



An inquiry into the nature, activities and results of leading from a spiritual basis

Character

During our 1½ – 2 hour interviews with leaders who participated in our international research programme, we asked each one to share specific stories that exemplified how they drew from their spiritual view of life to respond to a challenging situation.

In this file you will find 29 stories related to the broad topic of “Character”. These stories are organised according to the following five categories:

- 1. Character building (4 stories)**
- 2. Crisis intervention (9 stories)**
- 3. Ethics (7 stories)**
- 4. Integrity and conscience (6 stories)**
- 5. Miracles (3 stories)**

This file contains only the stories excerpted from the full interviews. To review the career history, current responsibilities, spiritual views, and other aspects of leading from a spiritual basis, please refer to the complete transcript of each leader, which can be found in the knowledge-base.

This file also contains each leader’s “spiritual theme” that summarises his or her spiritual view of life.

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**INTERVIEW STORIES ARE SORTED BY LAST NAME WITHIN EACH CATEGORY.
THE FOLLOWING LEADERS ARE CONTAINED IN THIS FILE:**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>Organisation Name</u>	<u>Sector or Industry</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Years in Leadership</u>
Aguenza, Floridas, F.	The Philippines	Planters Development Bank	Banking	President and COO	62	30
Behner, John R.	El Salvador	Nabisco	Food	Former Country Manager	66	40
Chattopadhyay, A. K.	India	ACC Limited Refractories Division	Manufacture and Installation, Refractory	VP - Senior	50	20
Covey, Stephen R.	USA	FranklinCovey	Professional Services	Vice Chairman	73	45
Cruz, Alvaro	Colombia	Cundinamarca, (major state of Colombia)	Government	Former Governor of Cundinamarca	54	23
		I.C.M. Ingenieros Ltda.	Building Construction	CEO		
Delbecq, André L.	USA	Santa Clara University School of Business	Education (Higher)	Director (Institute for Spirituality of Org Leadership)	67	25
Govindan, Rajan	USA	Bankers Trust	Banking	Former Senior Managing Director	56	35
Kanu, Victor-Krishna	Zambia	African Institute of Sathya Sai Education	Education	Director	73	30
Narayana, G.	India	Excel Industries, Ltd.	Chemicals, Biochem, Agri	Chairman - Executive	60	38
Pillai, Anand	India	HCL COMNET	Computer Technology	VP of Sales and Marketing	43	18
Ploix, H�el�ene	France	Pechel Industriesa and Pechel Industries Partenaires	Equity Investment	Chairman and Managing Director	62	38
Raghavan, N. S.	India	Infosys Technologies, Ltd.	Information Technology	Founder Director & Joint Mgr Dir.	61	35
Raman, Ananth	USA	Graptex, Inc.	Manufacturing – Electrical & Aluminium	Chairman & CEO, President	55	25
Ranganathan, V. V.	India	Ernst & Young India	Tax & Business Consulting	Senior Partner	53	24
Sinclair, James	USA/ Tanzania	Tan Range Exploration, Ltd.	Mining	Chairman	62	41
Vrethammar, Magnus	UK	Pergo	Laminated Flooring	Former President for Europe	52	22
	Sweden	Finess	Consumer Disposable	Former President, Consumer Division		
Webb, Janiece	USA	Motorola Corporation	Electronic Communications	Senior Vice President	47	28
Welling, S. K.	India	HMT International, Ltd. (Hindustan Machine Tools)	Exporter (Machine Tools, Watches, Tractors)	Executive Director	55	33

THE FOLLOWING STORIES ARE CONTAINED IN THIS FILE:

Character – Character Building

- Teaching human values to the managers and to young people – John Behner
- Practicing empathetic listening – Stephen R. Covey
- Leading with character and leaving a legacy – Stephen Covey
- Implementing human values in education – Alvaro Cruz

Character – Crisis Intervention

- Dealing with an organisation-wide crisis – Floy Aguenza
- Serving in a crisis condition – John Behner
- Getting customers and employees on their feet again after an earthquake – John Behner
- Responding to an employee tragedy – A. K. Chattopadhyay
- Facing critical challenges – G. Narayana
- Responding to a large mistake made by an employee – Anand Pillai
- Understanding inner control during an extremely difficult situation – Anand Pillai
- Responding to the press and to an employee, due to a major mistake – V. V. Ranganathan
- Maintaining confidence in difficult times – S. K. Welling

Character – Ethics

- Being honest and ethical – Rajan Govindan
- The capital market is not always correct – Hélène Ploix
- Promoting ethics and corporate governance: a matter of balance – Hélène Ploix
- Ethical values are spiritual values – Ananth Raman
- Being a warrior in a battle of ethics – James Sinclair
- Building trust through integrity – Janiece Webb
- Standing firm – Janiece Webb

Character – Integrity and conscience

- Peace of conscience – Stephen R. Covey
- Recognising the integrity of leaders – André Delbecq
- Supporting the integrity of paying taxes – N. S. Raghavan
- Repaying debts with integrity – Ananth Raman
- Following conscience – Magnus Vrethammar
- Building trust through integrity – Janiece Webb

Character – Miracles

- Experiencing God's little miracles – John Behner
- Intuition and safety – Alvaro Cruz
- Creating a "Miracle School" – Victor-Krishna Kanu

1. CHARACTER BUILDING (4 STORIES)

Behner, John R. – El Salvador

“Former Country Manager for Nabisco in El Salvador”

Spiritual Theme

“Realising God by serving others.”

Only saying “serving everyone” does not include that, which is the most important to me, which is to realise my oneness with God.

Teaching human values to the managers and to young people

At a certain time, we decided to do some combined publicity for the company and human values training. We went to local high schools and offered them an opportunity for the students to come to the plant. We had an auditorium, and I had each of my managers talk about one of the five human values, truth, right conduct, peace, love and non-violence, and how it affected his area.

The Controller would talk about *truth*, how truth is important in doing the bookkeeping, the accounting, paying the taxes, etc. The Sales Manager would talk about *right conduct*, how you have to treat the customers correctly. The Plant Manager talked about *love*, because he had to keep everybody in harmony, so the production would be good. The Quality Control Manager would talk about *peace*, that if you do your work right, you will be tranquil, because you’ll know that the quality of all the products is fine. The Maintenance Manager would talk about *non-violence*, that if you weren’t polluting and contaminating, then you would have non-violence.

The amazing thing was that the students would come in batches of a hundred, filling the auditorium. The managers were the ones who benefited the most, because they had to learn about these values to talk about them. Then they started seeing how the values worked in their job. The students would also understand the values in relation to a work ethic.

After the talks we would take them on a tour of the plant and give them free cookies and so on. We did it frequently to have an outreach to the high schools, and as a result, the young people would apply to work with us, because they liked what they saw, so we had a good pool of resources.

Covey, Stephen R. – USA

“Vice Chairman of FranklinCovey, a global professional services firm based in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

One of my mottoes serves as a powerful spiritual theme for me: “Live life in crescendo.” In other words, the most important work you’ll ever do is still ahead of you.

Another such spiritual theme for me would be: “Educate and obey your conscience.” Educating as I speak of it here involves getting into the sacred literature of all the great traditions that have had

enduring value and then consciously living true to what you have learned. The more you live true to it, the stronger your conscience becomes. A constant effort is required to stay on track with such stewardship.

Practicing empathetic listening

I had an interesting experience recently in India. I had just read the book, *The Argumentative Indian*. Essentially it's a very well written cultural history of India and how the argumentative tendency is part of their cultural DNA. When I got into that, I could see how under developed their country was with respect to teamwork and how over developed their democracy was. They have so many parties and so much fighting and contention. I spoke to an audience of a thousand people about the spiritual principle of *seeking first to understand before seeking to be understood*. I then opened things up to the audience and said, "Let us see if we right now can listen to each other and re-make the other person's point before we make our own." They were unable to do it. So I said, "Let me see if you could ask a question on what we have covered to this point without making an oratorical statement." They were unable to do it. So I had one half of the audience just observe to see if the other half could practice this principle. They could not do it. And they could see that they could not do it.

Then I said, "Look at what has happened to your infrastructure here in India, look at the bureaucracy, the extent of rules and regulations that have taken the place of human creativity – which is really interesting when you consider that you have more knowledge workers in this country than any other country in the world." I said, "Just look at this! You are capable of transcending your cultural DNA, because deeper than that is your spiritual DNA, it is deep in your natures, you really are capable of doing it." They were so intrigued with this approach, and I became intrigued with their awareness. Awareness, the space between stimulus and response, is a huge thing to me. They were aware of their cultural DNA. Rather than looking at life *through* it, they now chose to look *at* it. They could then see that true leaders don't work through systems rather that they work on the systems, and they do this through a principle-centred approach that rests on universal spiritual principles. This was a fascinating learning experience for all of us.

The more I get to know the Indian culture, the more I use this approach, and my audiences and the leaders I speak to know that it is authentic. That it is real. They know I am not some American over there trying to Americanise them. They know that I respect the development over more than 5,000 years of their magnificent spiritual and cultural tradition. I ask them to look at what has happened to this cultural DNA, and I ask them if they can practice a couple of principles. They become amazed and then they become very humble and open to learn empathetic listening – and how to re-make the other person's point before making your own point, which is a spiritual principle.

Leading with character and leaving a legacy

The other day I was in Kenya. In my recent book on *The 8th Habit*, I told the story of a man from Uganda named Stone, who was a professional soccer-player. He was well on his way to a career as a professional in Europe, where the big money is, the dream of all the youth there. During a game, someone hit him, on purpose, in a way that severely damaged his knee and ended his career dreams. Instead of becoming bitter or vindictive or losing himself in self-pity, he has used himself to empower underprivileged young Ugandan boys who would otherwise be lost in life, without marketable skills and with no role-models to follow.

