

# **Spiritualist Basics**

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## **Introduction**

Many people associate Spiritualism with psychic readings and “predicting the future”. Reactions to this association often range from “it’s of the devil” to healthy skepticism to a complete dependence on readings to continue daily living. Many people have a very flat understanding - you go to the medium, get a reading, and that’s the end of it.

You’re familiar with those movies that show the end of the story in the first 15 minutes and then spend the next hour and a half showing you how everything came together that way? Readings can be compared to the first 15 minutes of the movie. The problem is that many people watch the first 15 minutes and walk away thinking that they know everything they need to know.

The purpose of this writing is to give you the hour and a half that you missed so that you have a more accurate understanding, a greater appreciation for what Spiritualism is, and a clear perspective of how readings and “predicting the future” fit into the overall picture. The purpose is not conversion but exposure. (Spiritualists never convert anybody.) You decide what to believe. You are encouraged to continue your learning beyond this writing and experience things for yourself. Make an effort to understand and don’t be too quick to dismiss something that may have value for you. Keep an open mind.

## **The Earth Plane**

It is best to start out with square one - the earth plane. This existence that we commonly share is called the earth plane. The cars, houses, roads, grass, trees, streams, towns, cities, countries, mountains, deserts, and oceans, are all part of the earth plane. So is the sky, stars, moon and planets. Everything that is part of your "normal" perception is on the earth plane, man-made or natural.

## **The Spirit World**

There is an existence called the spirit world. The spirit world exists in the same space that the earth plane does and is all around you. Imagine you are standing in a fog. The fog is all around you. Everything else that is normally around you is there also, whether you see it through the fog or not. Where does the fog stop and the "everything else" begin? In this way the spirit world exists in the same space as the earth plane. This is not a perfect analogy but it illustrates the point.

## **Spirits, Spirit beings or Spirit**

People on the earth plane always have people from the spirit world around them. Whether you are Catholic, Jewish, Baptist, Hindu, Christian, Indian, Spiritualist, Buddhist, Moslem, or Atheist, it makes no difference.

Spirits are not normally visible. To continue the fog analogy, someone standing 10 feet away from you in a dense fog can’t be seen, although the person is there. Spirit people can be perceived. Sometimes you may actually see a spirit person - often just a face or head, or perhaps the entire body. This appearance may be visible to you only (subjective), or may be for everyone to see (objective). You are not “just seeing things”. Spirits can and do show themselves to people on occasion, and when they do, it is usually on a subjective basis.

Who are these people? They are people who have passed over ("died") and are now living in the spirit world. They are commonly loved ones or relatives, but they may be your guides and teachers.

Guides and teachers are people who help you learn and grow. Yes, believe it or not, you are not spiritually perfect. If you think you are perfect then you are in sad shape. If you think it doesn't apply to you then you had better wake up and get with it. Everyone is here to learn and your guides and teachers are here to help you.

Life is growth and progression. All those experiences you've had in life that you can't understand or would never want to go through again are a part of that progression. So are those experiences of feeling "on top of the world". Guides and teachers are helping us to learn life's lessons and become better people on all levels - spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically (regardless of which religion (if any) you believe in).

### **“Spirit”**

The term “Spirit” is used in several ways in Spiritualist literature. Spirit can mean an individual person who is living in the spirit world. Spirit can mean the spirit world itself, or the influence of the spirit world on the earth plane. Spirit can mean God (also called “infinite intelligence” or “the God of your understanding” in Spiritualist literature). The dictionary meaning for spirit is “essence”.

### **Vibration**

There is a quality of the universe called vibration. Every thing and every one vibrates. Vibration can be thought of as being on a scale from low (and slow) to high (and fast). Your vibration is low when you are depressed because you have lost your job or have turmoil in your family. You walk into a room where two people have just had a violent argument and you can "cut the tension with a knife" the vibration is low also. When you get up in the morning, it's a beautiful day and you have that feeling that "everything is perfect" or you are feeling love for someone, the vibration is high.

Vibration is more than your moment-to-moment happiness or unhappiness. When you walk into your aunt's house the vibration is different than it is when you walk into a friend's house or your workplace or a church or an auditorium. The feelings you have are somewhat of an indicator of the vibration.

