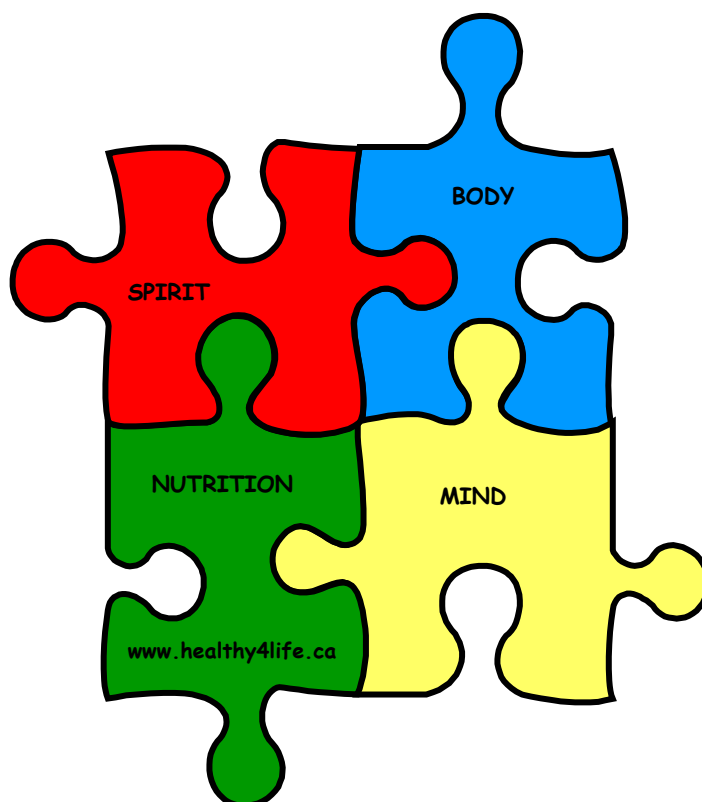


# **Nutrition and Lupus**

## **Book 5: Spiritual Health**

**Living Well With Lupus**

**KNOWLEDGE AND HOPE**

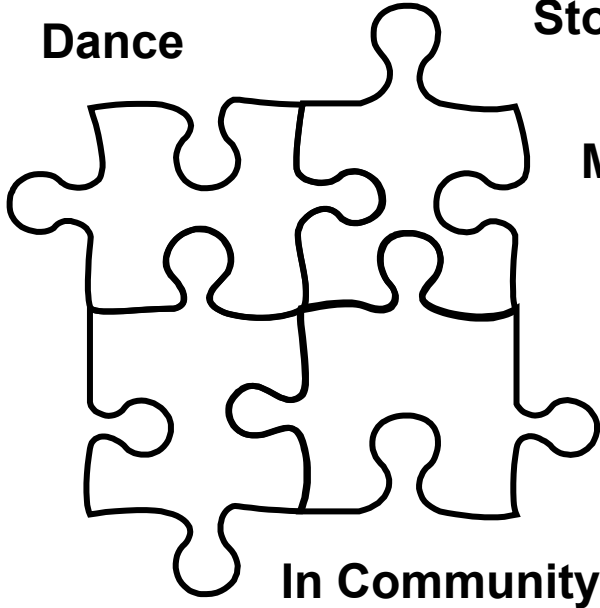


**Cathy Ferren RHN**  
Registered Holistic Nutritionist

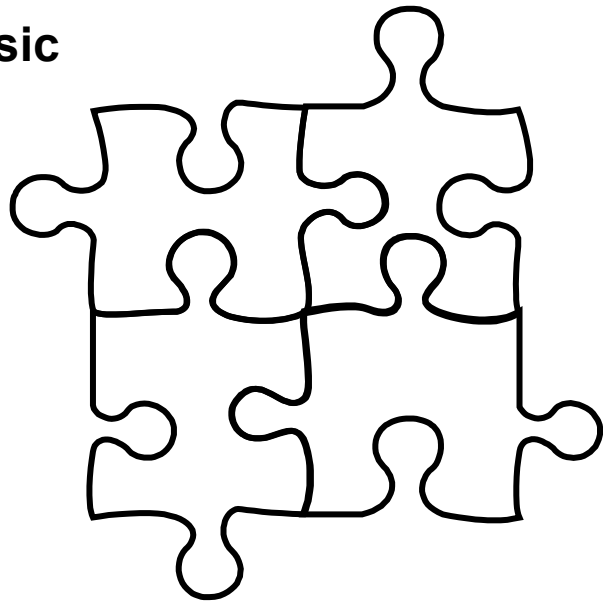
**Dance**

**Story Telling**

**Meditation**



**Music**



**In Community**

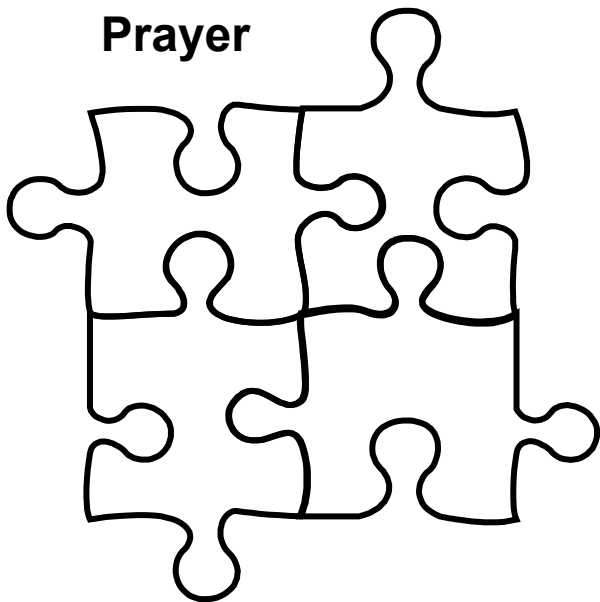
**Mindfulness**

**Group Sharing**

**Alone**

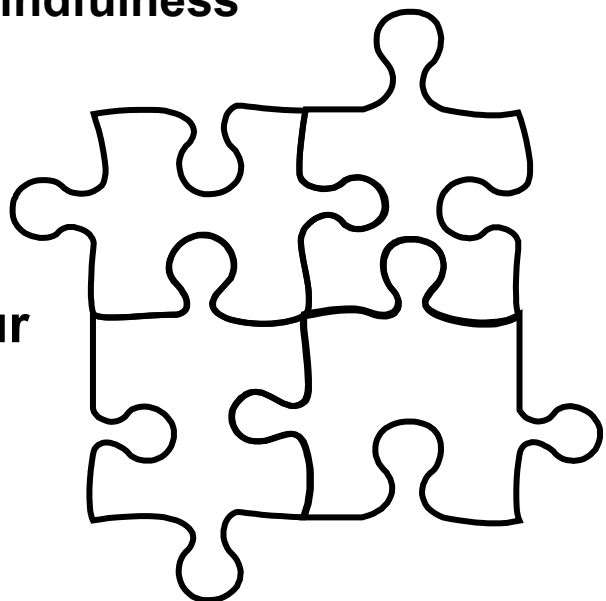
**Prayer**

**Spiritual Journaling**



**Arts**

**Mindfulness**



**How will you develop your own unique spirituality?**

**ISBN 978-0-9940849-1-0**

# Nutrition and Lupus Book 5: Spiritual Health

1<sup>st</sup> Edition - Digital

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**Warning** This book is a distillation of current nutrition science and spiritual health, as interpreted by Cathy Ferren based on her understanding and experience. Its purpose is to educate and inform those who wish to better understand the role of nutrition in health. It does not diagnose any disease or ailment. The author and publisher shall have neither liability nor responsibility to any person or entity with respect to any loss or damage caused, or alleged to be caused, directly or indirectly by the information contained in this book.

## **Dedication**

This book is dedicated to lupus patients everywhere and to all of my lupus friends, treatment teams, instructors, spiritual advisors and support team members over the years.

Each of you shares in my journey with lupus with all of its challenges and rewards. I am humbled by and grateful for the wisdom and knowledge each of you has given me.

## **Introduction**

I share this fifth book in the series with you, as a product of my own life experiences learning to live with chronic illness, client feedback and learning how to use holistic nutrition to improve symptoms and wellbeing.

I may not be able to control the disease process, however, I can have a beneficial effect on my physical symptoms, psychological wellness and my spirituality through good nutrition and healthy lifestyle choices.

