual self-schema;" it is a habitual pattern of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors to be developed during the course of the 3-S program in order to provide ongoing access to the experience and expression of one's Spiritual nature -- however that is defined by the individual.

**The goal of Phase 3 is as follows:**

to transform one's Spiritual self-schema into one's predominant or "habitual" self-schema, such that any previously traveled paths that led to suffering now fall into a state of disrepair from lack of use, and one's Spiritual path becomes wider, stronger, and available for use in every aspect of daily life, including coping with adversity and changing behaviors that cause harm to self or others.

To accomplish these goals, the 3-S program integrates cognitive-behavioral psychotherapy (CBT) with meditative practices common to a number of the major religious traditions into a non-sectarian, self-help program suitable for individuals of all faiths. Through self-reflection and mindfulness training, individuals become increasingly aware of those habitually activated self-schemas that prevent them from experiencing and expressing their Spiritual nature, and by developing and rehearsing new cognitive scripts and behavioral action sequences they construct a Spiritual self-schema (a personal Spiritual Path) that will provide ready access to the experience and expression of their Spirituality throughout daily life.

### Materials needed

You will need a 3-ring binder (not provided) labeled 'My 3-S Journal' to store your 3-S materials. If you prefer electronic storage of your 3-S records, create a new folder (labeled 3-S) on your computer's hard-drive. 3-S worksheets are available as hard copies at the end of this text. They are also available either by clicking on the name of each worksheet as it appears in the text (each worksheet opens as a new page). You may also access the Worksheets via a link on the About 3-S page. If you choose to proceed electronically, before you begin the 3-S program, it is recommended that you save all of the 3-S Worksheets to your hard-drive as HTML files, so that all the required code is retained. Then, when indicated in the text, open your HTML file and enter the information requested. When you have finished completing the Worksheet, save it to the 3-S folder on your computer and/or print a copy and file it in your 3-S Journal.

Glossary. Definitions of terms that may be unfamiliar are available by clicking on the term when it appears in the text (when viewed on the 3-S website. These definitions are also available in a glossary suitable for printing and filing in your 3-S Journal (available at the end of this document).

### What to expect:

Becoming aware of the activation of a habitual pattern of thinking, feeling, and behaving requires being motivated to change, being willing

to make a commitment of time, and actively participating in the program. Each of the phases, outlined above, requires you to:

Reflect -- this includes both cognitive self-reflection and behavioral self-observation);

Rehearse -- this involves mental rehearsal, using meditation and guided visualization, as well as behavioral practice (acting as if you are on your Spiritual path during the course of your usual daily activities); and

Record -- this involves keeping a record of your reflections, observations, and images, as well as a schedule for, and content of, your behavioral practice.

This process is intentionally repetitive. The more methods you use, the more likely you will be able to identify what "path" (schema) you are accessing at any given moment and to make the decision either to remain on that path or to access another. Initially, you will need to set aside 30 minutes each day.

Before you begin ask yourself the following questions:

Is my personal Spirituality compatible with compassion for self and others and with relief from suffering?

Am I willing to examine honestly the paths that I take habitually in daily life that lead me away from my Spiritual nature and toward suffering?

Am I willing to set aside time each day to construct, utilize, and maintain my own Spiritual path -- one that will facilitate the experience and expression of my Spirituality in my daily life?

If you did not answer 'yes' to each of these questions, this program may not be right for you.

If you did answer 'yes', please proceed to Phase I.

## **Phase 1**

The goal of Phase 1 of the Spiritual Self-Schema (3-S) development program is

to become aware of the pattern of self-schemas (or cognitive "super-highway") that one accesses habitually in daily life, and to determine whether it is compatible with being on a Spiritual path.

Those habitual patterns of thinking, feeling, reacting, and behaving that characterize how we experience and express our "self" in daily life are like a well-maintained, multi-lane, high-speed, super-highway -- fast, convenient, and readily accessed -- moving us rapidly, automatically, towards what --- happiness ? We may mistakenly believe that this superhighway of interconnected thoughts, feelings, and behaviors reflects our "true nature." We may even come to believe 'this is me; this is mine; this is my Self .' But is it?

It is so easy to lose sight of who we really are when we are being transported rapidly, automatically, mindlessly through each day ...

-- craving for and clinging to what we desire and do not have, and

-- aversion/hatred towards what we have and do not desire.

If we were to examine this cognitive super-highway more closely we would probably find that it leads only to further dissatisfaction. Yet, even with this insight, it is extremely difficult to exit.

### **Overview of Phase I: What to expect**

In Phase I you will reflect on the questions:

What personal "super-highway" am I on? Does it lead to the experience and expression of my "true" nature? Does it cause or relieve "suffering" (i.e., a general feeling of

dissatisfaction, or emotional distress, or any physical, emotional, or spiritual harm to self or others)?

As will be described fully below, in Steps 1 through 4 you will increase your awareness of the habitual patterns of thinking, feeling, reacting, and behaving (your habitual self-schemas) that were activated during the past week. Before taking each of these steps, it is recommended that you read over each step's self-reflections and corresponding guided visualization exercise. Then get comfortable in your chair, legs and arms uncrossed. Close your eyes and allow your thoughts to settle down by focusing your mental attention on the sensations produced around your nostrils as you breathe in and out normally through your nose. As soon as you feel centered and free from distraction, begin the self-reflection and visualization exercise. When you have finished, complete the indicated worksheet that is available by clicking on it when it first appears in the text, and proceed to the next step.

In Steps 5 and 6 you will use these skills to actually monitor the activation of habitual self schemas as they occur in your daily life. You will also determine which of your habitual self schemas is most incompatible with being on a personal Spiritual path.

In Step 7 you will prepare yourself for beginning the design and construction of your Spiritual self-schema by renewing your commitment to experiencing and expressing your Spiritual nature in your daily life.

Do not be surprised if you find these first few steps difficult at first. This is normal. If you persevere and continue working the program, the benefits of these initial steps will become clear.

**Before you begin, make a commitment to yourself... Go the 3-S Commitment Worksheet (provided at the end of this text), and indicate your commitment to constructing your Spiritual Self-Schema by placing an 'x' in each box. Print the form, sign it, and place it in your 3-S Journal. Review, revise (if needed), and renew, this commitment prior to beginning each phase of the 3-S program.**

You are now ready to begin Step 1.

**Step 1:** Increasing awareness of how you typically experience and express your 'Self' in daily life

**Reflect.** What is it like to be me? How would I characterize the kind of person I am as I go about my normal daily activities -- what kind of person do I present to the world? What kind of person do I perceive myself to be?

In this first step, quietly reflect on what it is like to be you while traveling your high-speed "super-highway" in daily life. How would you describe yourself when you are on "automatic pilot" or "cruise control"? (In a later step you will be listing these attributes/qualities on your Worksheet.) Reflect on the past week. It is easier to identify components of the "super-highway" you take in daily life if you reflect on a specific period of time. By reflecting on the week prior to beginning the 3-S program you can identify patterns that occur across a variety of roles and activities (for example, you might find that you are "a worrier" or a "perfectionist" regardless of whether you are alone, or at work, or with family and friends). By reflecting on the week prior to beginning the 3-S program, you will also have a point of reference from which to subsequently examine any changes you make.

**Rehearse** (visualization). It is often easier to characterize other people than to characterize ourselves, so in order to gain the necessary psychological distance, imagine that you are seeing an image projected on a movie or TV screen. You see an actor playing the role of YOU as you typically were last week when going about your daily activities, thinking, feeling, and behaving in the way you typically thought, felt, and behaved last week. In general, what kind of person do you see projected on the screen? What overall impression is the actor making. Consider what the actor would need to look like, sound like, behave like, to play the role of YOU as you were last week? Is the actor smiling? frowning? Do you see a person who is calm, happy, compassionate? Or, do you see a person who is anxious, sad, selfish? How does this person respond to the environment (to other people, places, things)? When the actor speaks, notice the tone of voice, the use of certain repetitive



phrases, and the body language, that are typical of how you communicate. What is the emotional tone of the actor's responses when things do not go as planned? Just allow any thoughts and images to arise without judging them.

**Record**: Go to the Habitual Self-Schema Worksheet provided at the end of the text. Complete the first section: Enter 10 habitual self-attributes -- predominant characteristics that an actor would need to enact in order to perform the role of you as you typically experienced and expressed yourself in your daily life during the week prior to beginning the 3-S program. (Note: you will be completing the remaining sections shortly, so keep this Worksheet available).

**Step 2**: Increasing awareness of your daydreams, cognitive scripts, and behavioral action sequences

**Reflect**. Where is this "super-highway" taking me? Does it transport me automatically, mindlessly, through each day, or does it allow me to be aware, moment-by-moment, of my true Spiritual nature?

Typically, we are unaware of the discrete moments in our life because our daydreams, cognitive scripts, and behavioral action sequences allow us to go on automatic pilot. Reflect on the nature of your daydreams -- when your mind wanders, where does it go, how long does it stay, how difficult is it to control? Can you detect any habitual paths that your wandering mind takes -- for example, do your daydreams trigger emotions that influence subsequent perceptions and actions? Is it a one-way path or is it bi-directional? Consider also your internal dialogue (cognitive scripts) -- those tapes that your mind plays repeatedly (e.g., your internalized "shoulds," "wants," and "don't wants"). What feelings do these scripts trigger that tend to influence your perceptions and motivate your behavior? Do these scripts encourage compassion for self and others? Do they encourage competition between self and others? Consider also your actions, what psychologists call behavioral action sequences -- those behaviors that routinely occur together in a set pattern such that they appear to be one seamless behavior rather than a number of discrete actions. Reflect on

the previous week and identify an occasion when your mindwandering took you on a journey down a high-speed path, or superhighway, and activated habitual cognitive scripts, emotional reactions, and behavioral action sequences.

*[Example: Pat becomes aware that while in his "professional identity" role, his mind habitually wanders to comparisons between himself and others, and triggers scripts that encourage criticism of self and others, perceptions of inadequacy, feelings of discontent, and specific behavioral action sequences in pursuit of what he perceives is lacking.]*

**Rehearse** (visualization). Visualize the actor playing the role of you once again. What daydreams, scripts and behavioral action sequences are typically activated in your daily life that the actor would need to memorize, choreograph, and rehearse repeatedly in order to give a flawless performance of you as you experienced and expressed yourself last week? Imagine that this actor is able to research the role by gaining access to your daydreams and repetitive thoughts, by carefully observing your mannerisms, postures, and movements, and by experiencing your seemingly automatic, "knee-jerk," cognitive and emotional reactions to certain environmental cues (i.e., people, places, things). What behavioral action sequences would be activated by these responses? Is the behavior motivated by desire -- wanting something you currently do not have, or do not have enough of? Is it motivated by aversion -- dissatisfaction with something you currently have, or a desire to avoid or end something you find unpleasant? Is it motivated by compassion for self and others? By watching the actor's performance, simply allow yourself to become aware, without judgment, of the daydreams, the cognitive scripts, the emotional response patterns, and the behavioral action sequences that seemed to be linked interactively, one to another, and characterize how you typically experienced and expressed yourself during the past week.

**Record**. Return to your Habitual Self-Schema Worksheet, and complete the next section. Remember that this worksheet is for your personal use and you will not need to share it with others. Therefore, be non-judgmental, but honest with yourself.

First consider your mind wandering -- what was the typical theme of your daydreaming last week when your habitual self-schema was being accessed (was it worry, fear, desire for something you want, aversion towards something you don't want, fantasy, memories of the past, anticipation of future outcomes, ... ?) How would you describe the general theme of your daydreaming last week?

Next list one cognitive script -- what did you tend to tell yourself last week (was your inner-dialogue encouraging you, was it chastising you, ...?) Describe a typical cognitive script.

Then list a feeling -- how did you typically react emotionally to whatever was going on (would you characterize a typical emotional reaction as agitation, depression, satisfaction, ... ?) Describe a typical emotional reaction experienced last week.

Finally, list a typical behavior -- what behavioral action sequence do you associate with the habitual self-schema that was active during the past week (was it a sequence of behaviors for making money, providing care to others, self-improvement, ...?) What specific behavioral action sequence do you associate with the habitual self-schema that was active during the past week?

### **Step 3:** Increasing awareness of the consequences of your habitual self-schema(s)

**Reflect.** Does my habitual path relieve, or contribute to, suffering? Mine? Others?

Sometimes when we go on "automatic pilot" -- after our mind wanders and our cognitive scripts, habitual emotional responses, and behavioral action sequences are activated -- we inadvertently harm ourselves or others. Consider the consequences of your own habitual ways of experiencing and expressing yourself last week that could potentially cause harm.

**Rehearse** (visualization): Visualize the actor once again, this

time engaged in one of the automated behavioral action sequences that was triggered in the past week by one of your frequently used cognitive scripts or emotional response patterns. By observing the performance as it unfolds on the screen, you are able to see the potential and actual effects of this behavior -- both on you (as portrayed by the actor) and on others involved in the scene. What do you see? Does suffering arise, or have the potential to arise? In you? In others?

