

IDENTITY. Most of us revel in our identity, whether it is defined by race, religion, nationality, wealth or station in life. **F**rom there it is a small step to engage in identity politics; we seek to advance the defining characteristics of our identity. **B**ut we easily get caught up in a process of denigrating others; those of another religion, another nationality or another race. **I**dentify politics is often intolerant, perhaps even destructive; strongly identifying with a group may be counterproductive. **W**e are all one race: Humans. We are equals and no single aspect of one's group identity makes it superior to another group.

INTERFAITH. Pluralism, syncretism and interfaith strive to create harmony among the world's religions and faiths. **T**hat aim is guided by the notion that religious beliefs are easily polluted, and thus become dictatorial and fascist. **F**or that reason we have to grasp the dynamics and diversity of beliefs - without this understanding there will be no peace. **I** am most interested in the aspect of interfaith that denotes it as secular, where instead of indulging in specific religionism, members of all faiths are encouraged to get communally involved. **I**nterfaith allows me to study, get to know and appreciate different religions without the need to be religious myself.

plu·ral·ism
co-existence of diverse ethnic or religious backgrounds
syn·cre·tism
the fusion of unrelated philosophical or religious beliefs
in·ter·faith
interaction between people of different religious faiths
re·lig·ion·ism
intense religious fervour with a tendency to proselytise

In his book The Quiet Revolution (the emergence of Interfaith Consciousness) Peter Kirkwood gives voice to Allan Lokos's and Susanna Weiss's New York Community of Peace and Spirituality, who summarise their goals thus: COMMUNITY: It is our mission to nurture a community that explores the commonality of all humankind, and concurrently honours our differences. We believe that the essence of spiritual practice is to reconnect with our true nature and our innate essence of peace and happiness. This we do for ourselves and for the benefit of all beings. PRACTICE: It is our mission to provide weekly gatherings of celebration that transform fear, depression, frustration, and anger into love, hope, encouragement, and joy. OUTREACH: It is our mission to provide community outreach programs including family services,

hospital and home visits, meditation classes and educational study groups that can heal and uplift the spirit. EDUCATION: It is our mission to educate and exhilarate our children through innovative and creative programs that develop the total person spiritually, intellectually and emotionally. EXPLORATION: It is our mission to support each other's journey of self-exploration and growth as we seek the highest expression of ourselves. EXPANSION: It is our mission to train and support those who wish to create new communities and share the philosophy of peace. INCLUSIVENESS: It is our mission to provide these services from a position of total inclusiveness and acceptance without regard for race, creed, colour, age, gender, sexual orientation, economic or social status.

[www.interfaithhome.org/
about_us_mission_statement.htm](http://www.interfaithhome.org/about_us_mission_statement.htm)