

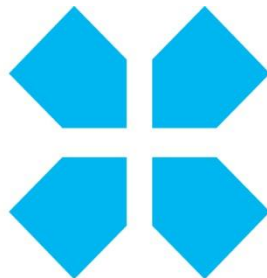
# Exploring Spirituality in New Zealand Older Men

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The Selwyn  
Foundation



THE UNIVERSITY  
OF AUCKLAND

FACULTY OF MEDICAL  
AND HEALTH SCIENCES

*We join spokes together in a wheel,  
but it is the centre hole  
that makes the wagon move.*

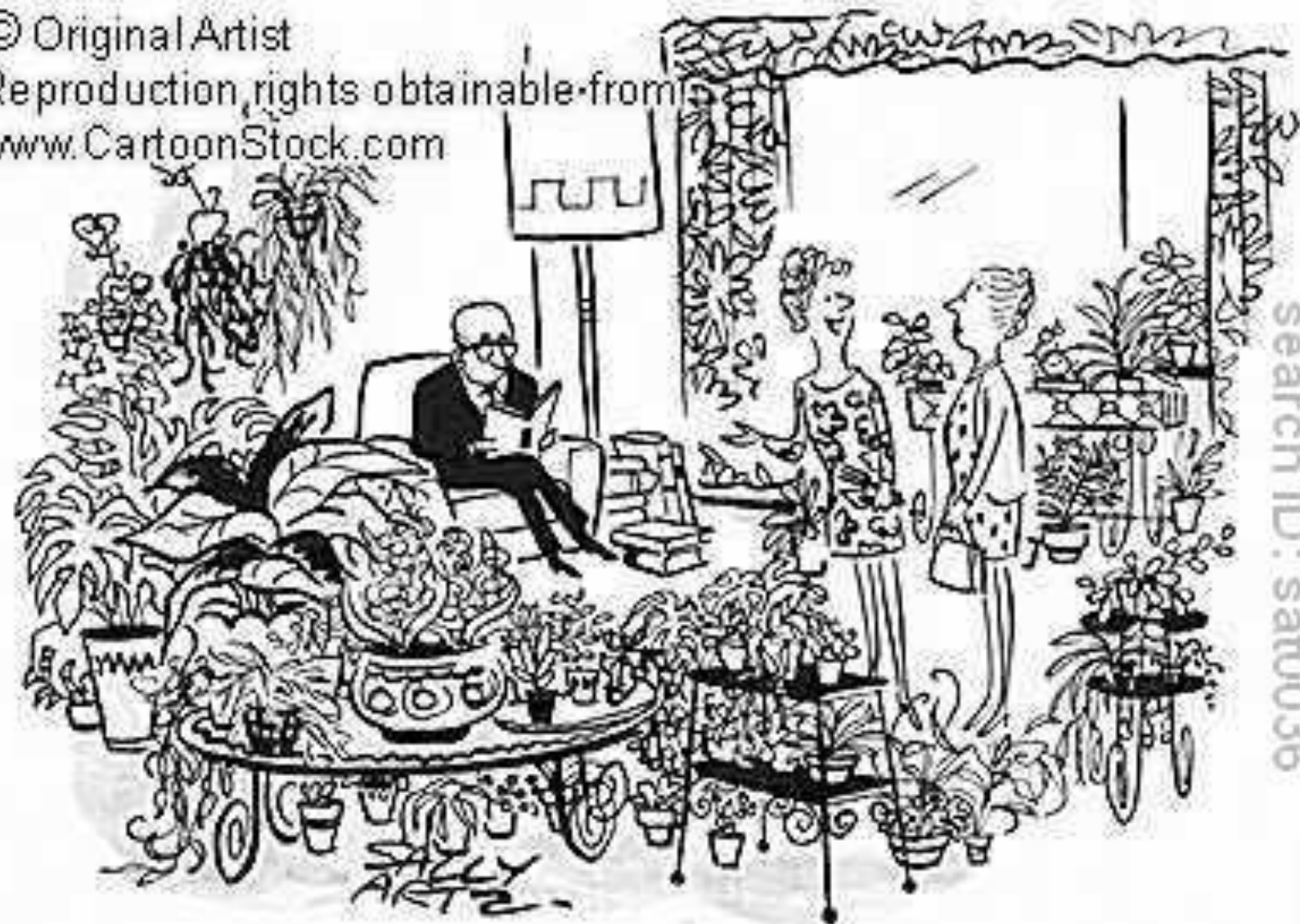
*We shape clay into a pot,  
but it is the emptiness inside  
that holds whatever we want.*

