Chapter 8
Restoring the Balance: Wisdom and the Spirit of the Age

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Abstract
Facing multiple challenges, from coronavirus to climate degradation, we need to re-examine where we are now and ask how individuals, organisations and society can move forward to a better future. Attention to issues, such as 'spirit' and 'spirituality', is a vital part of this movement. Based on a model developed to encourage relational aspects of health care practice, we argue that the complexity of contemporary issues requires a holistic approach incorporating three different angles: organisational culture, personal development and specific spiritual competencies. We explore how our culture is out of balance and suggest ways to build a better future.

Keywords
Spirit, spirituality, wisdom, restoring balance.

Shaping the future
During the Covid-19 pandemic one of the authors saw a child's painting in the window of a house in England. The picture of a rainbow and the earth was accompanied by praise for UK National Health Service workers, telling them 'you are out of this world'. Faced by the pandemic, inequality, racism, climate change and numerous other issues, our thinking needs to be 'out of this world'. We need to challenge the dominant unbalanced worldview of our time which is pushing the world towards disaster. We need to shape the future and repair the great post-enlightenment 'divorce' between 'objective' reductionist science and the subjective richness of lived experience (Wattis et al., 2019). In healthcare, we have found the terms 'spiritual' and 'spiritually competent practice' (Wattis et al., 2017) helpful in seeking to restore the balance between technical excellence and compassionate kindness. Spirituality is not esoteric but extremely practical in helping movement from the predominant world view to something more balanced.

What do we mean by spirituality?

Brief history of the word spirituality
The word 'spirituality' first came into the English language from 17th century French denoting direct knowledge of the divine or supernatural (McGrath, 2011). It derives from the Latin spiritus which serves as the root for words such as inspire (used both literally and metaphorically) conspire and respiration. The meaning of spirituality has gradually migrated so that it (and the related words spirit and spiritual) are used both inside and outside of religious understanding. While it is a 'slippery' concept (Swinton & Pattison, 2010) and hard to define, the issues of meaning, purpose, hope, values, and connectedness with other people (and perhaps 'the transcendent') are at the core of spirituality.

Metaphorical and experiential senses of spirit
When we talk about the 'spirit of the age' (German *zeitgeist*) or the 'spirit of an organisation' or a 'spirit of co-operation' we are using the word metaphorically. We are not speaking of something physical that we can measure but of something that nonetheless has a reality that, through the metaphor, can be grasped (and even 'assessed') by human reason. When we talk about our own 'spiritual experience' or the 'spirit' of a person, some would say that we are still using language metaphorically. Others would argue that we are speaking of an experience or reality that cannot be limited to metaphor but is a description of 'lived experience'. People will argue about how our experience relates to (ontological) reality depending upon their theory of knowledge (epistemology). For present purposes we will embrace a philosophical position of limited realism (King & Brooks, 2017). This combines a realist ontology with a constructivist epistemology. This holds that intangible phenomena such as culture, social forces and mental phenomena are as real as measurable physical

phenomena. It also acknowledges that we cannot remove subjectivity from our understanding of that reality.

Spirituality and philosophy in healthcare and life

Writing about the spiritual dimension in health care Swinton (2012) made the helpful distinction (based on neo-Kantian philosophy) between *nomothetic* and *idiographic* knowledge. Nomothetic (rule-based) knowledge is the kind that is studied by (empirical) science and is falsifiable, replicable and generalisable. It is usually advanced by testing hypotheses. Idiographic knowledge, on the other hand is based on experiential knowledge. No less valid and 'real' than nomothetic knowledge, it cannot be proved or disproved in the same way. Spiritual experience falls into this idiographic domain. Religion, one way in which people experience and express their spirituality, often involves practices such as attendance at services or daily prayer. These practices can be counted and are sometimes used as a surrogate for spirituality in research using quantitative techniques (Koenig et al., 2012). Qualitative methods can be used to study idiographic knowledge directly. Qualitative study may lead to the formulation of ideas that can be operationalised in a way that allows them to be reliably scored (and 'measured') by trained raters. Carl Rogers' (2003) client-centred therapy, with its principles of empathy, congruence and unconditional positive regard, has been verified by hypothesis-testing as well as qualitative research over the years (Kirschenbaum & Jourdan, 2005). There have been attempts to score spirituality through measures such as the spiritual wellbeing scale (Paloutzian & Ellison, 2012). However, this measure involves indirect scoring rather than direct measurement and relies on two subscales (existential and religious) potentially confounding existentialism, religion and spirituality. For a fuller discussion see Wattis et al. (2017, pp. 6–7).

