

Dwelling and Seeking in Late Adulthood: The Psychosocial Implications of Two Types of Religious Orientation

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SUMMARY. This article summarizes quantitative findings and presents two illustrative case studies showing how religious dwelling and spiritual seeking evolve over the adult life course and relate to psychosocial functioning in late adulthood. The data come from the Institute of Human Development (IHD) longitudinal study of men and women. Religious dwellers tend to emphasize traditional forms of religious behavior whereas spiritual seekers emphasize innovative religious practices. In the IHD study, the religious involvement of the dwellers tended to be highly stable over the life course whereas spirituality gained in salience in the second half of adulthood. In late adulthood, religious dwelling was associated with maintaining close and warm relations with others and communal involvement, and during times of adversity, religiousness served as a buffer against the loss of life satisfaction. Spiritual

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seeking was associated with an emphasis on personal growth, creativity, and acquiring new knowledge. Spiritual growth was particularly characteristic of introspective individuals who in early adulthood experienced stressful life events. [Article copies available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-HAWORTH. E-mail address: <docdelivery@haworthpress.com> Website: <<http://www.HaworthPress.com>> © 2003 by The Haworth Press, Inc. All rights reserved.]

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Over many generations, Americans have defined their relation to God in the context of organized religious institutional practices. Since the 1960s in the U.S., this pattern has changed as a result of the emergence of alternative ways of questing and the seeking of spiritual connection outside conventional places of worship (Marty, 1993). Consequently, while just a few decades ago it made little sense to differentiate between religiousness and spirituality, such a distinction has now become part of everyday discourse. Nonetheless, there is little consensus or clarity about the meaning of the two terms and their interrelation. For some, the quest for the sacred associated with spirituality is also the hallmark of religion and, therefore, spirituality becomes subsumed under a religiousness that emphasizes both personal and institutional concerns (Pargament, 1999). For others, spirituality refers to the universal human yearning for a sacred connection; an impulse that is much broader than any specific religious tradition or institution (Atchley, 2000). Once the concept of spirituality is broadened to include any kind of existential concern or striving for meaning, whether or not it is focused on the sacred, spirituality falls outside the domain of religion and thus yields two partially overlapping constructs (Stifoss-Hanssen, 1999).

Among some sociologists, the emergence of a self-oriented spiritual seeking that is detached from other-oriented religious dwelling has raised concerns about the growing narcissism in American culture that has the potential to undermine the fabric of social relations (e.g., Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985). Many psychologists, on the other hand, have embraced spirituality with its emphasis on personal autonomy, self-growth, and feelings as well as its secular potential (e.g., Elkins, 1995), leading to a concern over polarization between the putatively "good," dynamic, and individual spirituality versus the "bad," static, institutional religiousness (Pargament, 1999). In any case, there

appears to be very little consensus regarding the characteristics that distinguish religiousness and spirituality (Zinnbauer, Pargament, & Scott, 1999).

There is no easy solution to the conceptual ambiguity in the relation between spirituality and religiousness largely because both terms have a multiplicity of meanings (Wulff, 1997). For example, the term spirituality applies equally aptly to a pious individual who expresses his or her devotion within the context of a traditional religious institution, a New Age individual who seeks a connection with a transcendent being by borrowing elements of Western and Eastern religions, and a person who is prone to mystical experiences. The nature of the relation between spirituality and religiousness obviously shifts depending on the definition of spirituality under consideration. In our research, we have conceptualized religiousness and spirituality as two distinct albeit partially overlapping religious types or orientations (e.g., Dillon & Wink, in press-a). In mapping this typology we have drawn on the sociological research of Robert Wuthnow (1998) and Wade Clark Roof (1999) and the psychological theories of Erich Fromm (1950; 1976).

