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DECEMBER 2021

# The Saybrook Spirit

THE OFFICIAL ALUMNI NEWSLETTER  
OF SAYBROOK UNIVERSITY



## December is Spiritual Literacy Month...

Spiritual Literacy Month in December challenges us to read at least one book on spirituality. This December, we can broaden our minds or deepen our faith by reading a book (or 5) about spirituality, faith, or religion. It's important to remember that you can be spiritual without being religious. Religion is organized and has specific beliefs that usually come with a strict set of rules. However, spirituality is more of just believing in something bigger than humanity and being empowered. Spiritually does not necessarily stick to a set of rules or believe precisely what someone else believes in. So, whether you're spiritual, religious, or just plain curious, get reading this month to learn more about what stirs up the souls of others around you.

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# Spiritual Literacy Month

**"A book is a garden, an orchard, a storehouse, a party, a company by the way, a counselor, a multitude of counselors." -Henry Ward Beecher**

## **HOW TO OBSERVE #Spiritual Literacy Month**

When you've decided which book(s) you want to read this month, snap a photo and share it on social media. Be sure to use #SpiritualLiteracyMonth or #SpiritualLiteracy. There are many reasons why reading a spiritual book is beneficial, too. Here are just a few of them:

- Simply put, it's good for your soul. Reading a spiritual book opens your mind in ways you probably didn't realize it could. It also offers an uplifting, refreshing view of the world and universe we live in.
- It will lower your stress levels. Studies show that reading spiritual literacy can improve mental and physical health. It can also help keep you calm in stressful situations.
- Reading spiritual books introduces you to a whole new world. Spiritual books can awaken you spiritually and mentally. They also open up your range of thinking and imagination to an entirely different level.
- It is exciting and fun! Even if you don't agree with some of the viewpoints you are reading about, learning other perspectives and ideas will help you understand other people. You will also gain a well-rounded knowledge of others' spiritual life.

### **SPIRITUAL LITERACY MONTH HISTORY**

Authors, Frederic and Mary Brussat, founded Spiritual Literacy Month in 1996. They encourage people to read texts from all different religions to gain respect for the world's religions and the spiritual traditions that come along with them.



# Co-Chair's Corner



## Reflections on The Book of Joy

By Victoria L. Bowers, Ph.D.

In reading the *The Book of Joy* (Lama & Tutu, 2016), I gained some valuable coping skills that have helped me manage feelings of stress and anxiety during difficult times. I wanted to reflect on some helpful insights I gained from this book. According to the Dalai Lama (2016), it is self-centeredness that is the main cause of suffering. Compassion is key to wellbeing and happiness. It is important that we have self-compassion for our own needs as well as compassion towards others. Learning to be self-compassionate can help us to gain more resilience and overcome suffering. Through self-compassion, we can apply healthy coping skills in our lives.

It is possible to get through difficult times and still find meaning and happiness (Lama & Tutu, 2016). Finding peace and contentment in dark times can be done through learning to appreciate the small and big moments in life. We can choose to cultivate feelings of gratitude. We can learn to recognize all of the beautiful aspects of life. We can decide to be present in every moment and to enjoy each day. Applying mindfulness in our lives, can help us to have healthier more productive thoughts that can ease stress and anxiety. Mindfulness can help us to change our negative thoughts to be more positive and helpful. Using mindfulness improves our peace of mind and wellbeing. We can show ourselves compassion by practicing mindfulness daily.

Life can be very painful, but it is possible to use our inner strength and right way of thinking to endure the painful aspects of life (Lama & Tutu, 2016). We know that in life we will always face hardships, but we can discover that we have the opportunity to learn from our experiences and make meaning from them. Suffering leads to having greater compassion for others who suffer. It helps us to avoid any actions that may cause other people suffering because we understand what it feels like to suffer. When we understand pain, we can better appreciate the good times we experience. It is how we face our challenges that determines the kind of person we become. Compassion for ourselves and others as we journey in life is key to lasting happiness.



### Reference:

Lama, D., Tutu, D., & Abrams, D. C. (2016). *The book of joy: Lasting happiness in a changing world*. Penguin Books.

[Visit our Alumni Website Page](#)

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# Alumni Spotlight

Dr. Clinton C. Pickett earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Crisis Counseling from Liberty University, and a Master of Arts degree in Psychology and Doctorate degree in Clinical Psychology from Saybrook University.

He has trained in a variety of settings that include a psychiatric state hospital, private clinical practices, private forensic practices, and he has worked in adoption services. His experience includes therapy; neuropsychological and psychological evaluations; and forensic evaluations, such as competency to stand trial, risk assessments, will contests, and parenting responsibility evaluations. He has also provided therapy to at-risk children and has completed adoption assessments for families in the adoption process.



**Dr. Clint C. Pickett**

Dr. Pickett launched Central Focus Psychological Group in July of 2021. The practice continues to grow as he and his staff strive to provide competent evaluations to the community of Colorado. Dr. Pickett and his team evaluate/diagnose symptoms in children that range from autism spectrum disorder or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder to symptoms of cognitive decline or dementia in older adults.