My hope is that in these pages you will find practical ideas to incorporate into your own wellness plan so you can live well with lupus.

## **Other Books by Cathy Ferren**

Nutrition and Lupus Book 1: The Basics

Nutrition and Lupus Book 2: Movement

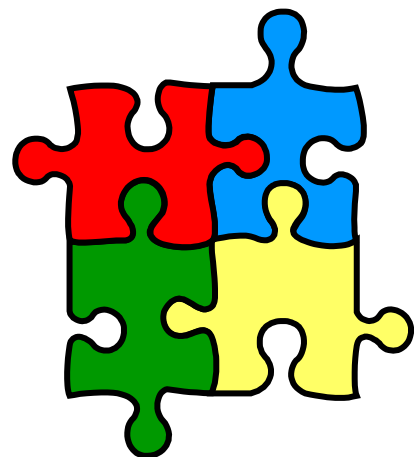
Nutrition and Lupus Book 3: Relaxation Plus!

Nutrition and Lupus Book 4: Your Treatment and Support Teams

Smoothies Easy and Nutritious

## **Contents**

- 1 Humans are Spiritual Beings**  
**Spiritual Health**
- 2 Spirituality**  
**Religion**
- 3 Identify Your Core Beliefs and Values**
- 5 Reflection on Core Beliefs and Values**
- 6 A Life of Gratitude**
- 8 Gratitude Worksheets**
- 10 Words to Reflect On**
- 11 Quotes**
- 12 Changing A Core Belief Worksheet**
- 13 Grieving Losses**  
**Connecting With Nature**
- 14 Inner Peace**  
**Spiritual Care**
- 15 Final Thoughts on Using Spiritual Health to Decrease Suffering**



## **Humans are Spiritual Beings**

Human beings throughout history have looked for meaning and purpose in life and death. Every tradition has its own set of rules, guidelines, laws and practices. Organized religions also have both management and leadership hierarchies. This book addresses the spirit part of holistic nutrition.

Every person has choices, the right to choose what their core beliefs are and depending on where you live, the right to express those beliefs. In most places in North America you have freedom of expression, speech and worship.

## **Spiritual Health**

When I talk about spiritual health while living with lupus, I am speaking about discovering what your core beliefs and values are and living them. This is not saying “I believe .....” and then using words, doing and/or performing actions, or behaving in a way that are not in line with the core beliefs and values you claim to have. It is about staying true to your core beliefs and values with consistency, honesty and commitment both with yourself and others.

You will be introduced to several different ideas of what spirituality can mean for any unique individual and how you can use your spirituality to decrease your suffering and stress.

**Your spiritual practices  
can bring you a lot of  
Healing and Hope**

# Spirituality means something different to every person.

## **Spirituality**

Spirituality in the context of this book means the most basic beliefs and values that you have about your life, your purpose while alive, your reason for existence and how that concerns. It is involved with and affects your meaningful activity, your state of mind and your ability to live well with a chronic illness. It is separate from organized religions, yet your beliefs and values may be related to a religion or belief system that you grew up with.

Your spirit is different than your physical mind or your psychological self. Your spirit exists beyond the basic functions of your brain. It is a part of you that animates you and gives meaning and purpose to your life.

There are a vast number of books, articles and web sites professing a multitude of different definitions. That is not the purpose of this book. For some it may be a blend of classical, medieval, early modern and modern traditions, for others it will be none of these.

What is important to you in living well with lupus, is for you to come to know what it is that you believe and to learn some ways that can help you.

## **Religion**

Each religion tends to have its own set of ethical rules, prayers, religious clothing, holidays, pilgrimages, dietary laws, obligations, prophets, sets of methods of contemplation or meditation, public gatherings and private practices. In this book I am not promoting any one religion or set of beliefs. I will be giving you real life examples of how people with lupus from various faith traditions have used their core beliefs and values to live well.

## Identify Your Core Beliefs and Values

For you to be able to use your spiritual nature to help you live well with a chronic disease like lupus, you first have to know exactly what it is that you believe.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines belief:

- as a feeling of being sure that someone or something exists or that something is true
- A feeling that something is good, right or valuable
- A feeling of trust in the worth or ability of someone

[www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/belief](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/belief)

Core beliefs and values in the context of chronic illness are the things you know and believe are true about yourself, others, life, the world, illness, the future, career, finances, food, medication, exercise, relaxation, all your treatments and support.