Stone came over from Uganda to Kenya for my presentation. It was a very interesting venue. There was a big building with five different balconies, like a theatre in the round, and he was in the fifth one. In my presentation I tried to get people to see themselves as trim-tabbers, (a trim-tab on a boat is the small rudder that turns the big rudder that turns the entire ship), so they can be change agents no

matter what their formal or moral authority is, and take the responsibility to leave a legacy. So during my presentation I showed the film on Stone which is included in the companion DVD to my book, and the audience became totally caught up in that film. They have the kind of poverty and the kind of problems that Stone had. The earlier regimes had literally devastated the institutions of the whole country, and children were often growing up without parents because of the AIDS-epidemics. There were so many orphans, and their living conditions and dreams were not very positive, to put it mildly. As a result, many in the audience were able to identify with Stone.

At the end of the film I said, “Stone, come on down here,” and they were blown away. He came down, and then I interviewed him in front of the whole audience about what he has been doing to leave a legacy and how he has influenced tens of thousands of young men. One feminist woke up and said “Why don’t you work with the young women?” and Stone just gave a sharp answer: “They don’t have the problems that men have.” He immediately made sense to her.

This guy is like a Mother Teresa in Uganda, and he is totally dedicated to helping these young men, not just with soccer, but as a life-coach so they can be responsible parents. And now they are coming back to him, showing him their families and the contributions they are making. He is immersed in his spiritual endeavour – serving the people and their communities. What a handsome guy, what a wonderful guy, what character and competence and quality.

Even there, on a stage and not on a soccer field, he was very, very pithy and very to the point in his communication. He said, “I am trying to get these kids to realise that they may lose a match, but they don’t need to lose in life.” He told the audience how he demonstrates for the young men in Uganda how they can follow their conscience and govern their lives – how they can start by learning to become good soccer players, then how important it is for them to become economically self-reliant, then responsible fathers and citizens. Stone explained how he is helping them transform themselves into trim-tabbers, into young men who have the will and discipline and character necessary to transform their society and to win in life.

Cruz, Alvaro – Colombia

“Former Minister of the Government of Colombia and Governor of Cundinamarca, Colombia”
“CEO of an engineering/building company in Colombia, I.C.M. Ingenieros Ltda.”

Spiritual Theme

Love and respect others.

Implementing human values in education

During my governorship I implemented the application of human values in public education with excellent results. It is included in the ten years program for public education, which includes parents, teachers, and the children. The teaching of values has been added to the regular curriculum. We also include the participation of the parents, because 60 percent of the learning takes place in the home.

I motivated the teachers to take the special training courses in human values, and we provided the new technology, which would make the teachers able to teach this. The teachers are trained at the universities. Several universities were competing for the contract for producing the texts for the teaching in human values. The one requirement we gave them was that it should include ethical and moral values such as respect, human solidarity, happiness, tolerance, love and forgiveness. We said,

take these values and include them in your texts and in your techniques for teaching. I was able to have this model program for education approved, and it was chosen by the World Bank to be a model for Latin America. The World Bank credit used for this is still continuing and will do so for two more years.

Simultaneously I was able to initiate a type of training for the college graduates. In the year 2000 only 43 percent of the students in our State were able to pass the medium examination, which would allow them to enter higher education. In the year 2002 the number passing the national medium was raised to 67 percent. This happened not necessarily because of the teaching of values, but because of the improvement of the education in general. The rank in the national level of education in 32 states, from 1st to 9th grade in my state went from the 16 place to the 3rd place as to the quality of education.

2. CRISIS INTERVENTION (9 STORIES)

Aguenza, Floy – The Philippines

“President and COO of Planters Development Bank in The Philippines”

Spiritual Theme

“What would Jesus do?” “What would the Lord do?”

Dealing with an organisation-wide crisis

Early on in my presidency, the bank’s Treasury Department was unwittingly dragged into a government security controversy. As you know, by the very nature of our business, it is a no-no to be involved in any controversy, much more with anything that tends to put doubt on the capability and stability of the bank. We thought it was unfair to drag the name of the bank into the issue when it was not clear how things happened or who was accountable for it. But we can not do anything as the publicity that accompanied the controversy got out of hand. I had to deal with it head-on.

When it happened, it felt like the heavens had fallen on my head. I was on my way home when our Controller called me on my cell phone and told me there was a problem and that I should come back to the office. Then he gave me the news. I prayed to the Lord to be with me during those difficult times. I feared that because of the bad publicity, the bank might suffer a run, and no bank, no matter how strong, can survive a run.

The first thing I did was to find out exactly what happened, the extent of the problem, and the consequences. I ordered a full-scale audit and had everything accounted for. We have a very good back-room operation (the area of the bank where they do electronic and paper processing), so within a short time I knew exactly what the problem was.

My Chair was in the U.K. at the time and I felt that I needed to first let him know what had happened since he is the largest shareholder of this bank and would be the one most hurt by this. So I called him and gave him the difficult news. The good thing about him is that he is a very grounded person; he did not show any sign of weakness or anger. I think in many ways he and I are like the yin and yang. He was really a rock in this situation. I was starting to panic, but seeing that he was steadfast really made a difference for me.

That was one of the worst crises of my life. The controversy dragged on for weeks. I woke up each day dreading to go to the office. I said to the Lord, “If I knew this would happen, I wouldn’t have accepted this position.” But I had to be strong for all the stakeholders of the bank. Every morning I prayed and intentionally put on a smile because I knew that everyone was watching me. I knew it was important to put on a strong front. I even deliberately chose to wear bright coloured dresses during this period!

It was a tremendous responsibility. I was consoled by our people in the organisation who held together and stood strong. From the beginning, we kept our people informed of our actions and decisions, especially the branch managers who were at the forefront, they having direct client contact. They worked very hard to convince our customers that there was nothing to be worried about. Some of them were even willing to pledge their own personal assets to show their customers the confidence

they had in the bank. Fortunately, they never had to put their assets at risk because the customers were convinced that there was indeed nothing to be concerned about.

And then there were prayers. Everyone was praying. We knew we could not get out of these troubles without the Lord's help.

The crisis lasted for about a month. Public confidence was soon restored and we emerged as a much stronger organisation. In hindsight, I knew there was a purpose for this happening. Without it, we could have been susceptible to even larger disasters. It opened our eyes to the weaknesses of our systems and processes and the need to strengthen further our controls. When the financial crisis hit the Asian region and the Philippine banking industry in 1997, the bank was prepared. The controversy prepared us for tougher times and strengthened our faith in God.

Behner, John R. – El Salvador

“Former Country Manager for Nabisco in El Salvador”

Spiritual Theme

“Realising God by serving others.”

Only saying “serving everyone” does not include that, which is the most important to me, which is to realise my oneness with God.

Serving in a crisis condition

A guerrilla war was going on in El Salvador for about 12 years. At one time there was a major invasion of the capital, San Salvador, by the guerrilla forces. A lot of mercenaries, young kids who were sort of idealists, coming from Cuba and the USA, had joined the mercenary forces and were going to “liberate the poor and suppressed peasants in El Salvador”.

The war was going on all over the city, which had about 1½ million inhabitants at the time. As we were in the food-business, we looked at how we were able to feed the people. Our employees would call us every morning. Since they lived all over the city, we would know where the fighting was going on and where it was calm. So we set up a whole system in which all the salesmen would go to one area of the city where there was no fighting going on that day, and start taking orders as fast as they could. The next day there might be fighting in that neighbourhood, and we couldn't deliver the orders they had taken until later, but then all the salesmen would go to another neighbourhood where there wasn't any fighting. In that way we were covering the whole city little by little.

We also set up a system of transportation for the employees. For those who could get to the downtown area, we sent vehicles. Then they went up about half way to where the plant and the offices were, stopping at a supervisor's home. From there they would call the office – this was before the cell phones – and find out if the coast was clear, because sometimes there would be fighting near the plant or the offices, but most of the time they could come and go to work. We usually had a few employees who couldn't come, but we paid everybody while this war was going on. People were taking risks to get to work, but they all saw their mission as feeding the people.

Getting customers and employees on their feet again after an earthquake

In 1986, there was a big earthquake in San Salvador, so we got a little experience in dealing with a crisis. One of the first things we saw was that all the supermarkets, which were our biggest clients, were affected; all their merchandise was all over the floor. They had a tremendous job of trying to clean what was saveable and to throw out what was broken and maybe take some kind of inventory of it. We also saw that our production lines were useless, because if the supermarkets could not put our products on their shelves, what good was it to produce it? So we shut down our production lines and sent the salesmen to all the major supermarkets. They offered them a team of our production people to help them clean up. We did this very successfully, and we were the only company that did it. All the supermarkets were happy to get this kind of service, which didn't cost them anything. It only took about a week of very concentrated effort. It got them on their feet faster, and so we could start selling faster.

We took stock of our employees, and we had nine employees who had lost their homes. Since we had shut down the production, our maintenance department wasn't doing anything. So we asked these guys to go and rebuild the homes of these nine employees on a temporary basis. In an earthquake, what happens is that the floor is still there, and the toilet is still there, but the roof and the walls may have fallen down. Temporary structures were put up in the nine homes, and the employees were very grateful. El Salvador gets earthquakes periodically. In 1994 when we had another earthquake, we were all prepared, because we had already gone through the big one in 1986.

