



ACCSS Associated Chaplains in California State Service

Ted "Bear" Jackson, CDCR Representative

accss@accss.org

ACCSS Newsletter

March 2019

What is spirituality? My understanding is that everything has a spirit to it. The two-legged human beings, the four-legged animals, the ones that crawl and the ones that fly, the plants, our water, our ancestors, the wind as well as everything above and below us -- has a spirit to it.

It's said that the birds share the same spirituality as Native peoples do because they are born into a circle like we are born into a tribe, birds live in a nest which is a circle like a tipi or round house.

The natural world is made up of circles and cycles and roundness. The sun, the moon, the earth are circular. As a mother's womb grows full of life it also becomes round. All of life is circular and cyclical. The seasons of time are circular in movement, marked by the cycles of the sun and moon, the songs of the animal and plant worlds, and the cyclical ebbs and flows of the ocean and water ways. Some of us are taught culturally to greet the morning sun with a song and start our day in the same way all of creation does with honoring this cycle of life.

My understanding of spirituality is that everything and everyone breaths, whether it is like human beings do or not, and each has its own unique spirit.

Spirituality does not place value in the color of your skin, how many degrees you have or don't have, which language you speak, or whether you have a hundred pairs of shoes or none.

While we each have our own values and belief systems which may or may not be related to cultural or religious beliefs or doctrines, it's important to understand that we all share an underlying connection with one another and life that is reflected through spirituality.

We don't have to always agree on everything. In fact I think it might be dangerous if we pretend that we do when we don't. Differences are an essential part of the Creator's design. Having said that, respect for the spirit that lives within us all is so very essential not only to us personally but for us as a human species.

Spirituality is based on our shared reliance on our Creator and one another. Spirituality is what connects us, like breath. Spirituality is based on relationship and connection and the idea that we are all made up from the same stuff and our lives and futures are intertwined and connected with one another.

Wishing you and yours many blessings in this one life and one planet that we travel together.

Oyondusuk nia nanawenuk
All My Relations,

Ted Bear Jackson
Native American Spiritual Leader