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## EMP 754: THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF CHILDREN

(3 credits)

## **Overview of Course:**

This course will explore the spiritual life of children within the context of healthy human development. It will focus in depth on the roles of intuition and empathy in a child's life. Focus will span from how to support children at home, school and interpersonally, to how indigenous cultures support the inner life of the child. This course will support students in their current and future work with children, as well as in building more understanding of how childhood disturbances in healthy development may be impacting adult client fulfillment. Personal reflection on student's own childhood experiences is a valued component of this course of study.

## **Course Topics:**

- The life of a highly intuitive child at home, school and interpersonally
- How to support the spontaneous inner life of a child through play, art and nature
- Review of attitudes within the family of origin, extended family and culture at large that support or thwart a child's healthy spiritual development
- Explorations in multi-cultural support of children's intuition
- Energy hygiene practices for children
- Spotting an intuitive or empathic child in distress; how to help
- Supporting boundary setting in intuitive and empathic children
- 10 Skills for Success for Intuitive Children
- Reflections on students own spiritual development (including intuitive)

## **Learning Objectives:**

- Know how to identify intuitive empathy in children
- Cultivate ways of supporting the psycho-spiritual health of intuitive and/or sensitive children in their family systems and communities
- Learn how to spot disturbances in the psycho-spiritual growth of adult clients that likely began in childhood, assess for these challenges and plan for how to support healing and integration
- Commit to an honest exploration of your own experiences as a child-- as pertains to this subject matter-- to assist you in being an effective, compassionate witness to your future clients

## **Audience:**

Open to all students in the distance Certificate and Masters programs.

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The spiritual life of children is an often overlooked or misunderstood part of childhood. This course is designed to explore, celebrate and understand the rich inner life of children, especially as it relates to intuitive and empathic development.

This class is grounded in holistic theory in child development and incorporates modern psychology, neurobiology research, art therapy, spirituality, intuitive abilities, indigenous wisdom traditions and life-span theory. Students will come away with practical skills to incorporate in their future work with children, families and adults healing from the psycho-spiritual wounds of childhood. This class encourages thinking outside of the traditional box of viewing children as well as your own creativity in the process.

## **NEED STATEMENT**

Students will:

- 1) Develop an in-depth awareness of the role of intuition and empathy in the life of a child
- 2) A graduate student in a healing profession needs to understand the assumptions and values at the core of their knowledge – in order to facilitate this awareness, this course includes reflections on student's personal spiritual development.
- 3) Be able to assist clients in better understanding the needs of their own children to assist in their parenting, as well as in how to heal adult spiritual wounds from childhood.
- 4) Develop the critical skills needed to evaluate for disbalance in the life of a highly intuitive/empathic child and provide guidance for greater well-being

## **FACULTY-STUDENT COMMUNICATION**

- Telephone Contacts

It is important that the students arrange by email beforehand for all telephone communications. Periodic telephone interaction, as required, at student's expense, can most easily be arranged through email contact.

- Communications

It is requested that students stay in weekly correspondence with the instructor using e-mail. The student should also set up monthly telephone conversations, at their expense, to discuss problems, concerns, or determine the direction of their course work. Students are always encouraged to contact the instructor by e-mail, fax, or telephone whenever a major concern may arise. It should be understood that as mature students, it is the responsibility of the students to stay in contact with their instructors.

Students will normally send communications via email and submit papers as MSWORD Format files attached to email messages. Only if requested by the instructor: Students may submit hard copies of their papers.

## COURSE DELIVERY STYLE

Distance Education - Coursework is completed at a location determined by the student utilizing a computer that has the ability to play audio and video clips, with Microsoft Office Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Adobe Reader, along with a current web browser, internet connection and email address. Contact and communication with distance students is typically conducted by telephone, Internet, Skype, text chat, and email. Students are also encouraged to contact the University by facsimiles, and postal mail, and by personal visit to the University.

All lessons, coursework and papers must be copied to lessons@energymedicineuniversity.org from both the student and professor.

### 1) Reading Assignments

This course is largely based on the reading of two books:

*The Highly Intuitive Child: A Guide to Understanding and Parenting Unusually Sensitive and Empathic Children* by Catherine Crawford, MFT, ATR (Hunter House, 2009)

*The Secret Spiritual World of Children: The breakthrough discovery that profoundly alters our conventional view of children's mystical experiences* by Tobin Hart, Ph.D. (New World Library, 2003)

Over the course of the 5 months of this course, students will be assigned readings from these books along with study questions that will comprise the bulk of course assignments.