If you do not already know what your core beliefs and values are, this next exercise will you to start to define them. It is a life long process. What you can do is find out where you are at today.

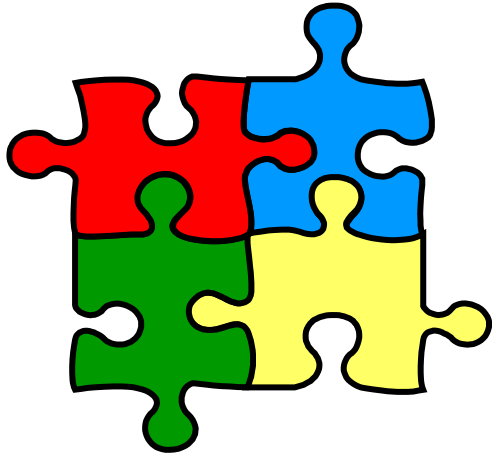
For the following questions, write down your answers or type them into a digital device.

1. Do I identify with a specific tradition or religion? Examples would be Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Sufism, Five Pillars, Buddhism, Hinduism, Four Paths, Sikhism, African Spirituality, New Age, and others. Write down which ones you feel you practice or want to practice.
2. What forms of somatic practices do I do? Examples are of deprivation, diminishment, fasting and poverty.
3. What forms of psychological practices do I do? Example, meditation.
4. What forms of social practices do I do? Examples, practicing obedience, communal ownership, reforming ego orientation into community or others orientation.
5. What forms of spiritual practice do I do? Examples, meditation, prayer, mindfulness, contemplation of sacred texts, ethical development, use of psychoactive agents.
6. Do I value thoughtfulness? Do I practice thoughtfulness?



7. Do I value honesty? Do I practice honesty?
8. Do I value respect? Do I practice respect for everyone and everything?
9. Do I value love? Do I practice unconditional love?
10. Do I value tolerance of other people's beliefs and practices?
11. Do I value charity? Do I practice charity?
12. Do I value the trait of being non-judgmental? Do I practice being non-judgmental in my words and actions?
13. Do I value western medicine?
14. Do I value pharmaceutical medications?
15. Do I value nutrition? Do I eat healthy foods? Do I eat an alkalinizing diet? Do I consume adequate nutrients? Do I eat mindfully?
16. Do I value body ecology? Do I use natural, organic, scent free soap, deodorant, shampoo, makeup, household cleaners, laundry products, and air fresheners?
17. Do I value herbs? Do I use organic herbal remedies with the federal government, Health Canada NPNs? (Natural Product Numbers)
18. Do I value homeopathic remedies? Do I use homeopathic tinctures, pellets and creams?
19. Do I value movement and exercise? Do I do regular exercise?
20. Do I value relaxation? Do I practice relaxation techniques daily?
21. Do I value meditation? Do I meditate daily?
22. Do I value prayer? Do I pray daily?
23. Do I value family relationships? Do I treat family members with love, honesty, respect and dignity?
24. Do I value my relationship with each friend? Do I treat each friend with love, honesty, respect and dignity? Do I treat some friends different than other friends?
25. Do I value peer support? Do I treat support people with love, honesty, respect and dignity?

Put the list away. After a few hours, days or weeks, take it out and read it. Think about each answer you gave. Which ones feel right at this point in time. Mark them with a check mark. If one feels wrong put an X beside it. If



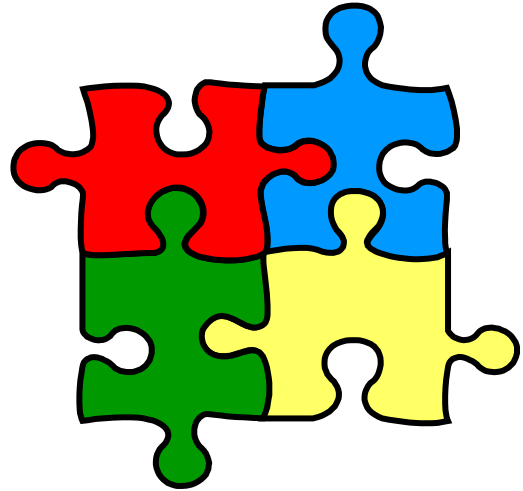
# Reflection on Beliefs and Values

you are unsure how you feel put a ? next to it. Think about it. Write down anything that comes to mind about what you need to change if anything in how you think or act related to that belief or value. It is helpful to redo this exercise from time to time to check in, get in touch with your beliefs.