Another helpful distinction from philosophy comes from Martin Buber whose work *Ich und Du*, published in German in 1923, has been translated into English as *I and Thou* (Kaufmann, 1970/1996; Smith, 1923/2010). Buber distinguished I-It experiences, corresponding to nomothetic knowledge, from I-Thou relationships which fall in the idiographic domain. He asserted that I-Thou relationships not only happen human to human but also between humans and other creatures and things, as when an artist looks at a landscape. This corresponds to Swinton's idea of how a human being can appreciate (relate to) a waterfall as a beautiful and inspiring whole (idiographic knowledge). The I-It approach would be to collect and analyse the water as H2O a (nomothetic knowledge). Buber asserted that we can also treat other people as depersonalised 'its' and this has increased as reductive science (and some strands of neoliberal thinking) have failed to recognise the importance of I-Thou relating. Carl Rogers had a public dialogue with Martin Buber (Anderson & Cissna, 1997). Tom Kitwood (1997), the originator of the concept of person-centred care for people with dementia, also acknowledged his debt to Buber's thinking. Kitwood (1997) summarised Buber's distinction between I-Thou and I-It nicely:

> Relating in the I-It mode implies coolness, detachment, instrumentality. It is a way of maintaining a safe distance, of avoiding risks; there is no danger of vulnerabilities being exposed. The I-Thou mode, on the other hand, implies going out towards the other; self-disclosure, spontaneity – a journey into uncharted territory. (p. 10)

Buber's work provides a link between transcendental, ethical and socio-psychological concepts of personhood.

One consequence of the 'Enlightenment' was a divorce between biomedical science, with its reductionist approach and the inter-personal aspects of clinical care. Though the biomedical approach has led to amazing progress in technical care, psychological, relational and social phenomena have sometimes fallen casualty to a focus on reductionist methods. This led Engel (1977, 1980, 1992) to propose an alternative *biopsychosocial model*. This is a systemic approach, allowing for the interaction between body, mind and the social dimension. It emphasises the importance of relationship (Borrell-Carrió et al., 2004) and potentially includes the spiritual aspects of care (Sulmasy, 2002). Person-centred and holistic care also include spirituality as part of care. They all embrace *I-Thou* as well as *I-It* approaches

The concept of spiritually competent practice and living

We developed the concept of spirituality competent practice to deal with issues around the variety of definitions for spirituality in the clinical literature and the problem of differentiating spirituality from religion. We believe it is also a useful framework for understanding how to live better in other contexts. Spiritually competent practice was made explicit in the PhD of one of our former colleagues at the University of Huddersfield (Jones, 2016) in relationship to Occupational Therapy. Her work involved direct observation of occupational therapists in practice followed by discussion to establish how they enacted spirituality in practice. We widened her description of spiritually competent practice to include other disciplines in health care. We currently describe it as follows:

> Spiritually Competent Practice involves compassionate engagement with the whole person as a unique human being in ways which will help them find and sustain their sense of meaning and purpose, where appropriate connecting with a community where they experience a sense of wellbeing, addressing suffering and developing strategies to improve their quality of life. This includes the practitioner accepting a person's beliefs and values, whether they are religious in foundation or not, and practising with cultural competency. (Modified from Wattis et al., 2017, p. 3)

Spiritually competent practice requires three elements to be present in some degree:

- Spiritual Competencies (which can be taught)
- Personal Qualities of compassionate motivation and engagement (which can be developed) and
- Opportunity (provided by political/organisational practices).

We believe that (with some modification) these elements can be applied more widely to life, society and the wisdom of positive change. For this purpose, the specific elements are described more broadly and considered in the reverse order.