Things vibrate the same way people do. Buildings, cars, trucks, bridges, roads, houses, hills, mountains, and streams. Rocks vibrate - it is just so slow and solid that you don't normally perceive it.

Animals and plants vibrate. Cats, bats, rats, dogs, hogs, spiders, snakes and elephants. Trees, plants, flowers and grass vibrate too.

Color is vibration - black, red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet, and white.

The God of your understanding is of the highest and purest vibration.

The person you are, the way you treat others (and your self), the things you do (and don't do), and the way you live your life largely make your vibration what it is. Your vibration is built up from life's everyday experiences and how you approach and handle them. Positive thoughts help bring about positive (higher) vibration.

### **Mediums**

The spirit world is of a higher vibration than the earth plane. You can raise your vibration high enough to make contact with the spirit world and the people in it. Conversely, people in the spirit world can lower their vibration and touch down into the earth plane.

Mediums are people who are able to raise their vibration high enough to contact and communicate with your loved ones, guides, and teachers in the spirit world. A medium becomes the message bearer for the guides, teachers, loved ones, and other spirits around you who want to talk to you, let you know that they love you, and help you progress spiritually.

### **Personal responsibility and Spiritual Progression**

Spiritualism teaches that you are responsible for your own happiness and unhappiness. Your happiness and unhappiness are largely determined by how you look at things. Negative things do happen and you have no control over some of them. But you can control your reaction and the point of view you take in dealing with the negative. Besides, an uncontrollable negative in your life today can have a positive affect on other areas of your life years later.

You can make changes to improve yourself and your life, which in turn affect your vibration. Spiritual progression takes time - it doesn't happen in a minute or overnight. You have to make a start in the right direction first. Your guides and teachers will help if you sincerely ask.

### **Natural Law**

How do you progress spiritually? There is a set of rules to live by called Natural Law. In practice, they are like the laws of physics - unbreakable. It is like dropping a glass from your hand - it always falls to the ground. There are no exceptions to Natural Law. The more you live by Natural Law and apply it in a positive way, the higher your vibration. The closer you come to God.

### **Law of Vibration**

You are already familiar with the Law of Vibration - all things vibrate and positive thoughts, positive actions create a positive (higher) vibration.

### **Law of Attraction**

The Law of Attraction states that like attracts like. The simplest way to see this law in action is to look at your self and the people around you. The people you are the most comfortable with and relate to are of a "like mind" in some way. Look for the similarities in the people around you - family, co-workers, and friends - their attitudes, opinions, outlook on life and spiritual makeup. Now think about the people who you can't stand, are very uncomfortable with and don't want to be around unless you have to. See the difference? Like attracts like.

Apply this law with the Law of Vibration. Your vibration is determined by who you are and how you live your life. People with a similar vibration will be attracted to each other (on a spiritual level). If you are a hateful, jealous and cruel person then you will attract people who are hateful, jealous and cruel. If you are a kind, loving, and warm person, then you will attract people who are kind, loving, and warm. The Law of Attraction operates in the spirit world also. You tend to attract the spirit people that are "just like you". As you live your life closer to God (and Natural Law) your vibration raises and people of a higher vibration will be attracted to you both on the earth plane and from the spirit world.

You can see the Law of Attraction and Law of Vibration working together when a person makes genuine, positive changes to their life. Alcohol abusers who quit the habit are a fine example. Initially, the abuser's life revolves around getting drunk. Their "drinking buddies" lives also revolve around getting drunk. They are together because they have something in common they can relate to, similar needs, interests, and outlook (i.e. have a similar vibration). When the abuser changes his or her life and stops drinking because they honestly "don't need it" (i.e. have begun progressing spiritually) the drinking buddies fall by the wayside. The abuser is not interested in the drinking buddies (and vice versa) because he or she is "not like them" anymore.

Since the abuser's vibration is now a bit higher and different than the drinking buddies' vibration, the attraction for them is broken. The Law of Attraction hasn't stopped working at all - before long, the abuser will be with other people whose vibration is also "a bit higher". Like is still attracting like.

