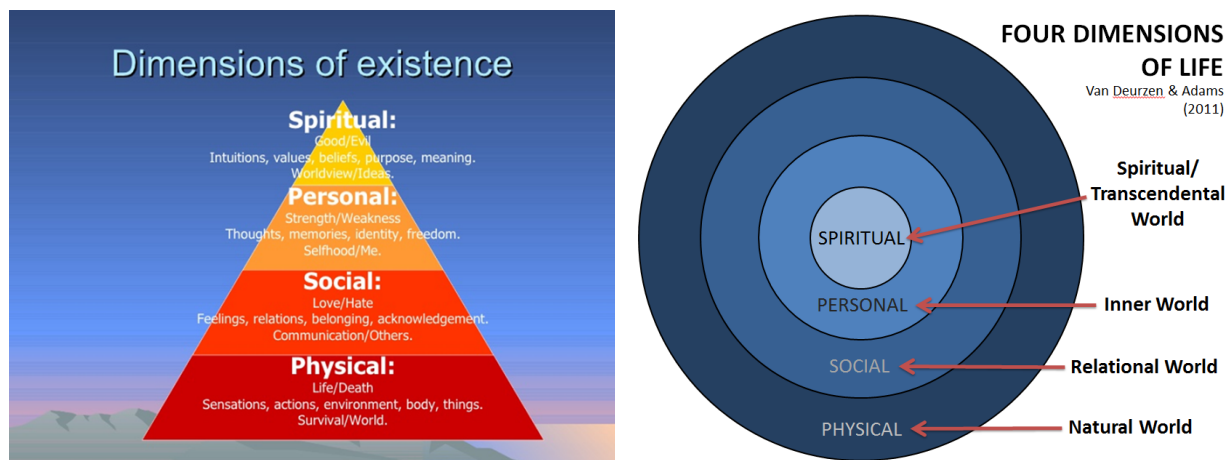


## The Spiritual Dimensions of Healthy & Happy Marriages

### (A) The Nature of Non-Religious Spirituality (Wong & Wong, 2015)

#### 1. Spirituality as a dimension of human nature



#### 2. Spirituality as the yearning for meaning

Frankl (1985) – Human beings have three dimensions: body, mind, and spirit

The spiritual dimension is the source of the will to meaning

The will to meaning is the need for self-transcendence

#### 3. Spirituality as morality or a moral compass

Frankl (1985) – Spirituality is the source of intuitive conscience, guiding us to do what is right.

#### 4. Spirituality as a yearning for the sacred (what is most valued)

Pargament (2013) – Spirituality is a distinct irreducible human motivation

The sacred place may be a burial ground, a temple, or an image of God. (Marriage is supposed to be regarded as being sacred.) Research shows that this motivation contributes in unique ways to well-being.

## **5. Spirituality as a yearning for oneness and connectiveness**



## **6. Spirituality as a broad vision for universality and brotherhood (transcending cultural differences)**

Fowler (1981) – In the sixth stage of faith development, people reach the spiritual maturity that envisions a universal connectivity which transcends individual cultural values.

## **7. Spirituality as intelligence (practical wisdom for daily living)**

Emmons (2009) identifies five components of spiritual intelligence:

- Capacity for transcendence
- Ability for heightened states of consciousness
- Ability to invest events with a sense of the sacred
- A resource to solve problems in living
- Capacity to show forgiveness & compassion

**(B) The Spiritual Foundation of Marriages  
(Wong & Wong, 2013)**

Couples fight often because they are unhappy with themselves and with their spouse. Their unhappiness is due to their failure to communicate their needs and their inability to meet their deepest needs for happiness and a sense of significance.

Communication needs to be based on authentic and intimate interpersonal relationship in order to understand what really matters to each other in order to live a fulfilling life.

Given the emotion-laden quality of couples' communication, especially stressful situations, learn to practice self-distancing and view each problem within a larger context. Self-detachment provides some space between the person and the problem and allows more rational discussion.

Hendrix's (2010) Imago Relationship Therapy teaches couples to replace confrontation and criticism with a reciprocal process of healing, which primarily consists of basic communication skills such as Mirroring (i.e., reflecting accurately), Validating, and Empathizing.

To reduce miscommunication, learn to practice active listening. We need to learn not only to listen with their **ears** and **eyes** but also with a compassionate **heart**, and open **mind**, and with the **spirit**.

To listen with the spirit means to be attuned to each other's silent cry for meaning and understanding. To communicate at the spiritual level is to understand each other's spiritual essence and inner space.

By practicing active listening at all five levels—ear, eye, heart, mind, and spirit—couples will be able to engage in clear and congruent communication and develop new ways to relate to each other.