Robert Wuthnow (1998) has distinguished between religious dwellers whose relation to the sacred is mediated by traditional forms of religious authority, and spiritual seekers for whom individual autonomy appears to take precedence over external authority. In other words, the dwellers find it comforting to inhabit a space that is created for them by established religious institutions and one that is steeped in centuries of tradition. In contrast, the seekers are explorers who are most comfortable in occupying a space that is largely of their own creation although the materials used to construct and demarcate this space are typically borrowed from various existing religious traditions. Whereas dwellers are concerned about the freedom to exercise individual conscience within the framework of an established organized religious institution (e.g., Dillon, 1999), seekers place an emphasis on the freedom to choose among the various religious strands that span Western and Eastern traditions. Unlike religious dwellers, spiritual seekers place a greater emphasis on personal growth and healing, emotional self-fulfillment, and finding the sacred in everyday life (e.g., Moore, 1992).

Wuthnow (1998) offers the concept of a "practice" oriented spirituality as a way of insuring that spiritual seeking preserves the discipline and commitment associated with traditional forms of religiousness. While Roof (1999) endorses Wuthnow's distinction between dwelling and seeking, his study of aging baby boomers' spirituality has focused more on showing how the expansion of the American "spiritual market-

place” has resulted in the proliferation of different religious orientations among middle aged Americans. Roof thus appears to conceive of dwelling and seeking as parallel types of religious involvement rather than seeing spirituality as a cultural successor to traditional religiousness.

Following Roof, we argue that dwelling and seeking are two equally valid and partially overlapping ways of being religious. The boundaries between the two constructs, however, are not clear-cut. As argued by Zinnbauer et al. (1999), seeking a personal relation with the divine does not occur in a vacuum. Many seekers embark on their spiritual quest using tools, techniques, and practices derived from traditional religious frameworks and their journey frequently takes place within the confines of organized religious institutions (e.g., Roof, 1999). Conversely, individuals who choose to stay within an established religious tradition may do so reflexively and with a critical selectivity (Dillon, 1999) and may prize the opportunity to grow and mature in faith (Batson, Schoenrade, & Ventis, 1993). Similarly, many members of the evangelical movement discuss their faith in highly personal terms, yet they also tend to emphasize a literal interpretation of the Bible and endorse traditional religious values and beliefs (Roof, 1999). Clearly, therefore, religiousness and spirituality are overlapping and interrelated rather than polarized constructs. To adapt a metaphor offered by Anne Patrick (1999), dwelling and seeking are like two rivers flowing in the same fertile valley. Each has many tributaries, several of which feed water into both rivers, indicating the complex ecology of the religious landscape.

A distinction between two types of religious orientation based on dwelling and seeking is not new. As early as 1950, Erich Fromm argued for a differentiation between authoritarian and humanistic religion based on whether an individual’s faith involved embracing religious teachings offered by traditional religious institutions or whether the faith was derived from the individual’s subjective experiences and was the result of a process of self-creation. Subsequently, Fromm (1976) reformulated this distinction in terms of having faith and being in faith. Although Fromm’s views were in many ways prophetic, it is unfortunate that the labels he chose to denote the two types of religious orientation (authoritarian and humanistic) are clearly evaluative in tone and reflect a bias in psychology against tradition, conventionality, and dwelling in favor of innovation, unconventionality, and seeking. Human society, however, needs both conservers and creators in order to preserve equilibrium between stability and growth. Both dwelling and seeking can result in a deep sense of connection with the sacred and a vi-

tal involvement in life, although, as we shall show, the nature of this connection and involvement differs for the two types.

The aim of this article is to present evidence supporting the analytical and practical usefulness of conceptualizing religiousness and spirituality in terms of dwelling and seeking. I will first summarize findings from my recent collaborative research on how religious dwelling and spiritual seeking change over the adult life course and how they related to psychosocial functioning in late adulthood (Dillon & Wink, in press-a, in press-b; Wink & Dillon, 2001, 2002, under review), and then present two case studies of individual lives to elaborate the pattern of quantitative findings.

SAMPLE

The sample consists of 185 men and women (over 90% of the available sample) who were born in either Berkeley or Oakland, California in the 1920s and who are members of the Institute of Human Development (IHD) longitudinal study. The participants were studied intensively in childhood and adolescence and interviewed four times in adulthood: in early (age 30s), middle (age 40s), late middle (late 50s/early 60s), and late (age 70s) adulthood. Most of the participants were White and Christian: 75% were raised as Protestants and 16% were raised Catholic, while 59% of the participants (or their spouses) were upper middle class professionals or executives, 19% were lower middle class, and 22% were working class. In late adulthood, the majority of the participants was in good physical health (89%) and living with their spouse or partner (71%). The median household income was \$55,000. See Clausen (1993) and Wink and Dillon (2002) for further description of the study.