The Law of Attraction applies primarily to the spiritual and mental realms. In the physical, opposites attract. Although it is not used, it may be clearer to say that the Law of Spiritual Attraction is "like attracts like" and the Law of Physical Attraction is "like attracts it's opposite".

### **Law of Thought**

Have you noticed that people with a negative outlook seem to be surrounded by negativity and negative thinking in general? Think about these people who are chronically miserable - complaining that the world has short changed them, others are always getting ahead faster than they are, and how things could be so much better if only things were done *their way* instead. Their world is largely a reflection of the negative thoughts that they generate.

Thoughts, both positive and negative, play a large role in your life. Your thoughts and your way of thinking are part of your being and vibration. Everyone is living in an ever-changing sea of thought. The waves, tides, and currents produced by your thoughts has an affect on others (and their thoughts affect you too.)

Don't dismiss this by saying that your thoughts don't have an affect on anything. They do. Negativity, bitterness, and jealousy cast darkness over your being as surely as love, kindness, and compassion spread sunshine. That sunshine (or darkness) affects how you feel and react to things, and is also reflected towards others when you come into contact with them.

Thoughts are very powerful. Thoughts (with feelings behind them) are just as powerful as actions. Your thoughts (and your way of thinking) are the base for your being and vibration. Since "you are what you think" (to a degree), change your thinking for the better and you will change yourself as well. Of course, it won't happen over night, but will change over time.

Your thoughts are not isolated to yourself. You don't think in a vacuum. Thoughts with enough energy behind them can be perceived by others. For instance, how many times has a friend or relative called you on the phone and you tell the person that you had just been thinking about him or her? Or vice versa? You probably just take this experience for granted, but there is more to it. You sent out a thought (most likely subconsciously). Your friend picked up on the thought (most likely subconsciously) and was many miles away from you.

A phone call is a simple example that shows the point, but do not dismiss this whole idea as trivial nonsense. It is not. And it is not as easy as arbitrarily thinking whatever you want and having it immediately happen either. If it worked that way then everyone would be a lottery winner and never have to work again!! There's no "faking" here, be genuine. It bears repeating - thoughts (with feelings behind them) are just as powerful as actions, and everyone is living in an ever-changing sea of thought. If your friend on the earth plane is sensitive enough to pick up on your thoughts from time to time, you can be sure that the spirit people around you pick up on your thoughts also. Spirits are more sensitive than your friend on the earth plane and can perceive your thoughts more easily.

Consider the implications. Thought can travel any distance and be perceived by others. Thought can become a method of communication. Thought *is* the basis for Spirit communication. Spirits send a thought which is perceived by the medium and passed onto you.

Both thought and action are subject to Natural Laws. For example, if your thinking and outlook is negative you will draw negativity toward you (through the Law of Attraction). On the other hand, positive thinking and outlook will draw the positive toward you.

### **Law of Cause and Effect**

In physics, for every action there is an equivalent reaction. In spiritual matters there is a similar rule - the Law of Cause and Effect. The common phrase for this is "what goes around comes around". People seem to have a more immediate understanding of this law because they can apply it to the negative. Ask someone about "what goes around comes around" and you will most likely get a story about how they hurt a person in some way or did something that was really rotten and it "came back to haunt" them or an event occurred that "made it all even".

Remember that there are no exceptions. Natural law is unbreakable. You may have done something that was very rotten and think you have gotten away with it. There is absolutely, positively no "getting away with it". It may take a while for the effect to come back to you. It may take years. It may take a lifetime. It may not happen until you have left the earth plane and are living in the spirit world. But come back it will. You may not recognize the connection between the effect and its original cause but there is a link in there somewhere, whether you ultimately learn what it is or not. This includes your thoughts. Keep this in mind when you are about to unduly criticize someone or wish something horrible upon them.

If you have done some of those "really rotten" things and are suffering from the consequences of those actions you are not doomed. Yes, you will have to pay for those transgressions and you won't get out of it. But the Law of Cause and Effect, like other Natural Laws, works in both the positive and negative directions. You can stop the negative thoughts and actions and replace them with positive ones, and before long those positive effects will be coming your way. Start with something simple like a heartfelt "have a good day" to the next person you meet. You don't have to "perform a miracle" in order for this to start working. Remember that Natural Law is always working. Start small and go from there. You will be amazed at the results. You will have a whole new appreciation for "what goes around comes around".