Chattopadhyay, A. K. – India

“Former Senior Vice President of ACC Limited Refractories Division in India”
“Executive Director of Tata Refractories, Ltd. in India”

Spiritual Theme

My spiritual theme is a combination of the four goals found in my spiritual view of life:

- To align oneself with a super power
- To find out the reasons within oneself
- To have faith in others
- To have a caring nature

Responding to an employee tragedy

One time an employee in our factory got caught in the conveyer belt and his hand was chopped off. This happened during the night and he was taken to the hospital. You can imagine that his family was in total distress. The newspaper came to write stories against me since I was head of the plant, saying that not enough safety measures were being applied.

Personally, I reacted in a totally different manner altogether. I stayed in the operation theatre the whole night that he was being operated on, in order to give moral courage to his family members. I am not a doctor and this was the first time I had ever been in an operation theatre, so you can imagine that with so much blood and all it was a terrific scene; I was not able to eat for two or three days after that.

There were some local union leaders who wanted to influence the head of the local police to arrest me. All of these things happened while I was sitting inside the hospital. I felt a strength inside of me that I could stand up to all of these people who wanted to abuse me, due to no fault of my own. I

continued to feel this strength inside me because I knew that I was doing what was good for this man and for his family.

The proper safety measures were there, but unfortunately this fellow had not followed them. He tried to do something in a way that he should not have done, and that is how his hand got stuck in the conveyer belt. But I did not tell any of this to the press or to his family members. I called his family all together and I explained that I would take full responsibility to take care of this man and them. I explained that, “No, we cannot get back his hand, this is most unfortunate. However, we can give the monetary compensation that needs to be given and we can give him a job where he can still work peacefully without his hand.”

I called groups in our company together and explained what had happened and how we handled it. Later, after all of this was over, I reflected back on this strength that I felt and realised it came from my connection with this super power.

Narayana, G. – India

“Chairman Emeritus for Excel Industries, Ltd. in India”

Spiritual Theme

My spiritual theme is: Noble actions, noble feelings, noble thoughts, noble responsibility.

Facing critical challenges

The most critical challenges I have faced here at Excel were in 1987 and in 2001. When I first came here in 1987, the company was losing money. There was no direction. The founders of the company were spiritual, so the culture here already had a spiritual base; they did a lot of service and all was going well.

But, a booster dose was required for the business. So I joined them to advise and they called me “Guru-ji” (“beloved teacher”). That first year was critical. The most important thing was the formation of the group, organisation, and direction (GOD).

Then also, rewards were required. There was no systematic salary structure, so we made the first salary and reward structure. We offered well and received the work, we offered and received. This is my spirit. We did not take and give, or give and take. We offered and received. Position people and give them challenges. Offer and receive. Share the success. When you practice it, it is fantastic.

Four levels of offering and receiving must occur. First, we *offer love* and *receive dedication*. Then we *offer value* and *receive work*. And then, we *offer knowledge* and *receive learning*. Finally, we *offer trust* and *receive responsibility*. For example, as a manager, if you offer love, you receive dedication; in addition, if you offer dedication, you receive love. As a leader, if you offer value, you receive work; in addition, if you offer work, you receive value. These four levels of offering and receiving are interwoven in everything.

We created systems for all of this. We made nurturing and learning systems. Through lots of training, we built trust and empowered people to achieve excellence. Achieving excellence only once is not enough; there must be continuous excellence. When work is done well, you become better. When the

work is done excellently, the people become excellent. Even if I do not get a larger salary for doing excellent work, I become excellent.

Pillai, Anand – India

“Head of the Learning and Development Department for HCL Technologies in India”

Spiritual Theme

Connecting with God, the source of “being.”

Responding to a large mistake made by an employee

At HCL, we had a situation in Calcutta where we were submitting a bid that was due the next morning at 10:00. This was a World Bank tender for 4-1/2 million US dollars. We worked all through the night to prepare the documents. We had to prepare three sets of the commercial bid and three sets of the technical bid. Everything was done, and we split up to check that all of the documents were correct. We gave the bid at 10:00, just at the time it was due. That day the bid was opened at 4:00 and it was discovered that our supporting document for the annual maintenance contract was not there. As a result we were disqualified.

The first reaction everyone had was to find the guy who made the mistake and sack him. However, I said, “No, there is no point in doing that. It was a mistake. If he did it intentionally, then yes, there is no reason for him to continue with the company. But if he did it unintentionally, that is a different matter. We all worked through the night, and who knows what happened at 4:30 in the morning?”

So, instead of getting angry and upset and sending nasty e-mails, I said, “Let’s take control of this situation and let’s see what we can do to salvage this situation. Let us focus our creative energy on supporting him, so that he has the initiative to stay on through the night when we have the next bid.”

This is what motivates people to go beyond the call of duty, to do what they are supposed to do. I took the lead and told them, “I am not getting angry, and so I am asking you not to get angry either.” I started to give them direction and ideas and told them to go to the evaluation committee and explain what happened and give the document to them in writing. I also asked them to tell the committee in writing that due to our inadvertent error the supporting document had been left out and request them to consider our secondary bid as our primary bid. The written law did not prevent the evaluation committee from considering this secondary bid.

After we submitted this written request, the committee said they would not honour our second bid. They said that they instead would follow another law which says that if you have not submitted a bid for a component, it will be assumed that your quote is the highest quoted figure from among the other competitors. As a result, our quotation became costlier and we became out priced and were out of the race.

We received this information and again kept our focus on trying to find a solution. After some further research, we found out that the other competitor had also violated one of the specifications. They had quoted their bid in Indian rupees, whereas this was a World Bank tender that needed to be quoted in US dollars. We pointed this out to the committee and as a result they applied the rule that said a bidder must then use the highest exchange rate, plus a deemed export rate. So this premium was

added and ultimately this vendor was disqualified. We won the bid and for that year it was the largest contract we received.

The moral of this story is simply this: we focused our creative energy not on the person who made the mistake, but on the process. The question that we asked ourselves was “what” went wrong, not “who” made this mistake. The customer also had a lot of respect for us because they watched us go through this process. We took the person who had made the mistake with us and admitted the mistake, and we all worked together to find a solution. The person who made the mistake and everyone else on the team was left motivated to work for the company, because now they know that if they do make a mistake their neck is not on the line.

The spiritual basis that I came from in this situation is that I knew that this person had not made this mistake intentionally. If I had berated him for being irresponsible, then I would be telling him that he is an irresponsible person. That would have demeaned my faith in him. So instead I focused on the process and showed him respect. I also gave him the liberty to do wrong.

Understanding inner control during an extremely difficult situation

I must give you a personal example of how I responded in an extremely difficult situation by connecting with my spirituality – an example which can also be applied to work situations. A little more than two years ago, my son met with an accident: a fully loaded car drove over his right foot. It caused a lot of damage to his foot. My wife rushed home from work in order to take him to the hospital. I was travelling in Bangalore and received a call that this had happened, so I had to catch a flight back to Delhi.

Everyone who knew what had happened wanted to stone the driver; they wanted to beat him. My wife took control of the situation and said, “Listen, this is our child. Please let us take care of it.” This driver was pleading with my wife not to make a police case because then he would lose his job and would not be employable again.

When I arrived in Delhi I went to the operation theatre and there was my wife, along with the head of HR and vice president of operations from our company who had also come. One person had paid the bill and one person had arranged the doctor. My entire company was involved, even though it happened after office hours and outside of the company business. The vice president of customer support and his wife had also come to be of support to my wife, and his elder daughter went to be with our daughter at home.

When I came, everyone was there and their immediate reaction was one of anger and wanting to know what had happened. For me, I simply asked the doctor two questions: “Will there be any irreparable damage? How long will he take to recover?” That was all I asked. In all of this, I had also called the pastor and he had come. After talking to the doctor, I looked into my wife’s eyes and without words I just said “Thank you” to God. Then I looked at the pastor and said, “Let us thank God for this situation.” My colleagues said, “What is wrong with this guy? Here is his boy who has suffered and by that time had had two operations, and he wants to thank God. For what?” So I went on and prayed, “Lord, thank you for this situation. We want to thank you for preventing a greater damage.”

In all of this, my wife was not crying or throwing a tantrum. She had the presence of mind to keep her focus on and take care of our son, even though it was a very emotionally draining situation. Instead she took control of the situation as a practical person. When I came we were both in complete control. We kept focusing on our son, to support him. Everyone else wanted to focus on what happened, on the driver, on everything else except our son.

Delhi is a very vindictive society, if you do something people want to make sure that you pay for it. Afterwards, my neighbours all got together and said, "Forget the driver, you must go after the owner." We told them that we would take care of it. The owner of the car came and apologised and offered to pay for the damages. I told him, "Take your money and go back; we don't need your money. Whatever you do, will not be able to pay back the flesh that my son lost, or the two inches of tendon that my son lost. Recognise that this situation was not in your control or in my control. It was in someone else's control. However, I want you to recognise that you have a role in maintaining order and discipline. I want you to incur a cost, and the cost I want you to incur is to first go to the community association and apologise to them, that you have been irresponsible in this community and you have let your car driver run over a small boy's foot. I want you to put that apology in writing and to feel the pain. Then I want you to put boards all over the streets in the community that say 'Children at Play. Drive Carefully.' You write these boards yourself and put them up." Our neighbours had never heard of anything like this being imposed. They were used to using this as an opportunity to receive large amounts of money for damages.

The doctors warned us that this accident could cause our son psychological problems, because at the age of 6 he had gone through such a traumatic experience. We prayed, and we knew that we were maintaining an inner control of ourselves in this situation. He was in the hospital for three months, and one day we opened his diary – a small spiral book that he used to scribble things in. He had written four diagrams. One was a car and a boy with the words "no hurt." Then there was one with the car close to the boy and he wrote, "hurt, car over leg, blood and flesh comes out." He wrote this in a positive manner and was able to relate to his own experience without going through the emotions. You should see him today. He is a very jovial boy.