*We hammer wood for a house,  
but it is the inner space  
that makes it liveable*

*We work with being,  
but non-being is what we use.*

*(Tao Te Ching)*

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"... And this is John's little corner."

# He who has a **Why** can bear almost an **How**

- What is spirituality?
- What is the importance in studying spirituality in older men?
- Finding meaning in old age
- Spirituality and health
- Results
- Implications

# What is Spirituality?

- Different perspectives define spirituality differently.
- Increasingly seen nationally and internationally within health policy, clinical guidelines and practice
- Recognised as an integral part of culturally competent healthcare.
- Increasingly, a holistic healthcare approach is becoming adopted by healthcare to view humans as bio-psycho-social-spiritual beings

- *'Spirituality' is a multi-dimensional and complex concept. In addition, there appears to be little consensus on the definition of this term (Ho, 2010; Moberg, 2008).*

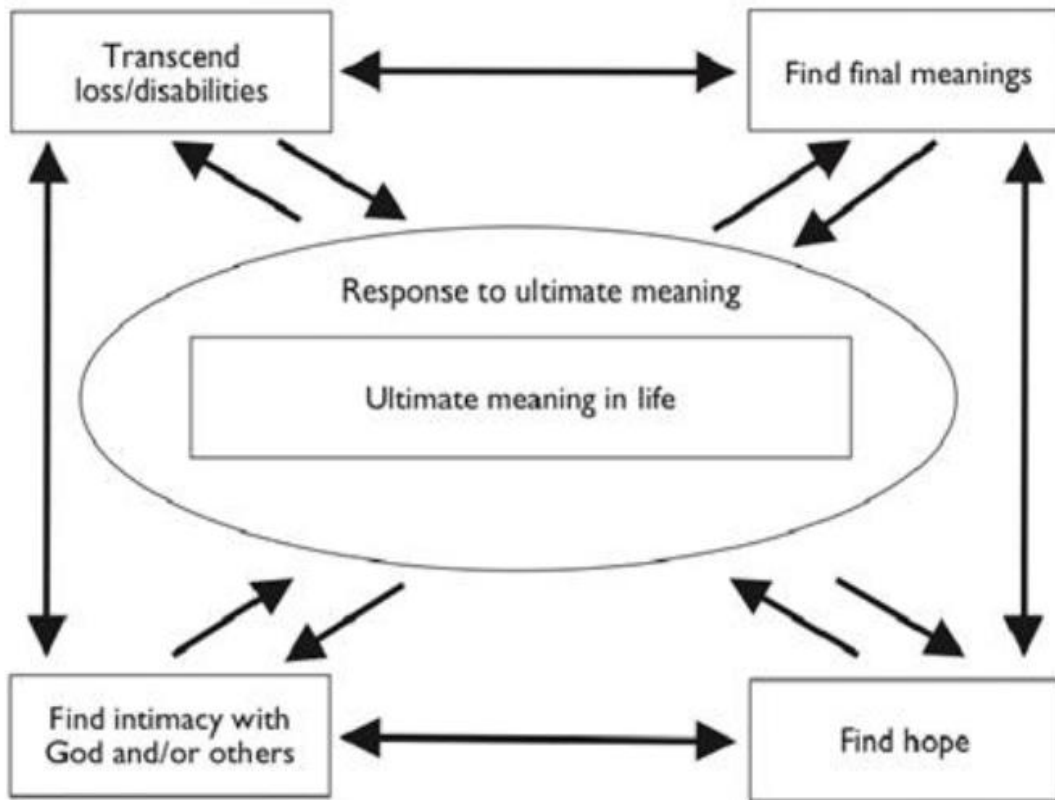
***a) the essence of being***

***b) the meaning of life***

***c) existential values***

***d) the connection with a higher power/God, with others and with the universe.***

# Mackinlay's Generic Model of Spiritual Tasks and Process of Ageing



- Dynamic and Interactive
- The importance of the spiritual aspect will vary between people.
- Spiritual concerns and development are heightened at certain points of the life cycle, such as in the latter part of life.