Political and organisational culture (opportunity)

A culture that values wisdom as more than mere knowledge is important. Wisdom is more than a thinking tool, though it uses both convergent and divergent thinking. Before coming to a decision or judgement wisdom broadens the options and considers the issue(s) under consideration in their social, political and economic context (Wattis et al., 2019). Wisdom is compassionate and relates to others in a whole person (*I-Thou*) way, seeking balanced solutions to problems. Wisdom puts due emphasis on those things which cannot be measured but can be valued and evaluated qualitatively, like kindness, trust and compassion. Wisdom uses metrics in balance with other considerations not allowing itself to be governed only by what can be measured. Wisdom in healthcare management gives doctors, nurses and other clinicians time to attend to the need of patients for compassionate, person-centred, human interactions as well as for routine tasks. During the coronavirus epidemic, intensive care staff have maintained human connection between patients and their relatives even when visiting was not allowed. Wisdom in the governance and management of life more generally gives room for interpersonal connections and does not just focus on metrics. Later, we will consider the current state of society and how a wisdom that includes spirituality might improve the organisation of society and the workplace, leading to a better future.

Personal Qualities for compassionate engagement

Most people enter the helping professions with a strong sense of vocation, compassion and commitment. An over-emphasis on the technical aspects of training and 'professional distance' can educate the compassion out of people. Good healthcare education values personal qualities like compassion and the ability to be 'present' with people. We suggest that the same principles can be applied to develop people for a more balanced, wiser future.

Ontological development for compassionate engagement

Using multiple case-study methodology Ali (2017) investigated the teaching of spirituality in three English University Schools of Nursing. She found a lack of systematic approach and a hunger for learning and development in this area. She proposed a framework based on self-determination, ontological development, personal reflection and humanistic concern for others. Ontological approaches emphasise and facilitate authenticity and self-determination, presence, curiosity and commitment to care (compassionate engagement) (Ali & Snowden 2019; Benner et al., 2010; Hartrick-Doane & Varcoe, 2015; Kang, 2003). Integrating transformative learning practices, facilitating reflexivity, coaching and mentorship in health care education, can promote ontological development (Ali & Snowden, 2019). Just as embracing authenticity and recognising self-care needs enables personal transformation in health care professionals (Newman, 1999) it also can enable personal transformation for others. The reflective model, developed through Ali's (2017) study, SOPHIE (Self-exploration through Ontological, Phenomenological, and Humanistic, Ideological, and Existential expressions) can be applied in other contexts and is briefly summarised here.

The diagram (Figure 8.1) is a symbolic expression of an intuitively expanding self. As a drop in the ocean produces waves, so the person addresses basic issues, radiating from exploration of self, a sense of being and encounter with the outside world to an understanding of the importance of relationships and finding personal meaning in life (Ali, 2017). This model provides a series of questions that can be applied in all areas of life.

- WHO am I?
- HOW am I in the world?
- WHAT can I offer others?
- HOW do I relate to others?
- WHY do I exist / WHAT is the meaning of my life?

Considering these questions, through self-reflection and creative learning, can help develop an authenticity and capacity for compassionate engagement (Ali & Snowden, 2019).