## **Going Deeper—Journal Thoughts**

1. What do I believe about myself. Am I all that exists?
2. Do I believe that there is something more than or outside of myself, a higher power, God, a great spirit, or something else?
3. What exactly do I believe about the purpose of my life?
4. What do I believe lupus is?
5. What do I believe is the purpose for me having lupus?
6. What has having lupus taught me?
7. What do I believe can help me?
8. What do I know can help me?
9. What do I believe my future will be?
10. What do I believe about my treatment plan?
11. Am I compliant with my treatment plan? Why or why not?
12. Who or what do I believe can help me manage my lupus?
13. Who or what do I believe can help me manage my life?
14. Am I in control? Who do I believe is in control?
15. What do I believe I can control?
16. What do I believe I need to not suffer in spite of symptoms?

# A Life Of Gratitude



## **A Life of Gratitude**

Gratitude is more than a thought or feeling.

It is an attitude, the words you choose to think or say, the behaviors and actions you choose to do and those you choose not to do.

Gratitude is being thankful for:

- What you can do
- What you cannot do for teaching you new ways of doing things
- Knowing your physical limitations
- Those who help you
- Your medical team
- Your extended treatment team
- Your support team
- Your job, pension, or other income
- Medication
- Good nutrition
- Body therapies that relieve symptoms
- Psychological support
- Spiritual support
- Pacing yourself and setting appropriate priorities
- Setting smart goals
- Believing in yourself

Research on gratitude and its effects on people has shown that people who choose to actively practice gratitude in all areas of their life and in their illness suffer less. It does not wipe out their symptoms or cure them. It allows them to experience more joy, happiness and peace. Does suffering less sound like a really, really good thing?

It will allow you to experience your inflammation or pain and not be totally immobilized by it which may then inspire you to do the thing that you can to better control your symptoms such as being compliant with medication, exercise, therapies, diet, lifestyle choices, weight management, exposure to toxins through body ecology and where you choose to shop/play/work.

When your perception changes of symptoms such as pain, fatigue, stiffness, inflammation, nausea, constipation, diarrhea, cognitive challenges and others; you will be better able to tolerate them by being less aware of them. You will not become the energizer bunny, however, you can be less aware of what can be an overwhelming group of lupus symptoms.

There is an additional free benefit in that this diminished awareness of physical symptoms usually allows people to feel less anxious, fearful, angry or depressed. Since thoughts and emotions cause chemical reactions in your body, feeling more positive is not all in your head but it can actually reduce your symptoms by decreasing some of the chemical triggers that are produced by stress hormones in your body.

### **A Gratitude Journal Worksheet**

Gratitude is one gift you can give to yourself to help you move along on the journey of healing your heart, mind, body and spirit.

Sometimes it is difficult to find anything to be thankful for. It may sound impossible. To help you with making an attempt at developing an attitude of gratitude, please take a few minutes during the day or at the end of the day, to write down something, some situation or someone you are grateful for today.

It is a tool for you to use to learn about yourself. Take it home, to work or outside. Use the worksheet whenever you want a lift, to find something good. When you also answer the questions, you begin to understand yourself better and to find ways to increase your level of gratitude.

Try to write down three things each day. For each thing that you wrote down, answer the questions with what you think about them and how you feel as you write them.

Find a quiet spot where you will not be interrupted for 10 minutes. Turn off the phone, get comfortable and give yourself this time to write down 3.

Gratitude is so important to your spiritual health, I have included 2 different formats for the gratitude worksheet. Pick one and try it for 30 days.

### **Gratitude Worksheet #1**

Use the first person, I statements.

**1. Today I am grateful for:**

- ⇒What allowed this to happen?
- ⇒What part did I play in making this happen?
- ⇒What can I do to bring more of this thing into my life?
- ⇒What do I think about this thing?
- ⇒How does this thing make me feel?

**2. Today I am grateful for:**

- ⇒What allowed this to happen?
- ⇒What part did I play in making this happen?
- ⇒What can I do to bring more of this thing into my life?
- ⇒What do I think about this thing?
- ⇒How does this thing make me feel?