MEASURES OF RELIGIOUSNESS AND SPIRITUALITY

Religiousness and spirituality were assessed reliably (all Kappas > .60) by two independent raters who used 5-point scales to rate the two constructs from a discrete section on religious and spiritual beliefs and practices in open ended interviews conducted with the participants in early, middle, late middle, and late adulthood. Following Wuthnow (1998) and Roof (1999), *Religiousness* was defined in terms of the importance of traditional or institutionalized religious beliefs and prac-

tices in the life of the individual. Highly religious individuals are those for whom belief in God and the afterlife and organized religion (e.g., church attendance) play a central role in life; they are dwellers whose religious practices and experiences are based on derived and habitual forms of religious behavior typically performed in a communal setting. *Spirituality* was defined in terms of the importance of non-traditional religious beliefs in the life of the individual. Highly spiritual individuals are those for whom a personal quest for a sense of connectedness with a sacred Other (e.g., a Divine Being or nature) plays a central role in life; they are seekers who engage in practices aimed at deriving meaning from, and nurturing a sense of interrelatedness with, a sacred Other. In the IHD sample, the average intercorrelation between the ratings of religiousness and spirituality across the four adult times of assessment was moderate (mean $r = .34$).

RESULTS

Summary of Quantitative Findings

Broad empirical trends pertaining to religiousness and spirituality for the IHD sample are highlighted in this section. The focus is on the life course trajectories of religiousness and spirituality and their patterns of association in late adulthood with generativity, involvement in everyday life tasks, and life satisfaction in times of adversity.

Development over the life course. The IHD data showed considerable stability and predictability in the way religiousness unfolded over time. As a group, the IHD participants dropped by one fifth of a standard deviation in religiousness from early to middle adulthood, reflecting perhaps the historical decline in religiousness from the 1950s to the 1970s and/or the fact that with their children no longer at home they were less constrained by religious socialization pressures (Wink & Dillon, 2001; Dillon & Wink, in press-a). Nonetheless, the study participants subsequently increased by one fifth of a standard deviation in religiousness from middle to late adulthood, a pattern that may be a function of the diminution in social roles coinciding with the post-retirement period. The overall level of religiousness in the sample remained consistently high with over 50% of the participants indicating in older adulthood that religion was either important or very important to them. Evidence showing a high level of rank order stability (correlation) between religiousness in early and late adulthood (mean $r = .76$)

meant that participants who were more religious than their peers as young adults tended to remain so as older adults (Wink & Dillon, 2001). In other words, after the age of 30, relatively few of the study participants experienced either a sudden decline in religiousness or a new-found faith, although there were some exceptions.

By contrast with religiousness, spirituality showed a very different pattern of development, tending to have prominence in the lives of the IHD participants only from midlife onwards (Wink & Dillon, 2002a). This trend may reflect adult maturational processes (McFadden, 1999), or the impact in individual lives of the cultural changes of post 1960s America (Roof, 1999), or may in fact be due to the interaction of maturational and cultural forces. The IHD participants as a group increased in spirituality by almost two thirds of a standard deviation between middle adulthood (40s) and late adulthood (70s) (Wink & Dillon, 2002a). Unlike religiousness, spirituality showed a relatively low level of rank order stability throughout adulthood (mean $r = .44$) until the period between late middle (age 50s) and late adulthood (age 70s) ($r = .64$) (Wink & Dillon, 2002a). Since the IHD individuals showed considerable variability in their spiritual interests early on in adulthood, it begs the question of what are the significant longitudinal predictors of spirituality in late adulthood? Our research findings suggest that the modal spiritual older adult was a woman who in early adulthood was introspective and somewhat religiously involved, and who between early and middle adulthood experienced personally stressful life events (Wink & Dillon, 2002a).

