

Principle and Foundation  
In  
Spiritual Direction

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The human heritage of experience with God, the sacred source of all life, is indeed a rich and diverse one. The paths to God are many, and each one highlights a unique doorway into understanding and connectedness with the source of life. We travel our paths of faith to better come to know our role, our purpose and our part in the mystery of creation. Our range of understanding and our experience of God can extend from a sense of personal, loving intimacy into universal and transcendent truths. At the heart of each unique pathway to God is our yearning to know that we are in some way at one with and intimately connected to the deep heart of life.

Principle and Foundation is a concept first put forth by Ignatius of Loyola in his program of spiritual exercises in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. This thesis introduces the idea of Principle and Foundation as a universal structure underlying any system of core beliefs that order an individual's relationship with God, or the Divine Mystery. It identifies four key elements of Principle and Foundation, outlines how they are reflected in three spiritual perspectives, and illustrates how a spiritual director, attending to these four elements in a directee's foundational beliefs, can support a directee's deepening in their unique relationship with the Sacred.

Spiritual Direction, as defined on the Spiritual Director's International (SDI) website is "...the process of accompanying people on a spiritual journey.... Spiritual direction exists in a context that emphasizes growing closer to God (or the holy or a higher power)" (SDIworld.org). Another perspective from the same SDI website suggests that spiritual direction is a process of holding another on their path toward a deeper relationship with the spiritual aspect of being human. Someone who acts as a spiritual director serves as witness and support to others on their journey of personal discovery

into and with the source of sacredness in their life. A spiritual directee is one who seeks the assistance of another in deepening their relationship with the Sacred. God, the Sacred, the Divine, and Generative Mystery are terms used interchangeably throughout this thesis to refer to the sacred source, the heart within life.

Within the overall context of a relationship of spiritual discovery, Principle and Foundation is the specific expression of core, guiding beliefs that help to focus, shape and define a person's relationship with the Sacred. Each spiritual or religious path outlines core principles that help to order its understanding of connectedness between the individual and the Sacred. Uncovering and understanding the foundational principles that guide an individual's unique relationship with God helps to clarify the spiritual direction journey. The contemporary spiritual director must be able to grasp the operative dynamics within the directee's personal core beliefs in order to best serve as a companion and soul friend on the spiritual path.

## Part I – Elements of Principle and Foundation

As a nomenclature, "Principle and Foundation" was first used by Ignatius of Loyola as he developed and taught a program for deepening into a spiritual life in the early 1500's. It offered a statement of basic Christian beliefs that were foundational to the personal practice outlined in his Spiritual Exercises. The 'P & F,' as it has come to be called, describes the paradigm of love and humility that informed the Ignatian approach to religious life and practice. In this paper we will use "P & F" to refer to Ignatius' original work and "Principle and Foundation" to refer to a more general

context of statements of core belief found in the wider arena of contemporary spiritual practices.

The transformative experiences of love and humility are common to many of the world's religious streams. As Wayne Teasdale writes in his book The Mystic Heart,

I think we are going to discover in coming years that a more adequate view of the divine includes both personal and transpersonal reality. God is a loving presence, compassionate, wise, kind and merciful and an impersonal principle or ultimate condition of consciousness, the basis of karma, *shunyata* or emptiness, and nirvana. (26)

So, although across traditions the emphasis and practices may differ, credo dealing with the principles of love, desire and intention are common to established religions in both eastern and western streams, as well as common to contemplative mystics following a more singular calling, and in current times, to many ethical activists working with communal values and visions for social change. In meeting this wide diversity of approaches to spirituality in an interspiritual direction practice, a framework for noting and outlining core beliefs can be a useful tool for spiritual directors in support of the spiritual direction process.

***First Principle and Foundation by St. Ignatius Loyola***

*Man is created to praise, reverence and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul.*

*And the other things on the face of the earth are created for man to help him in the attainment of this goal.*

*It follows that man is to use all other things in as much as they help him achieve this goal; and he ought to refrain from using these things in so far as they are a hindrance.*

*Therefore, with respect to all created things in which we have a free choice, it is necessary to become indifferent (free, detached). Consequently, on our part, we should not prefer health to sickness, riches to poverty, a long life to a short one, honor to dishonor and so fall all other things.*

*Our one desire and choice should be what is most conducive for the goal for which we are created. (Ignatius in Veltri 10)*

As a statement, Ignatius' P&F points to the paradoxical experience of the individual who is deeply and personally loved by God and is also one tiny speck, in a vast, vast universe. It is this foundational experience of love, humility and awe which paves the way for a redemptive life in Christ that is central in Christian tradition. In looking at Ignatius' original P&F above, we can extract an overall structure directing our attention first to the purpose in life and then to attitudes and actions a person must take up in order to fulfill that purpose in God. George Ganss in his book, Ignatius of Loyola, suggests there are four elements of the P&F that form a master plan for Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises.

First, the P&F presents an inspiring goal – eternal self-fulfillment or saving one's soul as the purpose of life on earth; then it offers the means to the goal - creatures and things of the earth rightly and wisely used; it states a preliminary attitude for their wise use - making oneself 'indifferent' or undecided until the sound reasons for choice appear; and it

suggests a criterion of choice -Which option is likely to be more conducive to the greater praise or glory to God? (51)

We will use Ganss' four foundational elements - (1) a life goal in relationship to God, (2) a means to the goal in relationship with the world, (3) an attitude that supports one's activity toward God and (4) a criterion of choice, which I have interpreted as a 'direction for our desire.' I have used these four elements as a template to help recognize a structure of Principle and Foundation that can guide directors supporting seekers from many paths. Clarifying these elements with a directee from any faith tradition can help a director to understand the directee's core spirituality in a manner that will allow the director to better support their deepening relationship with the Sacred. We will develop the following chart to illustrate three different path's expressions of a Principle and Foundation.

	<b>Life Goal</b>	<b>Means to Goal</b>	<b>Attitude</b>	<b>Choice/Desire</b>
Ignatian				
Interspiritual				
Incarnational				

## Part II - Principle and Foundation in the Ignatian Tradition

The tradition of Christian Spiritual Direction as we know it began as an intentional practice within lay communities established in northern Africa in the 3rd century. These early communal members dedicated themselves to living a life in Christ, emphasizing the practices of asceticism, humility and obedience. Leaders of these

communities were the desert fathers/mothers (abba/amma), such as St Antony of Egypt, who were sought out as teachers by their good works and their perceived closeness to God. They developed initial Christian traditions of discernment and contemplation practices.

