

# Questions to Contemplate for the Eight Pillars

## 1st Pillar – Reality & Truth

### Core Questions to Contemplate

- 1) What do I believe the universe is made of—purely physical matter, consciousness, or something else?

Answer:

- 2) Does reality exist independently of perception, or do mind and world co-create experience?

Answer:

- 3) How much trust do I place in my senses as reliable guides to truth?

Answer:

- 4) What roles do logic, intuition, and revelation each play in how I know things?

Answer:

- 5) How do I decide what counts as evidence when proof is incomplete?

Answer:

- 6) What makes something “real” to me: measurement, experience, or meaning?

Answer:

- 7) When experts or authorities disagree, how do I determine who to trust?

Answer:

8) Do I believe in an underlying unity or Source behind appearances?

Answer:

9) Is there such a thing as absolute truth, or is all truth contextual?

Answer:

10)How does my view of reality affect the way I live each day?

Answer:

## **Deeper Explorations (Optional)**

11)Could consciousness itself be the primary reality from which matter emerges?

Answer:

12)Have I ever had an experience that challenged my definition of “real”?

Answer:

13)How do illusions or dreams fit into my philosophy of truth?

Answer:

14)Does observation change what is observed?

Answer:

15)What is the relationship between knowledge and wisdom?

Answer:

16)What would it take for me to change my core view of reality?

Answer:

## 2nd Pillar - Self & Identity

### Core Questions to Contemplate

1) What makes me me—body, memory, consciousness, or something deeper?

Answer:

2) Am I the same person throughout life, or continually being re-created?

Answer:

3) What part of me observes my thoughts and emotions when they change?

Answer:

4) Do I believe consciousness arises from the brain or exists beyond it?

Answer:

5) How much of who I am is shaped by genetics, upbringing, and culture?

Answer:

6) What does “free will” mean in my lived experience?

Answer:

7) What parts of my identity or personality do I feel I have actively chosen for myself, and which parts seem to be shaped by external influences or circumstances?

Answer:

8) When I act, how much responsibility do I truly have for the outcome?

Answer:

9) How do I discern my inner voice of wisdom from fear or ego?

Answer:

10)How do I balance self-acceptance with the drive to grow?

Answer:

## **Deeper Explorations (Optional)**

11)If awareness can watch thought, is awareness my truest identity?

Answer:

12)How do trauma or shadow aspects influence the self I show the world?

Answer:

13)Can I experience freedom even if my external life feels constrained?

Answer:

14)In what ways might our sense of “self” be something we construct moment by moment, rather than something fixed or permanent?

Answer:

15)How does my view of identity affect how I treat others?

Answer:

16)What would remain if every label and role were stripped away?

Answer:

## **3<sup>rd</sup> Pillar - Meaning & Purpose**

### **Core Questions to Contemplate**

1) Do I believe life has inherent meaning, or do we create it through living?

Answer:

2) What moments or activities make me feel most alive and significant?

Answer:

3) When does my life feel meaningful, and when does it feel empty?

Answer:

4) Do I experience purpose as something found, chosen, or evolving?

Answer:

5) What patterns or themes run through my life story so far?

Answer:

6) If I had one year left to live, what would suddenly matter most?

Answer:

7) How do love, service, creativity, or learning shape my sense of purpose?

Answer:

8) How do I stay connected to meaning in ordinary or difficult times?

Answer:

9) What would make my life feel well-lived?

Answer:

10) How do my ideas of purpose relate to mortality?

Answer:

## **Deeper Explorations (Optional)**

11) Can life still have meaning if the universe is indifferent to me?

Answer:

12) What would change if I viewed purpose as moment-to-moment awareness rather than a single mission?

Answer:

13) How does desire—fulfilled or unfulfilled—affect my sense of meaning?

Answer:

14) How might suffering contribute to purpose?

Answer:

15) Does legacy matter to me, and if so, why?

Answer:

16) How do I reconcile multiple purposes that compete for attention?

Answer:

## **4<sup>th</sup> Pillar - Good & Right**

### **Core Questions**

1) What makes an action right or wrong in my eyes?

Answer:

2) Is morality fixed and universal or flexible and context-dependent?

Answer:

3) Is morality about intentions, outcomes, or inner character?

Answer:

4) When values conflict—honesty vs. kindness, freedom vs. safety—how do I decide?

Answer:

5) Which virtues do I most admire and wish to embody?

Answer:

6) Which habits or vices most often lead me astray?

Answer:

7) When (if ever) do ends justify means?

Answer:

8) How do I distinguish between legality, social approval, and true ethics?

Answer:

9) Do I owe moral responsibility to strangers, animals, or the planet?

Answer:

10) How do I live my values under pressure?

Answer:

## **Deeper Explorations (Optional)**

11) What does integrity mean in practice, not theory?

Answer:

12) Are my values aspirational or consistently lived?

Answer:

13) Where does healthy self-interest become selfishness?

Answer:

14) Can compassion exist without justice—or justice without compassion?