This has become an example in our office. That situation was an uncontrollable situation, but we were in control. By being in control I mean: there is a sphere in which you have control and there is a sphere in which you do not have control. I am in control of my emotions, I am in control of my actions, I am in control of my intentions, and so on. I am not in control of others' emotions, others' actions, or others' intentions. If I try to control that which I cannot control, then I lose control. So if I operate in this zone of control and expand this, it is what I call the sphere of influence. If I stay in this zone that I can control, then I can increase my sphere of influence. In my office, this has become an operating principle for responding to situations.

Ranganathan, V. V. – India

"Formerly a Senior Partner with Ernst & Young India"

"Co-founder of Pinnacle Opportunities, a non-profit and Compassites, a product incubation company in Bangalore, India"

Spiritual Theme

"Seeing God in everyone"

Responding to the press and to an employee, due to a major mistake

We have a world-wide practise within Ernst & Young called Environment Management Services. These are all great professionals who care for the environment and who are doing wonderful jobs in terms of helping the government and industries within the different countries to address pollution and other environmental problems. These are all dedicated and socially responsible individuals who have chosen a profession like this.

In one of the projects, there was a preliminary environmental impact report that was submitted to the local authorities in order to clear a project that involved the construction of a dam. In a study like this, you must study the flora and fauna to determine what would happen to the environment if the dam were built in this area. You must also study the local communities to determine the social consequences of building this dam. This is a study that is done within the confines of the country's environmental protection laws. Based on the report that we submitted, it then had to go on to a national board before permission could be given to start the project.

Unfortunately, an over enthusiastic young man, who had only been in our firm for about six months, was working in this area. He had been trained as an environmental engineer in the USA. He cleared an environmental report in less than a week; this was something impossible to do within our firm's normal review process. What he actually did was to use a draft from another report without going through our review process. Then he sent the report to the state board on our letterhead, and they adopted it.

There were a lot of environmental activists who wanted the building of the dam to be stopped and they suspected that this clearance had been done to please the company who was going to build the dam there. So the press picked it up and said that Ernst & Young was a big fraud in how they cleared this large environmental project report.

This young man had committed a big mistake by not following the review process of the firm. I got a lot of calls from the press because they saw this as a very juicy story. I would tell them that I wanted to know the person with whom I was talking – that I was happy to sit and talk with them in person, to have a person-to-person conversation about the issue, but I would not answer their questions over the phone.

When a journalist came to my office, we had a totally different conversation. I asked him, "If someone brought you a story and you published it in good faith, and then you found out it was completely wrong, what would you do? You would come with an apology the next day. This is exactly what has happened here. The firm has not done anything wrong. It is unfortunate that a very immature person did this who was in his position for less than six months. We are very sorry that this has happened. We have officially withdrawn the report and we have agreed to not handle this assignment for our client."

Another reason we did not want to handle this account further with the client is that at the time we were not completely sure whether the client might have influenced this young man to do what he did in such a short span of time.

Some of the larger newspapers came to me and spoke with me for an hour or so and decided it was not a story to be published. Others who did not come and talk with me did publish the story according to what the environmentalists had told them. So we also had a lot of international press. Even though this was actually a small incident, it was really blown out of proportion.

We got many e-mails from environmental groups in the USA, UK and Europe. I would patiently take each one of them and reply. My spiritual context of "seeing God in everyone" helped me in this situation a lot. It allowed me to come out with the truth, nothing but the truth and to put it into perspective. It helped me to speak from a conscious mind with no ulterior motives whatsoever. It helped me to not get mentally agitated at all. I believe that it is only because of this spiritual basis that I could be so tranquil inside. Because there was so much excitement around this situation, it would have been easy to have become a slave to my sensory perceptions.

Management decided to have this fellow leave the firm. Since we have an exit interview process, I was asked to do this interview with him. I took care of him and treated him with respect. I had him come here to Delhi and stay in a comfortable place. When we sat down for the interview, I used the following Sanskrit verse to drive home the point to this young man who was preparing for another career in his life:

“Ayusha Ghandamaadaaya Ravi-rasthamayam Gatha:Ahanyahani Bodhavyam Kimateth Sukrutam Kritham.”

This means: “The Sun as it sets everyday, takes away with it a part of the ‘ayusha’, meaning life – age of people. Therefore, as you engage in every action during the day, you should weigh every one of them to ensure that it is in fact a ‘Sukrutam Kritham’ – meaning a ‘good deed indeed.’”

I also told him that I wanted to hear from him an honest account of what had happened. I assured him that I was not there to reprimand him or to even take a confession from him. I told him that I just wanted to understand what had happened so the firm could prevent it from happening in the future. I told him this was a lesson for me as well.

He was very forthcoming and honest. He told me that he was under tremendous pressure from one of the officials of the local authority. This man told him that a report had already been done recently in an environment that was similar to the one he was working on, and that there was no need to spend so much time. So he was actually foolishly lured into believing that this report was just a small piece of paper that needed to be submitted, that it was just a formality. He didn’t understand the ramifications of this report going out of an office like ours. So he followed what this man said and gave it to that man.

After he told me all of this, I told him there was no point in crying over spilled milk. Here was a young man who committed a grave mistake. He paid for it, and now there was nothing more that he could do. So I told him that he was atoned of the sin that he had committed – he was already receiving the consequences for what he had done. But I also wanted to be sure that he had learned the lesson he needed to learn. I asked him to focus on that lesson, since he had the potential of a very good career ahead of him. His wife was pregnant at that time also.

We cannot blame the entire firm for what he did. There are actually only a few individuals who would have played into what he did. I believe it was a conspiracy of unintentional accidents. I do not believe it was done with the intent to collapse a large organisation and hurt the employees and shareholders.

Welling, S. K. – India

“Former Executive Director of HMT International, Ltd. (Hindustan Machine Tools) in India”

Spiritual Theme

Purity of character through faith, bhakti (devotion), trust and love

Maintaining confidence in difficult times

As of today in mid-2002, things are very bad in this company. The restructuring plan of 1998 was based on revenue projections for the next five years. These projections were not too aggressive, as they were based on what the company had already achieved in the past. But even though everything in the turnaround plan was implemented, the revenue projections were only achieved about 50%-60%

due to two things: (1) the market itself took a downturn; and (2) the inability of the internal organisation to rise up and restructure the physical operations (which included product-market strategies, systems and information technology, and other cost-related areas of the company).

As a result, the company has again slipped into cash losses. People from various parts of the company have come to me and asked, "Sir, our families, our children – what is going to happen? What is the future for us? We have been seeing darkness all around."

I've replied to them, "Do not get disheartened. This company has immense potential to grow. This company can rise to the past glory within a period of 12-14 months if we get the act done together. The whole thing will be all right. Look, with all the problems that we have in this company, in a recent market survey, the brand equity of this company is #1 in the whole country. While our competitors are far below, we are #1. With that brand equity, all that we need to do is set the priorities correctly, have the right objectives, set goals for the short term and long term, and see that we achieve things properly in a time frame. It is not difficult."

And during this situation, there is going to be a change of guard at the top level. People have asked, "Sir, if you become the Chairman, will you turn around this company in 12-14 months?" And I said, "If I become Chairman, I will bring back this company on the rails and every thing will be all right. I feel confident I can lead the changes that didn't happen earlier. When I can do it with the International business, why not do it for the whole company?"

How do I have the confidence that this can happen if I were to take on such a task as running the entire company? Yes, I have professional confidence because I am a hardworking person, I am a committed person, I am a professionally qualified person. But most importantly, that deep meditation and deep concentration gets into my system when I shift positions in the company. It just takes me a month or so to get myself adjusted to a new change. I get into a lot of details initially so I can understand things. Happily I go and sit where I am placed whether I know or I do not know the field. I do my work like a yagnam (worship). I keep myself deeply involved in everything I do.

(Interviewers' note: Another person was named Chairman nine months after this interview.)

3. ETHICS (7 STORIES)

Govindan, Rajan – USA

“Former Senior Managing Director with Bankers Trust in the USA”

“Chief Operating Officer of Bear Stearns Asset Management in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

To me this would be “happiness and contentment” and “to act with right conduct.”

Being honest and ethical

I think that in all of my work, I have had to make ethical choices all the time. In the banking business, the rule is that if the bank made a mistake, then the bank had to pay for it. However, sometimes when an error was made, it was in the bank’s favour. For example, maybe you were supposed to sell 500 shares of stock and you sold 5,000 shares instead. If the market was moving down, then the sell of 5,000 shares could mean that the customer made money. Most of the time the customer wasn’t even aware that something like this had happened. So how we handled something like this was always an ethical dilemma.

My feeling, however, is that once you go down the path to try to cover up your mistake, even if it was in the customers’ favour, you cannot gain the true respect of your customer. You may be able to rationalise all of this in your own mind, but in reality you cannot ever expect to have the customer’s respect and trust. So to me, you must set clear rules and they must be followed. The moment you are wishy-washy you set a trend.

I have also always told the people who worked for me to be honest when they filled out their expense report. I told them, “Don’t try to add a \$5.00 tip just because you can get away with it.” To me even these little things will always haunt you. I always taught the people to be clean in everything they did. This way you don’t have to look over your shoulder and worry about what might happen to you.