# How is religion different?

- *'Religiosity' is closely connected with the concepts 'religion' and 'religiousness'.*
- *Religiosity is related to the practice of religion, referring to the knowledge, feelings, practices and beliefs of people.*





# Importance of Studying Older Men

- Lack of research
- As one ages, “being” may become more significant than “doing”.
- A man, who has spent his life working to provide for a family, being the handyman around the house, and going from task to task, may find this particularly difficult.
- The retirement effect
- Masculine Identity

# My Research

How do older men view spirituality and do they see this interacting with their health and well-being?

General Literature  
Review

Systematic Review

6 one-on-one  
semi-structured  
interviews

# Interviews

- **WHO:** *Older men, aged over 65 years. Living in independent living or an aged care facility (Selwyn Foundation).*
- **WHERE:** *Two large aged care residential villages in Auckland*
- **RECRUITMENT:** *Purposive sampling, then random selection. Selwyn Foundation staff made first contact.*
- **HOW:** *in the men's homes or in a meeting room at the village; approximately 1-1.5 hrs. long*

## **i). The Meaning of Spirituality**

- definition
- spiritual experiences
- interpretations of spirituality

## **ii). The Meaning and Significance of Spirituality**

- within their family
- as an individual
- in relationships
- in everyday life
- significant moments

## **iii). The Effect of Spirituality**

- on health and well-being?

## **iv). Views on Spirituality**

- have these views changed or changing
- influencing factors on these views
- reasons for change

## **v). Inadequate spirituality**

- anything missing from spiritual life
- what has been lost spiritually
- could anything be improved in life spiritually