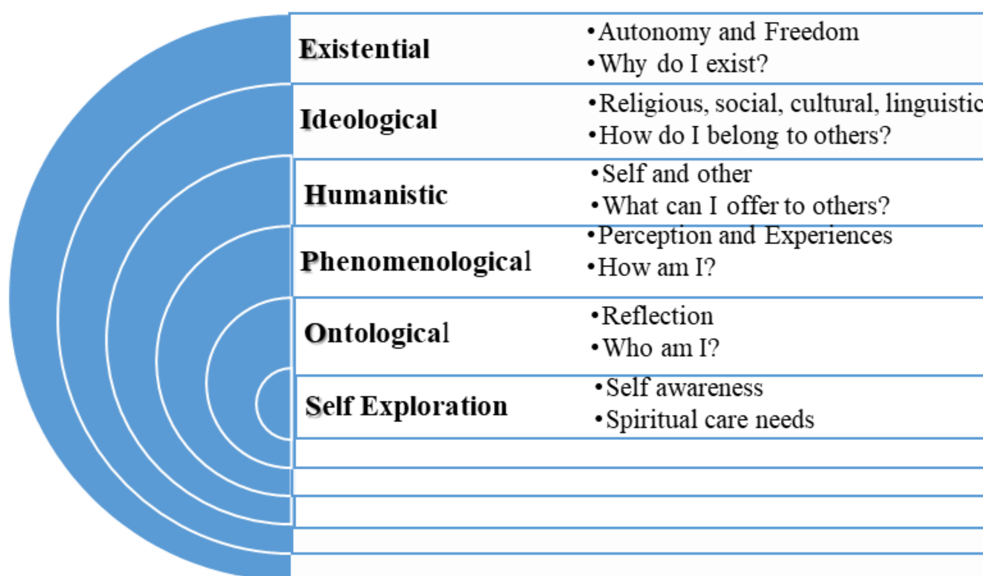

Figure 8.1: SOPHIE- A framework for approaching spiritual care needs (Ali & Snowden, 2019, p. 112, reprinted with permission from Springer).

Personal qualities of Availability and Vulnerability

The Availability and Vulnerability in healthcare framework was derived from the 'rule' of the (Celtic Christian) Northumbria community (Northumbria Community, 2020). The two key principles of availability and vulnerability were found to be useful in Rogers' own work as an Advanced Nurse

Practitioner. Using hermeneutic phenomenology, she studied other Advanced Nurse Practitioners' approaches to spirituality (Rogers, 2016). This involved interviews with practitioners, exploring their own experiences of spirituality in practice. Participants were then given details of the Northumbria Community's rule. A second interview, conducted around eighteen months later, intentionally explored the utility of ideas of availability and vulnerability in understanding the practitioner's experiences. A secularised version of the concepts of Availability and Vulnerability was found to be useful in operationalising spiritual care in Advanced Nursing Practice. Below we have expressed these principles for more general application.

Availability to self, others and the community.
Availability to self, calls for self-acceptance and reflection on the spiritual dimension of the meaning and purpose in one's own life. Availability to others involves being fully 'present' (*I-Thou*) with people we meet, offering time, acceptance and understanding. Availability to community involves being open to the needs of the wider society and taking action, within our sphere of influence, to help meet those needs.

Vulnerability to self, others and the community.
Vulnerability to self means being willing to accept that being genuinely available to people exposes our vulnerability. This includes acknowledging we can never 'know it all' and allows a more authentic relationship to develop. It involves embracing accountability, engaging in reflection alone and with others, accepting constructive criticism, sharing uncertainty in an open, honest and transparent way, and acknowledging mistakes and limitations. Vulnerability to the community means willingness to stand up for people in need, questioning authority on their behalf (Rogers 2016, 2017; Rogers & Wattis 2020).

Availability is the easier of the two concepts to understand and embrace. Offering time, care and presence (*I-Thou*) to those in need is a natural human response. Vulnerability is an inevitable part of Buber's *I-Thou* relating. Social Scientist and researcher Brené Brown has written and spoken extensively about vulnerability. In 2011 she gave a TED talk (Brown, 2011) on vulnerability which went viral. Her message has resonated globally with many people disillusioned with individualism. Brown (2010) suggested that many people feel spiritually or emotionally empty. She challenged people to "be seen" authentically, accepting the risk and uncertainty associated with this. She recognised that vulnerability is the birthplace of joy, love and gratitude and being vulnerable enables true connection, which is important to wellbeing. Vulnerability is seen not as weak but as courageous. Human to human connection is present when we are willing to be available to ourselves and others and when we engage with others with all our vulnerabilities.

The concepts of availability and vulnerability echo the theological virtue of love found in the Hebrew Bible חֶסֶד (*chesed), and New Testament* Greek ἀγάπη (*agápē,* Latin caritas) which suggest that love and caring compassion be offered to all. Within the concept of caritas, used in nursing literature, being present is paramount (Lindström et al., 2014). Alvsvåg (2014) suggested that caritas be offered with discernment which is moral, practical and professional. This discernment necessitates emotional involvement, an aspect of vulnerability (Martinsen, 2006). Templeton (1999) has emphasised that concepts analogous to *agápē* can be found in Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism and Native American spirituality. The Values in Action organisation, which adopts a broadly humanistic position, also has a cluster of character strengths (Values in Action Institute on Character [VIA], 2020) called:

Strengths of HUMANITY: centred around relationships to others which cover the same area of steadfast loving kindness as *chesed* and *agápē,*

1. The capacity to love and receive love
2. Kindness
3. Social intelligence.

This suggests there is a universality about the importance of these ideas.

