

Title	When does the 'spiritual' come into focus?				
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EPICC Standard Competency	General Teaching & Learning	1 Intrapersonal Spirituality	2 Interpersonal Spirituality	3 Spiritual Care: Assessment and Planning	4 Spiritual Care: Intervention and Evaluation
Teaching Group	Nursing, midwifery.				
Year of Teaching	2				
Learning Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop spiritual sensitivity. • Appreciate when the 'spiritual' might come into focus. 				
Strategy Description	<p>The Philosopher, Karl Jaspers, talks about 'limit situations', situations that come our way unannounced, things like illness, loss, death, uncertainty of a diagnosis or threats of these. We do not look for them and we cannot change them, but we will experience some of them in our lives at some point. Limit situations can bring the spiritual part of life into focus. According to Jaspers, limit situations, although negative, can also be positive. They can be 'gifts' wrapped in different wrapping paper because they cause us to reflect more deeply about life, provide opportunity for wonder and reflection and make us think about what is important in life. The patients we look after will encounter limit situations. How can we as nurses help them to respond positively?</p> <p>Listen to the podcast of Philip (Radio 5 Live, 26 July 2017, if you are in the UK). Or, here is the narrative:</p> <p>Radio presenter: "We were talking about happiness and what brings you happiness. This new research telling us it's all about time. We had some extraordinary calls from people including this one from Philip in Oxfordshire. He used to live a very busy lifestyle. All that changed when he was diagnosed with progressive MS. Something, perhaps surprisingly, he was glad had happened to him."</p> <p>Philip: <i>"You never know what life is going to throw at you. I had a fantastic career. I was Managing Director of a number of businesses, earning very well, leading a fantastic life split between Oxfordshire and London. One day I wasn't really feeling very well. A few weeks later I collapsed. I was diagnosed by MRI scan. I was diagnosed with progressive MS. That was 12 years ago.</i></p> <p><i>I am so bad now. Everyone listening to the radio now ... what do you take for granted? Just appreciate it now. I mean the simplest things. My wife has to dress me. She has to take me to the shower. Going to the toilet for me is akin to climbing Mount Everest. I can't eat. I can't dress. I sleep in a chair in the lounge. It's become hell on earth.</i></p> <p><i>I decided to be positive. I've gone inside my mind and I've appreciated things. And one of the big things is time. I can just sit here in my wheelchair. I can no longer walk. I can't even drive, not even an adapted car. I can't do anything.</i></p>				

	<p><i>When I go by the river. Recently I went with my wife. And I stopped in the wheelchair. She walked on and came back and she said ‘what are you doing?’ I said ‘I’m looking at that swan. I’ve never stopped to look at how beautiful this swan is. And now I’m looking at that tree. I can’t believe how beautiful it is.’ Now your listeners might think ‘the guy has lost his mind’. I haven’t. I’ve just opened my eyes and my mind to the simple things in life, the beautiful things that I used to take for granted.</i></p> <p><i>Have I had to cut back my lifestyle? Yes. I don’t dress like I used to. I have to be dressed. But even now on the rare occasions when I get out, it can take me weeks to get out to a restaurant. The restaurant means more to me than everybody else in the room. I appreciate it because I’m in such a hell hole that when I have something that’s really nice or I have the love and support that I have from my gorgeous wife whom I’ve been with for 30 years. The nice thing in life, the little things in life I appreciate them so much more. I’m really thankful. Whether people believe in God, the universe, the energy, whatever it is we live in a universe that is huge so who knows what is driving it but every day I wake up and I think ‘thank you for giving me the MS because it’s changed my life and it has made me appreciate the important things and if you like it’s elevated me above the material world. It’s given me time. I have much less of a material standard of living as I did before. It’s not like it was before materially but that’s not important because the disease has given me time. I’m able to take me time to appreciate the most beautiful little things.”</i></p>
Educator’s Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To facilitate discussion. • Picks up on Carl Jaspers ‘Limit situations’ (challenges in life that come our way that we would not seek out e.g., loss, illness, death, threat of death, uncertainty regarding diagnosis). • These are ‘gifts’ wrapped in different wrapping paper and cause us to STOP and take stock of our lives and our priorities. • Limit situations often cause the spiritual/existential to come into focus (Why me? What does this mean? How will my life change? Will I die?).
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Podcast or narrative.
Learner Assessment	<p>Not assessed formally. Rather a ‘feel’ for the group’s journey is sensed by the teacher from the discussion that has taken place within the session. Some points on student reflection follow.</p> <p><u>Reflection</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent does Philip view his illness as a gift? Jot down your thoughts (e.g., he talks about the beauty of the swan on the river, the trees, his love and appreciation for his wife). • What is the effect of that? • Can you think of a patient you have cared for who has come to view what has happened to them as a gift? • Describe this in a few sentences e.g., what was the ‘limit situation’, what ‘spiritual questions’ did they ask, what effect did that have?
Additional Comments	
References	<p>Fuchs, T., Breyer, T., & Mundt, C. (2013). <i>Karl Jaspers’ philosophy and psychopathology</i>. New York, NY: Springer.</p>