The traditions of these early teachers were carried on in the development of the monastic life ruled by abbots and abbesses. John Cassian, who lived in the fourth century, provided some of the earliest recorded guidelines on the practice of spiritual direction in his first work, The Institutes, in which he documents rules governing monastic life based on his observations in Egypt and Palestine. He founded two monasteries in France and opened the practice of mentoring in monastic life. Benedict of Nursia later integrated Cassian's guidelines into what is now known as the Rule of Saint Benedict (Hassett <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03404a.htm>).

The years of Ignatius of Loyola's work within the Catholic Church were also the years of Martin Luther's rise to influence with the Protestant Revolution. As documented by Wikipedia, during that time the Roman Church was in transition and under great pressure to respond to criticisms leveled against its doctrines and less than ethical practices. The Council of Trent (1545-1563) was a commission of cardinals tasked by Pope Paul III to establish institutional reform, and address the contentious issues such as corrupt bishops and priests, the practice of indulgences, and other financial abuses. While in its work the Council clearly rejected specific Protestant positions and upheld the basic structure of its sacramental system, religious orders, and doctrine, it did tighten the institutional organization, improve discipline and emphasize the integrity of the local parish.

New Roman Catholic religious orders emerging during this period were a fundamental part of this trend in reform. Ignatius' Jesuit order was one of the most effective of the new orders. As described in Wikipedia it helped to

...strengthen rural parishes, improve popular piety, curb corruption within the church, and set examples that would be a strong impetus for Catholic renewal. Characterized by careful selection, rigorous training, and iron discipline due perhaps to Ignatius' early military background ...the Jesuits strongly contributed to the reinvigoration of the Counter-Reformation Church. ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Counter\\_reformation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Counter_reformation))

The influence of the Jesuit order can be traced to its founder, Ignatius of Loyola and the way in which his personal call to faith gave expression to the spirit of the times. As Jay O'Callahan summarizes in his [Biography of St Ignatius](#),

Ignatius's experience had consequences because there was a rapport between it and the temper, as well as the needs, of the age. However one may view its ultimate source or enduring relevance, it was an experience that epitomized many of the spiritual tendencies then prominent. It was an interior conversion, it centered on Christ, it emphasized self-discipline, it was marked by independence of spirit and individuality, and it overflowed into a highly active apostolate. It bridged the gap between a religious dedication and a life of service in the world. It was an experience fully situated in the context of events, and it led by its very nature to an even deeper involvement in events. This total historicity of Ignatius's experience, it would seem goes far to account for the amazing force and

attraction it had. It has frequently been observed that Ignatius and the Jesuits mark a new stage or development in Catholic spirituality: a break with older medieval forms of piety and monasticism and the expression of a concept of the religious life more relevant to the times, more streamlined, so to speak, more engaged, more dynamic. (O'Callahan 14)

Ignatius of Loyola came into his faith with little background in Catholic study. In 1520, he was a 30 year old Spanish nobleman and soldier aiming for wealth and renown. At that time he was wounded in a skirmish against the French at Pamplona and sent home with a shattered leg to recuperate. During his slow and painful recovery he took to reading but found only a few books available to him, the gospels, the lives of Saint Dominic and Saint Francis and a few romance novels. He read avidly and with much time on his hands also spent long periods in reflection. He noticed his different responses to the books he was reading. The novels were entertaining but his enjoyment did not last; however, reading about the lives of the saints triggered his imagination and brought a sense of consolation that was long lasting. As he wrote later in his autobiography as documented by Mary Purcell,

And so he learned from experience how after some kinds of thought one is left sad, and after others joyful. And, little by little, he came to know by what different thoughts a man may be agitated. And this was the first reasoning he did on the things of God; afterwards, when making the spiritual Exercises, it was this experience of his own which enlightened him as to the diverse inspirations by which men are swayed....(46)

As his recovery progressed, Ignatius decided to” follow the example of the saints and to do deeds more striking than their own” (Purcell 47). He set out on a pilgrimage to Montserrat, gave up his fine clothes and privileged life style and undertook to live as a hermit at Manresa. As he records in his autobiography, “All the time he reflected constantly on the Scriptures and paid attention to what was happening to him” (Purcell 48). His retreat at Manresa, reflecting by the river Cardoner, opened an experience of conversion.

At this time God treated him as does a schoolmaster a boy whom he teaches...whether this was because of his stupidity and ignorance of mind or because he lacked a teacher or because of the gift God Himself had bestowed on him – that intense will he had to serve Him – he does not know. But he thought and has always thought since that God was his teacher at this time. (Purcell 71)

The Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius of Loyola evolved throughout his lifetime. They were first published in Latin in 1548, but Ignatius continually added notes and reflections throughout his life. They were intended as a practical guide for individuals following a path of faith and service to God’s purpose. Together they outline a 30 day retreat with practices and focus for contemplation based on the life of Christ. They begin with the statement of P & F, the focus of which is to acknowledge our purpose in God’s creation. As suggested by Tim Muldoon in an article on post modern spirituality in the Way magazine,

This is a deceptively simple statement of what one must embrace in order to progress spiritually... Ignatius suggests that we are created to praise,

reverence and serve God our Lord, and by these means to achieve our eternal well-being. This observation rests upon an understanding of what constitutes the spiritual life, namely, the pervasive practice of responding to an ever-present God. Ignatius' foundational experience was that one could find God in all things. (90-91)

As a preamble to all the exercises, the P& F directs the retreatant first to his or her purpose in life and then highlights attitudes and actions they must take up in order to fulfill this purpose in God. As Fr. John A Hardon, SJ, describes the P & F of the Ignatian exercises in his online article 'All My Liberty',

It synthesizes St. Ignatius' doctrine of Christian perfection. There is an emphasis on man's free cooperation with divine grace, a logical adaptation of the best means to a desired end, and a concept of generosity in dealing with God which many theologians consider the essential elements of Ignatian spirituality. (1)

This chart encapsulates the Ignatian Goals, Attitudes, and Desires

	<b>Life Goal</b>	<b>Means to Goal</b>	<b>Attitude</b>	<b>Desire</b>
Ignatian	Self-fulfillment within God's grace	Choice - Wise use of Creation	Indifference	Greater praise and glory to God

The Ignatian P&F is based on the principles of the absolute primacy of God as creator/director of life on earth and of a condition of a ‘fall’ or separation between humanity and God as creator/director. As a practice in the Christian lineage, the Ignatian tradition attends to the re-establishment of a personal loving relationship and connection with the Divine as a way to bridge the separation between God’s life (heaven) and human life (earth). It is from the place of intimacy and connection that one knows God’s will and can meet the challenge of sin and distraction and reintegrate one’s experiences on earth in the gift of this grace. It follows that ones’ life goal is to align oneself with the Divine will and open the possibility of a deeper connection to grace and redemption, the “saving” of one’s soul.