Influence on psychosocial functioning in late adulthood. Our research on the relation of religiousness and spirituality to psychosocial functioning in late adulthood has been guided by the premise that because religious dwelling places an emphasis on tradition and communal involvement, whereas spiritual seeking emphasizes self-expression, both orientations express two basic personality constellations characterized by other- versus self-directedness (Blatt & Shichman, 1983; Wink, 1991). As argued by Blatt and Shichman (1983), an other-directed individual's chief concerns have to do with intimacy, giving and receiving, cooperation, and dependability. In contrast, self-directed persons place a greater stress on self-definition, identity, autonomy, and a critical appraisal of the world. As a result, although we expected that both would be associated with successful functioning in late adulthood, we also anticipated that religiousness and spirituality would be characterized by different dispositions toward the self and social participation.

We investigated the relation between religiousness, spirituality, and generativity (defined by Erikson, 1963, as selfless concern for the welfare of future generations) using self-report (the Loyola Generativity Scale; McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992) and observer-based (the CAQ, Generativity Scale; Peterson & Klohnen, 1995) measures of the construct (Dillon & Wink, *in press-b*). We found that both religiousness and spirituality were positively related to generativity in late adulthood. As anticipated, however, the generative concerns associated with religiousness showed a greater other-directed emphasis on giving and interpersonal care, whereas those related to spirituality were more strongly expressed in terms of a self-directed concern with having an impact on others and leaving a legacy that would outlive the self (Dillon & Wink, *in press-b*).

Befitting an approach to religion that emphasizes dwelling over seeking, religiousness was positively associated with the Norm-Favoring scale of the California Psychological Inventory (CPI; Gough & Bradley, 1996), meaning that high scorers on religiousness tended, for example, to accept traditional rules of social conduct. Religiousness was also positively related to a measure of well being via positive relation with others (Ryff, 1989) and to scores on Harlow and Cantor's (1996) measure of everyday involvement in social activities with family and friends and in community service (Wink & Dillon, *under review*). Befitting an approach to religion that emphasizes seeking over dwelling, spirituality was positively related to the CPI's Self-Realization scale, meaning that highly spiritual individuals tended, for example, to emphasize the importance of self-actualization (Wink & Dillon, *under review*). Spirituality was also positively related to Ryff's (1989) measure of well being via personal growth and to scores on Harlow and Cantor's checklist of involvement in creative and knowledge building activities.

Despite a focus on the self and personal growth, spirituality was not related to narcissism (measured using Wink and Gough's (1990) CPI Narcissism scale) (Wink & Dillon, *under review*). Notwithstanding concerns, therefore, about the selfish and egocentric aspects of spirituality (e.g., Bellah et al., 1985), in late adulthood both religiousness and spirituality were associated with generativity and a purposeful engagement in everyday activities, what Erikson (1963) saw as hallmarks of successful aging.

Moreover, the concurrent pattern of association between religiousness and measures of other directedness in late adulthood could be predicted equally well with measures of religiousness scored in early

adulthood, a time interval of close to 40 years. The concurrent pattern of association between spirituality and self-directedness in late adulthood could be predicted from measures of spirituality from middle adulthood (a time interval of 15 years) but not before, reflecting perhaps the fact that, as indicated, spirituality was primarily a post mid life phenomenon in the IHD sample (Wink & Dillon, under review).

Religiousness as a buffer against adversity. Because late adulthood accelerates the inevitable prospect of interpersonal losses and declining health, there is interest in knowing whether religiousness and spirituality buffer the individual's self-esteem against adversity. We explored this question by investigating the interrelation between religious orientation, poor physical health, and life satisfaction for the study participants in late adulthood (age 70s) (Wink & Dillon, 2001). In the sample as a whole, we did not find a direct relation between religiousness and life satisfaction, measured with the Life Satisfaction Index (LSI) of Neugarten, Havighurst, and Tobin (1961); the correlation between the two constructs was close to zero. However, when we divided the IHD participants into four groups based on whether or not they had a serious chronic illness and whether or not they were high in religiousness, a more complicated pattern emerged. As expected, among individuals in good physical health variation on religiousness did not impact life satisfaction; both groups showed very high levels of satisfaction. Among individuals who had chronic physical problems, however, being religious did make a difference to life satisfaction. Whereas religious individuals in poor health did not differ in life satisfaction from healthy individuals, non-religious individuals who were in poor physical health were significantly lower in life satisfaction than the rest of the sample. The same pattern of results was obtained in longitudinal analyses substituting religious involvement scored in late middle (age 50s) rather than late adulthood (age 70s) (Wink & Dillon, 2001).