Answer:

15) Which ethical tradition best mirrors my instincts (Utilitarian, Stoic, Virtue, Care Ethics)?

Answer:

16) How do I handle moral failure—through guilt, repair, or renewal?

Answer:

## **5<sup>th</sup> Pillar - Suffering & Adversity**

### **Core Questions**

1) Is suffering an unavoidable part of life or a catalyst for growth?

Answer:

2) Do I believe pain has purpose, or is it simply the cost of existence?

Answer:

3) How do I typically respond to pain—resistance, acceptance, avoidance, or curiosity?

Answer:

4) What helps me stay grounded when everything feels uncertain?

Answer:

5) How do I distinguish between pain I must endure and suffering I can release?

Answer:

6) What has hardship revealed about my strengths or illusions?

Answer:

7) How do I show compassion to myself when I'm hurting?

Answer:

8) When I witness others' pain, what is my first instinct—to fix, to comfort, or to turn away?

Answer:

9) How do I balance caring for others with preserving my own well-being?

Answer:

10) What beliefs sustain me when life feels unfair?

Answer:

## **Deeper Explorations (Optional)**

11) How do I define evil—malice, ignorance, imbalance, or separation from good?

Answer:

12) Have I ever found meaning through loss, even reluctantly?

Answer:

13) What emotions do I resist most, and what might they be trying to teach me?

Answer:

14) How can suffering cultivate empathy or humility?

Answer:

15) How do I face injustice without losing peace of mind?

Answer:

16) When forgiveness feels impossible, what remains within my power to heal?

Answer:

## **6<sup>th</sup> Pillar - Connection & Community**

### **Core Questions**

1) What does love mean to me—emotion, action, or commitment?

Answer:

2) How do I express care without losing authenticity?

Answer:

3) What qualities make relationships nourishing or draining?

Answer:

4) When should I prioritize honesty, and when compassion?

Answer:

5) What responsibilities come with friendship, family, or community?

Answer:

6) How do I decide when to forgive and when to let go?

Answer:

7) Do all people deserve basic respect, regardless of behavior?

Answer:

8) How do I handle disagreement or difference in values?

Answer:

9) What is my role in creating fairness within my circles?

Answer:

10)How do I balance my needs with service to others?

Answer:

## **Deeper Explorations (Optional)**

11)What is the difference between loving someone and needing them?

Answer:

12)Can I love people I disagree with—or who have harmed me?

Answer:

13)How far does my circle of moral concern extend—family, nation, humanity, all life?

Answer:

14)What does a just society look like to me, and what is my part in building it?

Answer:

15) When should I conform to culture, and when should I challenge it?

Answer:

16) How can I embody compassion without enabling harm?

Answer:

## **7<sup>th</sup> Pillar - Transcendence & Mystery**

### **Core Questions for Contemplation**

1) Do I believe anything exists beyond the physical world?

Answer:

2) What fills me with awe or reverence?

Answer:

3) What does “sacred” mean in my experience?

Answer:

4) How comfortable am I with uncertainty and paradox?

Answer:

5) How do my beliefs about death shape how I live?

Answer:

6) Can I be spiritual without religion—or religious without spirituality?

Answer:

7) How do beauty, silence, or nature affect my sense of transcendence?

Answer:

8) When have I felt connected to something greater than myself?

Answer:

9) How do I respond when reason and faith diverge?

Answer:

10) What practices help me touch stillness or wonder?

Answer:

### **Deeper Explorations (Optional)**

11) What would convince me to change my beliefs about ultimate reality?

Answer:

12) Are mystical or paranormal experiences symbolic or literal to me?

Answer:

13) How do I interpret coincidence, synchronicity, or “miracles”?

Answer:

14) Can I honor mystery without needing to explain it?

Answer:

15) What role does humility play in my spiritual life?

Answer:

16) If nothing exists after death, does that lessen or intensify meaning?

Answer:

# 8<sup>th</sup> Pillar - Practice & Integration

## Core Questions to Contemplate

1) What habits or rituals keep me aligned with my inner being?

Answer:

2) How do I begin and end each day with intention?

Answer:

3) What is my process for making difficult decisions?

Answer:

4) When values conflict, how do I choose?

Answer:

5) How do I notice when I'm acting against my beliefs?

Answer:

6) How do I correct course without self-judgment?

Answer:

7) Which actions most clearly express who I aspire to be?

Answer:

8) What boundaries or disciplines sustain my integrity?

Answer:

9) How do I continue learning and evolving my philosophy?

Answer:

10)What daily reminder helps me live consciously rather than re-actively?

Answer:

### **Deeper Explorations (Optional)**

11)What does “embodiment” of wisdom look like in my routine?

Answer:

12)How do I live with inconsistency between my beliefs and reality?

Answer:

13)Which situations tempt me to abandon my values?

Answer:

14)What would it mean to forgive myself for failure yet keep striving?

Answer:

15)When should I speak my philosophy openly, and when simply model it?

Answer:

16)How can creativity, art, or service act as living practice?

Answer: