

## Spirituality – a load of mumbo jumbo or good for your health?

**Dr William Bloom, who prepares to launch a groundbreaking new approach to Spiritual Health on Monday 25 March, says leading a spiritual life can bring major health benefits, backed up by science, but he also warns of the dangers**

[Dr William Bloom](#), one of the most respected pioneers of modern spirituality, who will launch a cutting-edge new approach to spiritual health at [St James's Church](#), Piccadilly on Monday 25 March (7pm-8.30pm), claims spiritual practice brings huge health benefits, citing a large body of scientific evidence to support his claims.

However, Dr Bloom, Founder of the [Spiritual Companions Trust](#), whose new approach is succinctly encapsulated in a smart, user-friendly booklet entitled [Your Spiritual Health Programme](#), advises that it's also important to be aware of the risks of spirituality.

**Dr Bloom, author of 20 books, who has a PHD in political psychology from London School of Economics, says:**

“A wealth of scientific evidence demonstrates that spiritual practice improves your physical, emotional and psychological health. This is because spirituality helps to dismantle existential angst. It can reduce stress and anxiety, and help bring your body and mind into a state of healthy balance. There is much evidence to clearly indicate that a belief in spirituality can help people sustain their wellbeing and recover more easily from illness.

“However, it's important to be clear and open about the risks. For some people spiritual practice can jeopardise mental health. Fundamentalism and the inability to engage in discussion about one's beliefs is a good example. Spirituality can also slide people down a spectrum of delusion and excitement into full blown psychosis. To reduce these risks, getting guidance and support from a qualified and experienced spiritual advisor can be very helpful.”

### The health benefits

Until more recently, the benefits of spirituality have remained hard to quantify, but the new [Your Spiritual Health Programme](#) points to a rigorous evidence base of over 3000 peer-reviewed scholarly research papers from around the world detailing the positive benefits for physical and mental health. Many of these can be found under the research umbrella of the Duke University Centre for Spirituality, Theology and Health in the United States. There is also growing evidence for the health benefits of being kind, as well as for the health benefits of mindfulness and meditation.

The ‘Science & Evidence’ section of *Your Spiritual Health Programme* reports that spirituality improves health in a number of ways: Good for the endocrine system, the gut and the heart, spiritual practice can also calm the brain, soothe the nervous system, boost the immune system and reduce the risk of illness. Furthermore, the programme claims spirituality also brings psychological benefits, such as increased confidence and happiness, improved communications skills and a greater sense of connection to others and your wider community.

*Your Spiritual Health Programme* offers a simple, accessible way for anyone to enjoy spiritual health, free from the dogma and conflict associated with traditional religions. “*Recognising the jewels at the heart of all the world's faiths and welcoming diversity, this is the first accessible programme to make explicit how spiritual health works and how to achieve it,*” says Dr Bloom. “*And unlike many self-help approaches, which can be overly self-focused and narcissistic, we also place a strong emphasis on care and service to others.*”

**Professor David Peters MD, Clinical Director at the Centre for Resilience, Westminster University, says:** “Grounded in reliable physiology and psychology *Your Spiritual Health Programme* is relevant to all those involved in health care. It reflects the Royal College of Psychiatrist's view of spirituality as a universal human quality independent of religion.”

Following the London launch of *Your Spiritual Health Programme* on Monday 25 March, over 60 [Spiritual Health Taster](#) events will follow around the UK leading up to World Health Day on Sunday 7 April. Tasters open to the public include two events at The Findhorn Foundation in Scotland on 27 March and 3 April, and two events with Dr Bloom at the Avalon Community Centre in Glastonbury on Tuesday 2 and Wednesday 3 April. For details of the various public events visit [yourspiritualhealth.org/taster-events](http://yourspiritualhealth.org/taster-events).

***Dr William Bloom's 'Nine Top Health Benefits of Spirituality' are attached***

**For more information about Dr Bloom's talk at St James's Church on 25 March visit:**  
<https://www.alternatives.org.uk/event/spiritual-health---new-wellbeing-frontier>

**For details of Spiritual Health Taster Events happening around the UK, 25 March – 7 April, visit:**  
<http://yourspiritualhealth.org/taster-events/>

**To buy a hard copy of *Your Spiritual Health Programme* or download your free digital copy, visit:**  
<http://yourspiritualhealth.org>

**PRESS IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE IN THIS [DROPBOX](#)**

**Dr William Bloom and other Spiritual Companions are available for interview**

**For Media Enquiries contact Will Gethin at Conscious Frontiers:**  
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Notes to Editors:

- For Media Resources relating to *Your Spiritual Health Programme*, visit: <http://yourspiritualhealth.org/media/>
- For a summary of global research into the scientific evidence for the health benefits of spirituality, see the Duke University Centre for Spirituality, Theology and Health, especially their monthly journal Crossroads. *Your Spiritual Health Programme* also recommends the following publications: *Handbook of Religion and Health*, Harold Koenig, Dana King & Verna B. Carson, Oxford University Press, 2012; *Oxford Textbook of Spirituality in Healthcare*, Mark Cobb & Christina Puchalski (Editors), Oxford University Press, 2014; *Why Religion and Spirituality Matter for Public Health: Evidence, Implications and Resources*, Doug Oman (Editor), Springer, 2018
- To order printed copies of *Your Spiritual Health Programme* at a cost of £2.00 each, including post & packaging, visit <http://yourspiritualhealth.org>. The programme includes guided exercises throughout, and audio for these exercises can be listened to on the website
- The website also provides a service supporting individuals and small groups in going through the programme. If you're interested in support as an individual or small group, contact Diana Brown at the Spiritual Companions Trust: 01458 555008; [diana@spiritualcompanions.org](mailto:diana@spiritualcompanions.org). If enquiring on behalf of an organisation, contact Ruth Jolly: 07974 266108; [ruth@spiritualcompanions.org](mailto:ruth@spiritualcompanions.org)
- If you are interested in being trained to support others develop their spiritual health, the Spiritual Companions Trust offers a nationally recognised qualification, the Diploma in Practical Spirituality and Wellness (Ofqual Register Crossfields Institute Level 3). For more information visit: [www.spiritualcompanions.org](http://www.spiritualcompanions.org)
- For more information about Dr William Bloom visit: [www.williambloom.com](http://www.williambloom.com)