Preliminary analyses indicated that spirituality does not have the same buffering effect as religiousness in times of ill health. If further substantiated, this finding suggests that whereas spirituality may increase in response to negative events (Wink & Dillon, 2002), it may not buffer against the experience of negative affect in the face of life's adversities. It may be perhaps that highly spiritual individuals who are open to experience are freer to admit or explore feelings of personal distress than are religious individuals. In turn, the experience of these negative feelings may have the long-term benefit of stimulating personal growth.

Dwelling and Seeking in Individual Lives

This section presents two case studies from the IHD study exploring the relation between religiousness and spirituality. To assure that they were representative of our quantitative findings, the two cases were selected from among participants who scored above the sample mean on measures of generativity, life satisfaction, and a summary index of involvement in seven life tasks of everyday life. Whereas Anne¹ received the highest possible score of 5 on religiousness and a low score on spirituality, Melissa received the highest possible score of five on spirituality and a low score on religiousness. Typical of the sample as a whole, both women come from an upper class background.

Anne. Anne was born into a “seriously religious” Mormon family with a strong emphasis on family life and unity. When interviewed in her 30s, Anne recollected with great warmth the first seven years of her life playing with her sister and brother to whom she was close both emotionally and in age. Anne’s father was a successful accountant and devoted family man. Anne felt that she had a special relation with him based, in part, on their joint appreciation of classical music but marred somewhat by Anne’s relatively poor grades and lack of academic ambition. Anne’s mother was a serious scholar of Mormon scripture and an active church member who carried the weight of her children’s religious socialization. The main source of discomfort in the family, especially for the children, was that they lived with their grandmother, who was described by Anne as depressed and overtly critical of others.

Adolescence was a more conflicted time for Anne whose budding sexuality posed a serious challenge to her internalized moral strictures. Although a regular church attendee and a member of a Mormon youth group, Anne’s interest in religion was somewhat superficial. For example, at age 17, although she expressed an interest in going on a mission after finishing high school, she seemed quite unaware of what this commitment actually entailed.

Anne disappointed her father by completing only two years of college before taking a secretarial job at a brewing company, a position she held for six years. While at college, Anne became engaged to a young man with whom she had a very tempestuous, albeit platonic, relationship that oscillated between “spasms of ecstasy and despair.” Eventually Anne married Charles, a much more stable, down to earth, and mature young man who was also favored by Anne’s parents. Charles subsequently became a well-respected nuclear engineer, a lay leader in the Mormon Church, and a writer of books on near death experiences.

Anne experienced some problems in adjusting to married life. She missed having space of her own, felt guilty over sex, and, after the birth of her son, was lonely for the company of her colleagues at work. After the birth of twin boys three years later, however, Anne's sense of well being improved dramatically. With a new sense of confidence and poise, Anne became an active member of her congregation, leading a women's church group, and canvassed for local politicians. While her four children were still living at home (she had a daughter several years after the twins), Anne and Charles became temporary foster parents to four children, a practice encouraged at the time by the Mormon Church.

In 1977, Anne and her family moved to Utah where Anne continued her involvement in various social, communal, and religious activities. Reflecting her belief that "there is nothing more important than people" (Anne at age 54), Anne worked hard to maintain a good relationship with all of her four children and in her 60s was proud of the fact that her three daughters-in-law considered her to be their best friend. Anne and Charles set aside one day every year for a shared birthday celebration of their 15 grandchildren. As stated by Anne, one of her goals in life was to reciprocate toward others the love and compassion she experienced from her parents.