Spiritual Competencies

Spiritual competencies tend to have elements that are specific to different occupations and contexts. Based on general spiritual competencies in healthcare (Wattis et al., 2017), we suggest that the three broad areas below can be used in summarising spiritual competencies in all areas of life:

- Managing and organising to enable and enhance consideration of spiritual issues.
- Spiritual self-awareness
- Communication and actions concerning spiritual matters

Managing for consideration of spiritual issues

In positions with managerial responsibility, do we strive to create an environment in which personal and spiritual issues are taken seriously or do we just focus on the financial bottom line? Do we think about the meaning and purpose of what we are doing, or do we let the bottom line and performance indicators become a rod with which to beat others (and ourselves), leading to a bullying culture? At the level of our peers, are we open to these issues? Even (if we are brave enough), do we try to improve the workplace and social environments from the 'bottom up'?

Spiritual self-awareness

Spiritual self-awareness develops from reflecting, perhaps using Ali and Snowden's (2019) questions above, on what gives our own lives meaning, purpose and hope; where our own values come from; and how we connect with others (and perhaps 'the transcendent' or 'God'). Reflective practice is an important part of clinical professional and other disciplines; but reflection is also important more generally in self-understanding and in developing relationships and interests in the family and the wider world. The practice of Mindfulness, borrowed from Buddhist practice supports this as do meditation and contemplation and other religious and secular practices

Communication about and acting on spiritual matters

This concerns how our spiritual self-awareness influences our communication with and behaviour towards other people in all aspects of our life. Are we open to other people's concerns about the core issues of spirituality? Do we listen sensitively and empathetically to people who express those concerns? Are we genuine in our responses and compassionate in our actions? Do we relate to them as fellow human beings (*I-Thou)* regardless of race, gender, etc. or do we 'other' them and treat them like (*I-It)* objects?

Developing a wiser future – Where are we now?

Worldviews

The concept of worldview is close to what is expressed by *zeitgeist* or 'the spirit of the age'. Worldviews relate to the presuppositions, often unconscious, which form the substrate of a given culture or society and they relate to matters of ultimate concern. Worldviews have four characteristics. Firstly, they have a series of assumptions about how the world *is*, expressed through narrative stories. Secondly, they answer basic questions about human existence such as who are we, where are we, what is wrong and what is the way to move forward? Thirdly, the stories are expressed symbolically through events and artefacts. Finally, the worldview, its associated narratives, questions and symbols lead to a way of being and behaving in the world (Wright, 1992). The radical theologian Walter Wink (2000) suggested that there are only a handful of religious/spiritual worldviews. Two are of most interest to us here: the 'materialist' worldview, which admits of no reality that cannot be reduced to purely material terms and an 'integral' worldview which sees everything as having an outer material aspect and an inner spiritual aspect. There are two variants of the integral worldview, one in which the spiritual and material are intimately linked with nothing beyond them, and one in which they sit within a transcendent reality (Wattis et al., 2017) identified by some as divine. In the West today, secular materialism and neoliberalism are dominant.

Neoliberalism
In the West, five hundred years ago, the dominant worldview was based on the Christian religion with its questions about morality, forgiveness, and life after death, and its symbols including cathedrals, churches and feast days based on the Christian calendar. The neoliberal worldview's narrative can be summed up (perhaps rather pejoratively) by questions about how to get money and persuade other people to buy what we want to sell (products or labour). Its symbols include the January sales, 'Black Friday', regular reports on the FTSE100 and Dow Jones index, celebrity culture, shopping malls and massive buildings in the financial centres of London, New York and elsewhere. Its way of being is through market competition resulting in success or failure for individuals and organisations. This involves commercial advertising and political 'spin' to encourage consumption and compliance.

The term neoliberalism was first used at a conference in Paris in 1938 (Monbiot, 2016). The presupposition of neoliberalism is that competition and the 'market' lead to the optimum outcomes for humanity, by rewarding efficiency and punishing inefficiency, delivering benefits that, it is claimed, could never be delivered by state level planning and regulation. Neoliberalism was founded on ideas of individual consumers exercising choice through buying and selling. It believed that the market should be free, as far as possible, from 'unnecessary' constraints. Theories of natural selection in evolution were extended to a social level. It gathered strength from the development in the 1930s and 1940s of national income accounting in the form of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) and GDP *per capita* (Coclanis, 2019).

