

Spirituality in Higher Education Student Interview Protocol

Thank you for coming today. My name is _____ and I am a researcher from the Graduate School of Education & Information Studies at UCLA [or other affiliation, as applicable].

As you know, this is a study about college students' beliefs and values. We are particularly interested in learning about college students' spiritual beliefs and their search for meaning and purpose during their undergraduate years. Please treat this as a discussion, with no right or wrong answers.

Before we begin, I want to share with you this information sheet on the research study and give you a few minutes to read it and confirm you are interested in participating. If you are, I'll ask you to sign two copies so that we can have a copy and you can take a copy with you.

I'm also going to reiterate a couple of key points from the information sheet.

- 1. You can share what you wish to share. If you would rather not respond to a particular question, that is fine. You can simply indicate so.*
- 2. You are free to choose not to participate in all or any part of this study. At any time, you can excuse yourself without any consequences.*
- 3. We are asking your permission to tape record the interview. When we transcribe the dialogue, we will insert pseudonyms for each of you. You also have the right to listen to these audiotapes before the research team members have erased them and request that specific information be edited or deleted from the study.*
- 4. We have developed a project website that you can access if you are interested in following our progress on this study. The address is: www.spirituality.ucla.edu. I also brought you a copy of our project brochure.*

After this information is conveyed, interviewer will wait while the student reads and sign the consent form and returns one copy to us.

Questions:

1. Background information (e.g., home town, major, reason for choosing college, post college plans, career aspirations)
2. Do you consider yourself a spiritual person? Why/Why not? For those who say yes, what are the primary reasons why spirituality is important to you?
3. Do you consider yourself a religious person? Why/Why not? For those who say yes, what is your religious affiliation? What is the religious affiliation of your parents?
4. Do you attend church? If so, how often?
5. What are the spiritual questions or issues in your life that you are grappling with right now? When you experience pain or suffering in your life, is your spirituality a source of help for you? If yes, how so? Have you experienced religious/spiritual doubts or conflicts? If so, what was the nature of those doubts/conflicts?

6. Think of a recent time when you had a meaningful discussion about spirituality or religion. Who were you with? What was discussed? How did you feel?
7. Describe one or more situations in your life when you have felt most in touch with your spirituality. What are some of the situations when you feel the least in touch with your spirituality? How do you express/nurture/replenish your spirituality?
8. Do you discuss spiritual issues/questions with others on campus? Why/Why Not? Have you had discussions about spirituality in any of your classes? Would you like to have more opportunities for such discussions? Why/Why not?
9. How has your spirituality changed since coming to college? What role have your experiences in college played in affecting these changes?
10. What could help to make your college experience more spiritually meaningful for you?
11. How would you like to see yourself evolving spiritually in the future?

Thank students for their contributions to the discussion.

In closing, tell students that, if interested, when they have some time in the near future, we would like them write for us their brief biographical spiritual journey: How did you begin your journey? What does this journey mean for you? How do you express your spirituality? How do you nurture your spirituality? And anything else they would like to included. Students will be given the email and regular mail contact information for study researchers so they can submit these reflections, as desired.

Thank students for their participation.