**3. Today I am grateful for:**

- ⇒What allowed this to happen?
- ⇒What part did I play in making this happen?
- ⇒What can I do to bring more of this thing into my life?
- ⇒What do I think about this thing?
- ⇒How does this thing make me feel?

How do I feel about doing this exercise today?

How do I feel now that I have done this exercise today?

## Gratitude Worksheet #2

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>1. Today I am grateful for:</b>	What allowed this to happen?
What part did I play in making this happen?	What can I do to bring more of this thing in to my life?
What do I think about this thing?	How does it make me feel?
<b>2. Today I am grateful for:</b>	What allowed this to happen?
What part did I play in making this happen?	What can I do to bring more of this thing in to my life?
What do I think about this thing?	How does it make me feel?
<b>3. Today I am grateful for:</b>	What allowed this to happen?
What part did I play in making this happen?	What can I do to bring more of this thing in to my life?
What do I think about this thing?	How does it make me feel?

How do you feel about doing this exercise today?

How do you feel now that you have done this exercise today?

Think about what these words related to your spiritual health mean to you.

**Awareness** **Tranquility**  
**Direction** **Hope** **I will trust**  
**I will share authentically** **Respect**  
**Gratitude** **Self nurturing**  
**Enlightenment** **Groups**  
**Support** **Education** **Love**  
**Self respect** **Letting Go**  
**Surrender** **Selflessness**  
**Caring** **Peace** **Truth**  
**Prayer-Reflection**  
**Meditation** **Empathy & Sympathy**  
**Dependable** **Serenity** **Grounded**

**Quotes:** How has your spirituality helped you to manage your chronic illness?

**Responses from Canadians:**

“Spiritual journaling and keeping a gratitude journal have helped me to get through moment to moment, hour to hour, when pain, fatigue and brain fog threaten to put me into a helpless, hopeless place.” A. Chatham-Kent

“It has gotten me through many a bad day. Without it, I don’t know if I’d even be here. I use prayer for relaxation.” W. North York

“Mindfulness meditation helps me slow down racing thoughts so I can sleep better.” N. Toronto

“Prayer helps me get through pain.” R. Etobicoke

“Turning over my pain and frustration to God make them bearable” S. Scarborough

“Seasonal fasting gives me energy.” A. Toronto

“My spiritual director helps me look at things from another point of view.” H. London

“At the end of each day when I review my thoughts, words and actions, I accept what I did well, think of ways to improve things I could have done better, and let go of things. They are done. I cannot change them. This allows me to have deep inner peace as I go to sleep” C. Ridgetown

**Your beliefs and values**

**bring Healing and Hope**

**You can change yours!**



## **Changing a Core Belief Worksheet**

**My core belief today that is helping me is:**

**What can I do to strengthen this core belief?**

**My core belief that is hurting me today is:**

**What can I do to change this core belief?**

**I promise myself to make a real effort to include the following changes to my core beliefs and values no matter how long it takes, to live better with lupus:**

## **Grieving Losses**

Having lupus brings many losses. Each loss is like a death. In order to heal and move through these losses you need to be able to identify them. You have many symptoms that result in losses. Each needs to be grieved.

Here are some losses to reflect on. Some you may not know you are experiencing. It helps to know what is affecting you.

- decreased energy
- loss of mobility
- loss of job or income
- loss of memory
- problems word finding
- non-restorative sleep
- decreased stamina
- loss of physical strength
- loss of positive outlook
- family breakdown
- loss of friends
- loss of social groups
- decreased ability to perform normal activities of daily living including personal care, dressing, cooking, care of children or elders, housework, yard work, school, socializing, hobbies, shopping, walking, driving or taking public transportation.

Being aware of your losses is your first step in order to doing something to minimize the negative effects they have on your life. Deciding to actually do something to help yourself is the second step. Then, actively seeking out solutions, asking for help and accepting the help you need will bring you more peace.

## **Connecting With Nature**

Nature has many healing qualities from the visual splendor, healing sounds (water, birds, animals, leaves rustling, breezes), aromas such as wildflowers, honey or the forest floor, to warm sunshine on a beach or the cool crispness of an autumn day. There is science behind it all. Living things have electrical energy and magnetic energy. One example is the practice of hugging a tree in spring to connect with the rising energy as the sap moves up the tree. Another example is walking barefoot on the earth to ground yourself and release excess energy or take up needed energy.

