

Episode 0004

Practical Spirituality

Show Transcript



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Presented by Dr. Gala Gorman
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00:06

Dr. Gala Gorman: I personally don't believe that aspiring to a life of poverty is what's meant for us here. We are humans. We are meant to enjoy the spoils of being human.

00:20

Announcer: You've tuned to Awareness Addicts with Dr. Gala Gorman. Here, you'll find Sage Advice for taking inspired action. Awareness is the key. With this key, it's easier to navigate in the human world with all of its detours. It requires that we get to know ourselves intimately. If you choose to join us, this just might make you an Awareness Addict . . . alive, alert, awake and aware of life's possibilities.

00:48

Dr. Gala Gorman: This is Episode 4. In this episode, I am going to explore a term with you. You've undoubtedly heard of its components but may not have put them together. What is meant by the term "practical spirituality?" I'm Dr. Gala Gorman and this is just the sort of thing that we explore as Awareness Addicts. So, stick around and get your fix!

01:12

In the news, this was the economic times of India to put things in context. I found an article that talked about spirituality. I'd like to share a couple of things with you here because I think it is enlightening.

01:31

In the article it says, "To be spiritual you need no divine connection or platform." Kahlil Gibran narrated a true story in his Arabic autobiography. Gibran was seven-years-old, living near a town in Lebanon. On a hot summer day, he heard a sound outside his house. He saw a young man was being led for public beheading. The condemned man saw a butterfly on the path. He bent and picked up the butterfly and very softly placed it on a stone slab slightly off the road.

02:10 The sight left an indelible impression on the young Gibran. He wrote, “Knowing that soon he would be executed in public and his head would roll in the dust, yet that man had the overflowing compassion to lift a seemingly insignificant butterfly from the path and place it where it wouldn’t get trampled.”

02:34 In Gibran’s mind this is spirituality. And spirituality is achievable regardless of what religious affiliation you are associated with. Spirituality may be just having empathy, compassion, and extending ourselves to others. If you have been listening to me long enough, you know that we also are mindful about codependence. How do we do that in a way that is also honoring ourselves? Just a little food for thought today.

03:16 Let’s take a moment to develop awareness. This is something you can practice anywhere . . . anytime. Begin by noticing where your breath is landing in your body? Are you feeling your breath in your chest? Is it expanding your rib cage? Or, even your belly?

Just become aware of your breathing.

Now, we’re going to breathe intentionally. We’ll start by breathing deeply into our belly. Breathe deeply . . . expanding your belly. Notice how it feels for your belly to expand. Then, pull your abdomen in so that all of the stale air gets pushed out on the exhale.

Let’s do that again. Breathe in deeply . . . all the way into your belly. Expand your belly. And again, breathe out and flatten your tummy. Squeeze all that air out.

Next, we’ll move the breath up to our rib cage. Intentionally expand your ribcage with the breath. It may feel like your ribs are stretching out on both sides . . . or you may feel it expanding your back. Just notice how that feels. You’re

stretching your lungs to the side and creating flexibility in your ribs. Take another breath into your ribcage.

Now, let's go back to how you were probably breathing when we started this practice. Breathe into your upper chest. You can feel your breastbone raise and lower with the breath. Notice how it feels to take a shallow breath now that we have expanded the breath into our belly and rib cage.

We have sent a clear message to our brain and nervous system that we can take control. Let's use this feeling of empowerment to practice Aware Appreciation.

What is ONE BIG THING that you appreciate right now? And, keep this in mind as you notice more things to appreciate as you move through your day.

05:33 Have you heard of the term "practical spirituality?" If we're confused trying to differentiate between religion and spirituality, adding practicality to something that is oftentimes illogical can put us into a head spin. Let's try to make some sense out of it . . . shall we?

05:52 Let's start by defining practical spirituality. That is not so easy to do since there is no specific term, actually. Practical spirituality is an assembly of several terms. Let's start with spiritual. In the dictionary "spiritual" can be defined as, "of or relating to sacred matters." This is a concept that is up to interpretation because, as we heard, Kahlil Gibran saw the man picking up the butterfly as sacred. The butterfly was sacred to this man. Anything can be considered sacred, depending on the beholder. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Sacredness is in the eye of the beholder.

06:48 The other component of this practical spirituality concept is the term “practical.” In the dictionary practical is, “capable of being put to use or account.” There are a few ways we use the word practical but practicality would mean that this is actually going to be put to good use in our lives. Practical spirituality, from my perspective, means that we are going to take these spiritual practices and apply them in our lives. They are going to make our lives better.

07:33 One of the things that hangs us up here is the thought that, “When we are spiritual, we are supposed to let go any of our human ambitions.” One of the people that you might think about when you are contemplating this is St. Francis of Assisi. It is believed that in about the year 1209, no one is around to know for sure that it was 1209, but it is believed that it was about the year 1209.

08:06 Francis heard a sermon that changed his life forever. The sermon was about Matthew 10:9, in which Christ tells his followers they should go forth and proclaim that the Kingdom of Heaven was upon them, that they should take no money with them, nor even a walking stick or shoes for the road. At this point, Francis was inspired to devote himself to a life of poverty. It is interesting because St. Francis as a concept, if you will, has been put in front of me in a lot of different ways over the last year.