**Record**: Return to your Habitual Self-Schema Worksheet, and indicate by checking the appropriate box whether there were any potential harms, to yourself or others, in taking this habitual path last week, and in maintaining its associated daydreams, cognitive scripts, emotional response patterns, and behavioral action sequences.

**Step 4**: Increasing awareness of the (in)compatibility of your habitual self-schema with the experience and expression of your Spirituality

**Reflect**. Does my habitual path lead to the experience and expression of my spiritual nature, or does it create a barrier to its expression?

**Rehearse** (visualization). Visualize the TV screen once again. Now a second actor is also visible playing the role of YOU as you are, or have the potential to be, when experiencing and expressing your Spiritual nature. What do you see? Imagine you are viewing a split screen so that the actor taking your Spiritual path and the actor taking your habitual path can be observed, side by side. Don't worry if you cannot get a clear image of your Spiritual path right now; you will be able to work on filling in the details of this image in Phase 2 of the 3-S program. At this point, simply allow any similarities and differences to emerge between the characteristics being enacted by the two actors. Do both actors appear to be playing the same or different roles? Are the paths the same or different? Are the paths accessed the same way? Are the paths' destinations the same or different? By observing the differences and similarities between the roles being played by the two

actors, estimate the percentage of the time last week that you were able to experience and express your Spiritual nature while you were engaged in your habitual, automated, patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving. An honest and careful assessment will allow you to progress more rapidly.

### **Record.**

(a) Return again to your Habitual Self-Schema Worksheet and enter the percentage you just estimated that you were able to experience and express your Spiritual nature while your identified habitual self-schema was being accessed last week. Save your completed Habitual Self-Schema Worksheet to disk and/or print a copy and file it in your 3-S Journal.

(b) Now go to the Reflections on the 10 "Perfections" Worksheet provided at the end of this text, and rate the extent to which the self-schema that was habitually activated during the past week (i.e., prior to beginning the program) enabled you to experience and express the 10 qualities that are listed on the form (from 0-100%). In Buddhist traditions these qualities are called the 10 perfections (Pali *paramis*); however, they are qualities that are viewed as ideals in most spiritual/religious traditions. They are provided here as examples of qualities or characteristics that might be used to describe an individual pursuing a moral, ethical, or Spiritual path, and to help you keep track of personal changes you make during your participation in the program. Use them to examine the compatibility of your habitual self-schema with your highest ideals, feeling free to add to, or modify, the 10 qualities presented. When you have completed the Worksheet, be sure to print and/or save a copy, and keep it in your 3-S Journal (or folder).

### **Step 5: The Self-Schema Check-In: Observing self-schema activation**

In Steps 1 through 4 above, you tried to identify the habitual patterns of an entire week. Most people find this very difficult. Indeed, the more one is on "automatic pilot" through life, the more difficult (and the more necessary), the task of self-monitoring will be. This next step will be somewhat easier because it will allow you to monitor your habitual

patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving as they actually occur in your daily life. However, this process requires commitment and diligent practice.

This step is extremely important not only because it will help you become more aware of the different self-schemas that are habitually activated in your daily life, but also because monitoring habitual self-schemas, as they occur, helps to interrupt their automaticity, which can provide you with the opportunity to turn off the "automatic pilot" and interject conscious choice. As described below, you will observe the automaticity of these self-schemas and their dependence on context, and you will determine the extent to which you are able to experience and express your Spiritual nature when they are activated.

You will be stopping very briefly three times each day simply to identify the habitual "path" (the self-schema) that you are currently accessing. We call this a Self-Schema Check-In. Before you begin, it is important to identify the most convenient time to do your check-in consistently, and to create at least two different "cues-to-action" (i.e., such as beepers, meal times, post-it notes in conspicuous places, and so forth) to remind you to stop and check-in with yourself.

### **Rehearse (practice) and Record.**

Three times each day for the next week, STOP whatever you are doing and conduct a Self-Schema Check-In.

A self-schema check-in is rather like stopping to check your map periodically while traveling on a complicated highway system to make sure you are going the right way. What you will be doing when you stop three times a day will be to identify the habitual self-schema that was active just before you stopped -- in other words, what "path" were you taking and where was it taking you?

Once you have identified the self-schema that was active before you stopped, give it a brief descriptive name (for example, it may be your professional identity, or your role as parent, spouse, friend, caregiver, or patient, or it may be a habitual thought or behavioral

pattern, such as victim, aggressor, failure, addict, critic.

Then, using the Self-Schema Check-In Log (available as a Worksheet at the end of this text), enter the name you gave this self-schema in the space provided on the Log, and rate (from 0% to 100%) the extent to which you were able to experience and express your Spiritual nature while this particular self-schema was being accessed.

If you find that you forget to do your self-schema check-ins three times each day, examine and modify your cues-to-action, and try again. Do not proceed to the next step until you have been able to conduct Self-Schema Check-Ins three times a day for at least one week.

### **Step 6:** Week-End Review

**Reflect.** At the end of the week, review your Self-Schema Check-In Log and reflect on the following:

1. what self-schema was most frequently activated during the week?
2. what self-schema was most incompatible with the experience and expression of your Spiritual nature?

When you reflect on the self-schema that was most incompatible with the experience and expression of your Spiritual nature, try to identify those daydreams (patterns of mind wandering), cognitive scripts, and behavioral action sequences that were associated with this self-schema during the week, together with the internal or external cues that activated them [for example, perhaps a habitual emotional response pattern, such as anger (an internal cue) activated a particular cognitive script (e.g., angry thoughts) as well as potentially harmful verbal or behavioral action sequences (e.g., angry words or actions)].

**Rehearse** (visualization). Visualize the screen once again, this time imagine that you are viewing the actor enacting the self-schema that was most incompatible with the experience and expression of your Spiritual nature last week. As you watch the performance, imagine picking up the remote control device and rewinding the tape, stopping

as soon as you can identify what triggered the activation of this self-schema. Next, allow the tape to continue playing until you can also identify both the cognitive script and the behavioral action sequence that ensues, seemingly automatically from those internal or external triggers.

**Record.** On your Week-End Review, record the self-schema that was activated during the previous week that was most incompatible with experiencing and expressing your Spiritual nature. Record the habitual patterns of mind-wandering, cognitive scripts, emotional response patterns, and behavior action sequences associated with it, and identify the internal and/or external cues that triggered it during the week.

### **Step 7:** Strengthening your commitment to your Spiritual path

**Reflect.** Reflect once again on the habitual self-schema that prevented you from experiencing and expressing your Spiritual nature during the week and consider how much you identify with, and are attached to, this habitual path. Does this path lead to the experience and expression of your true nature, or does it take you in another direction?

**Rehearse** (visualization). Visualize the actor on the screen once again enacting the self-schema that was typical of you last week. The actor is convincing the audience that this habitual self-schema with its cognitive scripts and behavioral action sequences is taking the audience to the real you. The actor concludes the performance by saying "*I am* [... your name...], and "*I am* ... this professional identity ... *I am* ... this role as parent, spouse, friend, caregiver, or patient ... *I am* these habitual thought patterns of victim, aggressor, failure, addict, critic ... and so forth]. Imagine now that you are using your remote control device again this time to freeze the action. As you do, you shout to the actor "STOP! THAT is not me. That is not my TRUE nature." As you observe the actor frozen on the screen before you, you realize that what the actor is actually portraying is actually not your "true self" -- it is merely a path accessed habitually in your daily life, an expedient means of being in



the world, that may actually be preventing you from fully experiencing and expressing your true nature.

**Record.** Review the Commitment you made prior to beginning Step 1. Are you still committed to creating for yourself an ethical Spiritual path (a Spiritual self-schema) that will help you experience and express your Spiritual nature in all your daily activities. Having now had the experience of completing Phase 1, you may wish to modify or add to the commitments you made previously on this worksheet.

In your 3-S Journal (or folder):

Print out and file your Habitual Self-Schema Worksheet, the 10 "Perfections" Worksheet, Self-Schema Check-In Log, Week-End Review, and 3-S Commitment. Refer to them as you monitor your progress through the program.

This ends Phase 1. In Phase 2 you will begin the process of constructing and/or strengthening your personal Spiritual path so that it is readily accessible throughout your daily life. When you are ready, begin Phase 2 provided below.

## **Phase 2**

The goal of Phase 2 of the Spiritual Self-Schema (3-S) development program is:

to identify one's unique Spiritual path and to transform it into a carefully-constructed and well-maintained Path that is readily accessible in daily life. This Path is referred to in the 3-S program as the "Spiritual self-schema"; it is a habitual pattern of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors to be developed during the course of the 3-S program that will provide increased access to the experience and expression of one's Spiritual nature -- as defined by each individual.

### **Overview of Phase 2**

In Phase 1, you became more aware of the paths you take habitually in your daily life -- the habitual self-schemas that take you seemingly automatically through each day creating the illusion that they reflect who you really are, when, in fact, they are actually preventing you from fully experiencing and expressing your true nature. In Phase 1, you also stated your strong intention to take a different path. In Phase 2, you will design and construct this path -- your Spiritual self-schema -- that will provide you with increased access to the experience and expression of your Spiritual nature in your daily life. Phase 2 has four sections, as outlined below:

#### **A. Designing the Path.**

In this section, you will be creating a "blue-print" for the design of the new Path. On this blue-print you will identify not only the anticipated ultimate destination of your Spiritual path, but also the Path's moment-by-moment destinations -- the Spiritual "ideals" that will serve as the building blocks of your Path. You will create cognitive scripts and behavioral action sequences that will serve to keep you consistently on your Path, and you will develop the guidance and support systems that you may need along the way. You will also create multi-sensory cues-

to-action that will help you to access your Path in daily life, and you will design the signs and warning signals that will provide feedback on your progress.

### **B. Acquiring the skills and tools for Path construction.**

In this section you will ensure that you have the personal skills and tools needed to construct and maintain your Spiritual path. In Buddhist terminology, these are called the 3 Trainings that make up the Noble Eightfold Path. These trainings are universal, non-sectarian, and appropriate for individuals of all faiths. The 3 Trainings are (1) Moral/ethical practice (*sila*) -- to travel a Spiritual path, one needs a code of conduct or foundation in ethics that above all seeks to do no harm to self or others, in speech, action, and livelihood; (2) Meditation practice (*samadhi*) -- to travel a Spiritual path, one needs the ability to direct and control one's own mental processes; this is accomplished through the practice of meditation, which requires appropriate effort, awareness, and concentration; and (3) Wisdom (*panna*) -- to travel a Spiritual path, one needs to acquire the insight into one's true nature that purifies the mind; such insight requires right thought and understanding.

### **C. Clearing the site.**

In this section, you will clear the site in readiness for construction of your Spiritual path by reducing the automaticity of any habitually-activated self-schemas that are incompatible with your Spiritual path.

### **D. Construction of the Path.**

In this section, you will begin construction by actual use of your new cues-to-action and by enactment of new cognitive scripts and behavioral action sequences in your daily life.

Phase 2 will require diligent and consistent effort, as does the creation of any habitual pattern of thinking, feeling, and behaving. When you are ready begin Phase 2a below.

## Phase 2a. Designing your Path

### Step 1. Stating the anticipated destination of your Path

**Reflect.** Before constructing your Spiritual Path, you will need to reflect not only on its anticipated ultimate destination, but also on its moment-by-moment destinations.

First, reflect on your Path's ultimate destination. Do you anticipate that this Path will lead to Enlightenment ... to union with God ... to Heaven ... to Nirvana? Next, reflect on your Path's moment-by-moment destinations. These are the qualities or characteristics that you will need to practice and attain in your daily life in order to reach the ultimate destination of your Path. For example, in Buddhist traditions, the 10 "perfections" (Pali *paramis*) -- generosity, morality, renunciation, wisdom, effort, patience, truthfulness, strong determination, selfless love, and equanimity -- are the moment-by-moment qualities practiced by those on the Buddha's Eightfold Path to enlightenment and liberation from suffering. Reflect now on the personal qualities or characteristics (e.g., Spiritual ideals) that you will need to practice in your daily life in order to reach the ultimate destination of your own Spiritual path? For example, on a moment-by-moment basis, will traveling your Spiritual path require experiencing and expressing qualities such as compassion and practicing personal ethical standards that prohibit harm to self or others?

**Rehearse** (visualization). As in Phase 1, imagine that you are seeing an image projected on a movie or TV screen. You see an actor playing the role of YOU as you are, or potentially could be, when on your Spiritual path, experiencing and expressing your Spiritual nature, moving toward your Path's ultimate destination. Try to get a clear image of the actor on the screen. See the actor revealing to the audience the qualities your personal Spiritual path requires. What would the actor need to look like, sound like, behave like, to enact these qualities? Do you see a person who strives to be generous, ethical, moderate, diligent, patient, truthful, determined, loving, and calm in every aspect of life -- including thought, speech,

emotion, action? What qualities or characteristics are required to travel this Spiritual path? What ultimate destination is in view? Allow any thoughts and images to arise as you visualize what it really means to travel your personal Spiritual path on a moment-by-moment basis in your daily life.

