

## Spiritual Mentoring

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New York – “Spiritual Mentoring” is offered as a 3 credit, Continuing Education Course (CEU), one of the UTS offerings in its lifelong learning program. It is held in Tarrytown, New York, and started on February 16, 2016. When I first heard the topic of the class I was interested right away. I have always considered myself a naturally spiritual person and mentor.

The information and assignments after having a few classes has already transformed my life. I use the term “transformed” because “changed” just does not suffice. The class has given me a stronger sense of self, the ability to understand and listen to others, to be open to changes that occur in my own life and to help others. I have seen the change in my personal relationships already. I think by the end of the course I will not be the same person as when I started.

The class has a very diverse group of students, ranging from 21 to 68 years old. There are also people from different ethnicities and religious backgrounds which adds to the flavor of discussion. Something that is really positive that we do at the beginning of each class is to read a code of rules that we promise to uphold throughout the course. The one I find to be most important is confidentiality because much of the time in class we are sharing about our own life experiences.

Drissa Kone, an adjunct professor at UTS, is teaching the course. Asked to describe the course, he says, “Spiritual mentoring is personal development. In a culture where everyone has been told to talk, talk and talk, I am encouraging the students to listen more and talk less. If we listen well, then we can understand and care. If we care then we show love, and this goes to the heart of ‘living for the sake of others.’ This process of empowering members of a community to care for others can shift the culture. Unless we can understand what another person is experiencing (going through) then it is difficult to love them. The group dynamic of the class, with the willingness to be vulnerable in an atmosphere of trust, allows the students to experience a personal transformation. We each are open to feel the love of God.”

The assignments we take home ask us to look into our lives, our faith, spirituality and what we represent. The first assignment was extremely powerful. The most valuable question was, “What is your faith identity?” Honestly, I have never put into words (for other people) what my faith identity is and what it means to me. Now when I meet someone for the first time or talk with someone I have known for years I can share this powerful knowledge of who I am. The class is great and I recommend it for everyone.

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Elisa Hack is a teacher at Bright Horizons. She studied Counseling Psychology at Pace University, Pleasantville, NY. Inspired by the Spiritual Mentoring course she has signed up to pursue a graduate degree at UTS