### **Law of Harmony**

When you listen to good music, you appreciate the sound you are hearing and how it all blends together as one. Everything sounds "just right". Often you are not paying attention to this "blending together" as you are listening because the band is in harmony and all the instruments are in tune. But if the piano is badly out of tune and the guitar has a broken string you would notice it. The sound would be off and the music not right until you tuned the piano and replaced the guitar string.

Your life is like a band that is always playing music. The song you're playing is the song of your life, a song that is uniquely yours. Your music can be anything - classical, rock, folk, blues, rap, country, jazz, or heavy metal, it doesn't matter, as long as it is in harmony.

The instruments in your band have to be tuned up and work together well to sound best. As you bring more instruments into tune, the music gets better because the overall harmony improves. Musicians are continually tuning their instruments so that they are always sounding their best.

Keeping your instruments in tune and in harmony with each other is an ongoing process. Of course, "stuff happens". You just finished tuning the piano, then the lead guitar snaps a string and one of the drums needs to be replaced. You have that almost finished when someone hands you a new instrument you've never played before.

What are the "instruments" in your band? The important forces that affect your life. Work, school, family, friends, and your love life are some obvious examples. Your thoughts, actions, attitudes and outlook are more subtle examples. Your body is an instrument that needs tuning also - are you eating/exercising/sleeping too much or not enough?

How do you "tune" these "instruments"? By using your awareness. By staying in touch with yourself and responding to your needs. You can start by paying attention from moment to moment. "How much do I want to eat right now?" "Should I go to bed now or stay up for a while longer?"

Overeating is a common example of being out of tune. Your mind is busy telling you to eat and you're not paying attention to the fact that your stomach is getting full and don't need all that much to eat. Bring your eating and sleeping habits into tune by being aware of (and responding to) your needs.

Maintaining harmony in your life is a dynamic, ongoing process. This is not exactly the same thing as balance. The term "balance" implies a teeter-totter with two sides going up and down over a fixed point in the middle. Harmony is more of a smooth flow without any fixed point, a blending.

Take the time and make the effort to bring your life into harmony. Live in harmony with Natural Law. Improving your harmony can affect your vibration in a positive way.

### **Law of Continuity**

The Law of Continuity states that Natural Law is continuous and applies to both the earth plane and the spirit world. *Life* is continuous. You don't die. Your body does. Your body is a physical thing and you are not. You are spirit ("essence").

What is the shape of water? Shapeless. Water assumes the shape of the container it is put in. When the water evaporates into a cloud, the container can not hold it any longer and is discarded. The cloud used to be water and still is water, although in a changed form.

In the same way, spirit is shapeless. Your spirit is in the container called your body. When you "die" your body can not hold your spirit any longer and it is discarded. You remain the same, although there is a change of form. Your personality, attitudes, thoughts, actions, sense of humor, your "essence" is unchanged.

Life is continuous growth and progression, both here and in the spirit world. When you get to the spirit world you are going to keep growing and learning (unless you choose otherwise). Part of that growing and learning may be to teach others the things you have learned (the way your spirit teachers teach you now). Your spirit teachers are teaching and learning at the same time. Some of them may be around you for a while and then leave because they have other people to teach (or need to learn something themselves). Others may be around you for a very long time.

Everyone is always learning life's lessons and becoming better people - leaving the earth plane ("dying") and living in the spirit world is merely one transition in that process. Dying doesn't call everything to a halt. Life is continuous, and so is Natural Law.

### **Heaven and Hell**

Since you don't die when your body does, where do you go? To the spirit world. Is there heaven and hell? No. Not really. Spiritualists don't believe in hell. Everyone goes to the spirit world regardless of what their behavior has been like on the earth plane. No matter what. If you murder 100 people you go to the spirit world. If you save 100 people you go to the spirit world too.