**Record**: Go to the Spiritual Self-Schema Blue-Print Worksheet provided at the end of this text, and in the space provided, enter the anticipated ultimate destination of your personal Spiritual path (e.g., Enlightenment, Heaven, Nirvana, Union with God, ...). Then list the moment-by-moment destinations of your Path -- those qualities or characteristics (e.g., the "perfections") that you will need to experience and express in your daily life in order to reach your Spiritual path's ultimate destination. (Keep this Worksheet available so that you can add information to it in Step 2).

**Step 2**. Creating cognitive scripts and behavioral action sequences to keep you on your Spiritual path during the normal course of the day.

Staying on your Spiritual path requires not only habitually engaging in thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that are compatible with the moment-by-moment destinations of your Path (e.g., generosity), but also, actively refraining from those that are incompatible (e.g., refraining from harming self or others in thought, speech, or action).

**Reflect**. What habits (or self-schemas) do I already have, and which ones will need to be developed, to keep me unswerving on my personal Spiritual Path?

In the design and construction of your new, more easily accessed Spiritual self-schema, you will want to retain those aspects of old schemas that have been useful to you in the past and discard those that have not. For many people, religious beliefs and practices are an integral part of their personal spirituality. If this is true for you, begin by reflecting on your religious self-schemas -- those habitual pattern of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors associated with your religion -- that in the past have facilitated the experience *and* expression of your spiritual nature?

Reflect on any existing spiritual/religious self-schemas that you use to experience *and* express your Spirituality (e.g., identification as "I am a Buddhist, I am a Christian, I am a Hindu, I am a Jew, I am a Muslim, I am a ..."), and the strength of your self-identification with your religious faith. Examine ways in which your current spiritual/religious self-schemas help you to, or hinder you from, experiencing and expressing your Spiritual nature (e.g., when they are activated do you experience and express your "perfections" -- the moment-by-moment destinations of your Path? Or, does this schema ever lead to shame, guilt, fear, hatred, selfishness, prejudice, intolerance, hostility, or increased suffering? Reflect now on those cognitive scripts and behavioral action sequences that should be retained. Some examples might include reading or reciting passages from particular holy books or scriptures, or engaging in specific religious practices and rituals. Also reflect on any cues-to-action that have been useful to you in the past, such as the ringing of a bell calling you to prayer or meditation, or similarly, a specific time of day or meal that reminds you to stop what you are doing and remember your Spiritual nature. Do not let the examples provided here limit you -- reflect on whatever is, or has been, a source of Spiritual inspiration for you personally. In your 3-S Journal, make a note of those that have been useful so that you can include them later as you continue to work on your "Blue-Print."

Second, what additional habitual pattern of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors do I still need to develop that will facilitate the experience *and* expression of my spiritual nature?

### **Cognitive Scripts (see glossary).**

You will probably need to change the content of your inner-dialogue -- the incessant chatter of your thoughts that probably jumps here and there seemingly with a mind of its own, often barely above the level of conscious awareness. If your inner dialogue is not compatible with your Spiritual path you will rapidly find yourself back on your old habitual path. We will talk more about how to regain control over your inner-dialogue in a later section on Clearing the Path.

For the purposes of designing your Path, you will need to reflect on the scripts you could write for your inner dialogue that are consistent with your Spiritual path. Then through repeated use of these scripts, the content of your inner-dialogue will change. This requires consistency and persistence. Reflect on what self-affirmations, mantras, or inspirational phrases you could use that are consistent with your own Spiritual path?

### **Creating new cognitive scripts:**

#### Affirmations:

The following is a simple example of a new script to use at the beginning of the day.

May my thoughts reflect my spiritual nature  
May my words reflect my spiritual nature  
May my actions reflect my spiritual nature  
May my perceptions reflect my spiritual nature  
May I be open and receptive to my spiritual nature.  
I am now experiencing and expressing my spiritual nature.

Each week, try replacing the words 'Spiritual nature' in the daily affirmation suggested above with one of your Path's moment-by-moment destinations (e.g., each week select one of the ten Spiritual "perfections" to include when reciting your daily 3-S affirmation). This will help remind you each day to embody that particular quality while engaged in your usual daily activities.

Mantras: Mantras are words or syllables, sometimes without conceptual meaning, that are chanted or intoned during meditation as a method of intuitively experiencing the mysteries they symbolize, and for helping to focus the mind (e.g., 'Om mani padme hum'). One may also use a word, such as 'love' or 'peace,' or the name of one's Spiritual guide, as a mantra that can be repeated (to oneself) throughout the day. *Metta* (loving kindness) meditation, which is described in more detail in Phase 3, also utilizes mantras (i.e., the repetition of phrases, such as

'may all beings be happy'). Other inspirational phrases: Create additional scripts for yourself that are compatible with your Path.

Integrating old compatible scripts. Construct a list of sayings or phrases that you have found useful in the past that have helped you practice your Spiritual ideals (e.g., those you identified earlier as part of an existing religious self-schema), and/or find poems or passages from scripture that are consistent with your Path's moment-by-moment destinations. You may wish to link to a website that provides daily affirmations consistent with your Path. Copy these sayings and passages into your journal, memorize them, and silently recite them during the day.

Abandoning old incompatible scripts . Refrain from any harmful thoughts. It is not enough to include thoughts that are compatible with your Spiritual path, you also need to actively refrain from thoughts that are incompatible and hinder you from reaching your Path's destination. This requires that you become aware of your thoughts, that you acknowledge those that are inconsistent with your Spiritual path, and that you very deliberately set these thoughts aside. What scripts will you need to abandon?

### ***Behavioral action sequences (see glossary)***

You will also need to create or modify behavioral action sequences so that they are consistent with your Spiritual path.

Creating new action sequences. Consider creating a new activity or ritual. For example, you might want to begin regular attendance at a place of worship or establish a Spiritual practice. Or you may want to structure regular periods of contemplation or meditation (as in Phase 2b). Or, you may want to do at least one act of kindness each day. Do not let these examples limit you; identify as many activities, rituals, and other behavioral action sequences that you can initiate immediately that are relevant to your own Spiritual practice.

Integrating new components into existing action sequences. To remain steadfast on your Spiritual path, you will need to transform everyday tasks into opportunities for the experience and expression of



your Spiritual nature. For example, when bathing, try to integrate a Spiritual cleansing ritual; when eating, integrate rituals such as candle lighting to symbolize the light of your growing Spiritual insight; or when exercising, include a Spiritual stretch (see figure at end of text or animation available on website). As with the 3-S affirmation, when doing the 3-S stretch, you could replace the words 'Spiritual nature' each week with one of the Spiritual "perfections" you are currently practicing in your daily life). While performing your routine household tasks, you could also offer assistance to others (e.g., helping an elderly neighbor with that task). Again, do not let these examples limit you; reflect on your own daily routines and the potential for integrating new components into these routines that will help you remain on your Spiritual path.

Refraining from harmful behavioral action sequences. In addition to creating new, and modifying old, behavioral action sequences, it is necessary to maintain the precepts of your personal Spiritual path by refraining from harmful behaviors. For example, the precepts of most Spiritual and religious traditions include refraining from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, false speech, and the use of substances that can distract you from, or cause you to become negligent in regard to, your Spiritual path (e.g., use of intoxicants). The design of your path will need to include such precepts.

Rehearse (visualization). Return to your image of the actor on the screen playing the role of YOU as you have the potential to be when experiencing and expressing your Spiritual nature, practicing the personal qualities (e.g., the Spiritual "perfections") required of your Path. Imagine, this time, however, that you have access to the actor's thoughts, emotions, and motivations. Now while seeing the actor enacting the specific qualities necessary for traveling your Spiritual path, you can also hear the actor's cognitive scripts, you can experience the actor's feeling state, and you can see each of the actions that comprise the actor's behavioral action sequences. What would you hear? What would you feel? What would you see?

Record. Return to your Spiritual Self-Schema Blue-Print Worksheet and complete the section labeled Cognitive Scripts and

Behavioral Action Sequences.

### **Step 3.** Establishing Guidance and Support Systems

**Reflect.** What support will be available to me so that I do not abandon my Spiritual path whenever I feel physical or emotional distress?

*Spiritual Guide.* Who is your principal Spiritual Guide (e.g., the Buddha, Jesus, the Prophets, Brahma, other Deities, an inner Guide, a respected Spiritual teacher ...)? Personify your Spiritual path in whatever way is personally meaningful to you so that you can turn to your Spiritual Guide when needed. During construction and use of your Path, silently recite the affirmation 'I seek refuge in ...(name of Spiritual guide)... ' or in times of uncertainty, you can ask yourself "What would ... (name of Spiritual guide) ... do right now?).

*Supportive text and/or Spiritual teachings.* What texts or Spiritual teachings will support you as you travel your Spiritual path (e.g., the Bible, Koran, Torah, Tipitaka, ...other...)? Keep these texts readily available so that you can refer to them frequently.

*Social support.* Who do you know that will support and encourage you on your Spiritual path? Maintain a list of names of individuals of like mind -- those whose Spiritual paths are similar to your own -- and who are available to you for support and encouragement.

**Rehearse** (visualization). Return to your image of the actor on the screen playing the role of YOU as you have the potential to be when experiencing and expressing your Spiritual nature moving moment-by-moment towards your Path's ultimate destination. This time imagine that the actor is reaching out for support. See the actor receiving the needed support from your Spiritual Guide, your Guide's texts and teachings, and your social network of people who share your Spiritual beliefs and practices. Visualize clearly the three levels of support that are always available to you on your Spiritual path.

**Record.** Return to your Spiritual Self-Schema Blue-Print Worksheet and complete the section labeled Guidance and Support.

**Step 4.** Creating your Path's points of access -- your "cues-to-action"

Your Spiritual path will never become as readily accessible as the other paths you take habitually in daily life unless it has as many points of access, and unless these points of access are used as frequently. For example, once weekly attendance at a religious service will not, by itself, keep your Path readily accessible to you as you go about your daily activities.

**Reflect.** How many points of access does my Spiritual path currently have, and how can I increase this number?

***Multisensory cues-to-action (see Glossary)***

Reflect on the multisensory cues-to-action that you could begin to use to remind you to access your Spiritual path. Examples in each sense modality include, but are certainly not limited to, the following:

***Sight*** -- Select several kinds of visual cues, such as reminders on post-it notes, pictures, statues, movies, books, or other visual materials that can remind you to return to, or stay on, your Spiritual path (also see 3-S magnet image provided at end of this text). Placing items in unusual locations can also be useful. For example, wearing your wrist watch on the "other" wrist will interrupt the flow of your habitual self-schema sufficiently to allow you access to your Spiritual self-schema.

***Sound*** -- Construct a list of songs or pieces of music that inspire you to experience and express your Spiritual nature; plan on listening to this music as often as possible, or hum or sing it to yourself during the day. In addition, use unexpected sounds in the environment as cues. For example, use the sound of a bell or wind chimes, or the song of birds, as cues to remind you to access your Spiritual path. If you live in a busy city, you might want to select a specific sound of the city to serve as a cue.

*Taste* -- An example of using taste as a cue is to identify one particular flavor in a drink (or food) that you consume several times during the day, and to use that flavor as a cue to experience and express your Spiritual nature.

*Smell* -- Incense can be a useful cue for some people. However, it may be difficult to encounter during the normal course of your day. Therefore, you might try placing a small amount of a fragrant herb (e.g., lavender) in several locations around your home or workplace, or in a pouch that you can keep in your pocket. When you encounter that scent as you go about your daily activities, take a moment to access your Spiritual path.

*Touch* -- Identify one or two tactile cues that you normally come into contact with during the course of the day to use as reminders to experience and express your Spiritual nature. If you have a pet, you might select the feel of its fur, feathers, or skin as your cue. A hug, given to or received from a friend or family member can also serve to remind you to experience and express your Spiritual nature. You might also try placing something that provides an unusual tactile sensation in various locations in your home or workplace so that when you suddenly come across it during the course of the day, it interrupts whatever automatic pilot is currently in control sufficiently for you to make a conscious choice to access your Spiritual path.

**Rehearse** (visualization). Return once again to the image of the actor on the screen enacting the role of YOU in daily life. This time visualize the actor using these multi-sensory cues-to-action during the course of a normal day as reminders to return to, and stay on, your Spiritual path.

**Record**. Return to your Spiritual Self-Schema Blueprint and enter your cues-to-action that will serve as multisensory points of access for your Spiritual path.