You can connect with nature in your own home, yard, a park, forest, meadow, beside a waterfall, anywhere you choose. Just do it.

## **Inner Peace**

Deep inner peace is a feeling of serenity and contentment where there is no anxiety, fear, depression, guilt, racing thoughts or should haves. It is a state of relaxation in your spirit where you can experience tranquility and joy at the same time.

You can have inner peace in the midst of your challenging symptoms, your family relationships, financial pressures, ineffective treatments or lack of access to treatments, and the general chaos of daily life.

Cultivating inner peace is a conscious choice you make in each moment of the day. You choose how you react to each symptom and each event in your day. Choosing to be aware of things, letting go of things you cannot change, practicing gratitude, respect and kindness are healthy choices that will make your evening reflections on your day more positive and less stressful.

The choices are yours. You deserve inner peace.

## **Spiritual Care**

As the person in charge of your spiritual care, you make decisions every day on how to nurture strength and peace. When you ignore this part of yourself, you may find life is harder, out of sync, or just not working out the way you want it to. It requires that you take responsibility for yourself.

You choose the words you use, how you act towards others, how you treat yourself. By choosing positive, affirming thoughts and activities, you allow your mind and spirit the freedom to experience life without being burdened by it. You experience your illness physically and mentally, however, you choose whether or not to suffer.

Part of your spiritual care is seeking out a spiritual director or community with similar core beliefs and values, finding friends to share with and building your family relationships. Another part is making a commitment to your self or others if you need to, in scheduling time in your day, every day for reflection, prayer, meditation, study, joyful activity, and helping others.

## Final Thoughts

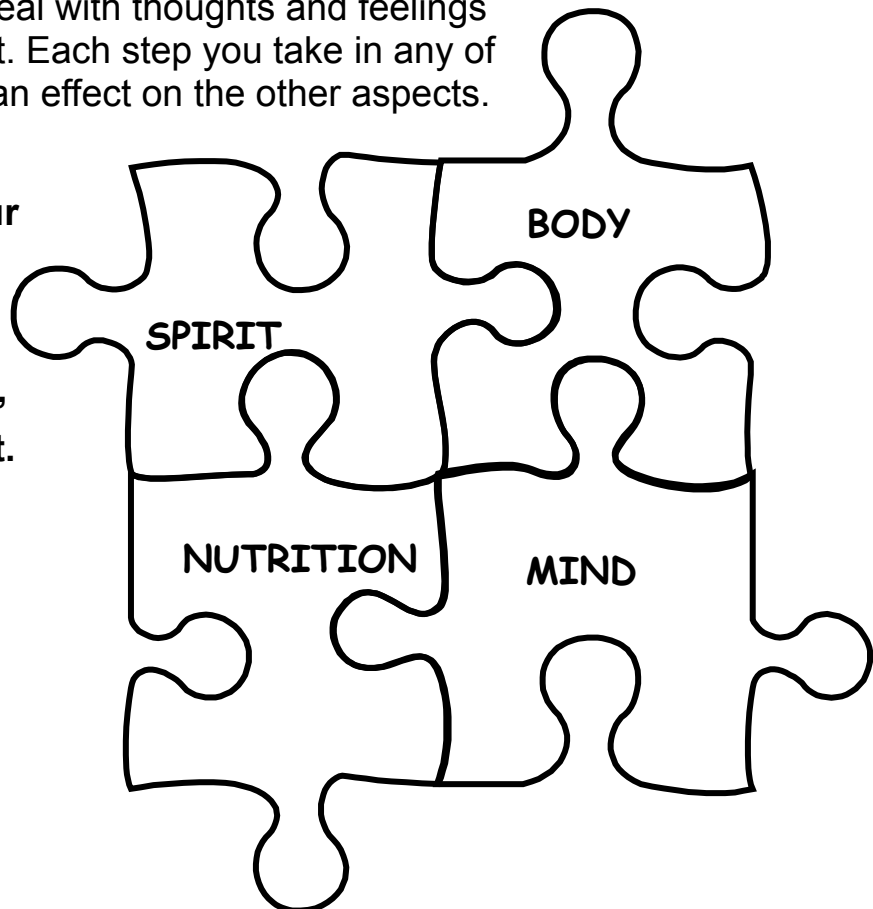
Spiritual health is one aspect of holistic nutrition. Your physical body, your mind with its thoughts, feelings and other cognitive processes and your spirit all work together. Each has its own electrical, chemical and biological functions.