Neoliberal thinking developed through the mid-period of the 20th century but did not gain political ascendancy till the late 1970s with Margaret Thatcher in the UK followed by Ronald Reagan in the USA. It has indeed delivered prosperity to some people in some countries; but there is a downside. Its antipathy to regulation by the state has led to exploitation of workers and the environment. Another unintended consequence of this worldview has been the growth in financial inequality so that currently the world's eight wealthiest people own the same wealth as the 3.6 billion making up the poorest half of humanity (Hardoon, 2017). Although neoliberals talk of wealth being 'created' by the wealthy and 'trickling down' to benefit those less well off, others think that those at the top of the wealth 'pyramid' extract wealth from those lower down. Even more importantly, the exploitation of our planet and consequent global warming are near the point of irreversible damage to the future of humanity. Campaigner and wildlife expert, Sir David Attenborough (Selby, 2020) warned world leaders that we are facing our 'last chance' of averting catastrophe.

How did we get here? - the making of the modern world
Of the many influences that have shaped the modern world, five stand out as especially influential:

- The imperial age and persistent related racism
- The gradual and incomplete establishment of democracy based on market fundamentalism rather than religious values.
- The Enlightenment and the divorce of reductionist science from other branches of reason
- Industrialisation and the dehumanisation of production
- Globalisation and the power of multinational corporations

Beginning in the 16th and 17th centuries and lasting into the 19th and mid twentieth century, the age of colonisation and imperialism is largely over, though some would argue that economic imperialism still exists with big international corporations exerting more power than governments. Modern democracy began to develop with the overthrow of European monarchies in 17th and 18th century but is still far from perfect with 'first past the post' systems, dependence on high financial stakes and susceptibility to media manipulation. The 'Enlightenment', also beginning in the 17th century, questioned traditional authority and advocated rational thinking as the way forward for humanity. Before this, natural philosophy, the precursor of modern science, was part of the wider discipline of philosophy; but the humanities, ethics and other aspects of philosophy became 'divorced' from the approach of reductionist science. However, ethics (moral principles that govern conduct and behaviour) remained an important factor for the healthcare and other professions

The ‘Industrial Revolution’ followed, in the eighteenth century, and led to a dehumanisation of the methods of production, remarked upon by proto-socialist John Ruskin in his 1862 collection of essays *Unto this Last* (Ruskin, 1985). Frederick Taylor in 1911 (cited in Muller, 2018) coined the term ‘scientific management’. This aimed to improve industrial efficiency by careful study and standardisation of workforce behaviour, typified by work study methods and the production lines introduced on a large scale by Henry Ford at the beginning of the 20th Century.

Political developments, such as neoliberalism, also relied on what can be counted (especially money). Muller (2018) discussed how, through *principal-agent* theory, these have led to a suspicion that those employed in institutions cannot be trusted and need their activity to be monitored, using *performance indicators*, with financial incentives for achieving or exceeding ‘targets’. *Performance indicators* were introduced into many fields such as education and healthcare in the late 20th century often with disbenefits that outweighed the benefits (Muller, 2018). The use of *external* motivation is symptomatic of a loss of trust in the workforce’s *intrinsic* motivation to do a good job. This is often accompanied by a tendency to treat the workforce as objects rather than as fellow human beings (*I-It* rather than *I-Thou*). The mid-20th century Toyota Production System - management by means rather than targets - attempted to put this right. It emphasised continuous improvement and *respect for all the people in the workforce,* maximising their ability to contribute to outcome rather than ‘driving’ them to predetermined targets (Johnson & Brom, 2008).

Whatever happened to morality and ethics?