In the last one and a half years I worked for Bankers Trust, I was working with someone where we made presentations to the board on projections we felt we could meet. But then when we got into the actual work, he instead wanted to manipulate the financial numbers in order to show that we achieved the projected results, rather than working toward actually obtaining the results themselves. He would continually approve projects, but then put pressure on us to eliminate costs. One way he wanted to deal with this was to capitalise the costs, so they wouldn’t show up as current expenses. I felt this was not correct and so I had to end the relationship.

Ploix, H  l  ne – France

“Chairman and Managing Director of Pechel Industries and Pechel Industries Partenaires in Paris, France”

Spiritual Theme

I think I can express this as: “To contribute to society”. And to try to be attentive to others and have a better understanding of them.

The capital market is not always correct

In 1992 when I was at Caisse des Dépôts, one of the people who was working with me had the good idea to start some research on ethics and finance. Although I was very, very, very busy I wanted to keep some time for that programme. I started thinking more about ethics and finance; what did ethics mean? What did finance mean? Was ethics and finance an oxymoron or was it possible to meaningfully speak of ethics and finance? I started thinking that ethics was balance, not going beyond limits. There were many reasons why finance could go out of balance – just think of what computers allow people to do; in some cases they don't think any more, computers tell them what to do and they don't always realise what they are doing. That became clearer and clearer to me, and I started discussing it with research people in order to clarify my thoughts. We had no code of conduct at Caisse des Dépôts, so I created one. This was at the very beginning when different markets were trying to organise themselves in that respect and it was very difficult to have people share it. It was difficult to convince them that they had to think about these issues, but we had some seminars to help.

At a certain point in 1995, someone in my team organised a seminar with, among the speakers, two famous economists. One of them was Merton Miller, who had received the Nobel Prize in Economics in 1990. The other was Myron Scholes, who two years later, in 1997, received the Nobel Prize in Economics and who at the time of the conference was working on the Board of the firm LTC Management that specialised in hedge funds. Both of them together with Robert C. Merton, and Fischer Black had contributed to the development of options, derivative products, structured products and consequently hedged funds.

I made what I considered at that time to be my “usual speech” about ethics and finance, balance, about stepping back and thinking about what the financiers were doing, about the risks and what ethics was all about. In that speech I spoke about systemic risks, because in economics you can really create big problems, big disruptions, because the money is all over the world and one country's actions can have big repercussions on other countries, hence the necessity for financiers to behave ethically. Then one of these Nobel Laureates (now I do not remember which one) stood up after my little speech and said, “You don't understand anything – the capital markets always correct imbalances!” The speeches were put together in a book “Risques et enjeux des marchés dérivés” which, in a footnote, mentions the debate which followed my speech: “diverging viewpoints were expressed on the role of regulation and on protection of the collectivity, and on the proportion of risk that it would bear in the last resort”.

Some years later LTC Management became unable to cover all the risks they had taken.¹ They had to be rescued; otherwise there would have been a systemic crisis that would have threatened the whole world's financial systems. At the same time several investment banks made big losses.

Promoting ethics and corporate governance: a matter of balance

¹ The hedge fund Long Term Capital Management, formed in 1994 and staffed with some of the greatest financial and mathematical minds in the world (including two Nobel Prize winners in economics), helped write one of the most unique chapters in Wall Street history. After huge initial successes, only four years after its start, it brought the world's financial markets to the brink of chaos when it ‘collapsed’ and couldn't cover its huge, leveraged positions; LTC had to be bailed out by major financial institutions to avoid the catastrophic effects of its failure on the international financial systems. The culture of this company was known for the arrogance of its leaders, as well as for its almost complete lack of transparency.

In the late 90s, I was asked to give a class on Business Ethics to 2nd year students at a university located east of Paris. Even though I was very busy, I accepted, because I thought it was very important to give them this mindset with which to work. It was to be a contribution to them. I did this for two terms, but then I stopped. I was disappointed because the students, even if they did their best, were unable to concentrate on the thoughts I presented. They had great difficulties in listening. I was not patient enough. Nevertheless I think it was useful to them and hope they got something out of it. I gave them as many small cases as possible in order for them to understand in practice what I meant. I tried to teach my students that you have legal and ethical frameworks to work in. What is most difficult is when you face something that is legal but unethical – or ethical but illegal.

Earlier, when I tried to find support for more research on ethics and finance, I became interested in corporate governance. I gave classes on corporate governance to managers, because I thought it was important for them to understand what it meant for a company and for themselves as managers. Good corporate governance really helps leaders to manage their companies because of increased transparency. When I was asked to write a book about it, I did so, because I felt it could be a good contribution and it would force me to study in depth all the aspects of this issue. I wanted more managers to see the benefits they, and the stakeholders, could get from improved governance.

A few years ago, together with the Ethics committee of MEDEF, I developed and wrote about principles for the remuneration of top managers, because we felt that, in some cases, the salaries and bonuses and the total remuneration packages were going beyond reasonable bounds and were not socially acceptable in a country like France, but nobody listened to that. The media mentioned that the Chief Financial Officer of Enron had a house with 80 rooms. What is the use of a house of 80 rooms?

Today because of lack of time I seldom accept invitations to give lectures at conferences. Nevertheless, I have accepted to give one in September on “How to Lead an Audit Committee”, because I feel a responsibility for doing so since I am the chairman of two audit committees. I think that through the good leadership of audit committees we can really improve the attitude of the people vis-à-vis the management of the company, vis-à-vis money, vis-à-vis transparency.

I am not alone in my thinking and convictions. There are other people in business like me in France. I know quite a few chairmen and CEOs who think about the same as I do.

Raman, Ananth – USA

“Chairman of Graphtex, Inc. a manufacturing company in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

“Awareness” and “Realising Divinity”

Ethical values are spiritual values

In a business sense, I like to talk about spirituality as ethical values. Initially the ethical guidelines that my corporation set up guided me in the right direction. When I was in one of the West African countries, the country was full of corruption, and you couldn't do anything without bribing someone. Sometimes I tried to rationalise this, because we were losing contracts and losing business. But the policy in my corporation was that you could not give bribes. At first, I wondered how I was going to get along without giving bribes. Ultimately, I chose to stick with the company policy – I chose to stay with

the ethical values that the company ascribed to. Initially, I followed these ethical values because this was what I was taught. When I began thinking more spiritually, it gave me the reasons for why to behave this way.

Values such as justice, truth, respect for others, equanimity, ability to take decisions, honesty and integrity are the core values that became very strong for me when I went into business. These are more on the ethical side, rather than on the spiritual side. Somewhere along the line however, these two kinds of values began to link.

Now I think of ethical values as nothing but a reflection of my spiritual values. For instance, in business you must respect yourself, your feelings, your customers, your employees. But then when you go deeper into spirituality, your self-respect begins to include respecting the inner Self. Then you try to understand: "What is meant by Self?" Self means 'I', it means awareness.

From this perspective then, self-respect takes on a new kind of meaning. When we talk about self-respect in an ethical sense, we are talking about being respectful to your colleagues, shareholders and customers because it is a good business practice. But when you go a little deeper and look at it from a spiritual point of view, you realise that it is really about respecting the inner Self. You need to think about this, but when you do think about it you realise there is a linkage between the two. Then I think it brings about a whole new dimension. While ethics originally became something to maintain order in society, order in business, now it also gives you a level of equality with your self and everything else. This is how I like to link spirituality with ethics and values in business.

Sinclair, James E. – USA

"Chairman and CEO of Tan Range Exploration, Ltd. in the USA and Tanzania"

Spiritual Theme

My theme for spirituality would be "Live it."

Being a warrior in a battle of ethics

When I was the Chairman of the Board for Sutton Resources in the late 80's/early 90's, their stock price grew from US19 cents to US\$56 and was then bought by a major corporation. How did we do this? We raised our corporate profile by our personal behaviour. I went to Tanzania, Africa and lived with the people and we acted as responsible citizens, undertaking the needs of an area of a developing country that was within the scope of our economic impact and environment. We saw to the needs of the people and their health; we built a hospital. My influence with this company was from 1989-1995. The last book that I wrote dealt with this subject – how you do business in a developing world.

But then after this level of success, the management began to act in extremely unethical, bad ways. They were doing some very bad things like stealing money from the stockholders for themselves and hurting people. I knew they had never done these types of acts before and therefore they shouldn't do them now. I first went to my management and said, "Can I convince you not to act in this way?" No. "Can I plead with you not to act in this way?" No. "Can I pay you not to act in this way?" No. So I fired the management. The problem with this was, the management was also on the board, so they turned around and fired me. Then I called a special meeting of the shareholders to determine what to do with all of this, and that is called a proxy.

In all of this, I became a warrior and fought against them. I asked them to cease and desist and change their policies and asked them to liquidate their major asset, which was a piece of land that they were going to build a mine on to extract gold. When they refused I executed the public proxy against them, which cost me personally US\$5 million. Even though this was a modest company, the legal battle reached the level as if it were between two of the largest corporations in America. I went so far as to hire the people who did the Nabisco take-over proxy to represent me.

The management immediately began to throw dirt at me, but through all of it, I never deviated from the high road. The way I handled this publicly was to say that they weren't capable of building a mine and therefore the asset should be sold. I knew if you put US\$300 million in these guys' hands, it would have been a disaster. So that's why I executed a proxy to force the sale of the company.

I knew these fellows had shown their true colours and were not ethical people. Even though I made them very rich initially, I threw the whole company into a major turmoil with this proxy. In all of this I became a warrior. What I did every morning was to say to myself, "Was Napoleon angry because he had a battle. No, he was happy. So let's go today and fight successfully." I was a warrior that never left the high road. I never attacked them as individuals for their ethics, even though that was the whole fight.