## **Step 5**. Designing your Path's Signs and Warning Signals

**Reflect**. Will your Path be clearly-marked so that you can

proceed directly towards your destination? Will it have a system of signs and signals so that you can avoid obstructions?

Signs. Reflect on how you will know that you are on the right Path. What signs will you look for along the way? For example, by continuing to stop briefly three times a day to conduct a Self-Schema Check-In (as in Phase 1), you will be able to determine whether you are on your Spiritual path or another incompatible path. By interrupting the automaticity of whatever self-schema is active, you will also be able to determine the extent to which you are able to experience and express your Spiritual nature while this self-schema is active. This will provide you with important data for making a conscious choice to stay on that path or access another.

Warning signals. Reflect on what has the potential to be an obstruction along your Path and what could cause you to detour from your Path. Buddhist traditions speak of hindrances, such as lust (greed, craving), ill-will (hatred, envy, aversion), anxiety (restlessness), sloth (laziness), and doubt. Members of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) use the acronym H.A.L.T. (Hungry - Angry - Lonely - Tired) to remind them of potential obstacles in the path of recovery that trigger alcohol or drug use. You may find this a useful acronym to use as a warning signal along your own Spiritual path. The hunger or craving for any sensual pleasure, the feeling of anger or any negative emotion, the need for the company of others in order to feel whole, and physical and mental fatigue that can reduce your diligent effort and obscure your view -- these are all early warning signals informing you that increased vigilance and/or access to support services are urgently needed. Other easy-to-remember warning signals, also borrowed from AA, are 'People, Places, and Things.' Become aware of any people in your life in whose company you find it difficult to experience and express your Spiritual nature, and be alert for any places or things that are likely to cause you to detour from your Spiritual path. By increasing your awareness of the hindrances -- the potential obstacles and detours along the Path -- they can be avoided or transformed. (You will have the opportunity to practice transforming these stimuli in Phase 3).

## **Rehearse (practice) and Record.**

1. Complete the final sections on your Spiritual Self-Schema Blue-Print labeled 'Signs and Warning Signals' . List some 'signs' such as use of the Self-Schema Check-In, that you will use to ensure you are on the right Path. Also list some early warning signals, such as HALT or People, places, things. Identify what you can use to warn you that you are currently on the wrong path, or that you are about leave your Spiritual path). Be specific. The clearer the signs and signals, the more likely they will be of help to you when you need them.

Note. While completing your 3-S Blueprint, be sure to include any practices and rituals that you identified earlier as having been helpful to you in the past. However, do not confine yourself only to previously-used strategies. Remember, as with any schema, the more elaborate the network of links that make up your Spiritual self-schema -- the more it "fills your mind" -- the more readily available it will be for activation during the course of your daily life.

2. Gather together all the materials you listed on your 3-S Blueprint (e.g., books, CDs, tapes, candles, fragrances, lists of activities, affirmations, cues/reminders, and so forth) in readiness for schema construction.

3. Continue the practice of stopping what you are doing three times daily to identify the self-schema that was active and to assess its compatibility with the experience and expression of your Spiritual nature. Record your observations immediately on a Self-Schema Check-In log, and save it to disk or print it and file it in your 3-S Journal. Be sure to review your check-in logs frequently throughout the program so that you can become aware of any patterns that emerge (e.g., persistent difficulty experiencing your Spiritual nature in a particular context). You will then be able to take appropriate action.

This ends Phase 2a. Proceed to Phase 2b below at your own pace.

## **Phase 2b. Developing the skills and tools**

### ***needed for Path construction and maintenance***

#### ***The "3 Trainings"***

*The 3-S program uses the "3 Trainings" of the Buddhist tradition to describe the skills and tools needed for traveling a Spiritual path because they are universal, non-sectarian, and therefore suitable for individuals of all faiths. Modify this list if your personal religious beliefs and practices suggest the need for learning additional skills and tools.*

### **1. Moral Practice: Establishing one's personal code of ethical behavior**

The foundation of a Spiritual path is moral practice. This requires doing no harm to self or others in speech, action, or livelihood.

**Right Speech.** Refraining from unwholesome speech (e.g., false or harsh speech, slander, gossip, or meaningless chatter) and engaging only in wholesome speech that is gentle and courteous, and engenders harmony among people.

**Right Action.** Refraining from actions that cause harm to self or others (i.e., the precepts against killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, false speech, and intoxication), and engaging only in wholesome actions that are beneficial to all living beings.

**Right Livelihood.** Refraining from making one's living in a manner that directly or indirectly breaks the precepts against killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, false speech, and intoxication, or in a manner that causes or encourages others to do so.

**Reflect.** Reflect on your own moral practice. Is there any difference between what you feel you "ought" to be doing according to the code of conduct of your own Spiritual/religious tradition, and what you are "actually" doing. Are the ethical standards that you have established for the conduct of your day-

to-day activities consistent with the Spiritual path you are designing and constructing? If there are any discrepancies, reflect on what changes need to be made.

## **2. Meditation Practice: Training one's mind to take the right Path**

Moral practice alone is not enough for the construction and maintenance of a Spiritual path. A Spiritual journey also requires the ability to control one's mental processes, so that wholesome thoughts become the foundation of one's moral practice. Through the practice of meditation one develops this capacity. The three steps in meditation training are:

**Right Effort.** Anyone who has ever tried to control the flow or content of his or her thoughts, knows that it takes enormous effort to focus the mind. Buddhists in the Theravada tradition have likened our ongoing stream of thoughts to a wild monkey in its forest home jumping here, there, and everywhere, seemingly unmanageable by those who are observing it, and disinclined to be tamed. Even those people who describe themselves as always 'in control' will likely admit that even they are not able to control the wandering of their "monkey mind." As you no doubt discovered while completing Phase 1 of the 3-S program, it is your wandering mind that at any moment can take you off on a journey of thoughts (cognitive scripts) and/or behaviors (behavioral action sequences), such that, before you know it, you have accessed a habitual self-schema, and you find yourself back traveling an old path (or superhighway) that is inconsistent with your Spiritual ideals, and is extremely difficult to exit. Strong effort is therefore an essential tool for the construction and maintenance of your Spiritual path and, as will be described shortly, is a tool you will learn to use skillfully in your meditation practice.

**Right Mindfulness.** The Spiritual path you are constructing, with its moment-by-moment destinations, requires that you are fully aware of each moment. However, in the course of our normal daily lives, we are usually more aware of the past or of an anticipated future



than we are of the present moment. Therefore, the skill of mindfulness will need to be developed. As will be described shortly, this is a skill you will be developing with your meditation practice by learning to become aware of the breath against the nostrils. The breath is used in the practice of mindfulness meditation because, as it passes in and out, it produces physical sensations in and around the nostrils that can be experienced on a moment-by-moment basis.

**Right Concentration.** Reaching the moment-by-moment destinations of your Spiritual path requires not only strong effort, and mindfulness, but also excellent concentration skills because you will need to remain fully aware of each moment as it arises and passes away. The practice of meditating on the breath will help you develop this important skill. When you begin to focus your awareness on the breath, you will find that your mind will soon wander away. You will learn to bring it back, but again it will wander away. And again you will bring it back, and again it will wander away. You will continue taming your "monkey mind" by gently, but firmly, bringing it back again and again each time it wanders away. Thus, you will develop your concentration and your ability to fully experience and express the moment-by-moment destinations of your personal Spiritual path.

There are numerous books available on the subject of meditation, many providing detailed instructions for beginners (see Reading List). What follows here are some general guidelines:

**Rehearse** (practice)

*Location.* Identify a suitable location in your home that is quiet and free of distractions and that can be used by you daily. If possible, this space should not be used by you for any other purpose. However, if this is not possible, select a space that you do not typically use for sleeping or relaxing (i.e., somewhere other than your bed or favorite armchair or any place where the risk for activation of habitual self-schemas is high).

*Time.* Identify a suitable time of day (preferably shortly after arising when your mind is quiet) that you can set aside specifically for the purpose of meditation. If you are someone with a busy schedule, it is

recommended that you awake 30-60 minutes earlier than usual to avoid activating habitual self-schemas by concerns that this time should be spent on other activities. Remind yourself that this time is special -- it is for you to practice the skills needed for your Path and to experience your Spiritual nature at increasingly deeper levels; it is therefore to be safeguarded.

*Posture.* It is recommended that you assume a posture that is not associated with your habitual self-schema, but rather, one that, with practice, can become strongly associated with the experience of being on your Spiritual path. The posture usually associated with meditation is sitting cross-legged on a cushion or mat on the floor, with back straight, and hands together resting palms up in your lap. However, modify this posture based on your own physical abilities, remembering that the posture should enable you to remain alert. Therefore, if you prefer to lie down, lie on your back on the floor, rather than on your bed; or, if you prefer to sit in a chair, sit with both feet firmly against the floor, and back straight rather than lounging to prevent falling asleep.

*Breathing.* If you are a beginner, it is recommended that you close your eyes. Begin by acknowledging your personal Spiritual Guide or your Spiritual path and its destination, in whatever way is meaningful to you. Affirm your intention to increase your power of concentration, take one long breath in and out, and allow yourself to settle down. Then, begin breathing **normally and naturally** through your nose. To help you focus, you may wish to say to yourself 'breathing in' as you breathe in, and 'breathing out' as you breath out. Breathing normally, continue concentrating on your in-breath and your out-breath, but now focus specifically on the sensations that arise and pass away as the breath makes contact with the inside of your nostrils, the rim of your nostrils, and your upper lip. Focus your attention just on this small area and become aware of the sensations you experience as the breath travels in and out. When thoughts arise, see if you can resist the desire to engage them. Using your strong effort, make the conscious decision not to follow them to wherever they may lead. As soon as you become aware that your mind has wandered, gently, but firmly, pull it back; return your awareness to the sensations created by the breath as it moves across the area around your nostrils. No need to be discouraged

when the mind wanders, this is normal. If you continue to have difficulty concentrating on the breath, see if you can concentrate better by counting ten breaths. For example:

When breathing in, think:

'Breathing in, one';

when breathing out, think

'Breathing out, one.'

and continuing ...

'Breathing in, two, breathing out, two.

Breathing in, three; breathing out, three.

Continue until you reach ten, and then begin again.

If your mind wanders and you lose track of the number you have reached, begin again at ... 'Breathing in, one; Breathing out, one ... ' and so forth.

You will repeat this pattern of focusing on the breath and becoming aware of and redirecting your thoughts throughout your meditation. This is how, with concentration and patient persistent effort, you learn to "tame the monkey mind" that jumps here, there, and everywhere, and you can become more open and receptive to experiencing the peace and serenity of your true nature.

You may want to begin by devoting just 10 minutes daily to your meditation. Do not attempt to sit for long periods if you are a beginner. However, before you begin, you will need to dedicate yourself wholeheartedly to using this time for increasing your '*power of concentration*'. Commit yourself to taking back the power you have given to the wandering monkey mind. Make the conscious decision to begin the practice of training it. Until your concentration skill is well developed, it is recommended that you do not use this time for prayer or reflection (set aside other times for these practices), but rather use this time to increase your ability to retain your single-pointed focus on the breath. By so doing, your capacity for focusing on your Spiritual path's moment-by-moment destinations throughout your daily life will increase markedly. As soon as you feel comfortable concentrating on the breath for 10 minutes, increase the time to 15 minutes, and so

on, until you can meditate for 40-60 minutes a day. Remember, by being consistent in every aspect of your practice you will also be creating a behavioral action sequence that will facilitate the seamless integration of your meditation practice into your daily life.

### Mental Imagery (visualization) as another Path construction tool

Multisensory mental imagery is another skill that will be extremely useful to you as you go about the process of building, maintaining, and using your personal Spiritual path. Construction begins with the mind's eye -- you form vivid, detailed, multi-sensory images of your Path and what it would look and feel like to travel this Path. By visualizing yourself, or another, as an actor playing the part of someone traveling your Spiritual path, you are conducting internal dress-rehearsals prior to "taking your act on the road." Continued access to your Path is also influenced by your mental imagery. You may have a well-constructed Spiritual path, but if mental images arise habitually that are inconsistent with the moment-by-moment destinations of this Path, it will not be readily accessed. Rather, the inconsistent imagery, and the sensations it produces, will serve as a detour that takes you almost instantaneously to a different path that is inconsistent with the experience and expression of your Spiritual nature. The 3-S program therefore offers frequent opportunity for the practice of visualization. In addition to the visualization exercises that accompany each suggested Self-Reflection exercise, there are guided imagery exercises available as written scripts provided at the end of the text. You may wish to record these scripts in your own voice to be played back during your practice. These guided-imagery exercises will be used primarily during construction and maintenance of your Path in Phases 2d and Phase 3.