So what's the difference? Why bother improving your life if you are going to go to the spirit world anyway? Because in the spirit world there are many, many places. Remember that the Law of Attraction works in the spirit world just like it does on the earth plane - you will attract people "just like you". If you are of a lower vibration (murdered 100 people) then you will go to a place that is in harmony with that vibration and you will be with people who are just the same way you are. This doesn't mean you will like it or that it will be pleasant. You will not be able to visit the people and places of a higher vibration either, although people may come to see you. You will still have to learn those same things that you refused to learn (or ignored completely) on the earth plane if you want to change your vibration and progress spiritually.

This is not hell and is not eternal damnation. You always have a choice, and you can change your mind at any time. You can stay where you are forever or you can make an effort to learn and progress. Again, it won't happen in a minute or overnight. Your guides and teachers will be there to help you.

### **What about haunted houses, ghosts, and poltergeists?**

Many people know of someone who says that their house is haunted and has had a variety of unusual events occur. Normally, you "die" and go to the spirit world. Some people die but don't go to the spirit world - instead they stay around the earth plane. These people may not accept or realize that they're "dead" and frequently stay in places familiar to them such as houses and the like. All spirits can affect the earth plane in various ways and frequently these "earth-bound" spirits make themselves known as they go about their business. Some are quite harmless and others are not. Spirit loved ones may not be able to get through to tell the earth-bound spirit person that they should be in the spirit world instead. There are mediums on the earth plane who perform rescue work. The medium works with other spirits to help bring the earth-bound person to the spirit world.

### **The continuity of life**

Life is eternal and life is progression, on the earth plane and in the spirit world. Learning is continuous. There is no finality to what you have learned. You may know very much and be living your life in harmony with Natural Law, but soon enough you will pick up something new to add to what you already know. You can always learn more.

The beauty and wonders of the spirit world are many. There are buildings and grass and trees and flowers and music and art and literature and science. Colors are very rich, more so than on the earth plane.

Your spirit guides and teachers are always ready to help you grow spiritually. There are more Natural Laws than what is covered here and much more that you can learn. Remember that when a medium comes to you with a message, it is coming from the spirits around you. The spirits around you are based on the Law of Attraction and the medium is the message bearer.

### **Messages and Readings**

Just what is a message and a reading? You get a message when you are sitting in the congregation and the medium working on the podium comes to you. The medium will say that they want to come to you, wait for an acknowledgment from you that it is OK to do so, and then give you a message from Spirit.

Here is a typical example. The chairperson calls a medium to the podium. The medium then calls on the first person Spirit wants to give a message to - "Can I come to the gentleman in the back with the green shirt please?" If you are the person in the green shirt, acknowledge the medium by

saying "thank you", "hello", "welcome", or something similar. Try not to use the medium's name as this can be distracting. The medium will say thank you and then begin the message from Spirit; for example "I have a short woman here with long blond hair, possibly an aunt who passed into Spirit through a heart condition ...". If you recognize the aunt say so. If you know it is your cousin instead say that it's your cousin. The spirit person is identifying herself or himself *for you*, not the medium. A typical message is 5-10 minutes long. When the medium has finished giving the message say "thank you". The medium may give one, two, or several messages (to different people) before the next medium is called to the podium.

A reading is not really different than a message. A reading is done privately with yourself and the medium, so there is no need to identify you out of the congregation. Readings are longer, typically 30-60 minutes.

Remember that in both messages and readings, the medium is only the message bearer. The medium will often ask if the information being given is making sense to you so they can give you more. The medium is making sure that the information is being received clearly. The meaning of the information is strictly between you and Spirit. Mediums know that it is none of their business and are not interested in your personal affairs.

### **Medium (or Spiritual) and Psychic readings**

The primary difference between a medium and a psychic is the way information is transmitted to the person. The medium's approach is passive. The person becomes the pathway for the information to come through, and the information is coming from people in the spirit world, not from the medium personally. A psychic's approach is active. The person plays an active part in getting the information - it may be picked out of the surrounding vibration or come from the psychic personally.

People who give readings will generally describe themselves as either a medium (giving spiritual readings) or a psychic. Any person giving a reading or a message could be doing so mediumistically (passive), psychically (active), or some combination of both. It is not a simple matter to tell where the reading is coming from and mediums take extra precautions to be sure that the reading is not coming from them personally.