The means to the goal is the right use of creation. Ignatius states that God created all manner of things on the earth to help us toward our goal so that “It follows that man is to use all other things in as much as they help him achieve this goal; and he ought to refrain from using these things in so far as they are a hindrance” (Ignatius, interpreted in Fleming 22). Within the Ignatian tradition, self-discipline and self-direction were key ingredients to meet the opportunities and choices of daily life. Implicit at this point is the reality that mankind as a free agent must choose among various creatures, and that “on this choice depends his eternal salvation” (Hardon 2). All creation belongs to God and each person must make their choices as to how to use that creation to praise and serve God.

The attitude Ignatius suggests is one of indifference or detachment from the things of the earth. As interpreted by David Fleming, SJ on the Marquette University website,

In everyday life, then, we must hold ourselves in a balance before all of these created gifts insofar as we have a choice and are not bound by some obligation. We should not fix our desires on health or sickness, wealth or poverty, success or failure, a long life or short one. For everything has the potential of calling forth in us a deeper response to our life in God.

(<http://www.marquette.edu/umi/reflections/mr092203.shtml>)

Ignatius' orientation to indifference was not to suggest non-involvement with life but rather balance in all things such that the individual is not pulled away from a life with God as the primary focus of their commitment. Freedom is a theme in this framework but it is freedom to focus individual service toward the enhancement of the glory of God.

The fourth element in the chart is the element of desire which serves as the focus for making choices that can lead toward the seeker's goal. Desire is seen as an energizing element in Ignatian spirituality and it is used to motivate and direct the individual's relationship to God. The ultimate desire in this tradition is for greater praise, honor and service to God. "Our only desire and our one choice should be this: I want and I choose what better leads to God's deepening life in me" (Mannery <http://peopleofthebook.us/2007/05/04/the-first-principle-and-foundation>). The element of desire in Principle and Foundation serves to link and integrate the goal with action in the individual's daily life. It is the intent that focuses and interconnects individual choices, bringing the person's spiritual understanding into manifestation in their daily activity. Desire is the element that helps the "rubber to meet the road," so to speak.

In this tradition as in all others, work with the elements of Principle and Foundation is not a linear progression but a dynamic flow interweaving goal, means to

the goal, attitude and desire. A director's work with the four elements of the Ignatian P&F helps to focus the seeker more and more deeply into a personal relationship with God and the praise, reverence and surrender which are central in this tradition.

### Section III – Principle and Foundation in Interspiritual Tradition

Interspiritual tradition has its roots in interreligious dialogue and occasional interfaith encounters throughout history. Historically, interfaith dialogue came into a wider, more organized focus with the first World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago, in 1893. Since then interfaith exchange has steadily increased, particularly in the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as cross-cultural travel and world communication through electronic media has expanded. Suzanne Fageol and Freya Secrest mention this evolution of connection in their article, "Interspiritual Spiritual Direction" in Presence magazine,

...in the 1960's the Vatican II's conciliar document, *Nostra Aetate*, committed the Catholic Church to the recognition of truth existing in other religions and to a desire for exploring new interfaith relationships. In the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, religious leaders, scholars and writers such as Thomas Merton, the Dalai Lama, Thich Nhat Hanh and D.T. Suzuki began to actively to engage in interfaith dialogue and exchange. Worldwide interfaith activity has gradually increased and interfaith exchange in the last twenty years has become a growing area of interest and exploration for many individuals. (7)

In 1999, Wayne Teasdale in his book, Mystic Heart, first described the idea of an emerging universal spirituality and coined the term "interspiritual".

The real religion of humankind can be said to be spirituality itself, because mystical spirituality is the origin of all the world religions. If this is so, and I believe it is, we might also say that *interspirituality* – the sharing of ultimate experiences across traditions – is the religion of the third millennium. Interspirituality is the foundation that can prepare the way for a planet-wide enlightened culture, and a continuing community among the religions that is substantial, vital, and creative. (26)

Teasdale, a Catholic monk, had found himself spiritually challenged by the political turmoil of 1960s America, which had the effect of plunging him into a spiral of reflective turbulence which lasted three years. As a student at a small catholic college, he started visiting St. Joseph's Abbey, a Cistercian monastery near Spencer, Massachusetts. Here he came under the spiritual direction of the abbot, Thomas Keating, a founder of the *Centering Prayer* movement. At that time he also began a correspondence with Bede Griffiths, a Benedictine monk who had dedicated his life to the 'marriage of East and West,' and worked toward the rebirth of Christian wisdom in the light of the Vedanta, a Hindu philosophy based on the doctrine of the Upanishads. Teasdale visited Griffiths' Shantivanam Ashram in Tamil Nadu, India and for two years lived at an ashram or Hindu monastery nearby. Inspired by Bede Griffiths' example, in 1989 Teasdale became a Christian *sanyassa*, or monk, following the Indian traditions of monk hood and studying Indian texts such as the ancient Hindu scriptures of the Vedas. (Barnhart [bedegriffiths.com/wisdom/wisdom.htm](http://bedegriffiths.com/wisdom/wisdom.htm))

Devoted to his growing interfaith understanding, Teasdale was a leader in the Parliament of World Religions and an active proponent of many social causes from

homelessness to environmental responsibility. He helped to convene the centenary Parliament of World Religions of 1993 in Chicago, an event that brought together eight thousand people of many different faiths worldwide; and resulted in the *Guidelines for a Global Ethic*. (Council for a Parliament of World Religions website)

Evolving such interfaith interactions a step further, Teasdale identified a commonality within the mystical experiences underlying most religious traditions.

Religion and spirituality are not mutually exclusive, but there is a real difference. The term spirituality refers to an individual's solitary search for and discovery of the absolute or the divine. It involves direct mystical experience of God, or realization of vast awareness, as in Buddhism. ....

This mystical tradition, which underpins all genuine faith, is the living source of religion itself. (Heart 10-11)

Teasdale goes on to say that,

Everything stems from mysticism, or primary religious experience... It is therefore quite natural and appropriate that spirituality should become more primary for people as they grow in their traditions and discover more substantial and ultimate nourishment in the living reality of the source.

(11)

Interspirituality, like Ignatian spirituality, has been influenced by western social and cultural developments as it has come into focus. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century different faith practices were no longer limited to their original geographical location as people began to increasingly travel and connect around the globe. The first pictures of earth from space in the later half of the twentieth century captured world imagination and focused

an image of our diverse planet as one earth. The telephone and the world-wide web have increased global networking, bringing connection and familiarity with other ways of thinking and life experience. Today, artistic inspiration crosses national boundaries and manufacturing innovation links workers with needed resources around the world.