Adam Smith, in his *The Wealth of Nations* first published in 1776 (Smith, 1999), argued for the division of labour and the ‘invisible hand’ of the market but also warned that there could be negative as well as positive consequences. His earlier work *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* first published in 1759 (Smith, 2010) argued that conscience developed from social relationships through a process of mutual sympathy. Writing over two centuries later, a prominent neoliberal economist, Roy Griffiths, adviser to Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, challenged both secular socialism and capitalism and emphasised the importance of mediating structures, such as “the family, the school, the workplace, the village, the neighbourhood, the trade union, the professional organisation, the church” (Griffiths, 1982, p. 11) in mediating between the private life of the individual and the state *and in transmitting values*. His solution was specifically Christian and capitalist; but his contention that the market and Marxist socialism could not *of themselves* produce a moral or ethical framework to produce a just society was sound. Like many right-wing thinkers, he seems to have been unaware of the Christian ethical socialism behind much of the British Labour movement. Others have looked more specifically at the environmental damage done by our present way of living and argued that religions which believe in a creator God can provide a moral imperative to treat ‘creation’ better (Shah-Kazemi, 2011; Rohr, 2019). A well-argued secular philosophical analysis (Goff, 2019) of the phenomenon of consciousness develops the theory of pan-psychism. Goff argues that this means that we need not live exclusively in the human realm but, recognising our oneness with nature, we can find a place in the universe and create a better world, providing a (debatably) non-religious framework for the same conclusion.

Coronavirus and change

Mair (2020) argues that the dominant idea of the current neoliberal system is that exchange value is equivalent to use value and markets are the way to match productive capacity and use value. He argues that the coronavirus epidemic has demonstrated the flaws in this system, for example by highlighting that it undervalues many of the most critical societal services such as health and social care. These are labour intensive and cannot easily increase productivity through mechanisation and information technology. At the same time many of these critical jobs are not highly valued in monetary terms by society as compared, for example to jobs in advertising and the financial sector. The coronavirus epidemic has highlighted the immediate importance of members of society who provide health, social and other essential services. It has forced governments to respond to the crisis in a way that highlights this issue. For example, Spain has nationalised private hospitals and the UK and other countries have provided income support for workers. Government has also assumed at least

temporary control over other essential activities. So, are we right to assume that the 'neoliberal consensus' of forty or fifty years has been challenged by this emergency? It has certainly highlighted areas where balance is lacking and a change in the 'spirit of the age' is needed to address this.

Areas where balance is lacking in our current society

The tremendous success of analytic, reductive scientific understanding has led to a relative under-emphasis on the more holistic approach that wisdom requires. Nomothetic (rule-following) knowledge has been elevated over idiographic (experiential) knowledge. Non-material aspects of life including hope, meaning, purpose and values, together with the human sense of interconnectedness with others (and possibly the transcendent), have been crowded out by an obsession with what is measurable. Lack of attention to values has led to attitudes in which social and economic justice and compassion have been relegated to a secondary status. Changes in production methods in industry have led, in some cases, to workers being seen as mere instruments who need to be 'driven', like cattle rather than people who, themselves, have something to contribute to improving the quality of products. The Toyota production system, mentioned earlier, has restored some human value to the workers. In clinical work, front line workers have had to work hard to maintain the importance of person-to-person contact as part of the healing process. The Virginia Mason system (Kenney, 2010) has recognised the value of frontline clinicians and patients themselves in designing and improving services.

Neoliberalism has become the dominant political force, occupying the place that religion had previously filled in some cultures. Its emphasis on metrics like GDP and the commercial 'bottom line' has sometimes led to moral and other failures. As neoliberalism has grown, so also has exploitation of workers through 'zero-hours contracts', pseudo-self-employment and the so called 'gig economy'. Exploitation of the planet has led to a point where climate breakdown is imminent. Exploitation of the world financial system arguably led to the global financial collapse of 2008.

Restoring the balance – spiritually competent living

Whether we argue from a religious or a secular viewpoint, the 'spirit' of the current age needs to change. We need to value each other through *I-Thou* relating and to value the world of which we are a part. The climate emergency urgently demands action which politicians have so far failed to deliver. Looked at from a political and organisational point of view, at a national and international level, we need to embrace issues like social justice, climate justice and economic justice. We need to educate people of all ages to value the non-reducible aspects of human experience and to develop values that can be used to mitigate political excesses. In the past these values would have come from traditional religions and for many people they still do; but in a multicultural society we need shared values that embrace as many people in society as possible. To look at this in more detail we will use three categories described above.

