

Clarifying what spirituality is by describing what it's not

Here are some clarifications about what spirituality is not that may help you to understand what spirituality is:

- Spirituality is *not* about trying to bend the universe to conform to your desires.
- Rather than striving to bend the universe to conform to your desires, spirituality guides you to be in tune with the great universal Will, which always moves toward the greatest good.
- Spiritual principles are *not* just tools for getting the universe to give you what you want.
- Spiritual principles are better used as tools for preparing yourself to receive and give to the universe the best of what you're here to give and receive.
- Spirituality is *not* about reducing God to a nice daddy who gives you what you want so that you can say, "I wanted a car, and He gave me a car!"

If you ignore something, does it go away?

Some new age teachers tell you that pretending something isn't there makes it go away. I used to have a cat who thought that if she couldn't see me, I couldn't see her. After all, she was only a cat. But you're not a cat; you're a human being with human intelligence and knowledge.

Yes, from the highest philosophical views, it is true that our beliefs create and limit the scope of our reality. This is why spiritual study can be so helpful in expanding our belief systems as well as the world as it manifests around us. And yes, what we focus on tends to expand so that, for example, if you want to get rid of a habit, you are better off focusing on positive results that would come from releasing the habit than to direct too much attention toward the habit itself.

Still, if you know that something exists and are just putting some positive frosting on top by pretending it is not there, you may be ignoring useful signs and information that would help you to make better decisions in your life. For example, choosing to ignore potentially uncomfortable aspects of your thinking or behavior may end up creating an environment of denial that allows those negative aspects to seep more deeply into your life, as they tiptoe by your closed eyes like harmful viruses sneaking past your immune system.