Within this web of increasing social, business and governmental networks, discovering commonalities within faith practices has also become important. Increasingly, the individual serves as a central point of integration for their own unique and diverse network of faith practices. At the time of the reformation, Ignatius' approach helped to free spiritual practice from a cloistered monastic tradition to become an active aspect of the everyday community mediated through the church. Today, an interspiritual view points to a core of beliefs identified as common to the diverse faith communities that often is integrated through an individual's personal experience, study in multiple practices and involvement in diverse spiritual communities.

In his seminal work defining the interspiritual perspective, Mystic Heart, Teasdale identifies nine elements leading to a goal of a mature interspirituality. These elements are key to the Principle and Foundation of the interspiritual approach that is currently finding its voice. Teasdale's nine elements are: actual moral capacity, solidarity with all living beings, deep nonviolence, humility, spiritual practice, mature self-knowledge, simplicity of life, selfless service and compassionate action, and the prophetic voice. The Principle and Foundation within the Interspiritual view upholds individual responsibility for serving a unitive wholeness. As an orientation it emphasizes the interdependence of individual and world as a path to reveal the foundational oneness at the heart of life. It attends to a relationship between the individual and the universal that is grounded in

action and service. It is based in principles of interconnection with all life on earth and mature self knowledge leading to an ultimate union with the divine that includes both immanent and transcendent experience.

Distilling these themes we focus our chart correspondences in the following way:

	<b>Life Goal</b>	<b>Means to Goal</b>	<b>Attitude</b>	<b>Desire</b>
Ignatian	Self-fulfillment within God's grace	Choice - Wise use of Creation	Indifference	Greater praise and glory to God
Interspiritual	Individual maturity of consciousness	Interdependence with all living beings	Deep nonviolence	Service and compassionate action
Incarnational				

In outlining consciousness as a foundation on the interspiritual path, Teasdale points to descriptions that have long been a part in mystical tradition and are now articulated by modern scientists such as Peter Russell in his work The Global Brain or physicist, Amit Goswami in his book The Self-Aware Universe: How Consciousness Creates the Material World. Developmentally, humans move from the low self-consciousness of infancy into the greater self-awareness of adolescence and then on into wider levels of other-centered adult awareness. In this stage of the progression the individual is still immersed in an ordinary, immediacy of experience focused on known

family and community. Further maturation of consciousness moves us into states of infinite creativity and intuition as we incorporate expanded states that bring an integration of mind and heart. At this level, Teasdale suggests,

Wisdom, love, and compassion join together in animating consciousness. Self-interest is transcended in a larger identity beyond ordinary life and perception. Consciousness and will conform to love through surrender....this stage of enlightenment is complete only in the sense of its spiritual maturity. (Heart 69)

M.D. Walsh, in illustrating his perspective of awakening to an interspiritual perspective, writes in his book, Essential Spirituality: The 7 Central Practices to Awaken Heart and Mind,

There, within ourselves, we finally find the most profound, the most meaningful, and the most important discovery any human being can make. Within ourselves we find our deepest self, our true Self, and recognize that we are not only more than we imagined but more than we can imagine. We see that we are a creation of the sacred, intimately and eternally linked to the sacred, and forever graced and embraced by the sacred. ....This is the aim of all our seeking, the answer to a lifetime of longing, the cause of the mystic's bliss, the source of overwhelming and enduring joy. ....This is the central message at the heart of the great religions. (Walsh 6)

Joan Borysenko and Gordon Dveirin in their book, Your Soul's Compass, also speak to this awareness as a foundation of a mystical, interspiritual perspective.

“Realizing and experiencing that goodness is the secret of life....That experience is the

common ground that mystics from all spiritual traditions describe... When we encounter the goodness within our own hearts, we recognize our true identity as a unique and meaningful part of life's heart" (xxvii).

As a means to the goal of mature consciousness, interconnectedness is an essential cornerstone of an interspiritual approach. Our perception of the unity underlying all of life creates our sense of solidarity with all living beings, the earth and the cosmos. Again, Teasdale speaks out on this contemporary perspective,

The awakening to our ecological interconnectedness, with its concomitant sense of the preciousness of all other species, raises the earth to where it becomes the center of our moral, aesthetic, economic, political, social, cultural, and spiritual activities. We have to learn to negotiate the balance between the individual and the totality ... Interdependence is an inescapable fact of our contemporary world. (Heart 5)

An enlightened consciousness is not possible without this deep experience of the interconnectedness of all life. As someone walks a mystical, interspiritual path an awareness of their intimate connection with everyone and everything else naturally grows, and equally, as attention is paid to the interconnectedness in life, consciousness expands.

Interspirituality does not exist at the expense of the natural world but in relation to it. This spirituality and those who are part of it understand that the earth, all of nature, and the cosmos itself have the highest priority for us. The natural world is the matrix of all value and concern. (Teasdale, Heart 239)

As Borysenko and Dveirin state, “Seeing ourselves as separate and controlling is where humans have gotten into the most trouble in the first place – like the mythical Prometheus who stole fire from the gods and was condemned to endless suffering as a result. Rather, our human role is to humbly yet boldly participate in a co-creative process” (170).

Teasdale again points to cutting edge research in science and two physicists in particular whose explorations have begun to show evidence for this fundamental unity of life. Fritjof Capra in his Tao of Physics suggests that quantum physics indicates that the universe is “a complicated web of interdependent relationship” (Teasdale, Heart 116). And British physicist, David Bohm, in his book, Wholeness and the Implicate Order, “shows that the universe and all reality is both enfolded or part of an implicate order and that this implicate order unfolds through time. Everything is part of an undivided order of wholeness, which always exists, and is the origin of all we see now in the universe” (Teasdale, Heart 116).

The attitude of deep non-violence that Teasdale defines as the attitude and practice of non-harming, is central to the interspiritual perspective. “The realization of the interconnectedness of all beings brings with it a sense of the utter preciousness of all life” (Heart 116). Teasdale goes on to say that, “Nonviolence adjusts our external actions to our inner attitudes, and makes them consistent with compassion and the demands of love. As we grow in spiritual wisdom, we become more sensitive to the rights of others, including other species. Gentleness, calm, patience, and humility are all aspects of nonharming” (Heart 117).

