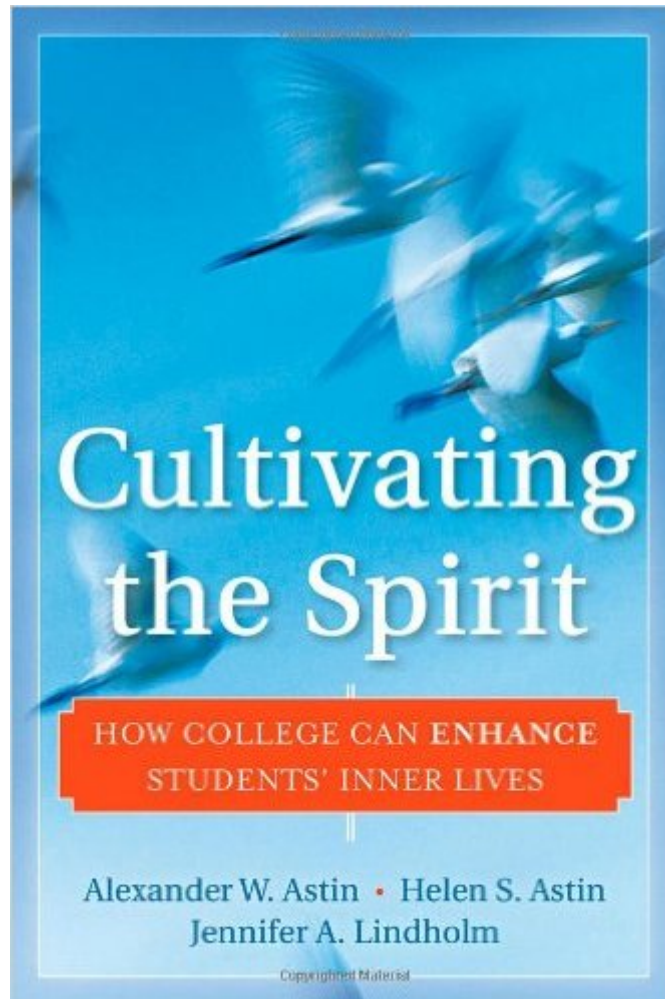


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Cultivating The Spirit: How College Can Enhance Students' Inner Lives



Synopsis

Praise for *Cultivating the Spirit* "A groundbreaking study of the spiritual growth of college students.... The spiritual dimension of higher education has been explored from a variety of angles for the past twenty years, but not until now have we had a competent and comprehensive body of data organized around well-defined dimensions of this complex phenomenon. This is an essential book for anyone in academia who cares about the education of the whole person." —Parker J. Palmer, author, *The Heart of Higher Education*, *A Hidden Wholeness*, *Let Your Life Speak*, and *The Courage to Teach* "An extremely important book for layperson and professional alike. A stunning wake-up call for higher education—highly recommended!" —Ken Wilber, author, *The Integral Vision* "Cultivating the Spirit makes a unique and important contribution to one of the least examined yet most fundamental questions about undergraduate education: how students acquire the values and convictions that help to give meaning and purpose to their lives.... The authors provide a wealth of valuable findings about this vital process and its effects on student achievement, well-being, and personal growth in college." —Derek Bok, former president, Harvard University, and author, *The Politics of Happiness* "The fruit of a decade of elegantly designed and compelling research, *Cultivating the Spirit* provides timely and significant data for reorienting the conversation about the relationships among intellectual inquiry, traditional academic values, and the formation of the inner life. Informative, clearly written, essential, and evocative reading for today's faculty across all institutions—public and private, secular and religious." —Sharon Daloz Parks, author, *Big Questions*, *Worthy Dreams* and *Leadership Can Be Taught*

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Customer Reviews

In 2007 former Yale Law School Dean Anthony Kronman published a book entitled EDUCATION'S END: WHY OUR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES HAVE GIVEN UP ON THE MEANING OF LIFE. Basically, Dean Kronman discusses the abandonment of 'big questions' and the classic curriculum which addressed such questions. At the same time, Professor Astin and his UCLA colleagues were studying the manner in which college can actually enhance the addressing of these questions and the development of what he terms students' 'inner lives'. The result of their study is CULTIVATING THE SPIRIT. While the books share similar concerns, broadly speaking, they could not be more different in their execution. Kronman's book is an extended meditation, a blend of personal, cultural and intellectual history. Astin's book is survey-based social science. There is a joking injunction in the university that 'thou shalt not commit a social science'. Astin has been committing them for years and his research institute is one of the most important in the country. His methods are judicious and as 'reliable' as one might wish. In this study he examines the experience of a multiplicity of students from a large number of diverse institutions. He takes snapshots and he develops longitudinal data. He explores his conclusions at great length and he deploys his methodology in great detail. There is only one problem: very, very few of the conclusions are counterintuitive. In the course of their college experience students tend to become slightly more spiritual but slightly less religious. They are more likely to explore ultimate questions if they major in English than if they major in Business. They are likely to be more caring if they study in the school of Nursing or Health Professions.

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