### **3. Wisdom: Developing insight into one's true nature**

Although the practice of meditation, as described above, can be truly life changing, and can help you attain states of deep peace and tranquility as you construct and maintain your Spiritual path, it is not in itself the goal of most Spiritual paths. In most Spiritual/religious traditions, a Spiritual path ideally involves gaining increased insight into one's true nature. This is, of course, a lifelong process. Wisdom is

not expected to be gained prior to beginning your Spiritual journey. Rather, it (like the other two trainings in ethical conduct and concentration) is to be developed through diligent practice, day-by-day, moment-by-moment, as you proceed along your Path. In Buddhist traditions, the training in wisdom has two steps:

**Right Intention (also translated as Right Thinking).**

Gaining insight into one's true nature requires very strong intention and lifelong commitment to the on-going practice of the other two trainings (ethical conduct and meditation practice), and increased mastery of each of their steps. That is, engaging only in speech, action, and livelihood that cause no harm to any living being; and developing the effort, mindfulness, and concentration that are necessary for gaining control over one's own mind, and for gaining insight into the habitual mental processes that keep us all ignorant of our true nature.

**Right Understanding (also translated as Right View).** It is only when you personally experience reality within the framework of your own body that you come to understand the habitual patterns that have kept you trapped and in ignorance of your true nature. Once you have made a commitment to the first two trainings (to behave according to your code of conduct and to train your mind), you can begin the practice of insight meditation (*vipassana*) which will provide you with this personal experience. When you practice insight meditation, you take on the role of scientist methodically observing your subject -- your self -- as if under a microscope. You will have already begun this process in your daily meditation in Training 2 when you focused your mind and became aware of the sensation of the breath as it moves across the areas in and around your nostrils (*anapanasati*). However, when you are ready to practice insight meditation, it will be like increasing your microscope's strength such that you come to experience even the most subtle physical sensations. As you do, you become aware of the rapidity with which the particles (*kalapas*) that make up your physical form (and all form), arise and pass away, constantly changing. Through personal experience, you gain insight into the impermanent nature (*anicca*) of all mental, emotional, and physical form. You also become aware of your habitual reactions (*sankharas*) to the sensations in your body that are going on all the time, usually beneath the level of

awareness. Because we are ignorant about the impermanent nature of sensation, we react with craving when we perceive the sensation as pleasant; that is, we try to cling to it, wish it would stay, wish it would return. We react with aversion if we perceive it as unpleasant; that is, we come to hate it, wish it would go away, wish it would never return. Thus, these habits of craving and aversion to sensations that are actually arising and passing away with great rapidity keep us forever dissatisfied (*dukkha*). However, with insight meditation, one penetrates the unconscious mind (*anusaya*) to reveal these habitual, conditioned, patterns (e.g., what in 3-S we call the habitual self-schemas). By learning to observe sensations mindfully, with equanimity, as they arise and pass away, you are able to clear away the old habitual patterns of craving and aversion that lead to dissatisfaction. You also realize that the habitual 'self' to which you were so attached is an illusion (*annatta*), and you gain further insight into your true nature. As in a number of religious traditions which speak of the spiritual journey as culminating in an ultimate Union in which self merges or is abandoned, in Buddhist philosophy, through wisdom (*panna*) one understands not only that 'self' as a construct is no longer needed, but that it serves to keep us ignorant of our true nature. In the 3-S program, you will construct and use a Spiritual self-schema -- your personal Spiritual path -- is an expedient means to gaining insight into your true nature. This self-schema is to be abandoned once the ultimate destination or goal is reached. To learn more about Vipassana, it is recommended that you take a course. For example, a free 10-day course is offered by Vipassana Meditation Centers around the world ([www.dhamma.org](http://www.dhamma.org)). There are also a number of other possibilities for extensive training listed in the Resources.

This ends the discourse on the three trainings of the Buddhist tradition. Reflect on any additional skills and tools you might need for your own personal Path. In the next section, you will begin to 'clear the site' in readiness for construction.

## Phase 2c. Clearing the Path

Now that you know exactly where you want to go and how you want to get there moment-by-moment, and you have the blueprint, building materials, skills and tools you will need to prepare the site. This entails clearing away any debris, and making the surface suitable for construction of your Path. Imagine you are trying to build a road through an area that is dense with brush, rapidly spreading vines, and weeds. Unless you prepare your site extremely carefully, your road will soon become so overgrown once again that it cannot be accessed. Similarly, unless you prepare your mind for your new Spiritual self-schema, your old self schemas will quickly take over once again. Intention and effort alone are insufficient. You will now need to use your skills of mindfulness and concentration.

**Mindfulness**: Regaining control over the Path you take habitually.

Without your conscious awareness, the incessant chatter of your ongoing thoughts can quickly create a detour leading back to your habitual self-schema. Remember, it is into this undisciplined, untamed, cognitive setting that you are attempting to construct your new Spiritual self-schema. It is therefore essential that you prepare and discipline your mind in readiness for your new Path.

**Rehearse** (practice). The first step in disciplining your mind is to increase your awareness of the chatter -- the bundles of seemingly inconsequential thought snippets that float in and out of our conscious awareness. Try to spend just one day keeping this chatter in the foreground of your consciousness rather than in the background. Become aware of the complex cognitive, emotional, and behavioral network in which these thought snippets are activated. Become aware also of the links in this network both within and between your thoughts, perceptions, convictions, intentions, emotions, sensations, and actions. Notice how just a fleeting thought can lead to a replay of past

conversations or fantasies about future conversations or behavior which in turn have their own network of emotional and physiological links. When you increase your awareness of the intricate trail of activation through this vast network that is left behind by each seemingly inconsequential thought snippet, you will soon find that each and every thought, no matter how fleeting, leaves a trace.

Once you are aware that every thought has consequence, you will become motivated to exercise control over the incessant chatter. Of course this does not mean you will stop the chatter, but rather you will learn to direct it, and make it work for you, rather than against you. As it is your intention to follow your personal Spiritual path, you will not want to allow what you believe to be inconsequential mental chatter to inadvertently activate habitual selfschemas that are actually incompatible with experiencing and expressing your Spiritual nature. Therefore, during the next five days, continue the process of preparing the site for your Path by using each of the following strategies:

### 1. Subvocal narration of thought, emotion, and action.

*Thought.* Unless you are aware of the content of your "self-talk," you will be unable to prevent even a fleeting thought from triggering a cascade of physiological, emotional, and behavioral responses that may take you mindlessly away from your desired destination. Therefore, you need to monitor your ongoing thoughts, and as soon as you become aware that a harmful thought has arisen, do not attempt to block it, rather acknowledge it; say to yourself "a harmful thought has arisen in me." Only by recognizing it as harmful can you activate alternate links in the network, such that the harmful thought subsides. Similarly, when a beneficial thought arises, say to yourself "a beneficial thought has arisen in me" and, having recognized it as beneficial, it will be more likely to return.

*Emotion.* In addition, by immediately identifying an emotion that is arising, you have the opportunity to prevent the emotion from reverberating uncontrolled throughout the network, activating other links that are compatible with that



emotion. For example, the experience of anger quickly gives rise to angry thoughts, words, physical sensations, and actions. However, with mindfulness training you can become aware of an emotion as it arises (e.g., say to yourself 'anger has arisen in me'), and by so doing you can potentially interrupt the automaticity of your habitual pattern of network activation in response to this emotion. If at first anger seems too difficult to become aware of in this manner, begin with another emotion.

*Action.* Be aware that the chatter of your self-talk fills whatever is empty. Although the chatter may attempt to interrupt directed thought or directed action (i.e., mind wandering while engaged in intentional thought or action), it is unlikely to occur simultaneously. Therefore, throughout the day practice filling the emptiness with mindful self-statements. That is, silently, name what you are doing as you are doing it. While sitting, think "sitting." When standing, think "standing." When bending, think "bending." When walking, think "walking." Then gradually increase the precision of your narration to include more detail. For example, when walking, think 'right' as your right foot moves forward, and 'left' as your left foot moves forward. Narrate all your activities in this manner whenever you are not engaged in directed thought so that an awareness of each moment fills your mind rather than the uncontrolled chatter.

## 2. Thought stopping

When thoughts that are incompatible with your Spiritual path arise, shout (silently) STOP! or visualize a Stop Sign. Then immediately resume your mindfulness practice, as above, or, as below, interject a thought, feeling, or behavior that is compatible with your Spiritual path.

## 3. Purposeful interjection

Experiment with interrupting the network's trail of activation by interjecting an incompatible thought, feeling, or behavior. For example, when you become aware that a thought trail has led to a frown or a negative emotional state, try smiling, and see if you are able to change

the direction of the trail of activation.

#### 4. Choice Points

When on automatic pilot, it is easy to miss opportunities for changing direction. Experiment with increasing your awareness of all the available forks in the road; become increasingly mindful of the choice points that each moment brings, and that each and every one represents an opportunity for returning to your personal Spiritual path. All that is required is that you shut down the automatic pilot of your habitual self-schema and change direction. Experiment with doing this in daily life. Then, once you have chosen to return to your Spiritual path, see if you can maintain your awareness of this Path and its moment-by-moment destination.

#### 5. Object Mindfulness

Increase mindfulness by carefully examining an object whose properties you usually do not notice. For example, when you peel and eat an orange mindfully, you will become increasingly aware of it as a multisensory experience. You might try to pose, and then reflect on, specific questions such as the following that were excerpted from "Do You Hear the Orange Peeling?" -- which is one example of 3-S creative expression currently featured on the 3-S Reflections link:

- a) When I hold the orange in my hand in readiness to peel it, do I experience its weight, do I notice how my fingers curl spontaneously in response to its roundness?
- b) Does the peel's intricate texture capture my interest, or am I so busy chasing after my runaway thoughts that I fail to notice it?
- c) As I begin to peel it, do I notice whether its rind is thin or thick?
- d) Does the rind yield readily to my touch, falling off in large unbroken segments with just a flick of my fingers and wrist, or does it cling tightly to the fruit inside permitting only small pieces to be tenaciously picked away?

- e) Do the segments cling tightly to each other in a tight orb or are they easily loosed from their connective tissue?
- f) As I carefully separate each segment do I notice that enclosed within are hundreds of tiny membrane-covered sacs filled to bursting capacity with nectar?
- g) As I raise a segment to my mouth, do I notice the heavy scent of citrus in the air?
- h) Am I mindful of the way that teeth, tongue, saliva, movement of the jaw, all work together as I take my first bite?
- i) Is my first response to what is now in my mouth a judgment as to its quality, its sweetness, its juiciness?
- j) If I am not rewarded with sweet fruit, do I think it any less an orange?
- k) Do I understand that this orange co-arises with my sensory experience?
- l) Do I listen for what the orange can teach me ...

about itself?

about myself?

about non-self?

There are a number of excellent books available describing the practice, and benefits, of mindfulness practices. It is recommended that you include at least one on your list of schema construction materials (for suggestions see the 3-S Reading List).

This ends Phase 2c. Proceed at your own pace to Phase 2d below.

## Phase 2d. Construction of the Path

Using the materials you identified and collected earlier, and the meditation, mindfulness, and visualization skills you are continuing to improve, begin construction of your path during the coming week.

**Reflect.** Begin each day by reflecting on the strength of your commitment to constructing your Spiritual path, on the diversity of materials and tools you have at your disposal, on any potential obstacles that may arise during the course of the day, and on the methods you can use to overcome them. Reflect on the qualities (such as the 10 "perfections") that you identified on your Spiritual Self-Schema Blue-Print as the moment-by-moment destinations of your Path, and select one to focus your practice on today.

End each day by reflecting on progress made, how obstacles were overcome, and on any modifications needed in your materials, tools, or skills.

**Rehearse** (visualization). At the beginning of the day, following your daily meditation practice, do the Activating your Spiritual Self-Schema Guided Visualization exercise. Remember that visualization provides an important opportunity for mental rehearsal of your selected characteristic, and prepares you for your daily practice (see below) during which you will take on the role of a person with this characteristic. If you act 'as if' you are such a person, both in your imagery and in your daily activities, you will soon no longer be acting, but will actually become such a person.

### **Rehearse (practice) and Record**

a) Continue your practice of stopping 3 times daily to become aware of what self-schema was active and whether it was compatibility with the experience and expression of your true nature. Enter this information on your Self-Schema Check-In log, and review these logs frequently;

they can provide use important feedback as to your progress and any adjustments you need to make in the construction of your Path.

b) Continue your practice of daily meditation on the in- and outgoing breath, increasing the amount of time as appropriate to your skill level. You may wish to take a meditation course, (e.g., to learn vipassana or metta meditation).

c) Formulate a 3-S Daily Construction Plan detailing how your 3-S Blueprint will be used during the course of your daily activities today. Begin by entering the quality or "perfection" that you selected to work on today, and determine how and when you will enact it -- what cognitive scripts and behavioral action sequences will be required for the enactment of such a quality; what available support systems might be useful? Then throughout the day, while engaged in your usual daily activities, use your Plan and begin to act 'as if' you are someone with the quality you selected. Become an actor who is taking on the role of someone walking your Spiritual path enacting this quality -- experiencing and expressing its this moment-by-moment destinations. It is recommended that you begin your rehearsal in the context of people, places, situations, and activities that you know are compatible with you experiencing and expressing the quality that you selected to enact today. In Phase 3 you will have the opportunity to rehearse in more difficult contexts that you typically find incompatible with your Spiritual path.

Repeat this cycle until all of the qualities and characteristics that you identified on your Spiritual Self-Schema Blue-Print as moment-by-moment destinations of your Spiritual path have been incorporated into your daily activities.

### **In your 3-S Journal:**

Print and file your Spiritual Self-Schema Blueprint, Daily Construction Plan, and Self-Schema Check-In Logs. Also file copies of all written materials identified on your Blueprint. In this regard, you may wish to include a printed copy of the 3-S affirmation and 3-S stretch, both of

which can be modified such that you focus on one specific quality at a time by replacing the words 'Spiritual nature' with the quality selected. Also file a copy of any guided visualization scripts and instructions for mindfulness training and meditation. You might also want to maintain a list of reading material. A partial list for you to revise or add to is provided by clicking on the 3-S Reading List.

This ends Phase 2. In Phase 3 you will practice activating your elaborated Spiritual self-schema in an increasing number of contexts in your daily life, and you will learn how to use it to help you overcome difficulties. Proceed to Phase 3 at your own pace.

## **Phase 3**

The goal of Phase 3 of the Spiritual Self-Schema (3-S) development program is

to transform one's Spiritual self-schema into one's predominant or "habitual" self-schema, such that any previously traveled paths that habitually led to suffering now fall into a state of disrepair from lack of use, and one's Spiritual path becomes wider, stronger, and more available for use in every aspect of daily life, including coping with adversity and changing behaviors that cause harm to self or others.

### **Overview of Phase 3**

In Phase 1, you became more aware of the paths you take habitually in your daily life -- your habitual self-schemas -- that take you efficiently, but mindlessly, through each day creating the illusion that they reflect who you really are, while actually preventing you from fully experiencing and expressing your true nature. In Phase 1, you also stated your strong intention to take a different path. In Phase 2, you designed and constructed this path -- your Spiritual self-schema -- that provided you with increased access to your Spiritual nature throughout your daily life. Then, while engaged in your usual daily activities, you began enacting, one by one, those qualities that characterize the moment-by-moment destinations of your Spiritual path. Now, in Phase 3, you will practice accessing your Spiritual path in an increasing number of contexts, with a focus now on transforming those contexts that are usually incompatible with you being able to experience and express your Spiritual nature. You will also conduct routine maintenance to keep your Path readily accessible regardless of the context. Finally, you may wish to identify a specific problem to work on from the new perspective of your personal Spiritual Path. Application of 3-S to the problem of addiction and to coping with chronic illness will be provided as examples.

## **Step 1:** Increasing the number of contexts for Spiritual self-schema activation

Now that you have incorporated into your Spiritual self-schema each of the qualities you listed as the moment-by-moment destinations of your Spiritual path, you will increase the number of contexts in which your new Spiritual self-schema is activated. You will begin by activating your Spiritual self-schema not only in more and more contexts that are compatible with the experience and expression of your Spiritual nature, but also in contexts in which you may have difficulty remaining on your Spiritual path. For example, you may find that experiencing and expressing your Spiritual nature is difficult when in the company of certain individuals, or when you are in locations or situations, or engaged in activities, that trigger the activation of incompatible self-schemas. If this is true for you, you will need to discipline yourself to take back control of your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, rather than allowing yourself to be controlled by your automatic pilot's habitual reactions to perceived obstacles (real or imagined) that cause you to swerve mindlessly off your Spiritual path and onto old habitually traveled paths that lead to suffering.

**Reflect.** Reflect on those people, places, situations, and activities that are part of your daily life and that have been incompatible with you being able to experience and express your Spiritual nature. Reflect on which of these can be avoided during the next week, and which ones cannot; the ones that cannot be avoided will need to be transformed. (You will eventually also transform those that you now avoid. However, to make your task more manageable in the beginning, select only those people, places, situations, and activities that are usually incompatible with you remaining on your Path that cannot be avoided during the coming week). Reflect first on whether there are any early warning signals (your cues-to-action) that could let you know when you are in danger of veering off your Path. Then reflect on the cognitive scripts and behavioral action sequences that you can deploy to keep you on track. For example, you might want to have a particular prayer or passage from scripture ready to recite in such a context, or an appropriate self-affirmation (e.g., I remain focused on my Spiritual path; what would my (... Spiritual Guide ....) do in this situation?). Also



useful to have available is a well-practiced behavioral action sequence that you can employ whenever necessary to prevent you from activating old habitual self-schemas that could force you off your Path (e.g., focusing on the sensation of the breath as it moves across the area in and around the nostrils -- use this as your anchor). If the perceived "obstacle" is a person, this is an opportunity for you to cultivate the quality of loving kindness and good will (*metta*) by taking a few moments to fill your mind with compassion for this person and wishes for their happiness (for a brief overview of the practice of metta meditation click here). You might also consider checking in with yourself frequently to rate (from 0 to 100) the extent to which you are able to continue experiencing and expressing your Spiritual nature while in the context of this person, place, situation, or activity. Consider now all the various materials, skills, and tools that you listed previously on your 3-S Blueprint, and select those that are appropriate for keeping you focused on your Path in typically incompatible contexts.

**Rehearse** (visualization). As in Phase 2, imagine that you are seeing an image projected on a movie or TV screen. You see an actor playing the role of YOU as you are, or potentially could be, when focused on your Spiritual path, experiencing and expressing your Spiritual nature. Imagine that the actor is driving a vehicle along the Path you have constructed. An icy bridge comes into view. Visualize the actor becoming increasingly alert, slowing down, tightening his/her grip on the steering wheel, and using all his/her skills to control the vehicle until the danger is passed. Note that the actor does not permit any external stimuli to force him/her off the Path nor does s/he decide to leave the Path to take what may appear to be an easier route. Visualize now the actor engaged in your daily activities encountering one of the people, places, situations, or activities that you identified as incompatible with staying on your Spiritual path. Visualize the actor becoming increasingly mindful for the emergence of any habitual thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that may be elicited by these stimuli. Imagine now that the actor uses a self-affirmation, or recites a prayer, mantra, or passage from scripture that is reserved specifically for such an emergency. See the actor's breathing

slowing as s/he calms him/herself by focusing on the breath, and begins to view the person, place, situation, or activity with compassion rather than aversion. Now, having observed how the actor maintained control and, even in this context, was able to stay in the role of one traveling your Spiritual path, imagine that you, yourself, are the actor and, in your mind's eye, practice how you can maintain control when you encounter this person, place, situation, or activity today. Form a vivid image of yourself in this context and visualize yourself transforming what once triggered the activation of a habitual maladaptive self-schema into a welcomed opportunity for Spiritual development. Continue practicing this visualization until you are able to see yourself clearly experiencing and expressing your Spiritual nature even when in this context. You will then be ready to enact this transformation when engaged in your daily activities.

### **Rehearse (practice) and Record**

a) On your Transforming Obstacles into Opportunities Worksheet, enter those contexts (i.e., people, places, situations, and activities) that you reflected on above that activate old, habitual self-schemas that make it difficult for you to experience and express your Spiritual nature. Describe how you will prepare for, and ultimately transform, these contexts into ones in which you can continue experiencing and expressing your Spiritual nature. Refer to your previously completed 3-S Blueprint and identify the warning signals that will alert you to slow down and become increasingly mindful of, and in control of, your thoughts, feelings, and behavior. Describe the scripts you will use (e.g., self-affirmations, recitation of memorized inspirational sayings or scriptures) and the behavioral action sequences you will enact (e.g., deep breathing, visualization exercises, seeking support) and the skills and tools you will need in order to transform what was once perceived as an obstacle into an opportunity for Spiritual development.

b) Each day during Phase 3, when completing your daily 3-S Construction Plan enter the potential obstacle that you expect to encounter that day, and describe how you will use the materials, skills, and tools you described on your Transforming Obstacles Worksheet (or

if the obstacle emerges unexpectedly, how, in retrospect, you did, or did not, successfully transform it). As in Phase 2, become an actor who is taking on the role of someone walking your Spiritual path who can transform these obstacles into opportunities for Spiritual development. For example, when an encounter with a certain individual gives rise to feelings of dislike, impatience, or anger, you might try to view this person as someone who helps you to become mindful of your automatic thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that cause you to veer off your Spiritual path and onto a path that leads to distress. Remind yourself that by doing this you are not attempting to change that person in any way, nor are you judging the rightness or wrongness of your feelings concerning this person; rather, you are taking back your power over your own being, and are thereby preventing yourself from mindlessly activating an old self-schema while in this person's company. Continue in this way each day transforming perceived obstacles until you are able to prevent yourself from inadvertently, mindlessly, swerving off your personal Spiritual path.

c) While actively engaged in transforming perceived obstacles, continue your practice of stopping 3 times daily to become aware of what self-schema is currently activated and the extent to which that self-schema is compatible with the experience and expression of your Spiritual nature. Enter this information on your Self-Schema Check-In log. Refer to this log frequently; it will provide you with important feedback as to the usefulness of your warning signals, cognitive scripts, and behavioral action sequences, and provide you with the opportunity to make appropriate modifications to them. Do this each day, gradually increasing the number of "obstacles" you can transform.

d) Continue also your practice of daily meditation, increasing the amount of time as appropriate to your skill level.

**Step 2:** Assessment of progress: To what extent has your Spiritual self-schema become your habitual self-schema?

Now that you have constructed and practiced using your Spiritual self-schema in all your daily activities, even those that you

once perceived as obstacles to the experience and expression of your Spiritual nature, you are ready to determine the extent to which your Spiritual Self-Schema has now become your Habitual Self-Schema. To do this, complete a second Habitual Self-Schema Worksheet and compare it to the one you completed prior to beginning the 3-S program. Determine (i) the extent to which the qualities/characteristics you now list as descriptive of your Habitual Self Schema during the previous week are consistent with the qualities (e.g., the "perfections") that you listed as moment-by-moment destinations of your Spiritual path on your Spiritual Self-Schema Blue-Print; (ii) the extent to which the activation of your new habitual self-schema causes suffering to self and/or others; (iii) the extent to which your habitual scripts and action sequences now more accurately reflect your Spiritual nature; and (iv) the extent to which you are now able to experience and express your Spiritual nature in all your daily activities. Also complete a second Reflections on the 10 "Perfections" Worksheet, and compare it to the first. Which, if any, rating changed? Which, if any, quality/characteristic changed? Which, if any, quality/characteristic do you wish to add to your previously completed Daily 3-S Construction Plan so that you can work on increasing the strength of this quality in your daily life?

### **Step 3: Routine maintenance tasks**

Routine maintenance tasks include:

- a) a weekly review of your 3-S Blueprint to evaluate the continued appropriateness and effectiveness your listed materials, skills, tools, and support system. Revise your 3-S Blueprint as needed to keep your Spiritual path readily accessible throughout your daily activities.
- b) monthly assessment of progress as in Step 2 above.

This completes the three phases of the basic 3-S program. Those who wish to continue working at deeper level can repeat Phases 1, 2, and 3 and may wish to consider developing additional skills and methods for maintaining their Spiritual path (e.g., Resources).

## **Glossary of Important Concepts Used**

### “Behavioral Action Plan”

A series of behaviors that in sequence appear as one single action. Examples: a professional tennis player serving the ball; a smoker lighting a cigarette; ordering a meal in a restaurant. Each of these behaviors may appear as one seamless behavior, but each is made up of a series of discrete actions that have become seemingly automated through repetition. In the 3-S program, harmful behavioral action sequences will need to be dismantled and discarded, and new ones consistent with your Spiritual path will be constructed and practiced.

### "Automatic Pilot":

"Automatic pilot" is a term used to describe the experience of engaging in a sequence of behaviors seemingly without the need for any conscious thought on your part, just as the automatic pilot on a plane is programmed to take over the controls so that the pilot does not need to fly the plane. Although having an "automatic pilot" may seem very useful when we are engaged in routine tasks, it can rob us of our moment-by-moment awareness, such that realize that much of our life is lived on "automatic pilot" . In the 3-S program, you will increase your awareness of when your "Automatic Pilot" is robbing you of the benefits of mindfulness, and taking you away from your Spiritual path.

### “Cognitive Script”:

"Cognitive scripts" is the term used for the themes that flow habitually through our thoughts. These cognitive scripts can influence both our emotions and our behavior. They have been described as the tapes we play repeatedly in our heads -- those things we tell ourselves over and over again, often without conscious awareness. Some examples of cognitive scripts: I can't do anything right, this is too hard, no point trying; or I can do anything I set my mind to, it will get easier once I get started, I can do this. In the 3-S program, harmful cognitive scripts will be abandoned, and new ones consistent with your Spiritual path will be developed and rehearsed.

