

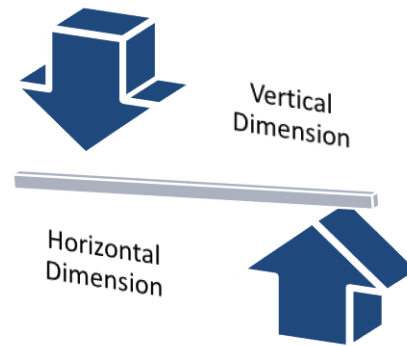
# *Spiritual Attentiveness*

*By  
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Most of us have driven a car sometime in our life. We know that while driving a car, the most direct method to control the car is the steering wheel. However, no one would consider the steering wheel the most crucial mechanism to drive the car. It is the engine that really powers the locomotion, while the steering helps navigate it. Similarly, in our life, our ego or consciousness is the steering wheel that helps us navigate inner and outer reality. However, it is our Soul that powers our life, its trajectory and destiny. This destiny is our spiritual purpose, what the Hindus call, our Dharma.

While it is important to be aware of our ego consciousness, our conventional ways to attending to our outer and inner reality, this only attends to our horizontal life. This helps us deal with the routine and the mundane dimension of life. However, to live a meaningful and spiritually purposeful

life, we need to cultivate Spiritual Attentiveness; the vertical dimension of our life. The question is – how do we tune into this vertical, spiritual dimension of our life?



Ninety percent of our wakeful life is devoted to the mundane concerns of our horizontal life; skating on the surface issues. So how do we deepen our vertical axis, our spiritual dimension?

Of course, the first place we may look at is our non-waking or sleep consciousness. It is during our sleep that we suspend our horizontal concerns and are free to experience our vertical or Spiritual dimension when they whisper to us in our dreams. When we honor our dreams, journal them and try to decode them, we get a glimpse into our Soul.

The next manifestation of our Spiritual life is in our day dreams or fantasies. They may be embodied in our art, writing or creative process and give us a window to our Soul. When Carl Jung was lost in his life after

break up with his friend and mentor Sigmund Freud, he turned to his inner world, his art and drawings (Mandalas) to guide him. This courageous dialogue with his unconscious is depicted in his recently published personal Journal, the Red Book (Liber Novus – the New Book). This Red book helped him reconfigure the trajectory of the rest of his monumental life, helped him to create a new narrative for his life journey informed by his soul; hence the New Book.

Others may look at their relationships as a mirror of their soul. We unconsciously choose friends and foes; lovers and adversaries that help us complete the jigsaw puzzle of our life. When we try to consciously understand our relational choices and our projections onto them, our spiritual dimension is enriched. We still celebrate these relationships but as an authentic encounter with another soul, not as a mere projection of our unlived light or shadow.

For some, their personality quirks or complexes offer a window into their soul's potential. When we understand, honor, and transmute our quirks, we are enriched as an individual and transform our personality problems into our spiritual potentials. A womanizer may learn to serve the women not exploit them.

When we attend to accidents and synchronicities of our life, they offer a glimpse of what is cooking in the depths of

our soul. If we honor them as meaningful, we are better able to align the horizontal with the vertical dimension of our consciousness.

Our medical and psychiatric symptoms are the final call of our soul. When we do not attend to the earlier signals, our health is recruited by the soul as a vehicle to alert us. Our heart problem may be the final call to attend to our feelings and relationships. Our thyroid problem may be the desperate attempt by our soul, inviting us to find our authentic voice.

To connect with this vertical, sacred dimension of our life, we need to cultivate spiritual attentiveness. This is best fostered by silent time, solitude, studio time, being in the present, journaling, attending to our dreams, yoga, mindfulness, and meditative practices. Centering prayer, spiritually informed readings, fellowship and attending to the sacred moments in midst of mundane concerns of daily life offer us a window into our Soul.

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Dr Bedi is a Diplomat Jungian psychoanalyst and a board certified psychiatrist. He is a member of the Royal College of psychiatrists of Great Britain, a diplomat in Psychological Medicine at the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of England, a Distinguished Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association. He is a Clinical Professor in Psychiatry at the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee and the President Elect, a Training Analyst and a faculty member at the Analyst Training Program at the Carl G. Jung Institute of Chicago. He is Honorary Psychiatrist at the Aurora Psychiatric Hospital and the Aurora Health Care Network. He has been a psychiatric consultant to several agencies in Metro Milwaukee. Presently he is the consultant for the Sexual Assault treatment center at the Aurora Sinai Samaritan Hospital, Dewey Center at the Aurora

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Trained in India, Great Britain and the US, he is interested in the emerging frontiers of Spirituality and Healing and the synapses of the Mind, Body, Soul and Spirit. He is author of the book, Path to the Soul, Weiser Books, 2000, Awaken the Slumbering Goddess: The Latent Code of the Hindu Goddess Archetypes, Booksurge Publishers, 2007 and the coauthor of Retire Your Family Karma, Nicholas-Hays, Inc. 2003, These and his other upcoming presentations can be previewed at his website [www.pathtothesoul.com](http://www.pathtothesoul.com)

Ashok Bedi has been in practice in Milwaukee for over twenty- five years and specializes in Adult Psychotherapy and Jungian Psychoanalysis. He regularly presents lectures and seminars in India, Great Britain, Ireland and USA on the topic of the Spiritual and analytic dimensions of treatment, healing and personal growth. Over the last several years, he has been the International Association of Analytical Psychologists liaison person for developing Jungian training programs in India and travels annually to India to teach, train the consult with the Jungian Developing groups at several centers in India including Ahmedabad &, Bangalore. He leads the

annual “In the Footsteps of Carl Jung in India” study group to several centers in India under the auspices of the New York Jung Foundation.