Nonviolence is strengthened by the quality of humility. “Humility keeps us honest, cutting away self-deception, falsehood and inauthenticity. It compels us to

always be true to ourselves and to others” (Teasdale, Heart 127). One example of the practice of nonviolence between faith traditions was illustrated in Borysenko and Dveirin’s Your Soul’s Compass. They reference the principles of authentic interreligious conversation established by 15 different spiritual leaders. These leaders were gathered at the Snowmass Conference convened by Thomas Keating, a Catholic priest and Trappist monk active in interspiritual efforts. One of their principles states, “The differences among belief systems should be presented as facts that distinguish them, not as points of superiority” (5). At Snowmass participants were asked to speak *from* their tradition, but not *for* their tradition in terms of dogma, upholding a practice of nonviolence in the way they spoke and listened to each other.

The interest to be of service is the motivating energy at the heart of an interspiritual practice. “Changing your motive for action from selfishness to service means using your free will for the benefit of something higher – unfolding the heart of spirit in action. Such right use of will creates...the outer path of action that leads simultaneously to inner illumination” (Borysenko & Dveirin 156). In Mystic Heart Teasdale states,

Regardless of the tradition, the effects of the spiritual journey on the person are the same....(they) undergo a radical refashioning of their being: the *theosis*, or deification of the person, a transformation that affects their entire life. ...They are free, and so are capable of giving to others and their communities. Their actions are consistently animated by compassion and love. (102)

In discussing the creativity of the heart, Borysenko and Dveirin quote Oriah Mountain Dreamer, a shaman and medicine woman, “We’re born two-leggeds, and if we wake up, we become a human being, a journey that’s never really ended. Becoming human is the capacity for compassion, the inclusion of everyone and everything that is” (178). Another teacher interviewed in Your Soul’s Compass, Suzanne Fageol, speaks to her experience of service, “The shift is from small, self-seeking behavior to operating more in terms of the greater good. It’s not me or them. It’s a co-creative partnership. How can I be served while serving others” (179)? She goes on to explain,

So many traditions have taught: *Lose yourself, sacrifice yourself, for the good of the whole*. The shift I see now helps both me and everyone else to thrive. There’s a mutuality there so that we all thrive. Then I become part of an energetic field of thriving that can change things. (179)

One further aspect of the interspiritual principle of service recognizes the responsibility of both the individual and the collective to take action in the face of social, moral, and personal challenges. A vital component in Interspirituality is an awakened function of personal leadership in the area of justice. The focus is not necessarily to be public or political in one’s leadership, but to stand as a witness to justice, and to be willing to respond with appropriate attention and action. The “sages” interviewed in Your Soul’s Compass concur that “Heart intelligence is what is needed to replace blame and judgment with the compassionate understanding necessary to implement enlightened social action”(189). And for those approaching the Sacred from an interspiritual stance, service and enlightened social action lead back to nonviolence and interconnectedness from a deepening maturity of consciousness.

#### Section IV –Principle and Foundation in Incarnational Spirituality

At the time in which they first appeared, each of our major faith traditions was an emerging spirituality. They expressed a new truth and understanding of the relationship between the Divine Mystery at the heart of life and the individual, and they were shaped by and helped to shape the emerging spiritual, cultural and practical wisdom of their time. The work of David Spangler is principal to one articulation of a new spirituality that is emerging in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Spangler defines this spirituality as “intra-spiritual,” since he sees it is “arising as a common experience within the body of humanity rather than a sharing of spiritual ideas between different religions. ‘Intra-‘implies within something considered as a whole thing.’” (Spangler Partnership email) He has termed it ‘Incarnational Spirituality’ as it brings into focus new perspectives for human engagement in a co-creative and sacred earth life. Its core principles recognize an interconnected dynamic between humanity, God and our world and suggest a perspective for experiencing love and connectedness within the sacredness that is inherent in our world and personhood, not outside of it.

Spangler is an American spiritual philosopher, researcher and self-described "practical mystic." He began his teaching career in 1964 as the keynote speaker at a national conference in Phoenix, Arizona, on "Youth and the New Age." Inner mystical experiences beginning in childhood caused him to leave his formal education program at 19 and take up an inner-guided apprenticeship that has led to pioneering work in the field of spiritual thought and cosmology. ([www.lorian.org/davidspage.html](http://www.lorian.org/davidspage.html)) His interest in new scientific thought and his fifty years of experience with inner sources have come together in his work outlining Incarnational Spirituality.

Incarnational Spirituality is one reflection of a larger worldview emerging out of contributions from ecology, science, and contemplative spiritual insights that reflect intra-connectedness and interdependency of all parts of the world, both organic and inorganic. This larger worldview has been called the “holistic paradigm,” and emphasizes the need to recognize, understand, sustain, and create wholeness within ourselves, in our relationships with each other and with the world at large. David speaks to the impact of the new scientific understandings,

But largely through the influence of science, we are emerging from a time when our culture thought in polarities into a time when we think in terms of dynamic systems, possibilities, paradox, and flow....We are beginning to have a deeper appreciation for complexity and wholeness.

[www.lorian.org/anevspirit.html#gpm1\\_1](http://www.lorian.org/anevspirit.html#gpm1_1)

In the worlds of science and consciousness there are more and more thoughtful individuals joining earlier scientist and priest, Teilard de Chardin, writer and philosopher, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, intuitive and social scientist, Rudolf Steiner. Modern physicists such as David Bohm, and Arthur Zajonc and mathematical cosmologist, Brian Swimme are a few who are exploring the territory of this holistic view. Swimme, with his work in the evolutionary dynamics of the universe puts forward the idea in an interview with Susan Bridle that “...it’s all one energy event. It’s one journey, one story, so that the qualities that are true of the human are in some way or another true of other parts of the universe.” (Bridle WIE interview) Swimme’s research demonstrates that we live in an “intelligent, self-organizing, living Universe,” and invites us to re-imagine our human approach to stewardship “so that instead of degrading the Earth's life systems,

humanity might learn to join the enveloping community of living beings in a mutually enhancing manner.” (Swimme [www.Brianswimme.org](http://www.Brianswimme.org)) The Dalai Lama, leader of the world Tibetan Buddhist community and advocate for science and consciousness dialogue sees that

With the ever growing impact of science on our lives, religion and spirituality have a greater role to play reminding us of our humanity. There is no contradiction between the two. Each gives us valuable insights into the other. Both science and the teachings of the Buddha tell us of the fundamental unity of all things. ([www.mindandlife.org](http://www.mindandlife.org))

Spangler links these newly recognized, holistic characteristics of matter and consciousness to a spirituality emerging from within incarnation itself. As he describes on the Lorian website,

Incarnation, though, is more than just embodiment. It is the dynamic process of connectedness and interaction that not only makes me part of something larger but enables me to be a participant in its unfoldment and wellbeing. I become a co-creator, helping that environment achieve a state of optimal performance and being that I call wholeness....