For more information about the services available at Central Focus Psychological Group, please visit

[www.centralfocusgroup.com](http://www.centralfocusgroup.com)





## Coping with Holiday Blues

A pre-Covid survey (<https://www.nami.org/Press-Media/Press-Releases/2014/Mental-health-and-the-holiday-blues>) found, "Approximately 75% of overall respondents reported that the holidays contribute to feeling sad or dissatisfied and 68% financially strained. 66% have experienced loneliness, 63% too much pressure and 57% unrealistic expectations. 55% found themselves remembering happier times in the past contrasting with the present, while 50% were unable to be with loved ones." During this time of Covid, depression, loneliness, and anxiety have only increased. The following links offer some ideas and insights into helping boost moods during this sometimes difficult time of year.

<https://namica.org/blog/handling-stress-during-the-holiday-season/>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/stress/art-20047544>

<https://www.mcleanhospital.org/essential/mcleans-guide-managing-mental-health-around-holidays>

<https://mhanational.org/blog/5-things-do-when-holidays-arent-exactly-uplifting>

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Saybrook  
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November 22, 2021

I am pleased to announce the selection of Dr. Robyn Parker, Ph.D., as our next Vice President for Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer. We will begin introducing her to faculty, staff, and students in January, with February 1, 2022, being her official start date.



**About Dr. Parker:** Dr. Parker has extensive administrative and instructional experience in higher education. She most recently served as Professor and Dean of the Donald R Tapia College of Business at Saint Leo University, headquartered in Saint Leo, Florida. She previously served as Academic Dean, Dean of the College of Business Administration, Tenured Professor, and Director of Instruction at Plymouth State University in New Hampshire. Dr. Parker started her career in higher education as an Assistant Professor and Undergraduate Program Director at Kent State University. Robyn has an earned doctorate in Organizational Communication from Wayne State University in Detroit and a Master's degree in Human Resource Development from Boston University.

Throughout her career, within each institution she has worked, Dr. Parker has been a leader in change-facilitation. Her interests lie in organizational theory, development, and behavior. A systems thinker, Robyn has facilitated the design and implementation of restructuring strategies that have saved money, streamlined processes, and created innovative programs and learning environments. A past fellow with Arizona State & Georgetown University's Academy of Innovative Higher Education Leadership, Robyn's passion is guiding others toward becoming transformational leaders. Robyn lives with her husband, Steve, in Tampa Bay, Florida, where they enjoy golfing and travel.

I sincerely thank our university-wide search committee chaired by Ms. Joline Pruitt, Dr. Gina Belton, and Dr. Eric Willmarth, leading to Dr. Parker's appointment. We are also extremely grateful for the leadership of Dr. Leanne Wruck who has served in an exemplary fashion as our Interim VPAA while we conducted our national search. Note that Dr. Wruck will continue in her interim capacity until Dr. Parker officially begins with the university.

Please join me in warmly welcoming Dr. Parker and her family to the Saybrook community!

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Nathan Long, Ed.D., President  
Saybrook University

Events & Stuff

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## **Upcoming Events!**

Mark Your Calendar - Film, Book, and Poetry Festival  
July 15 & 16, 2022



Coming Soon!

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F A I R

**May 20 & 21, 2022**





## We're Hiring

- ✓ Core Faculty for the Sustainable Social Impact MBA/DBA
- ✓ Adjunct Faculty - Psychology Department
- ✓ Associate Director of Clinical Training

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# Guess Who is Hiring?



**Fordham University**  
[HIV & Drug Abuse Prevention Research Ethics Training Institute](#)



**University of New Mexico**

[Counselor/Social Worker](#)



**Utah State University**  
[Postdoctoral Fellow - Indigenous Narratives](#)



Join us for  
**Mindfulness Meditation Moments**



Sep 10th - Dec 10th, 2021  
Mondays  
Fridays



Facilitated by the  
Mind-Body Medicine  
Faculty and guest Alumni  
of Saybrook University



9:15 am Pacific  
11:15 am Central  
12:15 pm Eastern

**Zoom Link:**

<https://tcsedsystem.zoom.us/j/96555778825?pwd=ZUI2Ykd2eE9pbm9XduU1IOTRjSDMrQT09>  
Meeting ID: 965 5577 8825  
Password: 182085

**To Join by Audio Only: Find your local number:**

<https://tcsedsystem.zoom.us/u/ac2sGhpBw2>

**Facilitated by the Mind-Body Medicine Faculty  
and guest Alumni of Saybrook University**

If you miss the live meditation, we invite you to refer to recorded  
podcasts as often as you like to practice on your own at :  
<https://saybrookinsights.buzzsprout.com/>

*\*\* There will be no audience interaction with the  
facilitator. How-ever, please reach out to us following  
the event if you have questions by emailing  
[presidentsoffice@saybrook.edu](mailto:presidentsoffice@saybrook.edu)*

*\*\* We will be audio recording these sessions to provide  
these free of charge to the general public at a later  
date. By joining these sessions, you acknowledge you  
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Learn more  
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Thank you, from the Saybrook University Alumni Council Team!



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Thank You for Reading!

Look for the January 2022 edition coming soon!



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