I was drinking 16 double espressos every day just to stay awake with all of the tension and fatigue, and eventually I went blind in one eye. At this point I said, "Okay, if you want both eyes, take them. I'm still going to continue my battle." I am now blind in one eye as a result, and could have died if I had remained there because the tension was so great. They attempted to ruin my reputation. They took my money on three different occasions using legal manoeuvres, but even after all of that I ended up beating them.

What won in the end was nature. Nature was on my side. This property was so valuable that a company came in and bought it. But I had to fight for over a year and a half. I had to take many punches: they sued my wife, they had detectives trailing my children, they said I was part of the mafia. It's hard to believe what they did to try to stop me.

I never stopped my fight against them and they couldn't understand why. I had 21 lawyers and took this fight of ethics to the level of the Fortune 500, as if it were between two of the largest corporations in America. Do you know what hell is like? Hell is having 21 lawyers working for you. I put every cent I had in the world into it. No one paid me anything to do this. I did this because following God through my spiritual teacher, and my sense of ethics had made me a warrior.

Initially I lost the proxy because they paid one of the stockholders to get his votes, but even then I still got 47.3% of the total vote. But that didn't stop me. After that they had so many lawsuits that they couldn't get financing to build the mine; I wouldn't let them off the hook. So here they won, but they couldn't get financing. Nothing could make me stop. Why? Because I knew I was to be a warrior and I was to fight.

During all of this I felt like I was dying. I hurt from the bottom of my feet to the top of my head and every day I felt like I was going to my execution. At one point one of the executives came up to me and said, "Look, it's nothing personal; it's only business." And I said, "You better get out of my physical presence so I can control myself."

What could I do? I couldn't change what was happening; this was what was on the plate. Was I going to run? If I had run they would have killed me. So I fought to the end. Even during this extreme tension, I took the time to be quiet. I wouldn't miss that time for anything in the world. When I couldn't

sleep at night, I went to my meditation room. Why waste your life if you can't sleep? Even if you can't meditate, you can pray. Prayer for me is not "God help me." Prayer for me is "give me courage, give me strength."

Webb, Janiece – USA

"Former Senior Vice President with Motorola Corporation in the USA"

Spiritual Theme

I think my spiritual theme would be "God in everyone."

Building trust through integrity

I have had numerous times when people outside of the company asked me to cheat in the name of business. I have run into this all over the world. Within myself I knew I didn't have to cheat; I knew that I didn't have to pay bribes or go behind the law. Somehow, I have always known that. In my mind, if I am not attracted to money and material things, then I do not radiate that essence to people.

I have had people that worked for me in the past come and tell me that I have the highest ethics of anyone they have worked for. This is always a surprise to me when people say these things because to me this way of operating in business is so natural.

I have stood firm many times to not paying bribes and as a result people realise that they can trust me. A wealthy man in an Asian country once attempted to get me to hire a person so that he could buy some property for his personal use through Motorola. I stood firm that I would not do that. He reminded me that he was one of our largest customers in that country and I told him I didn't care. To this day my contacts in that country tell me that they want to deal with me because they know they can trust me.

In another Asian country we had worked very hard to put together a huge partnership and contract. At the very end of the deal, the partner told us we would have to make a payoff in order for them to sign the contract. They thought they had our soul and that we wouldn't back out. My higher-ups had told me earlier not to go and do this deal, but I believed in my heart and soul that I could pull it off without a compromise. I refused to make the payoff, so I came back with my hat in my hand and admitted that I had made a mistake. Yes, it was very embarrassing and I admit that those above me were very right in many ways. There were also ways in which they were not right and we all learned a lot together from this experience.

Standing firm

I have always stood firm that we did not have to cheat in order to get business. I have told people over and over that we never, ever have to be unethical and we will still be around. Often times that meant I had to stand against the crowd, but I didn't care, I stayed firm in my convictions.

I had a situation where I had negotiated a very, very large contract with the U.S. Navy. When it was time for me to go pick up the contract I was traveling, so I had to stay in a hotel. The evening before signing the contract, the admiral called my room and told me that he was coming up to my room. I asked whom he was calling and told him that the person he was calling was not there. He clearly knew that I was the one speaking on the phone and I knew that he was aware of that fact. Because I

knew that I would not allow him to come up to my room, this was how I allowed him to save face. He said, "If you want that contract tomorrow, I am coming up to your room." I continued to tell him that the person he was calling was not there.

The next day I saw him in the elevator and he said, "I thought you had left town." I again told him I was unaware of who he was talking about. Once again, he said directly to me, "If you want this contract, I am coming to your room." I told him, "No you are not." He then said, "I don't know how you are going to explain this to your corporation when you come home empty handed." I clearly said, "They will support me." He said, "I bet they don't." I replied with, "I bet they will and if they don't that's okay too."

I stood firm and said, "I am not going to be put in that position. And if you are going to try to put me in that position, I am willing to walk away." He signed the contract and I flew home with it that day.

4. INTEGRITY AND CONSCIENCE (6 STORIES)

Covey, Stephen R. – USA

“Vice Chairman of FranklinCovey, a global professional services firm based in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

One of my mottoes serves as a powerful spiritual theme for me: “Live life in crescendo.” In other words, the most important work you’ll ever do is still ahead of you.

Another such spiritual theme for me would be: “Educate and obey your conscience.” Educating as I speak of it here involves getting into the sacred literature of all the great traditions that have had enduring value and then consciously living true to what you have learned. The more you live true to it, the stronger your conscience becomes. A constant effort is required to stay on track with such stewardship.

Peace of conscience

Peace of conscience is much greater than peace of mind. Peace of mind is wonderful, too, but that’s more a function of events, like you’ve paid your bills, you made the plane on time, and so forth. Conscience means that you are truly true to that which you have internalised as being right and that gives you tremendous courage. Because then you can be strong with a loving spirit. You don’t have the ability to be courageous without deep respect and compassion for others. Neither do you experience the opposite – feeling compassionate and kind, and then capitulate on being courageous. Following your conscience is a long term approach to win-win; even though all your decisions may not be popular, you don’t ever violate the relationship of win-win towards people.

I think peace of conscience also recognises such a thing as evil. You would go for “no deal” with evil; you would have no real partnership with it. On the other hand, I find that most people see evil in others because they have not truly listened to them. I recently had the opportunity to have a good visit with Nelson Mandela. He was talking about how he saw the goodness in his guards when he was in the Robben Island Prison for six years. He had glimpses of this goodness, and he kept that awareness with him all the time he was in prison. It added to his moral authority which enabled him eventually to leverage towards formal authority as the first president of the new South Africa.

Delbecq, André, D.B.A. – USA

“Former Dean of the Santa Clara University School of Business in the USA”

“Professor and Director of the Institute for Spirituality and Organizational Leadership at the Santa Clara University School of Business in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

Wonder is the theme that naturally comes to me. I have always loved innovation because I am continuously thrilled to see what was once only imagined (and partially imagined at that) emerge as an institutionalised reality. Innovation scholarship plumbs the mystery of creativity from concept to actualisation within large-scale systems. I have always had and continue to retain a great excitement

associated with building collaboration between bright minds seeking to understand a complex problem and engaged in the discovery of a creative solution.

But now my sense of wonder is even enlarged. My eyes are opened to how the unimaginable emerges in all of creation; e.g. in nature in a blossoming flower, in the movements of the tides and the mysteries of the sea. I am increasingly appreciative of the insights from each of my colleagues when they join together for innovation. So the world is filled with wonder, echoing the limitlessness of the transcendent.

I have always had a good sense of adventure: I love boating, motorcycling, and travel and I am willing to take risks. But in the past these activities have been something that I felt I had to work hard at, something I mistakenly thought depended primarily on me. Now I see such efforts as tapping into a mysterious abundance. I don't do much of anything actually; I realise how little I do. This is not to diminish the importance of what each person does, but rather to increasingly see how God (the transcendent mystery that bears a thousand names), is at work in people and in nature. This allows for increased inner joy even in the midst of the greatest difficulties.

Of course I still have days of great unknowing; I still sometimes experience desolation and anguish. Yet even these experiences don't disturb a deep core sense of peace and wonder as my spiritual journey unfolds. It's as if the fire just gets brighter and brighter as my life unfolds.

Recognising the integrity of leaders

In a seminar I taught at the Santa Clara University, in the Leavey School of Business, entitled "The Management of High Technology" for MBA students, I used to invite prominent business leaders from Silicon Valley's technology complex to come and talk about their most difficult problems. The difficulty might be a lawsuit, a product launch problem, the complexities of integration of businesses following a merger or acquisition, or ramping up for large-scale manufacturing. The particular challenges varied greatly. The purpose was to share the generic nature of strategic struggles where both means and ends are unclear as the leader embraces the problem.

Throughout the years, MBA students offered two major observations or leanings from their experience. The first lesson was how difficult such challenges were in a fast moving, contemporary, and complex organisation. No matter how tough they thought leading an organisation through such difficulties might be, their prior imaginings didn't begin to capture the reality of the complexity these leaders were facing. These problems involved long lines of causation, required linking loosely coupled stakeholders in difficult alliances, and involved sustaining others through long periods of effort.

The second lesson was the enormous moral integrity of these men and women leading these corporations. The students came to see that what allowed these leaders to succeed was the fact that they were operating from a deep inner compass. These were leaders who were not opportunistic or exploitive. The focus of these leaders was serving society well through all the difficulties of evolving an efficient and effective organisation to provide their product or service in fast moving, competitive settings.

Still, these working professional MBAs would always spend more time in their reports discussing their impression of the courage, integrity and ethics of the leader than they would spend on the analysis of the exemplified business strategy. Note that these leaders were not invited to talk about ethics, or integrity. The focus was on business strategy. However their ethical and moral courage just flowed transparently through their discussion of whatever business problems they described.