([www.lorian.org/anewspirit.html#gpm1\\_3](http://www.lorian.org/anewspirit.html#gpm1_3))

The Principle and Foundation of Incarnational Spirituality is rooted in the alchemical dance of universal and particular, of the whole and the part. It speaks to the mystery of wholeness that emerges out of the dance of relationship, a sum that is greater than the whole of its parts. Further, Incarnational Spirituality upholds the individual as capable of being a source of wholeness and blessing for the world, a microcosm of the

macrocosm. Within its partnership perspective, it works with individual identity to provide a focused place of self that can birth wholeness in the world. Following the principles of engagement and connectivity, the self identifies itself as a part of a greater whole. The principle of freedom facilitates the most complete interaction of individual and other in its dance of *holopoiesis*, a word derived from the Greek, *holo-* whole and *poies-* to make. The desire is to be a gift or blessing resulting in a dynamic and interactive flow of co-creativity that connects us with the love and wholeness at the heart of the universe.

Individuals exploring this worldview are seeking to explore a new relationship to creativity within themselves and with the world around them. They are looking to not only be responsible for their actions, but responsible to their creative and transformative capacities. They are exploring the art of *holopoeisis* – the creation of wholes- which Incarnational Spirituality sees as the gift and purpose of conscious life. As Spangler defines,

Wholeness is a state of connectedness that exists between things... We would say that wholeness is a boundary condition (that is, it exists in relationship between two or more elements at the point of connection where they meet). It is a boundary condition that fosters flow, connection, integration, coherency, and emergence. From a spiritual standpoint, it creates a condition in which sacredness may manifest.

Both incarnation and wholeness are manifestations of love.

(<http://www.lorian.org/anewspirit.html>)

Out of this we present Incarnational Spirituality in our chart with a life goal of *holopoiesis* through active sovereignty. The means to this goal is engagement. Freedom is the attitude most conducive to that engagement, and the desire that fuels this goal is to be of blessing.

	<b>Life Goal</b>	<b>Means to Goal</b>	<b>Attitude</b>	<b>Desire</b>
Ignatian	Self-fulfillment within God's grace	Choice - Wise use of Creation	Indifference	Greater praise and glory to God
Interspiritual	Maturity of consciousness	Interdependence with all living beings	Nonviolence	Service and compassionate action
Incarnational	<i>Holopoiesis</i> through active sovereignty	Engagement	Freedom	Blessing

From an incarnational perspective the goal of an individual is to come to *holopoiesis* – the making of wholes, through an active sovereignty. In his book [Incarnational Spirituality](#) David Spangler relates sovereignty

to a capacity for self-governance and describes it in the following way:

Sovereignty is the capacity and function within us that enables us to express our unique “isness” or being, our will and “I”-ness. It is the power

that enables us to govern our selves. Sovereignty is not a unilateral, private power; the capacity to do anything one wants. It is a gift bestowed from the “commons,” from the Whole of Life. (47)

Incarnational Spirituality speaks within a time in which our human impact on the world is being called into heightened awareness and accountability. Individually and collectively, we are being challenged with the need and the responsibility to foster wholeness, not separation. Individuality is not an end to achieve; it is a means to accomplish the unfoldment of the whole.

Incarnational spirituality is person-centered. It considers the sovereignty of the person as a core value embodying his or her freedom, integrity, uniqueness, and innate creative power. It is a foundation that allows the individual to understand and experience the nature of sacredness as embodied in an incarnate, personal life. (Spangler DIS archives)

*Holopoiesis* through active sovereignty is not the same as self-centeredness, or self-orientation. It is a state of being that links us with our own sacredness and thereby connects us with the sacredness in the world. It holds the paradox of personal self and sacred self in a unique crucible. It speaks to the need to uphold a new balance of self and other in order to enhance life on earth. Spangler further illuminates sovereignty by saying, “...our sovereignty is a fractal of that greater, ultimate sovereignty. As such, it cannot act to destroy or diminish itself,...Sovereignty supports itself wherever it is found; it is synergic in its action (Spangler, Glossary 27).

The means to a goal of interdependent sovereignty is engagement. The word “engage” as defined in the New American Dictionary comes from the Germanic “wadh”

– “to go, to step or to pledge. To engage is to step in, to commit to interact within a relationship” (433). Engagement is stepping forward into relationship with the sacred, with ourselves and with the world. Engagement moves us from activity to intimacy, to understand self and other as one continuum. It brings one to an intimate level of participation and commitment with the Sacred in all life. Incarnational engagement respects the other and seeks partnership to reveal a way forward that honors and serves all concerned. Engagement does not use things, it co-creates with things.

In an interview with Otto Scharmer, physicist and teacher, Arthur Zajonc describes his understanding of engagement through a scientific, delicate empiricism.

Science says to step back and gain a distance, because you’re inevitably going to make a mess of that which you are investigating. Goethe said, no, become more graceful, become more delicate in your observing. He said that there exists a delicate empiricism in which the observer becomes united with the observed, thereby becoming true theory..... this delicate empiricism allows one to come close to the phenomenon under investigation, as opposed to having to move further away. One actually unites with the object under observation. So, rather than disconnecting from nature, one is participating it. Through that participation, something happens.

(<http://www.collectivewisdominitiative.org/papers/zajoncinterv.htm#two>)

For the incarnational worldview, the physicality of incarnation is a tool for engagement and uniqueness that carries us further into the sacred and not away from it.

This immanent nature of spirituality is also supported by Brian Swimme's cosmological work.

Hydrogen gas is odorless and colorless, and in the prejudice of our Western civilization, we see it as just material stuff. There's not much there. You just take hydrogen, leave it alone, and it turns into a human – that's a pretty interesting bit of information. The point is that if humans are spiritual, then hydrogen's spiritual. It's an incredible opportunity to escape the traditional dualism – you know, spirit is up there; matter is down here. Actually it's different. You have the matter all the way through, and so you have the spirit all the way through. (Bridle, WIE Interview online)

Spangler presents the quality of freedom as the attitude through which our goal can be accomplished. It defines an active, open approach to engagement with the world and ourselves.

