

*Morten Tolboll*

## **Six common traits of New Age that distort spirituality**

When someone is going to question the New Age movement, then it can be hard to send the critique to a certain address. It is often only a minority within the New Age movement, who stands behind a certain practice, and a critique of a certain practice might be irrelevant for another part of the movement. The movement is namely based on all kinds of imported spiritual traditions mixed with Western psychotherapy, coaching and management theory (see my articles **The devastating New Age turn within psychotherapy** and **Management theory and the self-help industry**).

One central inspiration, though, is the ideology and syncretism of Theosophy (see my article **The fascism of Theosophy**).

Most people, who can be characterized as New Agers and/or Self-helpers, therefore often don't recognize themselves as such. Most often they speak about themselves as spiritual free-thinkers not belonging to any religion, movement or ideology. This is not true though. In the following I will show six common traits of New Age, that show how it distorts true spirituality, and why it must be characterized as an ideology. My main name for this ideology is **The Matrix Conspiracy**.

### **1. The psychologizing of religion and philosophy**

This causes, that the practitioners turn their minds towards the content, and not the form, as true spirituality does. It also causes that the main focus is turned towards feelings. In true spirituality the main focus is the thoughts (see for example my articles **Humanistic psychology, self-help, and the danger of reducing religion to psychology**, **Self-help and The Mythology of Authenticity** and **Philosophical counseling as an alternative to psychotherapy**).

### **2. The elimination of critical thinking**

The psychologizing therefore also causes that critical thinking is seen as something negative, as a symptom of problems with your feelings. This turn is coming from

relativistic and subjectivistic theories on Western universities, which forbid actual value judgment (notice the self-contradiction). And it has nothing to do with spirituality, and causes that the practitioners close themselves to both own problems, and problems of the world. In true spirituality critical thinking is quite central, because the practice here is about discovering both own thought distortions, and thought distortions of the world (see my articles **Constructivism: the postmodern intellectualism behind New Age and the self-help industry**, **The New feminism and the philosophy of women's magazines**, **The Sokal Hoax**, and my book **A dictionary of thought distortions**).

### 3. Incompetent teachers

The many short self-made and private educations within the New Age ideology, cause that there are extremely many teachers without enough experiences and philosophical training. This causes a lot of spiritual misguiding.

### 4. Pseudoscience

New Age is filled with all kind of loose, self-invented and directly wrong interpretations of science. Furthermore there is a manipulative, and non-founded, tendency to call their own practices science. This also causes a lot of misguiding (see my article **The pseudoscience of New Age and reductionism**).

### 5. Narcissism

The same fully individualized core of personality, which today makes us able to step out of the past's fixed and subconscious attachment, has itself within New Age become the main interest, center for the identity in a degree, that almost all awareness here are directed inwards in a global seen exceptional narcissism. The ideological use of relativism and subjectivism sounds like this: "I have my truth, you have yours!" "You judge" is the same as "You condemn." In true spirituality the central goal is the elimination of the Ego (see my article **The ego-inflation in the New Age and self-help industry**).

### 6. Ideology

An ideology functions with the implied assumption, that the supreme good is lying out in the future, and that the end therefore justifies the means. In New Age this goal is the so-called New Age; the New World Order, or the Age of the Aquarius. In the self-help industry the goal is success, personal power, money, etc. An ideology is always used from an interest in finding ways of getting on in the world, rather than an interest in finding ways of discovering the truth. Spirituality has nothing to do with

ideology, but with philosophy, which is based on an interest in finding ways of discovering the truth (see my articles **The difference between philosophical education and ideological education** and **Philosophical counseling as an alternative to psychotherapy**).

Typical methods used in New Age are clairvoyance, channeling, astrology, personality typing, hypnosis and psychotherapy. About these, see following articles:

**Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with clairvoyance**

**Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with channeling**

**Some critical comments on astrology**

**Personality typing is a refined system of prejudice**

**Hypnosis, Hypnotherapy and the art of self-deception**

**The devastating New Age turn within psychotherapy**

*All articles and books referred to are available in free PDF Versions. Links can be found on my blog: [www.MortenTolboll.blogspot.com](http://www.MortenTolboll.blogspot.com)*

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