

DEMOCRATIC VALUES, VIRTUES, AND SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

America’s democracy is founded on powerful ideas: We are all created equal. We have the right to life, freedom, and the opportunity to pursue our own happiness. At the same time, we are people in *united* states, trying to form a more perfect union and promote the welfare of all. American democracy can flourish only when citizens are united, at a deep level that transcends ideology, race, and class, with a shared spiritual and moral vision of what America should be.

Democracy is more than a form of government. It is a way of life that can be strengthened through spiritual practices — both those traditionally considered to be “inner work” and those that encourage active engagement with our neighbors and communities. The Practicing Democracy Guides give you specific ways to practice democracy at home, at work, on the Internet, and in other settings. The chart below is designed to show how the spiritual practices we’ve suggested, as well as others from your own experience, uphold democratic values and cultivate democratic virtues.

To uphold the democratic values of:				
Common good	Freedom Independence Liberty	<i>E Pluribus Unum,</i> “Out of many — one”	Equality Justice for all Rule of law	Patriotism Popular sovereignty
And to cultivate the democratic virtues of:				
Appreciation	Courage	Adaptability	Accountability	Assertiveness
Caring	Determination	Cooperation	Awareness	Consideration
Commitment	Honesty	Embracing diversity	Dignity	Cultivating wisdom
Creativity	Humility	Integrity	Fairness	Discernment
Empathy	Nobility	Mercy	Honor	Idealism
Generosity	Open- mindedness	Optimism	Initiative	Loyalty
Moderation	Purposefulness	Peacefulness	Love of learning	Responsibility, especially for civic engagement
Pursuit of excellence	Sacrifice	Searching for transcendence	Perseverance	Social conscience
Service	Self-discipline	Sincerity	Resilience	
Simplicity	Self-reliance		Respect	
Thankfulness	Trustworthiness		Steadfastness	
	Truthfulness		Strength	
We need spiritual practices of:				
Compassion	Joy	Connections	Forgiveness	Devotion
Gratitude	Openness	Love	Justice	Faith
Hope	Questing	Peace	Reverence	Listening
Hospitality	Transformation	Teachers	You	Meaning
Imagination	Yearning	Unity	Vision	Shadow
Kindness				

For more on American democratic values, virtues, and the language of democracy, visit PracticingDemocracy.net.