### “Cues-to-Action”:

A Cue-to-Action is anything that can interrupt the automaticity of one's habitual patterns thus providing the opportunity for more conscious choice. It is very easy to lose sight of your Spiritual path during the course of daily activities. Therefore, in the 3-S program, you will select and use cues-to-action to help you stay on track. These cues should involve all your senses. Examples include --sight (placing notes to yourself in conspicuous places); sound (bells, chimes, beepers); smell (the fragrance of specific flowers or herbs); taste (the flavor of specific foods); touch (the feel of specific textures). The experience of unpleasant physical sensations and emotions (e.g., anger, resentment) are also cues-to-action; they are components of your early warning system that alerts you to the need for action when you are in danger of losing sight of your Path.

“Moment-by-Moment Destination”:

Moment-by-Moment Destination refers to the intention behind each small step that you take on your Spiritual Path. Each moment-by-moment destination needs to be consistent with your Path’s ultimate destination. For example, if, as in the Buddhist tradition, the ultimate destination of your personal Path is enlightenment, then your intention with each step would need to reflect generosity, morality, renunciation, wisdom, effort, tolerance, truth, strong determination, loving kindness, and equanimity (the 10 paramis). In the 3-S program, you will examine the moment-by-moment destinations of your own Spiritual path from the perspective of your personal traditions.

## ***Metta* meditation**

The Pali word '*Metta*' is commonly translated in English as 'loving-kindness.' *Metta* signifies friendship and non-violence as well as "a strong wish for the happiness of others." Though it refers to many seemingly disparate ideas, *Metta* is in fact a very specific form of love -- a caring for another independent of all self-interest -- and thus is likened to one's love for one's child or parent. Understandably, this energy is often difficult to describe with words; however, in the practice of *Metta* meditation, one recites specific words and phrases in order to evoke this "boundless warmhearted feeling." The strength of this feeling is not limited to or by family, religion, or social class. Indeed, *Metta* is a tool that permits one's generosity and kindness to be applied to all beings and, as a consequence, one finds true happiness in another person's happiness, no matter who the individual is.

### The Practice

The hard work and repetition required of an individual engaged in *Metta* practice endows the four universal wishes (to live happily and to be free from hostility, affliction, and distress), with a very personal inner love, and by so doing, it has the power for personal transformation. Although serious practitioners of *Metta* meditation offer *Metta* for an hour or more morning and evening, you may wish to begin by offering *Metta* for just 10-15 minutes each day. You may do your practice as a formal sitting meditation or while walking (preferably without destination). You may also choose to integrate your *Metta* practice with daily chores.

To begin, take a few moments to quiet your mind and focus your attention on the experience of loving kindness. You will begin by offering *Metta* to yourself. If distracting thoughts arise, acknowledge them, make a mental note to return to them after your *Metta* practice, but quickly move them aside to maintain concentration.

Recite the following phrases to yourself at a pace that keeps you

focused and alert.

- 1 May I be safe and protected.
- 2 May I be peaceful and happy.
- 3 May I be healthy and strong.
- 4 May I have ease of well being (and accept all the conditions of the world)

Continue reciting the phrases in the first person.

Then when you are comfortable, try offering *Metta* to a beneficiary, someone who supports you, who has always "been on your side." Forming visualizations of this person while reciting the phrases can be helpful; for example, imagining this beneficiary as a child or grandparent, can assist in 'opening the heart.'

- 1 May s/he be safe and protected.
- 2 May s/he be peaceful and happy.
- 3 May s/he be healthy and strong.
- 4 May s/he have ease of well being (and accept all the conditions of the world) Next offer *Metta* to a loved one.

- 1 May s/he be safe and protected.
- 2 May s/he be peaceful and happy.
- 3 May s/he be healthy and strong.
- 4 May s/he have ease of well being (and accept all the conditions of the world)

Once your *Metta* flows easily to a loved one, begin to include in your practice one or more of the following categories of persons to whom you will offer *Metta*:

A close friend. A neutral person (someone you neither like nor dislike)  
A difficult person (no need to start with the most difficult person, but someone whom you have a distaste for) All beings, individuals, personalities, creatures (choose whichever word to describe all 'beings' that you please; it may be helpful to break up this category into subcategories; i.e., all men, and then all women, all enlightened ones,



and then, all unenlightened ones, all beings who are happy, and then all beings who are both happy and suffering, and all beings who are primarily suffering.

- 1 May s/he/it be safe and protected.
- 2 May s/he/it be peaceful and happy.
- 3 May s/he/it be healthy and strong.
- 4 May s/he/it have ease of well being (and accept all the conditions of the world)

Although one traditionally starts by offering *Metta* for 'oneself' and ends by offering *Metta* to 'all beings,' please do not expect to be able immediately to offer these phrases to all beings from the onset of your practice. We all struggle to offer this unconditional love to many people in our lives, and it is truly difficult to include everyone, though this aspiration is reasonable if we are committed to *Metta* practice. Between these two 'categories' -- oneself and all beings -- one should choose freely from any category or any number of categories. Categorical divisions serve only as tools to keep *Metta* from overwhelming someone new to the practice. They should not create restrictions within the practice once one gains familiarity with it.

In truth, any one individual may fit into a number of different categories. This ambiguity should be expected and embraced. Awareness of our feelings toward another is always the first step in converting this energy into loving-kindness. Noticing a feeling of aversion, or indecisiveness, when evoking the image of a particular person in your practice does not mean you are failing to offer *Metta*. Rather, you are leaping forward in your practice. According to Buddhist teachings, the worst plague a human being can suffer is one that s/he cannot identify, or does not even know exists. Similarly, aversions (and cravings) that lie below the level of conscious awareness fuel habit patterns of the mind that inevitably lead to suffering. So, as you peel away the layers of self, allow any negative emotions to arise, so that you can actively replace them with *Metta*, a loving-kindness.

*May you be safe and protected.*

*May you be peaceful and happy.*

*May you be healthy and strong.*

*May you have ease of well being. (and accept all the conditions of the world)*

Resources for readers interested in learning more about *Metta*:

*Metta. The Philosophy and Practice of Universal Love* by Acharya Buddharakkhita (1989). The Wheel Publication No. 365/366. Sri Lanka, Buddhist Publication Society (Available on-line at

<http://www.accesstoinight.org/lib/bps/wheels/wheel365.html>).

*Loving-Kindness. The Revolutionary Art of Happiness* by Sharon Salzberg (1995). Boston: Shambhala.

## **Guided Visualization**

The following recommendations apply to all 3-S meditations and guided visualization scripts:

Audiotape the guided visualizations using the scripts provided, and then listen to your taped recording daily or at the frequency recommended.

Time: Select a time when you will not be disturbed.

Place: Select a location that is quiet and free of distractions. If possible, create a meditation area that you use specifically for your practice.

Position: Loosen any tight-fitting clothing. Choose the sitting position that is right for you. If you are able, sit on the floor in a crossed-legged position (e.g., right foot on or next to left thigh, left foot on or next to right thigh) with left hand resting palm up on your lap and right hand resting palm up in your left hand. If you prefer, sit upright in a chair, with legs uncrossed and hands resting on your thighs. If you prefer to lie down, lie on the floor on your back. Whatever position you choose it should facilitate remaining alert and focused.

### **Imagery Script #1:**

#### **Constructing the Path: Activating your Spiritual Self-Schema**

Assume your preferred position and take a deep breath; inhale as deeply as you can and, as you exhale, close your eyes. And now, with your eyes closed, take another deep breath, breathing in healing relaxation -- hold the breath -- and now breathing out any tension that remains. As you continue to focus on your slow, rhythmic breathing, allow yourself to relax more deeply. And as you allow yourself to relax, deeper and deeper, just imagine that right above your head is a light that represents your personal Spirituality. Give it a color. As you do this, acknowledge its source, its compassion and its potential for healing, and invite this healing energy into your body. Feel it enter

through the top of your head, feel its relaxing warmth as it moves down your forehead, relaxing the muscles in your forehead. Down now through your entire face and head and into your neck, as your head and neck now feel bathed in the light. Feel the healing light penetrating your shoulders now and feel the muscles letting go, relieving you of the heavy burden you carry on those shoulders. Feel the relaxation as it moves down your arms now and into your hands. Feel your arms and hands totally immersed in the relaxing light. Now visualize the light moving down from your shoulders into your chest, and into your stomach, and now into your pelvic region. Feel its relaxing warmth permeating your torso, relaxing all the muscles, and bathing all of your internal organs in its healing energy. The light is moving down now into your legs. Down, down, down your legs into your knees, your calves, your ankles, your feet, your toes. Feel the relaxation in your legs and feet now as they are bathed in the relaxing warmth of the light. Now spend a moment experiencing your entire body immersed in the healing light of your Spirit nature -- feel it penetrate every pore, feel it bathe every organ, feel it relax every muscle. Just allowing it to surround you and fill you with its peace and serenity. Reminding yourself that this peace and serenity is available to you whenever you need it.

When you are ready, I'd like you to imagine that in front of you is a television set. See the television screen in front of you, and imagine that you are selecting a channel to watch. Imagine that an image appears on the screen that you recognize. When you look carefully you realize that it is an actor playing the role of YOU as you typically experience and express yourself in your daily life. Examine the actor's performance carefully, without judgment. What does the actor look and sound like, what mannerisms and habits is the actor displaying that characterize you, what thoughts and emotions underlie your habitual patterns of behavior that you now see being enacted on the TV screen? Take a few moments to examine this image, then use your remote control to fade that image and change the channel.

Now a new image comes into focus on the screen. The image is of you. This time YOU are the actor, and you are playing the role of someone

who is traveling your personal Spiritual path, fully experiencing and expressing your Spiritual nature. Don't be surprised if you can't get a clear image right away. Just as an actor has to research a role thoroughly and dedicate many hours to rehearsing, so too will you need to research and rehearse what it means to be on your Spiritual path. Take a few moments now to study the role. What will you need to look like if you are on your Spiritual path? What would you need to sound like? What mannerisms and habits would be obvious to others? What thoughts and emotions would underlie the habitual behaviors required of your Spiritual journey? Take a few moments to capture the essence of the role you are to play. How does it feel to experience your Spiritual nature? Really feel what it is like with every cell of your body. Do you feel its compassion for you and for others? What thoughts come to mind? Are they thoughts of loving kindness towards yourself and others? What actions will result? Will they serve to prevent harm? Does the activation of this pattern of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors move you further along your Spiritual path?

Now reflect on the day ahead. Visualize yourself going about your daily tasks while remaining in the role of one traveling your Spiritual path. Create a clear image of the tasks and challenges ahead. Would you handle them differently if you were mindful of your Spiritual nature. Now resolve to rehearse your new role throughout your daily activities today. During your day become aware that you are thinking, feeling, and behaving as you would while traveling your Spiritual path, and seeing the world through the eyes of your Spiritual nature: with compassion and equanimity. If at any time during the day other roles intrude, simply close your eyes for a moment and visualize yourself changing the channel on the TV screen, letting that image fade and replacing it with the image of you on your personal Spiritual path. Every day, as you practice your imagery, and go about your daily life playing the role of someone on your personal Spiritual path, your performance becomes stronger and deeper, and soon you find you are no longer playing a role. Rather, you are that person who has decided to take a Spiritual path through daily life.

And now, still visualizing yourself on your Spiritual path, count slowly from 1 to 5. When you reach the number 5, your awareness returns to

your surroundings once again. You may notice a feeling of peace, knowing that in each moment of every day, the capacity to fully experience and express your Spiritual nature is always present within you.

[Counting... 1...2...3...4...5]

Open your eyes now, take a deep breath, stretch and continue on your Spiritual path.

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## Suggested Readings

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## WORKSHEETS

*(Note: Prior to using worksheets, make additional copies for use weekly or as recommended in the text).*

## ***COMMITMENT TO MY SPIRITUAL PATH***

1. I am committed to creating and maintaining a Spiritual path (my Spiritual self-schema) that has a strong ethical foundation that is consistent with doing no harm to self or others in speech, action, or livelihood.
  
2. I understand that investigating, and abandoning, old self-schemas and creating and maintaining a new Spiritual self-schema will require diligent effort, concentration, and mindfulness, and I am willing to set aside time each day (at least 30-60 minutes) specifically for this purpose
  
3. I am committed to gaining a deeper understanding of the cause of, and remedy for, my own suffering, and I intend to work hard to discipline my mind to stay on my Spiritual path.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Upon completion of Phase 1, review the commitments above, and place a check in the box on the right to indicate your continued commitment to your Spiritual path.

Write any additional commitments below:

## HABITUAL SELF SCHEMA WORKSHEET

Reflect on the past week and, in the spaces below, list the primary qualities/characteristics of your habitually activated 'self-schema' -- i.e., how would you describe the kind of person you were last week when you went on 'auto pilot' traveling whatever path (or "super-highway") that prevented you from accessing your spiritual path

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

**Reflect on the qualities listed above, and list at least one associated:**

*Daydream (theme of mind-wandering)*

---

*Thought (script/internal dialogue)*

---

*Feeling (emotional reaction)*

---

*Behavior (action sequence)*

---

**Did this auto pilot have the potential  
to cause suffering?**

**To Self  To Others**

**Rate (from 0%-100%) the extent to which you were able  
to access your spiritual path during the past week \_\_\_\_\_%**



**Reflection on the 10 "Paramis" (perfections) of a Spiritual Path**

For the Week Ending \_\_\_\_\_

*Reflect on the past week and rate (from 0% to 100%) the extent to which the self-schema that you habitually-activated during that time allowed you to experience and express the following "paramis" (perfections/spiritual qualities):*

Generosity	%
Morality	
Renunciation	
Wisdom	
Effort	
Tolerance	
Truth	
Strong Determination	
Loving Kindness	
Equanimity	
Other qualities associated with your spiritual self:	

## Self-Schema Check-In Log (Week of \_\_\_\_\_)

Enter cues to remind you to do Self Check-In 3 times a day	Cue 1:		
	Cue 2:		
<b><i>STOP THREE TIMES EACH DAY. Become aware of the self-schema that was most recently active. Give it a descriptive name, and enter it in the box. Then rate the extent to which you were able to remain on your spiritual path while that self-schema was active.</i></b>			
Day	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
<b>Sunday:</b>			
Name of active self-schema Extent (0-100%) spiritual	_____	_____	_____
<b>Monday:</b>			
Name of active self-schema Extent (0-100%) spiritual	_____	_____	_____
<b>Tuesday:</b>			
Name of active self-schema Extent (0-100%) spiritual	_____	_____	_____
<b>Wednesday:</b>			
Name of active self-schema Extent (0-100%) spiritual	_____	_____	_____
<b>Thursday:</b>			
Name of active self-schema Extent (0-100%) spiritual	_____	_____	_____
<b>Friday:</b>			
Name of active self-schema Extent (0-100%) spiritual	_____	_____	_____
<b>Saturday:</b>			
Name of active self-schema Extent (0-100%) spiritual	_____	_____	_____

## Week End Review

Week of \_\_\_\_\_

***Review your Weekly Self-Schema Awareness Log:  
Identify the self-schema that was activated during the past week  
that was most incompatible with being on your Spiritual path::***

**My most incompatible self-schema was:**

**Briefly describe habitual patterns associated with this self-schema:**

**Habitual daydream theme:**

**Habitual thought pattern (script):**

**Habitual emotional response:**

**Habitual action sequence:**

**Briefly describe internal and/or external cues that triggered the  
activation of this self-schema during the week**

**Internal cues:**

**External cues:**

## Blue-Print for Constructing a Spiritual Path

<b>3-S Worksheet: BLUEPRINT FOR CONSTRUCTING A SPIRITUAL PATH</b>	
<p><b><i>What is the anticipated <u>Ultimate Destination of your Spiritual path?</u></i></b> (e.g., wisdom, enlightenment, union with God)</p>	
<p><b><i>How is your Path constructed? Foundation = Morality- Do No Harm to Self or Others Paving Stones = 10 paramis/spiritual qualities</i></b></p>	
<p>1. Generosity 2. Morality 3. Renunciation 4. Wisdom 5. Effort</p>	<p>6. Tolerance 7. Truth 8. Strong determination 9. Loving Kindness 10. Equanimity Other:</p>
<p><b><i>What will keep you on your Path? (Traffic lanes = habitual thoughts/actions)</i></b></p>	
<b><i>Cognitive Scripts (habitual thoughts)</i></b>	<b><i>Action Plans (habitual acts)</i></b>
<b>Scripts to be rehearsed</b>	<b>Behaviors to be rehearsed</b>
<p><u>Self-affirmation/Prayer</u> <u>Song/hymn/chant</u> <u>Think about (and interact with) a 'spiritual object'</u> <u>Metta statements</u></p>	<p><u>Meditation</u>: Goal: 60 minutes daily <u>Mindfulness</u>: 3xDaily Self-Check-Ins <u>Exercise</u>: Spiritual Stretch: 1-2 times daily <u>Kind acts</u>:</p>
<p><u>Other (be specific):</u></p>	<p><u>Other (be specific):</u></p>
<p><b><i>Cognitive Scripts to be abandoned</i></b> (be specific)</p>	<p><b><i>Behaviors to be abandoned</i></b> (be specific)</p>
<p>(Worksheet continues on next page)</p>	

**Blue-Print Worksheet (continued)**

**Guidance and Support – Taking Refuge**

**Spiritual “Guide”** (write name here):

**Spiritual Teachings:**

Scriptures \_\_\_\_\_

Books \_\_\_\_\_

Videotapes \_\_\_\_\_

Audiotapes \_\_\_\_\_

**Spiritual Community:**

**Friends and family also on a spiritual path:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

**Community resources:** (example: places of worship, meditation groups)

Name and location \_\_\_\_\_ Meeting day and time \_\_\_\_\_

**How will you access your Path? (On-Ramps = Multisensory cues-to-action)**

**Sight:** e.g., ‘Who Am I? magnet \_\_\_\_\_

**Sound:** e.g., Chimes \_\_\_\_\_

**Smell:** e.g., Lavender sachet \_\_\_\_\_

**Taste:** e.g., Flavored tea \_\_\_\_\_

**Touch:** e.g., Prayer beads \_\_\_\_\_

**Signs** (that you're on your Spiritual path) e.g., high Spiritual experience/expression ratings on your 3 times daily Self-Schema Check-In:

**Warning Signals** (that you're not on your Spiritual path) e.g., the 5 hindrances -- craving, aversion, worry/agitation, sloth, doubt.

## Daily 3-S Construction Plan

Day \_\_\_\_\_ Week \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Each day, plan specifically how and when you will use the items listed on your 3-S Blueprint (a) to realize your moment-by-moment destinations (i.e., Spiritual "perfections" identified in Phase 2) and/or (b) to transform a selected "obstacle" (identified in Phase 3).

*Phase 2: "perfection" to be enacted today:*

*Phase 3: "obstacle" to transform today:*

Time	Meditation / Visualization	3xDaily Self Check-In	Cues to action	Cognitive scripts	Action sequence	Guidance /support
6 am						
9 am						
Noon						
3 pm						
6 pm						
9 pm						
Midnight						
3 am						

## **TRANSFORMING OBSTACLES INTO OPPORTUNITIES**

3-S Phase III: Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:**

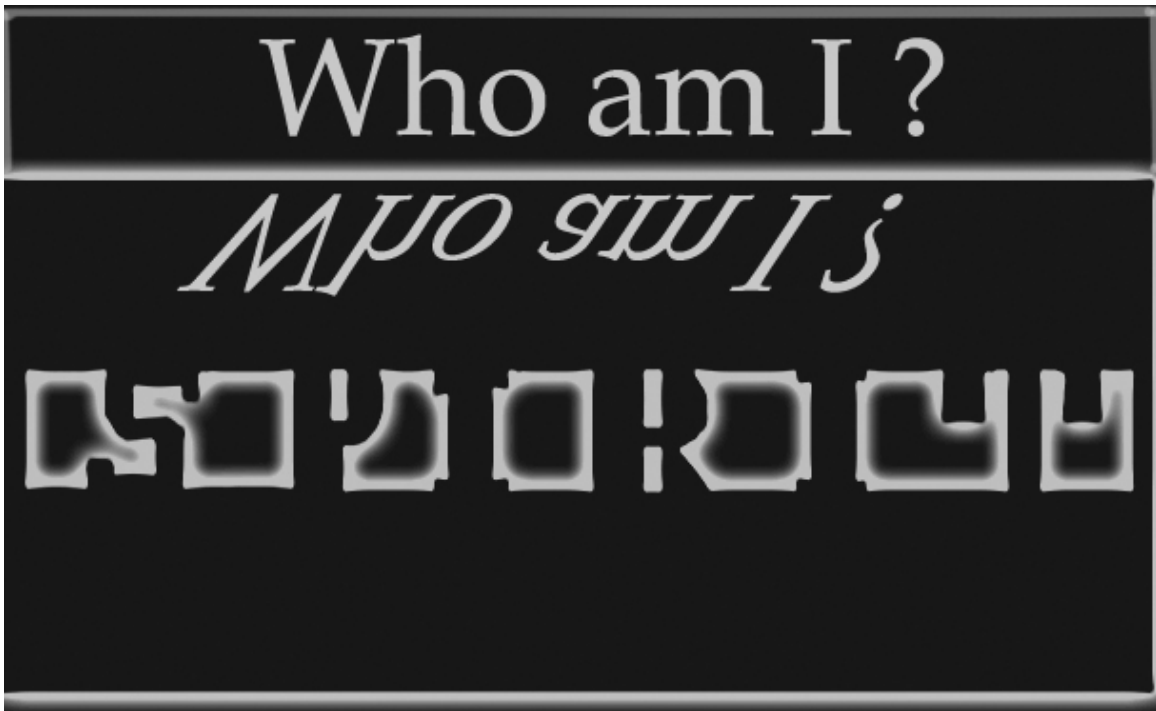
In the spaces below, list the people, places, situations, and activities in your daily life that activate habitual self schemas that are incompatible with attaining the moment-by-moment destinations of your Spiritual path (i.e., with enacting the qualities /"perfections" listed on your 3-S Blue-Print), and the strategies you can use to transform these "obstacles" into "opportunities" for strengthening your Spiritual Self Schema.

<b>"Obstacle" to be transformed</b>	<b>Transformation Strategy</b>			
	<b>Cues-to-Action (warning signs)</b>	<b>Cognitive scripts</b>	<b>Behavioral Action Sequences</b>	<b>Skills/Tools needed</b>
<b>People</b>				
<b>Places</b>				
<b>Situations</b>				
<b>Activities</b>				
<b>Other</b>				

## Sight Cue-to-Action: Refrigerator magnet

Stop and be mindful in order to perceive what is written in response to the question.

(cut out and insert into a magnetic holder and place on your refrigerator).



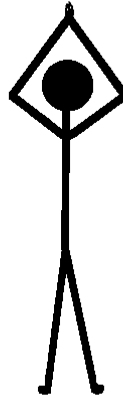


# The 3-S Stretch

## the 3-S Stretch

**#1: Reach your arms high above your head, press your palms together, and affirm:**

Today I take my  
Spiritual path



**#2: With palms together, press your thumbs against your forehead between your eyebrows, and affirm:**

Thoughts reflecting  
... insert spiritual quality here ...



**#3: With palms together, press your thumbs against your mouth, and affirm:**

Words reflecting  
... insert spiritual quality here ...



**#4: With palms together, press your thumbs against the midpoint of your chest, and affirm:**

Emotions reflecting  
... insert spiritual quality here ...



**#5: With palms together and fingers pointing away from the body, press the heels of your hands against your lower abdomen, and affirm:**

Actions reflecting  
... insert spiritual quality here ...



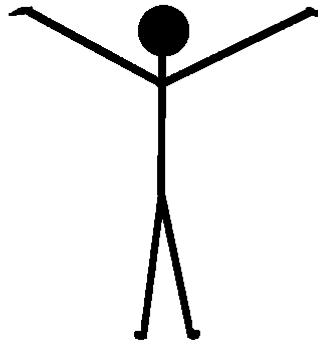
**#6: With arms outstretched and to your sides and palms facing away from the body, open your hands wide, with fingers outstretched, and affirm:**

Perceptions reflecting  
... insert spiritual quality here ...



**#7: With arms outstretched above your head, hands wide open, press your palms upwards towards the sky, and affirm:**

Open and receptive to  
... Insert spiritual quality here



**#8: Returning to the starting position, with your hands raised high above your head, press your palms together, and affirm:**

I am my  
Spiritual nature



Spiritual self-schema therapy, sometimes referred to as 3-S Therapy, was developed at Yale University School of Medicine by S. Kelly Avants, Ph.D., and Arthur Margolin, Ph.D. It is a therapy for addicted individuals who have contracted HIV or are at risk for contracting HIV, whose goals are to reduce illicit drug use as well as drug- and sex-related risk behaviors. In general, it aims to promote living a spiritual life aiding in their recovery . Spiritual self-schema therapy has a non-theistic Spiritual Self-Schema Development Program. Yale School of Medicine. The Spiritual Self-Schema (3-S) development program for the treatment of addiction and HIV risk behavior. 3-S Individual Therapy Counselor Treatment Manual.Â Several versions of 3-S therapy will be available. The current version specifically targets drug users. Users of heroin and cocaine were the focus in the development of this manual, due to the prevalence of HIV and other infectious diseases in this patient population; however, the manual is readily adapted for use with any addicted population. The 3-S Individual Therapy Counselor's Manual can be downloaded in its entirety as Adobe pdf files (see below).