In this seminar, on one occasion we had a leader make a presentation who was not particularly ethical. Rather, he was quite brutal and opportunistic. After he departed I asked the students for their impression of this particular presentation. It was summarised best by the statement of one young woman who said, "The Board of Directors will let him finish this particular task and then they will see that he is history." She was right. He was removed as CEO shortly after speaking to our seminar.

The point is simply this: the majority of successful organisational leaders I have encountered in Silicon Valley are individuals of high moral and ethical functioning. The broken and twisted are usually found out and removed before rising to top leadership posts. Contrary to the impression one might form from media coverage of business scandals, we found the majority of leaders to be individuals of great inner depth and goodness. It was their personal integration that allowed them to rise to positions of leadership.

Later a few of these same executives who had spoken in the "Management of High Technology" seminar joined the first "Spirituality of Organisational Leadership" seminar. I remember one of the MBAs who was also a participant saying: "I am glad that I listened to these leaders first speak as very skilled business strategists. I would have been very intimidated going 'back stage' with them to explore the intimacy of our spiritual lives as the first step. I also now understand the spiritual depth required of senior leaders who perform well."

Robert J. House at the Wharton Business School, University of Pennsylvania, reports that integrity is one of the defining variables that distinguish a leader. This variable holds true across nationalities and different cultures whether Chinese, Scandinavian, Latin, Anglo-Saxon, and so on. My MBA students understand the need for integrity very quickly. They can be with a leader speaking about a strategic challenge for just a few minutes and they quickly discern whether they are dealing with an integrated person (a person of high integrity) or by contrast with a narcissistic manipulator.

Still the question of how one arrives at such self-integration – the life development story and the spiritual journey of becoming the integrated leader – remains for many MBAs a mystery. So this provides one of the important motivations for our dialog in the spirituality seminar. We look at biography to discover the life development stories of great leaders.

I believe we need "lives of saints" to inspire us. Thus we need to study the lives of noble and good business leaders to inspire the next generation of business leaders. One of the gifts I can offer is an intimate acquaintance with many highly integrated business leaders in Silicon Valley. So relative to any topic, I am able to provide exemplification regarding lessons that I have learned through friendship with these leaders over the years. The lives of these leaders affirm that the "vocation" (calling) to business leadership can be a noble calling and a spiritual path.

Raghavan, N. S. – India

"Founding Director and former Joint Managing Director of Infosys in India"

Spiritual Theme

"Love and trust" automatically came to my mind as my theme.

Supporting the integrity of paying taxes

We used to have perpetual complaints from our employees about the salary structure and how much they had to pay in taxes. They would compare with their friends in other companies and tell me that other companies were giving their employees a lot of cash payments, which allowed them to avoid paying taxes. However I knew that this was not legal and told them that they must pay the taxes that they are supposed to pay.

To make the employees appreciate our stand, I requested a senior income tax official to come and give a presentation to our people. One of the employees told the official that he knew of a company that was giving cash payments so that the employees could pay less tax. The IT official was quick to say that if he could get the details, he will check it out and if necessary take immediate action on the company. He assured us that we at Infosys were doing the right thing. He also told them that they were earning top wages, and therefore they should rightfully pay their taxes as their duty.

The employees continued to come to me and complain that if they paid so much in taxes it was just going to support a corrupt government. I continued to tell them that they must pay their proper taxes and if they had complaints about the governance issues or how the taxpayers' money is being used, they must go to those forums and see if they can help to correct that situation. I told them that they must not shy away from upholding their responsibility to pay their taxes. I told them not to mix up the two. I believe in integrity and openness, and this is how I handled this situation.

Raman, Ananth – USA

“Chairman of Graphtex, Inc. a manufacturing company in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

“Awareness” and “Realising Divinity”

Repaying debts with integrity

There was an instance where I was not the decision maker; my boss was the one who had to make a very important decision. However, I was able to see the basis of this decision from a spiritual perspective only after it had happened. We had borrowed a large sum of money from a banker who wanted to pull out of their operations in the USA, and we had a large multi-million dollar loan due to them.

I went to the lender and told them that since they were the ones who were leaving, we would like to pay them less than the total amount. I proposed a certain reduction in what we owed them, and we had an extensive discussion about this. With hesitation, they agreed to a reduction, but it was a smaller reduction than what I had proposed. Since we couldn't finalise the actual amount of the reduction, they had the head person from their London organisation come to the USA to meet with our principle shareholder from Switzerland; and we decided to let those two people work it out.

I had briefed our principle shareholder, who was actually my immediate boss, on what had taken place up to that point. I suggested that he offer an amount for the reduction that was a little more than they had agreed to. I went into the discussions feeling very proud that I had negotiated this loan reduction, and had gained this extra income for the company.

As we moved toward this critical point during the talks, my boss suddenly said, “I have not come here to ask for this reduction, I will not do it.” We had negotiated so hard for this reduction, and now this

man was saying that he would not ask for this! He told them that we would in due time pay back the entire amount of the loan.

I was totally shocked. Here we had a huge gift of money available, and my boss was giving it away. Afterwards I asked him why he had done this, and he said, "As a businessman we have a responsibility. We are responsible not only to our shareholders, but also to our bankers. We have borrowed this money from them; we must repay it to them. This company is not bankrupt – we are able to pay this money to them. So there is absolutely no reason why we should take advantage of this situation just because they want to pull their operations out of the USA. This is no way to do business."

I was really struck by all of this. He was not a religious person or anything like that. He was just a gentleman with a deep sense of values. He considered this loan not as something that we simply wrote down and now we can debate about whether to pay or not pay. Rather, he took it as an obligation to society.

I felt this was a deep spiritual lesson for me. The lesson was that all *obligations must be honoured*. They must be paid back in the right way, not by arguing like this. I saw that all obligations, whether they are in cash, such as this, or in some other form, must be repaid in some way or another. This is my duty and I must honour that duty. I saw that this was the only way to do business in this world.

If I had not looked at this from a spiritual perspective, I would have thought, "I did all of this hard work for this man, and he is not even appreciating it." My financial controller was with me, and he is still not convinced today that what my boss did was right. He still calls it a stupid decision, and I continue to tell him why it was not a stupid decision.

Vrethammar, Magnus – Sweden

"Former President for Europe of Pergo Flooring in the UK"

"President of an executive coaching and business development firm Creability AB in Sweden"

Spiritual Theme

Spirituality is an opening process. And then the question is, "What are you opening up to?" I would say love, as long as I am very careful in how I define love. Love can be, on an energy level, a very encompassing and still impersonal energy. So, if one considers this type of love, I would say that my theme is "opening up to love."

Following conscience

I do feel that I have a balance between my professional life and my private life. Do I face questions or situations in my professional life that challenge my ethical and moral stance? Yes, definitely I do. I do face situations where information needs to be communicated to the government or to auditors that could be detrimental to the company, and I have to determine how I can perform in these circumstances and maintain my moral, ethical stance. I feel that the only way I can do this is to stay very firm on my own personal borderlines. This also happens during power struggles on boards.

One example of this was when I was supposed to sign an important document dealing with a new investment in the Logistics Centre that was financed by the local community together with a number of large companies. I was sitting together with both the press and the head of the local community, while

I had the union waiting for me in the next room. After signing the document, I had to make my exit and discuss firing a number of employees with the union. Nobody at the table would have signed if they knew what the next action was going to be. Did I feel that I was doing something morally right? Yes, because it was legal and in the best interest of the company, it was important for its survival - which was important as well for the community.

Webb, Janiece – USA

“Former Senior Vice President with Motorola Corporation in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

I think my spiritual theme would be “God in everyone.”

Building trust through integrity

I have had numerous times when people outside of the company asked me to cheat in the name of business. I have run into this all over the world. Within myself I knew I didn't have to cheat; I knew that I didn't have to pay bribes or go behind the law. Somehow, I have always known that. In my mind, if I am not attracted to money and material things, then I do not radiate that essence to people.

I have had people that worked for me in the past come and tell me that I have the highest ethics of anyone they have worked for. This is always a surprise to me when people say these things because to me this way of operating in business is so natural.

I have stood firm many times to not paying bribes and as a result people realise that they can trust me. A wealthy man in an Asian country once attempted to get me to hire a person so that he could buy some property for his personal use through Motorola. I stood firm that I would not do that. He reminded me that he was one of our largest customers in that country and I told him I didn't care. To this day my contacts in that country tell me that they want to deal with me because they know they can trust me.

In another Asian country we had worked very hard to put together a huge partnership and contract. At the very end of the deal, the partner told us we would have to make a payoff in order for them to sign the contract. They thought they had our soul and that we wouldn't back out. My higher-ups had told me earlier not to go and do this deal, but I believed in my heart and soul that I could pull it off without a compromise. I refused to make the payoff, so I came back with my hat in my hand and admitted that I had made a mistake. Yes, it was very embarrassing and I admit that those above me were very right in many ways. There were also ways in which they were not right and we all learned a lot together from this experience.

5. MIRACLES (3 STORIES)

Behner, John R. – El Salvador

“Former Country Manager for Nabisco in El Salvador”

Spiritual Theme

“Realising God by serving others.”

Only saying “serving everyone” does not include that, which is the most important to me, which is to realise my oneness with God.