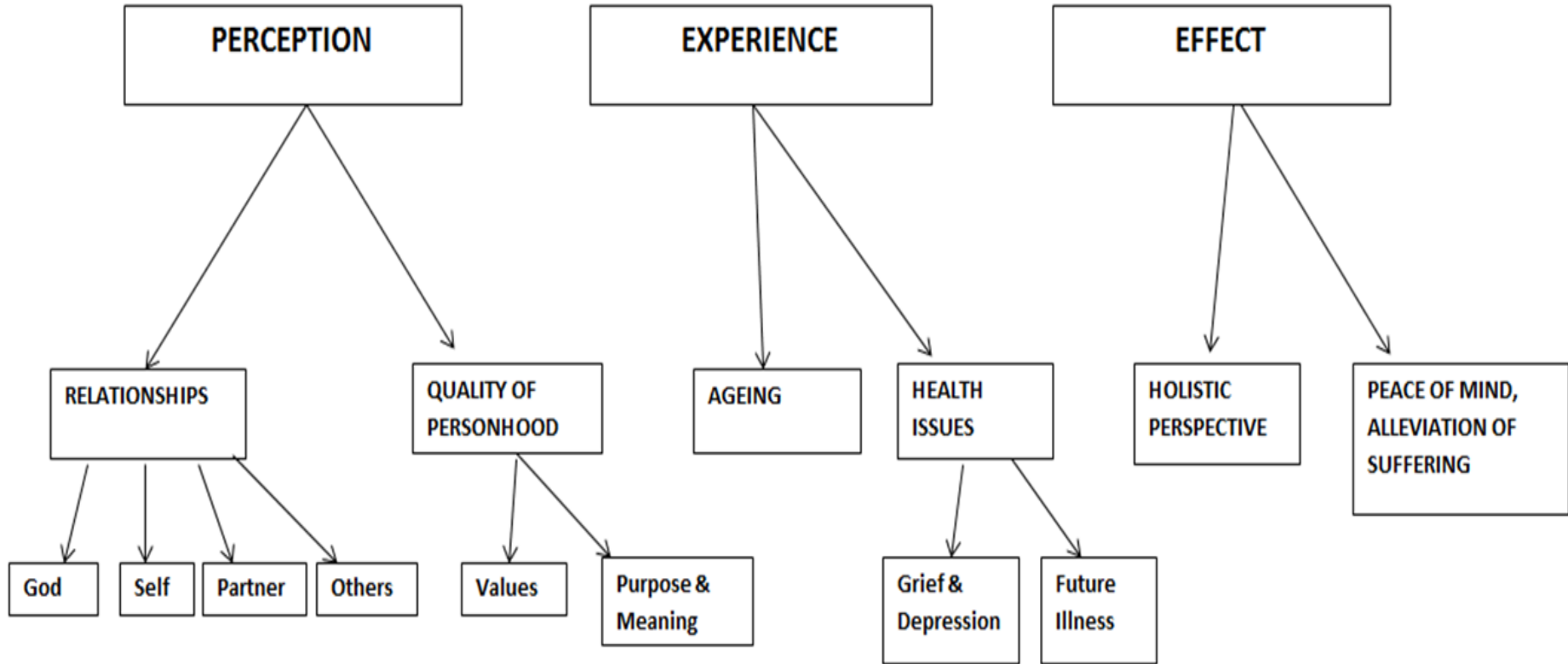
## **vi). Spiritual Challenges**

- what challenges your spirituality?
- have there been any particular experiences, relationships or times in life that your spiritual life was challenged?

## **vii). Spirituality and Religion**

- what do you regard as the relationship between spirituality and religion?
- is there a difference between the two for you?
- in what instances would you feel spiritual but not religious, or vice versa?

## Spirituality in Older Men



# Results: Relationships

*Well the first thing I thought of all was that the whole concept of spirituality as it is expressed here is one of the modern ways of bit of new jargon isn't it?"*

*"My job was all about statistics, facts and mechanics. Spirituality just doesn't fit into that environment does it? Getting rid of that [job] and having wee grandsons and living here [retirement village] has lifted me."*

*"Nature is a powerful force, it was the backbone of my income and my spirituality relied on its power. Living here, I miss my land."*

# Results: Quality of Personhood

*“It wraps up all those big life values really. Ahhh love, helping others, honesty, integrity, loyalty, faith..If we are taking spirituality away from religion, these values still hold.”*

*“You could succumb to anything if you couldn’t see a way out of a way forward. I think a driving factor has to come from you.”*



# Results: Ageing

*“ Being a farmer you have to understand that there is something a lot bigger... And so ageing and retirement didn't give me some type of spiritual enlightenment. I'm a busy man, I mean I keep myself busy, Being spiritual is always there”*

*“I feel in my thirties perhaps I was very dogmatic and.. Well you just.....I feel I have more faith now. I feel that perhaps my faith has grown stronger as I've grown older, or you're inclined to think that you're clearer”.*

# Results: Health Issues, Holism & Alleviation of Suffering

*“ I think it [wife’s death] has, yes. I get depressed, not all the time, you know... It changes your life. It came to me then more or less. Different ideas of what its all about, you know. It makes you think deeper, you know”.*

*“Im sure its given me some sort of serenity if you like; an acceptance. And this has helped me physically. Because as I say, the doctor says to me, I’m pretty good for a 1927 baby.”*

*“My wife’s alzheimers became my retirement. She is my wife, so I cared for her. But she couldn’t care for me-that’s where I guess you could say my spirituality cared, it umm kept me focused on the bigger picture”*

# Strengths and Limitations

## Strengths

- Adds to the small amount of research on older men
- Provides a basis for further research
- First NZ study to explore spirituality specifically in older men.

## Limitations

- Volunteers- may not be indicative of the general population
- Setting: Christian-based residential village likely to skew results.
- Similar ethnic background

# Summary

Religion is still found to be an important factor for older men when considering spirituality.

Spirituality can be observed in mundane activities or relationships, and at a broader fundamental level.

The men's stories draw attention to the need to health and well-being from a holistic perspective.

**“Man is not destroyed by suffering; he is destroyed by suffering without meaning” (Frankl, 1984)**