Chronic illnesses such as lupus, fibromyalgia, pre-diabetes, diabetes, COPD and others bring physical and mental dysfunction, immune system irregularities, disturbed sleep patterns, aches, stiffness, fatigue, headaches, depression, anxiety, numbness and tingling just to mention a few. Nobody gets all of them, however, anyone can get a combination of them. Non-restorative, non-refreshing sleep is a major contributor to cognitive impairments. When combined with poor diet, poor quality foods, nutritional deficiencies and/or poor nutrient absorption, a lack of movement and exercise, and psychological or spiritual chaos, your symptoms can spiral out of control.

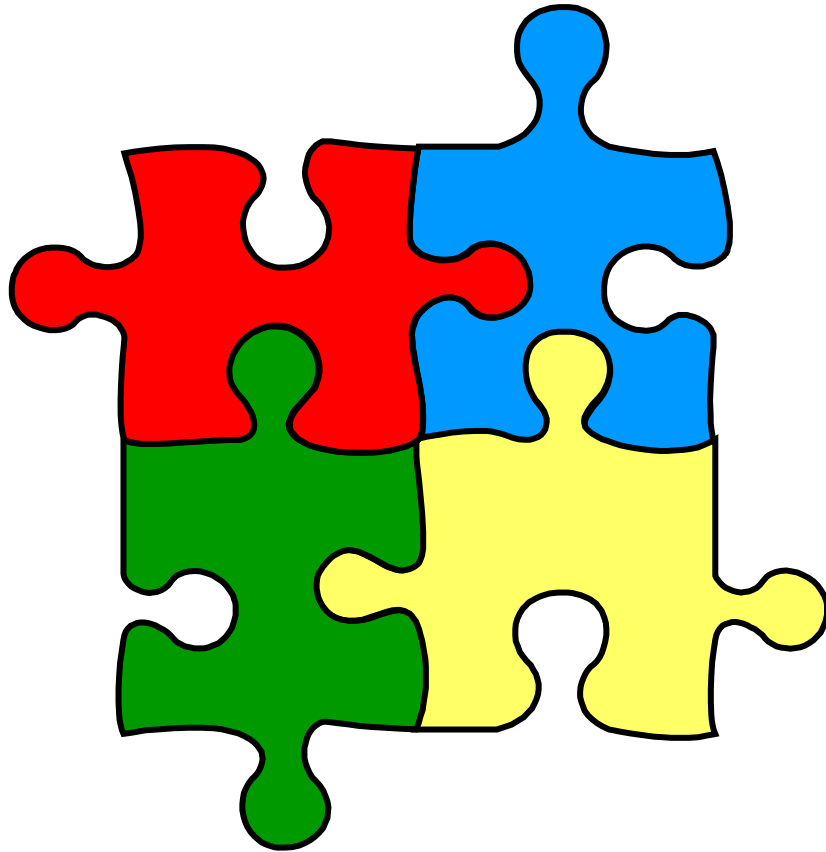
Your spiritual health is something you can have a good bit of control over by implementing some of the suggestions in this book.

You can eat healthy, deal with thoughts and feelings and develop your spirit. Each step you take in any of these areas will have an effect on the other aspects.

**You can improve your wellness from any place you are starting at, right now, today in this moment. There is always something you can do to help yourself. Have courage and live well with lupus.**



**Be Proactive!**



**You are the  
manager of your  
spiritual health!**

## About The Author

Cathy Ferren RHN MAATO is a registered holistic nutritionist, life skills and health coach and instructor, certified Personality Dimensions® instructor, relaxation techniques coach and prayer minister working across Canada. She incorporates her over 35 years of experience in architectural technology into barrier free design consultations for her clients to help them meet their mobility needs.

As a lifelong volunteer in many non-profit organizations, she brings her experience, compassion and focus to her clients. She is passionate about helping people improve their wellness in all areas: body, mind and spirit.



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