I believe that things like this happen for a reason to force me to think about how I am being of service. Have I bought in to this idea that we are not spiritual if we have not disavowed ourselves of all things material or that we are meant to live a life of poverty? I don't believe that I believe that is true. But I do believe that the thought is prevalent enough that it is important for us to pause and see how we may be limiting ourselves with this type of belief.

09:33 I was pointed to a movie about the life of St. Francis. It was fascinating actually to see this played out on the screen. Francis actually came from a very wealthy family and saw

what wealth can do when not used appropriately. His family was very greedy. The powers that be were all about amassing wealth and leaving everyone else out of the equation with whomever they could do that with ... and get away with it. After some life experiences, Francis saw this and determined that was not the way he wanted to live his life.

10:23 One of the concepts that we hear about is this concept of the pendulum swinging in both directions. Francis lived this very affluent life. He is all the way out here on this one end of the spectrum. He realized that he could no longer live like that in good conscious. And he swung all the way to the other end of the spectrum. To complete poverty. The complete opposite. Total contrast. Now, Francis died at 44. We don't know what he might have discovered had he lived longer. But what we can see is that he was experiencing these two great extremes.

11:15 What if he could have found a way to use his wealth constructively to enjoy it in his own life but, to also use it to help others. I personally don't believe that aspiring to a life of poverty is what's meant for us here. We are humans. We are meant to enjoy the spoils of being human. But that doesn't mean that we have to trample over everyone in our path. It also doesn't mean that if we are successful and affluent that everyone else can't also be successful and affluent. We are actually able to demonstrate what is possible to other people.

12:02 As we close on this concept of practical spirituality. I challenge you to think about the ways you are incorporating spirituality in your life. Is it making your life better? Is your spiritual practice helping you see opportunities? And helping you capitalize on them? Even if that opportunity is about how you can be of service to your fellow humans by spirituality being applied practically in our lives.

Practical spirituality is how we actually turn dreams into reality.

12:48

This show was actually going to be called practically spiritual . . .

My takeaway today is that I'm reminded of where that came from. Actually this was one of the places in the last year where I have been shown some of the nuances about St. Francis and what he stood for. As I was experiencing this idea of the show . . . practically spiritual came to me. It was related to the movie, "Mary Poppins." One of the lines in this movie is where Dick Van Dyke's character, Burt, refers to Mary Poppins as practically perfect in every way.

What if we are practically spiritual in every way? What if spirituality applies to every corner of our lives? What if we are almost spiritual? Or, spiritual with a real purpose? It is a play on words ... practically spiritual. I like to use this sort of exercise to help me expand my thinking. And, drop in some new seeds of insight, awareness, and understanding.

14:13

Question:

I am an athlete and play sports competitively. I find myself feeling overwhelmed and anxious before a game or match. And, when things aren't going well, the anxiety makes it extremely difficult to perform well. Even worse . . . sometimes when I'm playing well, I find myself thinking it isn't going to last. How can I use awareness to improve my performance while playing?

14:38

Dr. Gala Gorman: First, thanks for submitting your question. As I see it, awareness is a spiritual practice. And, we can learn to use it for practical purposes. What better way than to improve our

performance . . . regardless of the activity. So, you can start by noticing when you begin to feel a shift . . . from things are going well to not so much. For example, my husband, Charlie is a tennis player. He plays competitively and often says, “On the court, I’m playing two opponents. The person on the other side of the net AND myself.”

We don’t have much, if any, control over the other person but we can exercise some control over our own “stinkin thinkin.” In order to do this, you need to become aware of your thoughts. Don’t dismiss them. They’re quite valuable and can provide a tremendous amount of information that will help you work your way through this quickly enough to save the outcome. Keep a journal with you and write down what you notice yourself thinking. Don’t count on remembering. You need the details. You’ll start to see a pattern. At that point, you’re on your way to deconstructing it and replacing it with one that works!

15:54

Announcer:

Are you ready to create an attitude adjustment? Practicing Aware Appreciation will make a positive difference. You can access the Aware Appreciation Worksheet by visiting AwarenessAddicts.com/AA. In just a few minutes a day, you'll stop negativity in its tracks...and gain some insight and awareness in the process.

Your feedback makes a difference. What part of this episode helped you the most? Join the Awareness Addicts Facebook group and share your thoughts. Make sure you leave a review wherever you've accessed the show. And, if you know others who could use some divine inspiration, share with them! Remember, all the links and resources are available at AwarenessAddicts.com/Episodes. Don't waste another moment feeling confused and stuck. As an Awareness Addict, you're alive, alert, awake and aware of life's possibilities.

16:51

Dr. Gala Gorman: If you'd like to experience more happiness in your life . . . you may think, "It's a long way from where I am right now to happy." I'm going to challenge you to try a new approach. You won't want to miss the next episode where I share how we can actually manufacture happiness. So, make sure you join me.

17:14

Announcer: This was Awareness Addicts with Dr. Gala Gorman. For more information and to find any resources mentioned in this episode, visit AwarenessAddicts.com/Episodes. Thank you for tuning in.

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