When interviewed at the age of 68, Anne continued to express her commitment to maintaining positive relations with others. She had also developed an active outdoor sports life, enjoying skiing and biking. When asked about how she had changed as a person, Anne commented that she had become less selfish and had developed a broader view on life. She was thus able to accept her daughter's premarital cohabitation even though it clearly contravened her religious ethics. Unlike in early adulthood, Anne's behavior was no longer driven by rigid moral rules and feelings of guilt. Her religious outlook had broadened so that she was accepting of the validity of diverse religious beliefs, while her own deep belief in the afterlife, supported by her husband's research on the phenomenology of near death experiences, was helping her to live her remaining years to the fullest.

With her consistently high level of religious involvement, a strong emphasis on maintaining warm and close relations with others, communal involvement, and a concern for younger generations, Anne illustrates very well the life course trajectory and psychosocial correlates of religiousness. The only exceptional feature is that Anne did not experience the mid life decline in religiousness that was observed for the sample as a whole. The stability of Anne's religiousness, however, should not obscure the fact that the character of her religious beliefs changed

over time. Whereas her behavior as a young adult was largely governed by guilt and rather rigid moral rules, in late adulthood Anne had developed a more nuanced view of the sacred as highlighted by her increased tolerance. These qualitative changes in religiousness that are central to Fowler's (1981) notion of progressive stages in faith development are not easily discernible, however, in behaviorally anchored measures of religion as such as, for example, frequency of church attendance.

Melissa. Unlike Anne, Melissa did not have fond childhood memories. She describes growing up in a conflict-ridden family masked by a facade of social conformity, politeness, and good manners. Melissa's father, who had a managerial position with a Bay Area public utility company, displaced many of his insecurities onto his daughter, who lived in fear of his anger and the threat of physical abuse. Melissa's mother was controlling and critical, and negated her daughter's need for independence, insisting, for example, that Melissa should never close her bedroom door. Melissa's younger brother dealt with family conflict by siding with his parents, leaving Melissa as the family scapegoat. The family was not particularly religious. Melissa was baptized at the age of 8 or 9, but otherwise, did not attend church services.

During each of the four adulthood interviews, Melissa's memory of family life centered on a pivotal scene that occurred when she was in college: Coming back home after a date, she was locked out of the house by her mother who saw and disapproved of Melissa kissing her boyfriend good night. For Melissa this was the final episode in a long series of family betrayals, and following the incident, she married her boyfriend, Kevin, despite some serious misgivings. Not unexpectedly, the marriage turned out badly with her environmentalist husband lacking the capacity to create a nurturing environment for his wife and two children.

When interviewed at age 30, the "rock bottom" in her adult life, Melissa was depressed, felt alienated from her husband and incapable of taking adequate care of her son and daughter. Following her realization that she was beginning to mistreat her daughter just as her mother had mistreated her, Melissa entered therapy, and thus began a slow journey of self-discovery and spiritual growth. After a long separation, Melissa divorced Kevin, who subsequently lost his job, squandered a substantial inheritance, and died destitute. Living on her own with two children, Melissa obtained credentials as an adult education teacher and was thus able to supplement her income from selling pottery by teaching art classes to children and adults.

Melissa benefited considerably from psychotherapy as she developed insight into the feelings of passivity and lack of assertiveness that had contributed to her troubled interpersonal relations. After entering psychotherapy, Melissa started attending different Protestant churches, including a Unitarian one. Because “(organized) religion was such a social thing,” Melissa said she soon realized that it was largely irrelevant to her spiritual needs. In her 40s, she entertained the possibility of some kind of a living force but felt that its ways were unknown, and she seriously entertained the possibility of reincarnation. Melissa had a vision of the world as a total eco-system with all of its living organisms equally sacred; thus for Melissa, cutting down trees was an equally “irreligious” act as killing other living beings.

By age 54, Melissa had found an outlet for her spiritual needs. She was attending meditation groups, getting involved in Jungian psychology, had embarked on Shamanic journeys, and was involved in a drumming circle. She has also attended an Indian Ashram, a small Zendo with a traditional Japanese monk, and the Episcopal Mission in the town where she currently lives. From the early 1970s onward she developed the habit of writing down her dreams and treating them like a “running commentary” on her life that tapped the archetypal forces within her psyche. Melissa’s spiritual journeys led her to have out-of-body experiences that were very similar to those reported by Anne’s husband, Charles, in his books on near death experiences. Similar to Anne, Melissa used these encounters as confirmations of life after death, heaven, and in Melissa’s case, reincarnation.