### 2) Email Contact

Reflection on and questions about the lessons should be addressed via email weekly or as needed. Students are always encouraged to contact the instructor via email whenever a problem arises.

There also may be a student/faculty discussion chat group which creates a larger feedback mechanism though internet communication. The thread page is located at: [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Energy\\_Medicine](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Energy_Medicine)

## COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

### **Assignment #1: Due last day of month #1**

- Read introductions and first two chapters of each assigned book
- Email responses to chapter questions as provided by instructor on first week of class.
- Provide “Questions of Exploration” that you will use throughout your personal journal process—to course instructor.
- Begin writing in journal

**Assignment #2: Due last day of month #2**

- Continue reading and study questions
- Mindfulness exercise #1—spend at least four hours of time alone with the intention of paying attention to your inner, spiritual child. At the start of the second month of the semester, you will be provided with suggestions for this exercise in mindfulness.
- Write about your reflections on this exercise in your journal as well as continue with other journal writing.
- Provide initial proposal for final paper including the topic you wish to write about and your intentions for the paper. Once approved, begin writing.

**Assignment #3: Due last day of month #3**

- Continue reading and study questions
- Mindfulness exercise #2—spend a couple of hours completely dedicated to being present to a child. No cell phone or electronics to interrupt you, simply time Being with a child, playing with them, making art, etc. At the start of the third month of the semester, you will receive more instructions on this exercise.
- Write about the above exercise as well as continue other journal writing.
- Check in with instructor on writing progress for final paper.

**Assignment #4:**

- Finish reading and study questions
- Final Paper Due. Deadline for this paper in the last day of the 4<sup>th</sup> month of the semester.

**Assignment #5: For Fall semester: Digital Personal Journal is due on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the 5<sup>th</sup> month of the semester.**

Course Evaluation Due on the last day of the 5<sup>th</sup> month of the semester

Expanded Instructions for Special Projects:

**-Assignment #4: Final paper**

Prepare a scholarly paper of approximately 10 double spaced, 12 point font, typewritten pages. Papers will focus upon a specific aspect of children's spirituality and/or intuitive development. Grades will be given on content, and use of source material, also grammar, spelling, and originality. Students should use the American Psychological Association Style Manual. Students may also have the option of designing a research project.

Each research project will be chosen by the student to best support their individual professional goals, yet each student will also benefit from seeing the fruits of all fellow students' research and providing professional criticism of each others work.

Each student will be afforded the opportunity of writing on a subject that is related to his or her field of interest. This will assist the student in making each paper individualized. Also the student is encouraged to go outside the field and obtain research data from other interdisciplinary areas. Each student, based on his or her background, will be encouraged

to transfer that theoretical information which the course provides into a practical format in the final paper or project.

### **-Assignment #5: Personal Reflection Journal**

The journal is your tool for reflecting on your personal process through this class. It is intended as a mindfulness practice and is the vehicle for exploring your own childhood experiences that pertain to this class. The focus of this assignment is on the process and not the product. Grades for this portion of the class are based on commitment over time to reflect on the questions provided by the instructor and especially upon your own story. Journal length can vary from 5 to 10 double spaced pages. Contact the instructor if you prefer to complete this assignment by hand and submit by mail. Journal is expected to be submitted digitally unless arranged otherwise.

### **COURSE GRADING DETERMINANTS**

Grades are based on the following elements of a student's participation and accomplishment. In determining a grade for this course, the following formula will be used:

Reading required texts and responding to study questions – 35%

Email check-ins – 10%

Course paper or project – 30%

Personal journal including mindfulness exercises– 25%

Using this technique, there will be 100 points assigned to the course. Final semester grades will be calculated as follows:

92-100 points = A range

86-91 points = B range

80-85 points = C range

70-80 points = D range

Under 70 points = F

### **SPECIAL NOTES AND INSTRUCTIONS**

Students are welcome to work at their own pace in this class. The Personal Reflection Journal is intended as a mindfulness accompaniment throughout the duration of the course and spans most of the 5 months.

All coursework must be completed in a timely fashion. Students are encouraged to phone or e-mail the instructor whenever they need advice, comments, or instruction.

## ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED SOURCES

### **Intuition and Children's Spirituality**

Choquette, Sonia, *The Wise Child: A Spiritual Guide to Nurturing Your Child's Intuition*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1999

Hart, Tobin, *The Secret Spiritual World of Children: The Breakthrough Discovery that Profoundly Alters Our Conventional View of Children's Mystical Experiences*. Novato, California: New World Library, 2003

Mayer, Elizabeth Lloyd. *Extraordinary Knowing: Science, Skepticism, and the Inexplicable Powers of the Human Mind*. New York: Bantam Books, 2007

Orloff, Judith, *Positive Energy: 10 Extraordinary Prescriptions for Transforming Fatigue, Stress & Fear into Vibrance, Strength & Love*. New York: Harmony Books, 2004.

Painton, Molly, *Encouraging Your Child's Spiritual Intelligence*. New York: Atria Books, 2007

Sinetar, Marsha. *Spiritual Intelligence: What We Can Learn From the Early Awakening Child*. New York: Orbis Books, 2000

### **Intuitive Thinkers**

Palladino, Lucy Jo, *The Edison Trait: Saving the Spirit of Your Free Thinking Child in a Conforming World*. In hardcover edition with a new title release for the softcover edition: *Dreamers, Discoverers and Dynamos: How to Help the Child Who is Bright, Bored and Having Trouble in School*. Ballantine, 1999

### **Sensitivity**

Aron, Elaine. *The Highly Sensitive Child: Helping Our Children Thrive When the World Overwhelms Them*. New York: Broadway Books, 2002

Aron, Elaine, *The Highly Sensitive Person*. New York: Broadway Books, 1997

### **Art and Meditation Resources with Children**

Capacchione, Lucia, *The Creative Journal for Children: A Guide for Parents, Teachers and Counselors*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1982

Murdock, Maureen, *Spinning Inward: Using Guided Imagery with Children for Learning, Creativity and Relaxation*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1987

### **Anxiety Resources**

Chansky, Tamar, *Freeing Your Child From Anxiety: Powerful, Practical Solutions to Overcome Your Child's Fears, Worries, and Phobias*. New York: Broadway Books, 2004

Foxman, Paul, *The Worried Child: Recognizing Anxiety in Children and Helping Them Heal*. Alameda, CA: Hunter House, 2004

### **Parenting**

Deak, JoAnn, *Girls will be Girls: Raising Confident and Courageous Daughters*. New York: Hyperion, 2002

Porro, Barbara, *Talk It Out: Conflict Resolution in the Classroom How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk*. Alexandria, VA: Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1996

Kurcinka, Mary Sheedy, *Raising Your Spirited Child: A Guide for Parent Whose Child is More Intense, Sensitive, Perceptive, Persistent, Energetic*. New York: Harper Perrenial, 1998

Miller, Alice. *The Drama of the Gifted Child: The Search for the True Self*. New York: Basic, 1994

Pearce, Joseph, *The Biology of Transcendence*. Rochester, VT: Park Street Press, 2002

### **Emotional and Social Intelligence**

Goleman, Daniel, *Social Intelligence: The Revolutionary New Science of Human Relationships*. New York: Bantam, 2006

Goleman, Daniel, *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Matters More than IQ*. New York: Bantam, 1995

### **Sensory Processing Disorder**

Heller, Sharon. *Too Loud, Too Bright, Too Fast, Too Tight: What to Do if You Are Sensory Defensive in an Overstimulating World*. New York: Harper Collins, 2002

Horowitz, Lynn and Rost, Cecile, *Helping Hyperactive Kids: A Sensory Integration Approach*. Alameda, CA: Hunter House, 2007



Kranowitz, Carol Stock, *The Out of Sync Child: Recognizing and Coping with Sensory Integration Dysfunction*. New York: Perigree Publishing, 1998

### **Type and Temperament**

Armstrong, Thomas, *In Their Own Way: Discovering and Encouraging Your Child's Personal Learning Style*. Los Angeles: Jeremy Tarcher, 1987

Murphy, Elizabeth, *The Developing Child: Using Jungian Type to Understand Children*. Mountain View, California: Davies-Black Publishing, 1992

Tieger, Paul and Barron-Tieger, Barbara, *Nurture by Nature: Understand Your Child's Personality Type—And Become a Better Parent*. Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1997