Freedom is the quality of balance in which energy flows and neither freezes nor explodes but nurtures, connects, integrates and builds. ... Freedom is not simply choice, it is the richness and depth of the capacity to engage and participate. It is a heightening of the energy state of a being....In other words freedom was a measure of the availability of creative energy and the capacity to use it." (Spangler, *Apprenticed to Spirit* 145-147)

Spangler's concept of freedom is closely linked to creativity and mutuality. Love is the underlying energy of this approach to freedom as he describes it,

...the answers, the energies, the healing, the blessing the world needs will come from co-creativity and a sharing of perspectives and wisdoms, not from dominance or submission. It will come from acts of love between us as fellow participants in the life of the world. It will come from standing together in freedom.” (Apprenticed to Spirit 143)

Arthur Zajonc speaks also to the value of freedom to be our unique selves.

Today we live the paradox of knowing the mystery of solitude and yet we seek genuine loving relationships. I see in you your complete difference from me; I see your complete uniqueness. Then, paraphrasing Rilke, we can say, “I’ll stand guard over your uniqueness, which is to say your solitude. I won’t stand back-to-back with you as a warrior to fight for your physical safety, but I’ll fight for your difference, your uniqueness. For your being different from me and all others.” That’s the way the contemporary world has to be. It requires you to be who you are, and I (<http://www.collectivewisdominitiative.org/papers/zajoncinterv.htm#two>)

The desire to bless and be a blessing is the energy motivating will stand guard over your uniqueness, your solitude, as Rilke calls it. the practice of Incarnational Spirituality. The American Heritage Dictionary defines blessing as “to make holy, sanctify. It is from the old German “to hallow with blood.” (141) It is the practice which translates the spirit of wholeness and love into manifestation, into form. “A blessing is not the function of a particular role. It is the natural expression of the fiery love and inclusiveness of our inner spirit. To bless is a natural human ability and anyone can do it.” (Spangler, Blessing 5)

No longer linked with the forced or sacrificial rituals of the past, in the incarnational worldview blessing has been identified with its essential nature, that of an act of gifting. Incarnational Spirituality recognizes that the desire to be more whole, to create wholes, is generated through the act of gifting of self; self genuinely given and received is the most intimate of connections. Done with freedom and by honoring differences, it becomes an act of whole-making, a primary act from which worlds are born. From an incarnational view the desire to bless and be blessed draws us into partnership with the Sacred, not only uniting with, but as partners, co-generating new sacredness in life. As Spangler describes,

Blessing is a two-way street: not something someone does for someone else, but something we become together in order that a spirit may flow.

Where two or more are gathered in the name of that which loves, that which connects, that which is compassionate, that which liberates, there blessing is also. (Blessing 9)

Arthur Zajonc describes a moment of blessing that can happen in scientific meetings,

When we're in those fabulous dialogues in the Mind & Life meetings, we're learning a lot from each other. But what's animating the meeting is ultimately the compassion and love that we extend to each other in those meetings.... So it's a mystery. You can't program it. It's a way of being with each other. It's a way of opening the heart to another, being vulnerable and being open.

(<http://www.collectivewisdominitiative.org/papers/zajoncinterv.htm#two>)

The desire to bless is a desire to participate, a choice to engage freely with another and it can take many forms. “A blessing was an invitation to openness. It was not meant to impress but to touch and to connect. It could take whatever form would make that connection” (Spangler, Blessing 9). The act of blessing is more conditioned by the openness and love of the one who gifts than it is by the specificity or logic of the activity itself. Blessing includes acts of service to others and expands the field to incorporate random acts of connection with no purpose other than the joy of wholeness. Moving within the framework of Incarnational Spirituality, conscious individuals, taking up their engagement with the world with freedom and a spirit of blessing create the conditions for *holopoiesis* in their life and the life of the world around them.

#### Section V - Principle and Foundation in the Spiritual Direction Practice.

*For modern men, who need to discover the meaning of God's sovereignty, the Foundation cannot remain a mere consideration, lofty and luminous as it may be. It must be turned into an exercise for acquiring awareness of the absolute primacy of God. An intellectual demonstration...would have little effect... Louis Beirnaert. (Veale 54)*

We have developed the above brief overview of three spiritual traditions to illustrate key elements we see underlying core beliefs that order an individual's relationship with God: a life goal, a means to that goal in relationship to the world, the attitude that best serves that goal and a direction for desire that opens one to the fulfillment of the life goal. This meta-system for Principle and Foundation can be applied to any spiritual tradition as a matrix or structural template to support an increased focus in the director for witnessing and honoring a directee's unique experience of a grounded

and integrated relationship with the Sacred. The traditions illustrated are only three examples out of the many different traditions. Our intent is not to compare or value them one against another. Each stream represents a complete and whole focus of attention for the faith practitioner. It is by attending to the flow of relationship between the expression of these four elements within any one stream that the spiritual director can best serve to highlight and support the dynamic heart underlying the directee's faith practice.

Considering this meta-system of approach to Principle and Foundation can be of particular help to directors when working with someone from outside of a traditional faith practice or with someone who is drawn to a more eclectic interspiritual approach to the Sacred where there are no norms or existing statement of Principle and Foundation. Attention to these elements can help the directee in building a coherent and sustainable foundation of meaningful spiritual practice. It is also helpful when a directee comes out of a different faith tradition and the director is not as familiar with that tradition.

In general, work with the elements of Principle and Foundation has two important functions in the direction relationship. It can help the director to focus and support the directee's experience of God as a resource of love and renewal in their life. This is true whether the individual's views aim them toward a relationship as a child of God or as a partner with co-creative responsibility or as some other form of connectedness. Secondly, the coherency formed by a balanced relationship between the four elements enhances an experience of trust, receptivity and responsibility within the individual so that they may expand in their experience with the Sacred. Strategies for work with Principle and Foundation flow back and forth between these two points of attention, a clarification of self in relationship to the Sacred and a deepening and widening of relationship and

coherence with the Sacred. Both, as Beirnaert suggests, must be lived to be of service to the directee.

In considering the four foundational elements in my direction work I find that a clarification of self in relationship to the Sacred emerges most clearly out of an experience of relationship with the Divine. With that experience we begin to build the structure for a life goal in relationship to God and a direction for our desire. One common practice in spiritual direction to support this discovery is some form of autobiographical reflection. Martha Kinnider, a nun and spiritual director in Ireland shares her use of autobiographical material to strengthen a directee's link to the Sacred in their life in the *Way* magazine:

With each one I began by talking of her present life experience, not merely the present problem, and then we looked at some significant event where she had found God. Without formally working at a full faith history this normally sparked off a looking back at the most important life events, and a realization of God's presence in them. At the first meeting this was planted as a seed which grew and developed in the weeks following. (133)

Establishing a reference to the deep foundational experiences of the life goal can also begin by having a directee identify moments of awe and wonder in nature. I was reviewing an autobiographical timeline with one directee early in our work together. They had come into direction feeling unable to recognize God in their life. As they reflected on their timeline, they spoke about a moment of joy and expansiveness around a particular experience of the beauty in nature that they had documented. It surprised them to consider this might be a moment of contact with the Sacred in their life. We shared a

time of silence together and using their memory and imagination to link to their earlier experience, they were able to open to a sense of the divinity in life and establish an ongoing touchstone for their contact with the Sacred.