Both are valid ways of getting information, but in Spiritualism the major emphasis is on mediumship. Mediumship is preferred because the information is coming from spirits in the spirit world, and not from the medium personally. As a result, messages and readings should be more accurate and not clouded by what the medium personally thinks or feels.

Being a medium (or psychic) is a very large responsibility and typically takes years to develop. You do not have to be "born with it". Every person has the basic capability, although few develop it. Anyone can pick up a French horn and make sound, but only a few will learn to make beautiful music with it. Becoming a medium (or psychic) is the same way.

### **Predicting the Future and The Continuity of Life**

Isn't predicting the future what this is all about anyway? No. The main reason spirits come back to the earth plane through mediums is to prove the continuity of life, although they may come back to offer help too. So many people believe in life after death but don't give it any real thought. People don't fully realize that you, your personality, your being actually continue after your body dies. Your friends and loved ones in spirit are coming back to let you know that they love you and are OK. The continuity of life is proven when the medium gives you something in a message that uniquely identifies the spirit - when *you know* who it is, without a doubt.

The "something" that spirits will use to identify themselves can be most anything - their name, occupation, how they passed from the earth plane into Spirit, their relationship to you, their peculiar hairstyle or dress, a favorite dish they used to like to cook, their quirks and habits, special things they did with you on the earth plane, how they met you, or just about anything, even if it's funny or ridiculous. The point is to let you know who they are.

Spirit can more accurately predict the future than you can because they have a better vantage point. Imagine yourself in a car at night, driving down the road. It is snowing hard and you have your headlights on but you can't see very far. The snow hitting the windshield has a mesmerizing effect. A large tractor trailer passes right by you without a problem, just like it was noontime on a sunny day.

The truck driver has a better vantage point to see the road from. The truck driver is sitting far above the headlights and isn't mesmerized by the view of the snow hitting the windshield. The view from the seat in the truck is much better than down in the car.

Spirit has a better perspective to see where you are heading in your life. Spirit can see where the road you are on will *most likely* take you. Why most likely and not absolutely? Because you have the freedom of choice. You can change your mind about things and take a path that leads into something entirely unexpected at any time. But Spirit will be right more often than not.

Remember that people in the spirit world are often *guides*. Because they are guides it is appropriate to ask them to help you find your way, but you should not live your whole life clinging to them (and getting readings every day) for every little decision that comes up. How would you feel if you had someone continually asking you silly questions every day - "Should I eat eggs for breakfast or cereal instead?" "What should I have for lunch then?" "Do I wear the green dress today or the blue one?" Keep it in perspective. Remember that spirits are people just like you. Be grateful that they are there to guide and help you.

## **Healing**

Messages and readings are a form of mental mediumship. The medium raises his or her vibration and allows Spirit communication through in the form of thought. Spiritual healing is a form of both mental and physical mediumship. The healer raises his or her vibration and allows spiritual healing energy to come through. This energy can have positive mental and/or physical effects.

Spiritual healing can reduce pain and suffering, lessen or eliminate symptoms, and promote quicker recovery. The positive healing energy that comes from Spirit through the healer is very powerful and can cure ailments and diseases, oftentimes after medical science has given up and the patient comes to the spiritual healer as "a last resort". But spiritual healing is not a substitute for seeing a doctor.

There should be no contest between medical science and spiritual healers (although you may hear differently). Each have the same goal, which is to restore and promote health. This is not an either-or proposition - no one says you must use one method exclusively over the other. Use them both for your benefit. Don't discredit either one. When you find what works for you go with it. Remember that every body is unique - what helps you may not work at all for someone else.

How does this work? There is a lot of positive energy freely available to everyone in the world. Where does this positive energy come from? Positive thoughts and actions are a source of positive energy. This is true and not just something to be scoffed at. Your thoughts and feelings are energy. This positive energy can be focused, producing positive results. The healer is the pathway for the energy to come through.

The spirits around the healer (who are healers themselves) also come through the healer to work on the person in need. The healers in the spirit world are doing the work, the healer is just providing the avenue for them to come through.

How does healing take place? You sit down on a comfortable chair (like a padded piano stool) and just relax. The healer stands behind you and places their hands close to you (they typically touch very little). The healer often works through the aura to promote healing. The healer will start at the top of your head and work down your back and shoulders, then come around the front and work the kneecaps and shin down to the ankle. The healer will work on the areas that need it according to Spirit's directions. The healer will often hold your hands for a few moments and/or talk with you just before the healing is completed. Be sure to say thank you.