When interviewed at age 68, Melissa was retired and lived a contented life on a four-acre coastal property she inherited from her parents. She maintained close relations with her adult children and continued to find satisfaction from doing senior peer counseling, square dancing, gardening, and giving financial support to environmental causes. Her artistic endeavors continued unabated although their focus had changed from ceramics to mosaics. She maintained her interest in finding out “what is true versus illusion” and used as her motto the phrase “consider possibilities, believe nothing.” Melissa interpreted this aphorism not as a sign of nihilism or of skepticism but as a reminder to keep an open mind and to try to experience different points of view.

Before her father’s death in 1989, Melissa confronted him about his abusive behavior toward her. This profoundly cathartic experience allowed Melissa to integrate her childhood experiences as an inevitable part of her life cycle and thus successfully complete the process of life review (Butler, 1963). At age 68, Melissa’s only source of dissatisfac-

tion was the absence of a romantic partner but she was hopeful that one day soon she would have a new companion in her life.

In sum, Melissa illustrates well the nature of spirituality in late adulthood and how it differs from religiousness. Like other highly spiritual individuals, Melissa enjoyed creative activities, she had a strong interest in personal growth and self-realization, and constantly sought to expand her knowledge of the self and the world. Despite her emphasis on self-directedness, it is not the case that Melissa was uninterested in others; after all she maintained positive relations with her children, valued friendship, and participated in social functions. Rather, her interpretation of these activities and the meaning that she derived from them made her different from Anne. For example, in contrast to Anne's concern for the welfare of the women in her church group, Melissa cared about the health of the global eco-system. While her work as a peer counselor was clearly driven by altruism, Melissa also used it as an opportunity to continue her own process of self-growth. Even Melissa's propensity to see the sacred in everyday life had a certain air of reflection or premeditation. Nonetheless, Melissa crystallizes the ability of spiritual seekers to bring to fruition the quest of the medieval alchemists to convert base metal into gold—as argued by Carl Jung (1965), the search for spiritual rather than material riches had always been the true object of the alchemist's quest.

CONCLUSIONS

Recent years have witnessed a growth of interest in the relation between religiousness and spirituality and their impact on functioning in late adulthood. Attempts to study the empirical relation between these two constructs have been hampered, however, by uncertainty about issues of definition and measurement. In our research, following Fromm (1950), Wuthnow, (1998), and Roof (1999), we have use the metaphors of dwelling and seeking to operationalize these two constructs and study their concurrent and longitudinal implications for psychosocial functioning in late adulthood. In doing so, we do not claim to have captured all the meanings or facets of religiousness or spirituality. Nonetheless, we found the distinction between traditional and non-traditional religious beliefs and practices useful in mapping two successful, yet quite distinct, ways of psychosocial functioning in late adulthood.

On a theoretical level our findings enhance the understanding of the differences between religiousness and spirituality, and show the value

of conceptualizing their implications for psychosocial functioning in terms of other- and self-directedness. The relative stability of religiousness over the life course supports the view of adulthood as a time of little personal change. Yet, the fact that spirituality gains in salience beginning with middle adulthood adds weight to the idea of older age as a time of growth in, and development of, characteristics that are distinct to this phase of the life cycle. Our findings also have practical implications for health professionals and gerontologists. It is important to know, for example, that in late adulthood highly religious individuals are likely to benefit more from having a strong social support network than are highly spiritual individuals. On the other hand, because of their interest in personal growth and introspection, highly spiritual individuals are likely to gain more from reviewing their lives than are individuals who are high on religiousness. Religiousness, but not spirituality, appears to act as a buffer against the loss of life satisfaction resulting from poor physical health. In contrast, only spirituality tends to grow in response to the experience of negative life events. Although different, it is clear that both religiousness and spirituality offer valuable resources for successful psychosocial functioning in older age.

NOTE

1. All names in this section are pseudonyms.

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