The element of life goal frames a place of wholeness and coherence toward which our deepest desires seek to move us. The element of desire is that force which yearns and expands outward, but which also remembers and bring us back again and again to the coherence found in our life goal. In Spiritual Direction working with the energy of desire often focuses around strengthening tools of stillness and discernment in order to help the directee come to understand and direct this dynamic force within them. One of my directees had had several strong experiences of rejection in their life. They had come to protect themselves from new rejections with a protective reaction of withdrawal and anger. When a thoughtless response from an old friend triggered this habitual reaction, the client brought the issue into their direction session. They had competing desires, they wanted to withdraw from the relationship, but they also did not want to lose the friendship. We worked with a prayer practice to access a center of stillness to help them keep open to other possible responses. They worked with qualities of non-judgment and forgiveness in other reflection exercises. After some time with this work they were able to speak directly to their friend with an attitude of non-judgment and freedom and continue the friendship.

Attitude and Means to the Goal are elements that facilitate the deepening and widening of our relationship and coherence with the Sacred. Attitude contributes openness and possibility, Means to the Goal brings focus and effective action. Daily life brings many opportunities to apply many different approaches of attitude and action and

find that which best serves our spiritual goal. In my experience, work with rhythm is of particular support to the mastery of these elements because it helps to maintain a quality of movement and flow for the individual. One of my clients was feeling blocked about setting up a regular spiritual practice. She would make a commitment and then not follow through. She said any practice felt too “narrow” and “tight.” In our sessions she identified time in nature, journaling work, art and meditation practices all as meaningful elements in her connection with the Sacred. Rather than isolating them as separate activities and choosing only one, she began moving between them to create her own dynamic integration, and as time progressed she constructed a flowing attention to practice that was interwoven in all the activity in her life. As a part of this attention to a rhythm of integration, she began find ways to bring beauty into her work environment with an attitude of connectedness that benefitted herself, her co-workers and her patients.

Tim Muldoon offers an Ignatian perspective on the benefits of rhythm for integrating these two elements in his article, “Postmodern Spirituality and the Ignatian Fundamentum” in *The Way* magazine:

The encouragement toward rhythm is a gentle movement toward engagement and disciplined self awareness that strengthens an individual’s capacity to shape a space in their life for their faith goal. Here practices such as the morning and evening Examin of Conscience, a practice from Ignatius’ Spiritual Exercises, can be of help. A regular rhythm of attending to sacred presence moving through one’s life is a valuable part of focusing the experience of principle and foundation and building familiarity with its signature “note.” (96)

The particularity of action which can help to achieve our life goal in the world moves us from objective cognition to a more intimate “felt sense,” or full bodied knowing of how to meet our goal in relationship to the world. Practice in linking to the sensation of an experience allows it to become a part of an embodied awareness and from there it may be drawn upon to accomplish our goals. When a directee shares an experience of connecting with sacredness, if appropriate to the flow of the session, I might ask them to notice if that experience has a sensation or location in their body so they may link to and mark the unique sensation of this connectedness. One directee, who identified her experience of centeredness with her breath, continues to note the ease of her breathing as a marker and a tool to help her connect with God in challenging situations. If she notices herself holding her breath, she finds that bringing her awareness back to breathing deeply and evenly is a way of re-linking to her sacred core.

The dynamic flow between the elements of Principle and Foundation creates a living responsive system serving growth and awareness. In this same article referenced above, Tim Muldoon brings attention to Principle and Foundation as the overall container of an ongoing and expanding relationship with God.

The Ignatian Fundamentum (P&F) is not a once-and-for-all decision, but rather a formative process that knits God and the human person in an ever-deepening relationship. Greater and further imagination allows us to explore meanings, feelings and thoughts not previously considered.....  
(consider) what constitutes the spiritual life, namely, the pervasive practice of responding to an ever-present God. (97)

The perception of Principle and Foundation as a “formative process” engages us in a full life experience, not in a onetime event to be recorded and put away. Wayne Teasdale speaks to this deep seating of oneself in the ongoing experience of connection with the Divine. We can match our element, *life goal* to his articulation of surrender, *means to the goal* to his description of spiritual practice, *attitude* to humility and *desire* to the motivation toward compassionate action.

There are four essential requirements for successfully embracing a mystical path in the midst of the demands of family and work: surrender, humility, spiritual practice, and compassionate action. ....Each day, and in every moment of the day, surrendering to God, or to the greater purpose of our existence, is necessary. Relinquishing control over our lives to the Presence is essential if we really want to awaken and develop our capacities for intimacy with God. Along with this surrender, humility is indispensable....Humility is insight into ourselves, our motives, tendencies, gifts and limitation. It protects us from self-deception....regular prayer or spiritual practice is the foundation and core activity of any mystic. ....The final essential requirement is compassionate or loving action. What’s important is an integral experience of compassion: uniting the attitude or disposition of love and compassion with its fruits in acts of kindness and mercy. (Monk 46-47)

## Summary

The Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola with its introductory P&F statement offers a rich and widely used structure in the growing Christian spiritual direction tradition. Many modern and thoughtful scholars have contextualized its practices into 21<sup>st</sup> century language and experience. Underlying its specific language and tradition in the Catholic faith, there are universal themes able to inform and strengthen a deepening relationship with the Sacred beyond the any one religious tradition.

This thesis has developed the idea that Principle and Foundation can be seen as a matrix underlying any system of core beliefs that order an individual's relationship with God, or the Divine Mystery. It identified four key elements of Principle and Foundation, outlined how they are reflected from three spiritual perspectives, and gave examples of how a spiritual director, attending to these four elements in a directee's foundational beliefs, can support a directee's deepening in their unique relationship with the Sacred. It is my thesis that by considering Principle and Foundation as a matrix or structure of universal and interrelating elements, spiritual directors can increase their flexibility, sensitivity and responsiveness to the unique movement of spirit in their directee's lives. Such a matrix of Principle and Foundation elements allows directors to support a strong anchoring in the Sacred for individuals travelling the diverse and sometimes eclectic spiritual paths emerging in this time of global cultural awareness.

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