Political and organisational

Mair (2020), a research fellow in ecological economics, has proposed four possible (political) futures. On one axis he places what we value. "Do we use our resources to maximise exchanges and money or do we use them to maximise life?" (p. XX). His use of 'life' in this context perhaps echoes Ruskin's conclusion in 1862 that "There is no wealth but life" (Ruskin, 1985, p. 222). On the other axis Mair placed centralised versus decentralised styles of governance. This resulted in four possible combinations. The first he dubbed state capitalism, the current dominant global response, prioritising exchange value and centralised governance. The second was barbarism with a decentralised response prioritising exchange value but not extending protection of life to those locked out of markets by illness or loss of paid work. The third resulted from measures which put protection of life, for its own sake, before the protection of exchange value, and embodied centralised governance. This he called state socialism and the final, combining protection of life with decentralisation, he called mutual aid. He discussed all these possibilities and their possible consequences in more detail and this brief summary does not do justice to all his caveats.

An even more fundamental issue (regardless of the particularities of politics) is developing a society based more upon treating all people as valued individuals and urgently recognising our oneness with and dependence upon nature. This would be consonant with spiritual values as expressed in Buber's vital distinction between *I-Thou* and *I-It* and with secular and religious understanding of our oneness with nature/creation. Principles such as respect for all stakeholders in society and methods for enabling this at a political level could be developed following the lead of the Toyota Production System in manufacturing and the Virginia Mason Institute's practices in health care.

Personal Qualities that can be developed
This is not just a 'tick-box' exercise. Plato listed four 'cardinal' virtues or character strengths; *Wisdom, Courage, Temperance* and *Justice.* Christian, Islamic and other religious thinking also makes *love* central. Humanistic thinking agrees about the need for 'virtues', typified by the Values in Action list of twenty-four character strengths, derived from a study of a wide range of cultures and philosophical and religious thinking (VIA, 2020). These have been clustered into groups largely corresponding to Plato's *Wisdom, Courage, Temperance* and *Justice.* Two further clusters have been identified: *Humanity,* representing love, kindness and social intelligence and *Transcendence,* representing appreciation of excellence and beauty, gratitude, hope, humour and spirituality. We argue that whilst all the character strengths are important, it is those focused around loving kindness and compassion in our (*I-Thou*) relationship to others and to the world we live in that are foundational. We develop them through connecting to others, creative activities and reflection, using frameworks like those discussed above.

Spiritual Competencies
Managing to enable and enhance consideration of spiritual issues
Managing to enable and enhance consideration of spiritual issues has largely been dealt with in the section on political and organisational governance and culture above. Creating an organisational culture in which *I-Thou* relating and mutual respect flourish, improves the quality of life for all. This is also true of family and other relationships outside of work. This is the most rewarding aspect of attention to spirituality. Creating an organisational culture which respects our oneness with nature and the need to act urgently to preserve the environment that supports us is equally important.

Spiritual self-awareness
Spiritual self-awareness depends on maintaining the habit of reflection, Socrates is quoted as saying the "the unexamined life is not worth living". Perhaps this competency aspect of spirituality is about regularly setting aside time for examination of our own lives, reflecting on where we find meaning, purpose and hope, where our own values come from and how we connect with others and the world around us (perhaps including 'the transcendent' or God).

Communication about and acting on spiritual matters
Communication about and acting on spiritual matters also need to be practised. Too often these are squeezed out of modern discourse by time pressures, data collection and the concerns of a consumer society. We need to educate people to be much more comfortable talking about the things that really matter and give our lives meaning. We also need to de-emphasise the tendency to manage from the top down by imposing targets rather than by encouraging and trusting people's intrinsic motivation to do well.

Conclusion
In this chapter we have argued that spirituality, properly understood, is distinct from religion (though, for many of us, the two overlap). Spirituality can be understood as relating to subjective aspects of life, expressed through hope, meaning, purpose and values. The current materialistic neoliberal 'spirit of the age' could lead to disaster by treating people and the planet as objects to be exploited. We have asserted the need to find a new worldview, based in *I-Thou* relating and the importance of recognising that our humanity is part of nature, to rescue us from this disaster. Put bluntly the choice is between competitive consumerism and compassionate co-operation that respects the planet we live on. This

requires us to de-emphasise materialism and develop a wiser more spiritually reflective way of dealing with the world and each other. Then we may all live to see a better future.

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