Experiencing God’s little miracles

In 1989, I went to India for three weeks while my wife stayed home with the kids. I was travelling with KLM at the time, and when I tried to reconfirm my return flight, they said, “We don’t have your name; we’ll have to put you on a waiting list.” That day my spiritual teacher asked me when I was going back. I told him that I had just checked with the airline, and I didn’t have a reservation. “I know”, he said. “I will tell you when to go.” I thought this meant another weeks’ vacation, great! So I sent a message to the office, telling them that I would be delayed. One week passed, two weeks passed. Then I followed my spiritual teacher as he travelled to different beautiful places in South India, but I couldn’t explain to the people in the office back home what was happening. I could only say that as far as I knew, I was coming back, but I didn’t know when. One day I got a courier message from New York, saying, “Don’t come back. You don’t have a job any more.”

This was around the 1st of June, and I had come to India in February. I didn’t hardly have any more money left, my visa had expired, I had a 45 day ticket which was long gone, and I didn’t have any money with me to buy another ticket. This was long before the days of the credit cards. One day I got a sign from Sathya Sai Baba that I could leave on the 5th of June. The airline said they didn’t have any seats out of the country, but they put me on a waiting list in Delhi. I succeeded in getting to Delhi where at least 20 people were waiting, hoping to get on the overbooked flight. I had my expired ticket, which was also non-endorse-able. Well, a lady came, picked up all the tickets, and put all of us on an Air India flight to Amsterdam where we could get our ongoing flights. In Amsterdam I called my boss in New York, saying that I would come to my office in El Salvador on Monday to pick up my check.

Back home at the company, everybody was happy to see me. Nobody was sitting at my desk, and I called my boss again. After a silence at the end of the line, he said, “Well, we’ve been analysing your situation. We’ve decided to give you a 25 percent wage increase.” 25 percent wage increase? I almost fell off my chair. I had never got more than about a 5 percent increase in my whole life. He continued saying, “We have also decided to consider the time you just spent in India as a paid vacation, and we’ll give you a check for that. And we have been analysing the work you did last year and have decided to give you a bonus for last years’ results.” He gave me so much money... How can you get something like that for insubordination, unless it’s God’s work?

In another example, we would sell products, which nobody else had in the countries around us. At one time, God really helped me. Because of the exchange rate with Europe, milk powder became very cheap, and I ordered about 20 containers of milk powder. I didn’t borrow the money, I had enough money to buy it, but I didn’t know where to put the milk powder, because I didn’t have that kind of

warehouse space. I really could have gotten in trouble, because I couldn't have sold that much, even if I had 'given it away'.

Then I got a call from a guy working for the USA Procurement Agency, which was supplying the Contras; the Contras, supported by the USA government, were in Honduras, doing battle in Nicaragua. "We need ten containers of milk powder immediately." I said: "Yes, Sir! I have got it! As a matter of fact I can trans-border it without even getting it through the customs here, because we'll just re-dispatch it. In that way we won't have to pay any taxes in El Salvador, and we'll get it into Honduras immediately. All you have to do is send me a certified check and it's yours." We made a bundle. It just went like that. It was all so perfect. God must have done it.

Cruz, Alvaro – Colombia

"Former Minister of the Government of Colombia and Governor of Cundinamarca, Colombia"
"CEO of an engineering/building company in Colombia, I.C.M. Ingenieros Ltda."

Spiritual Theme

Love and respect others.

Intuition and safety

In my country terrorists want to destabilise the order, and I represented law and order. On one of several occasions of attempts on my life, terrorists had mined my armoured car. Ten minutes before I was supposed to use it, my intuition told me to move to another vehicle. Shortly after, the first vehicle blew up, and I was saved.

Another time I was going to visit one of the most impoverished districts in my state on a Sunday. The Friday before, a peasant came to my Governor-office. For some reason this peasant had been able to bypass the security people, and he insisted on talking to me. He begged me not to go to the section of his town as planned on the following Sunday, because he knew that an attempt to kill me was being prepared. I cancelled my visit and ordered a wide investigation in that area. A ground rocket was found, which would have shot down my helicopter, and other platforms had been prepared for attacks on me during the main meeting, in case they missed the helicopter.

Already in 1983 I listened to my intuition. At that time the company that I was working in as a consultant, was building a major hydroelectric dam. One evening I was talking to the engineering chief of the night shift; this man was an old college friend. I had asked him to come with me for ten minutes. Because of this, he arrived ten minutes late for work. Just as he was getting there, the engineer heard and saw an explosion at the entrance of a tunnel. More than 130 people were trapped and died. This friend felt that my calling him had saved his life.

Kanu, Victor-Krishna – Zambia

"Former High Commissioner (Ambassador) for Sierra Leone to the UK, Norway and Sweden"
"Director of The African Institute of Sathya Sai Education in Zambia"

Spiritual Theme

Divine love is the central theme. Oneness is a parallel. Because if you say you love all, you do that because all are one.

Creating a “miracle school”

Looking back some years to the time when we were building the Sathya Sai School in Ndola, Zambia, practically with our bare hands, I met difficulties of all kinds, financially and otherwise. My spirituality lifted me and enabled me to persist – and this has born fruit. How did this happen? I made references to the various scriptures. There is a lot of spirituality in the scriptures, and I drew examples from them, which sustained me.

The story of Hanuman is found in Ramayana, one of the great scriptures in Hinduism. Hanuman had absolute faith in his master, Lord Rama. His focus was on Rama, nobody else. His devotion and commitment to duty when facing many challenges were remarkable. He persevered and endured all kinds of hardships. There was not a single moment in his life when he doubted Lord Rama. He therefore had the courage of his conviction to such an extent that he did not denounce his Lord when in captivity. Asked by Ravana, who was Rama’s adversary, “Whose messenger are you?” “I am the messenger of Rama whose wife you have abducted”, he replied.

In Christianity, we find the story of Saint Paul. Saul of Tarsas persecuted the Christians until he was confronted by a vision on his way to Damascus, and he heard a voice saying, “Saul! Saul! Why persecutes thou me?”

“Who art thou?” replied Saul.

“I am Jesus of Nazareth whom thou persecutes,” replied the voice from the sky.

From that moment onwards, Saul became a completely transformed man. Now he was Paul the Evangelist. He travelled great distances fearlessly to proclaim the message of Jesus in the face of suspicion, ridicule and threats to his life. He worked hard to spread the new message. He never gave up until he was executed in Rome. He sacrificed his life for the good cause.

Hanuman’s and Saint Paul’s stories inspired me, coupled with my belief in Sathya Sai Baba, who had said; “Go out there and spread my message of love.” I knew that this was not going to be smooth sailing. Really, spirituality drawn from the lives of other devotees like Hanuman and Saint Paul - who practised love, who practised right conduct, perseverance, stick-to-it-iveness, who had the courage of their convictions - helped me a lot to move along.

The local population as well as the local government in Ndola was stunned at our work, they had never seen anything like it. I was with the workers from 7 AM to 5 PM each day; I was always with them, doing things. This was and still is uncommon in Ndola. People like us, who are thought to be “big men” and important people, are not expected to do that kind of menial work. But they really felt that the example set, not just by me, but also by my wife Genoveva and a few others, was such that they could not help but admire and emulate it.

The way the school unfolded was an example. Without knowing the language, as it was not our country, we started this school – and did so by starting both a primary wing and a secondary wing. This was because Sai Baba told us: “Finish the whole school.” So we built the school with 24 classrooms. There was a primary wing for the beginners, and a secondary wing. Filling the primary wing was easy, because in Zambia there are many children out there; families are very big, so you only have to blow a whistle, and 10 will come, 20 will come. But when it comes to the secondary school, it’s different.

To enter a secondary school, there is a national primary school examination, which all children from grade seven, the last class of primary school, must take. Following this, the children with the best grades are selected for the government schools. Those with poor grades are left out. They are failures, rejects, dropouts. Our problem was that the first year, we were not on the government list. We were not even known; only the immediate townships knew that there was such a school coming up close to their sites. So when the grade 7 candidates were given their forms to fill out and they were asked for preferences for schools, they would not put Sathya Sai School on their list.

We went to the minister of education and asked for the basket containing the list of failures, the rejects, and it was from this basket that we chose our students. That was a big challenge. Again we were moved by love. That was a spiritual principle that influenced us, because we believed that these children were capable of achieving higher things. So we took these rejects, brought them to school and showered them with all that Sai Baba had taught us. The whole atmosphere became a spiritual atmosphere where there was love, kindness, sharing, helping, persevering and discipline, with love as the most important “weapon”. And we found that the children responded so wonderfully positively. Their mental powers, which were once blocked, suddenly blossomed, and they were able to grasp academic concepts and do very well in their studies. Genoveva would always tell them, “You are not failures, you can make it!”

Today the Sathya Sai School in Ndola is known as “The Miracle School”. There are 560 students, boys and girls. We started with the boys’ school. When parents asked, “Why only boys?” it suddenly occurred to me, that the problems of the world are mainly caused by men, not women, and that the prisons are full of men, very few women. Therefore, especially in a continent like Africa where wars are fought by men maybe we should start with taming the boys. This was the explanation I used to give to the people, and they liked it very much.

The school is called The Miracle School not just because of the high academic results, but also because of the transformation of the children themselves. The whole atmosphere of that township is now lit up because of the presence of the school and the teachers’ quarters there. And now The African Institute of Sathya Sai Education is functioning there as well. The inhabitants of the township feel important and are proud of our presence. For example, my former substitute as a leader, who came from Malaysia and was of Chinese origin, and his wife, who was a teacher and came from India, lived in the township. It has never happened in Ndola that foreigners lived with the natives. But they did that, and were respected for so doing. So the school and the Institute have become a very important fact in community building, in peoples’ relations to each other. There is no vandalism. People like these institutions.

I led “The Miracle School” for ten years, and now I am leading the Institute. Together with others, I am training the future teachers, both teachers for the school system and the teachers for the UN-Habitat water project.