Healing can also take place without the person who needs it being physically present. This is called absent healing. When the healer is in a meditative state, the healer can become the pathway for the positive healing energy to flow, which can be sent forth to anyone anywhere.

Healing, like other types of mediumship, can be taught, and some people will find it easier to develop than others. Healers can obtain various credentials (although it is not absolutely necessary). Healers can become commissioned through the National Spiritualist Association of Churches (NSAC). Other Spiritualist organizations offer certifications or commissions as well.

There are many different methods of healing beyond what is described here. Spirit works with each healer in their own way. Spiritual healing could be best described by the Prayer for Spiritual Healing. The first part is said with the focus on yourself and the second part with the focus on others:

#### **Prayer for Spiritual Healing \***

I ask the great unseen healing force to remove all obstructions  
from my mind and body and to restore me to perfect health  
I ask this in all sincerity and honesty and I will do my part.

I ask this great unseen healing force to help both present and absent ones  
who are in need of help and to restore them to perfect health  
I put my trust in the love and power of God.

#### **What is a Spiritualist Church like?**

Spiritualists sing hymns and listen to the lecture (sermon) and take a collection the same way other religions do. There are some significant differences though.

A healing service often takes place before the regular service. When the regular service begins, the healing list is read. The healing list is a list of people who are in need of some form of healing. If you know someone who is in need of healing, be it physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual, you can put their name on the healing list. The list is read before the congregation, who are asked to focus their thoughts and to see the people on the list in perfect health. The Prayer for Spiritual Healing is then read aloud.

The Declaration of Principles is also read aloud. After a few short announcements the lecture begins. Lectures are commonly about the applications of Spiritualism to daily living and are very

\* National Spiritualist Association of Churches (<http://www.nzac.org>) version

down-to-earth and easy to understand. Many lectures are often based on quotations from the Bible or other inspirational works.

After the lecture, the message service begins. Mediums are called one at a time to the rostrum (podium) and give messages to people in the congregation. The service concludes with a hymn and a closing prayer.

### **Spiritualism is not Christianity**

Spiritualism is considerably different from Christianity - God is not defined as a super-being that sits on a throne and watches over you. Spiritualists do not worship God in that sense. God is defined as the "God of your understanding." There are no symbols like the cross that Spiritualists pray to. The sunflower is the symbol of Spiritualism but is not prayed to either.

Some Christian religions consider Spiritualism to be the work of the devil. This idea just doesn't make sense - Spiritualism expresses a belief in God, promotes healing, and brings communication from our loved ones in the spirit world.

No one has to be saved to become a Spiritualist, and Spiritualists don't go out saving anyone. The Spiritualist viewpoint about saving is very straight forward. *Save your self now. You are responsible* for your own happiness and unhappiness.

### **Jesus and the Bible**

The major focus of many Christian religions is on Jesus' life with the disciples, his crucifixion, death, and resurrection. The stories of Jesus' accomplishments are told and retold many times.

Spiritualism does not have any one person (or experience) whose story is told and retold and made the major focus of the religion. Spiritualism does not believe in Jesus as the savior of the world. Spiritualism does not believe that Jesus is any more (or less) the son of God than anyone else. Remember that You are Spirit, and Spirit is God. Jesus is Spirit, and Spirit is God. Spiritualism views Jesus as a human being - one of the greatest mediums that ever lived on the earth plane.

The Bible is filled with many stories that relate to Spiritualism. There are many examples of Spirit communication (which is a basic tenet of Spiritualism) in both the Old and New Testament. Spiritualists may use the Bible as the basis of a lecture, but the Bible is not given a central role in like it is in many Christian religions.

### **Spiritualism as an Institution**

Spiritualism can be looked at as having three main parts - a belief in God, Natural Law, and spirit communication. Spiritualism is called a religion, a philosophy, and a science.

### **Spiritualism is a Religion**

Spiritualism believes in God. God goes by several names such as Infinite Intelligence, Mother Father God, or most often the "God of your understanding". Spiritualism does not define God in any particular manner - if you were to ask every Spiritualist what God is you would get a different answer for each person you spoke to, but a general consensus might be that God is an ever-present, positive force in the universe. A belief in Spiritualism often does not require you to change your view of or definition of God. Spiritualism has been called a "religion of conviction not conversion".

## **Spiritualism is a Philosophy**

Spiritualism believes in Natural Law, which provides a basis for a philosophy of life. The Declaration of Principles is a general set of principles that Spiritualists believe in and go by. The principles are not dogma or creed.

### **Declaration of Principles \***

1. We believe in Infinite Intelligence.
2. We believe that the phenomena of Nature, both physical and spiritual, are the expression of Infinite Intelligence.
3. We affirm that a correct understanding of such expression and living in accordance therewith, constitute true religion.
4. We affirm that the existence and personal identity of the individual continue after the change called death.
5. We affirm that communication with the so-called dead is a fact, scientifically proven by the phenomena of Spiritualism.
6. We believe that the highest morality is contained in the Golden Rule: "Whatsoever ye would that others should do unto you do ye also unto them."
7. We affirm the moral responsibility of the individual, and that we make our own happiness or unhappiness as we obey or disobey Nature's physical and spiritual laws.
8. We affirm that the doorway to reformation is never closed against any human soul here or hereafter.
9. We affirm that the precepts of Prophecy and Healing contained in all sacred texts are Divine attributes proven through Mediumship.

## **Spiritualism is a Science**

Science is concerned with the collection of observations and facts, and Spiritualism also concerns itself with the collection of observations and facts regarding spiritual communication and spiritual phenomena. Spiritualism does not believe that everything is already known and set in stone.

There is much to learn about the spirit world and spiritual phenomena. Spiritualism is willing to accept new facts and new truths as they come up, even if they refute present thinking and ideas. Spiritualism is one of the few religions that is willing to ask questions, encourages people to do so, and will honestly admit that it doesn't know when necessary.

Spiritualists don't often concern themselves with trying to prove spiritualism to the scientific community. The scientific community largely believes in lab experiments, which in many cases are nearly useless in relation to spiritualism and spiritual phenomena. Lab experiments are supposed to approximate natural conditions. Spiritual phenomena occurs under *natural* conditions not *approximately natural* conditions.

The rationale often used by the scientific community is like using a flashlight to prove that darkness exists. You shine the flashlight in an area and say that you are looking for the darkness. All you can see with the flashlight is the light it produces. You therefore conclude that there is no darkness because you can't see it with the light.

There is a variety of case studies, some experiments, and physical evidence that you can look at regarding proof of spiritual phenomena. Weeding out the counterfeit phenomena is important. Phony phenomena has only aggravated and confused matters. The best proof comes from your own experiences.

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Spiritualism is a continuous learning experience. There is much studying and reading you can do to increase your understanding. As far as proof is concerned, it is up to each individual to prove it to him or her self. Be objective. Ask questions and be skeptical. Some of the finest Spiritualists are also among the most skeptical.

### **Summary**

To continue with the movie analogy, you now have the missing hour and a half that you need to make the sense out of the first 15 minutes. The basic story behind Spiritualism is now “rounded out” and (ideally) you have broadened your thinking and perspective. There is more you can learn, much more. Spiritualism can be made a lifelong study. Many books are available on the subject. Classes are the best and most direct way to learn. In class you learn as much from your classmates as you do from the teacher. Make an effort to understand and keep an open mind.

**Sources:****Spirit**

"Natural Laws", Ron & Sandie Mercer. The National Spiritualist Summit, December 1992.

Peggy Spencer - class instructor

Bruce McMillan - healer

Psychic Healers, David St. Clair

Truck driving analogy - Ron Spencer

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Lisa Peterangelo - thank you for the initial motivation to create this document.

Dear Reader,

Thank you for reading this document. If this document has increased your understanding of Spiritualism or has benefited you in a positive way, please express yourself by sending a charitable contribution of \$5 or more payable to:

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Thank you again - it has been my pleasure to create this document and hopefully yours in reading it. I wish you well.

Joseph A. Loffredo, Jr.