



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

## **Employees**

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 40 stories related to the broad topic of “Employees”. These stories are organised according to the following four categories:

- 1. Communications (12 stories)**
- 2. Compensation/reward systems (8 stories)**
- 3. Development (13 stories)**
- 4. Discipline (7 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:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Organisation Name</b>	<b>Sector or Industry</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Years in Leadership</b>
<b>Behner, John R.</b>	El Salvador	Nabisco	Food	Former Country Manager	66	40
<b>Budin, Philip</b>	USA	Royaltos Ltd.	Marketing	CEO	61	30
<b>Chand, Amber</b>	USA	The Amber Chand Collection	Retail Marketing	Founder	53	9
		Eziba	Retail Marketing	VP of Vision, Co-founder		
<b>Chattopadhyay, A. K.</b>	India	ACC Limited Refractories Division	Manufacture and Installation, Refractory	VP - Senior	50	20
<b>Daugherty, Thomas</b>	USA	Methodist Health Care System	Health Care/ Medical Care	VP of Spiritual Care and Values Integration	61	27
<b>Franklin, Carol</b>	Switzerland	World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)	Environmental Protection & Conservation	Former CEO	53	20
		Swiss Re	Insurance	Former Head of Human Resources		
<b>Govindan, Rajan</b>	USA	Bankers Trust	Banking	Former Senior Managing Director	56	35
<b>Jensen, Niels Due</b>	Denmark	Grundfos Mgmt A/S	Manufacturing, Pumps	Chairman – Group	60	30
<b>Kanu, Victor-Krishna</b>	Zambia	African Institute of Sathya Sai Education	Education	Director	73	30
<b>Kolind, Lars</b>	Denmark	Oticon	Hearing Impaired Products	Former CEO	54	26
<b>Maitra, Ashoke</b>	India	Times of India Group	Publishing, Newspaper	Director Human Resources	45	16
<b>Moitra, Deependra</b>	India	Lucent Technologies	Tele-communications	General Manager, Engineering	32	7
<b>Narayana, G.</b>	India	Excel Industries, Ltd.	Chemicals, Biochem, Agri	Chairman - Executive	60	38
<b>Narendran, Parantha</b>	Czech Republic	Eurotel	Tele-communications	Strategy Director	34	3
<b>Ollé, Ramón</b>	The Netherlands	Epson Europe B.V.	Electronic Equipment and Services	President	52	27
<b>Raghavan, N. S.</b>	India	Infosys Technologies, Ltd.	Information Technology	Founder Director & Joint Mgr Dir.	61	35
<b>Raman, Ananth</b>	USA	Graptex, Inc.	Manufacturing – Electrical & Aluminium	Chairman & CEO, President	55	25
<b>Ranganathan, V. V.</b>	India	Ernst & Young India	Tax & Business Consulting	Senior Partner	53	24
<b>Sinclair, James</b>	USA/ Tanzania	Tan Range Exploration, Ltd.	Mining	Chairman	62	41
<b>Vrethammar, Magnus</b>	UK	Pergo	Laminated Flooring	Former President for Europe	52	22

<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Organisation Name</b>	<b>Sector or Industry</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Years in Leadership</b>
	Sweden	Finess	Consumer Disposable	Former President, Consumer Div.		
<b>Webb, Janiece</b>	USA	Motorola Corporation	Electronic Communications	Senior Vice President	47	28

## THE FOLLOWING STORIES ARE CONTAINED IN THIS FILE:

### Employee – Communications

- Taking an interest in the employees – John Behner
- Two initiatives to cultivate spirit in the organisation – Amber Chand
- Taking responsibility in a downsizing – Amber Chand
- Turning around a failing organisation – Dr. A. K. Chattopadhyay
- Honesty and openness – Neils due Jensen
- Understanding and respecting emotions – Deependra Moitra
- Cultivating loyalty – Deependra Moitra
- The value of family – Ramón Ollé
- Correcting a mistake with employee compensation – N. S. Raghavan
- Building trust with employees – N. S. Raghavan
- Being open and honest with employees – N. S. Raghavan
- Current style of leading – Janiece Webb

### Employee – Compensation/Reward systems

- Basing pay on productivity – John Behner
- Not working for money only – Carol Franklin
- Transparency as to salaries – Carol Franklin
- The difference between shares and stock options for employees – Lars Kolind
- Facing critical challenges – G. Narayana
- The human aspects of compensating employees – Ramón Ollé
- Correcting a mistake with employee compensation – N. S. Raghavan
- Measuring “quality of effort” rather than “success” – Ananth Raman

### Employee – Development

- Bringing people up from within – John Behner
- Developing and energising a vision for the company – Amber Chand
- Integrating values in everyone’s day-to-day work – Thomas Daugherty
- Increasing the opportunities – Carol Franklin
- Social responsibility – Neils due Jensen
- The Scorpion and the Sage – Victor-Krishna Kanu
- Conducting trainings on joy and self-mastery – Ashoke Maitra
- Implementing quality programmes – Deependra Moitra
- Empowering people – Parantha Narendran
- Being open to new ideas and experiments -- N. S. Raghavan
- Unity of thought, word, and action – Ananth Raman
- Quietude and introspection – James Sinclair
- Opening up others to their potential, their self, and greater responsibility – Magnus Vrethammar

### Employee - Discipline

- Ensuring discipline through strength and humility – John Behner
- Firing an employee – Philip Budin
- Exploring the issues of when to let employees go – Rajan Govindan
- Reprimanding employees – G. Narayana
- Dismissing people – Parantha Narendran
- Terminating employees and downsizing the organization – Ananth Raman
- Responding to the press and to an employee, due to a major mistake – V. V. Ranganathan

## 1. COMMUNICATIONS (12 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.

#### **Taking an interest in the employees**

You have to have discipline, but at the same time I always tried to protect my employees, and I was a good friend with everybody. Even when I had 300 employees, I would find time to sit down with each one of them and talk to them for three or four minutes, “How are the kids? How far away do you live? Do you have troubles getting here?”

A lady told me she had a problem getting on the bus to go to work because of troubles with her legs. She only lived about six blocks from the company, so I said, “We’ll send a car for you in the morning, don’t worry about it.” Immediately I asked a salesman, who used to come early in the mornings, to go and pick up the lady, who worked in the accounting department.

The people working for me were very appreciative of the love and the way they were treated, and the personal interest that I showed in them and their welfare. There was an instance when one of the girls in the reception who was pregnant had a miscarriage. One of the accountants made a negative comment about an expense item I had had. She got very, very upset and said, “How can you think of accusing Mr. Behner of anything like that?” She got so upset that she had a miscarriage as a result of it.

She wasn’t a spiritual person at all, but afterwards I told her that children who die in that circumstance are very advanced souls, they don’t have hardly anything that they need to do in life in order to become united with God. “Your child has had that experience,” I said. “Instead of feeling sad, you should feel very happy that you had a child that has been able to unite with God.” She was really depressed, but when I told her that, her whole attitude changed.

At the same time, I went up to the accountant, who had said this thing about me and my expense report, and I told him, “I really appreciate your attentiveness, that you catch little things and bring it to the attention of the controller when you have a doubt.” I explained to him what the expense was. My expense reports were a joke, because I was a vegetarian and only ate one main meal a day. I would go to New York for a meeting and stay in a cheap place instead of the hotel where the meeting was, to save money for the company.

But sometimes I think I took this looking after the people to an extreme. At one time the police came and arrested one of the workers in the factory. I went to the police station to find out what was going on. I was told that the guy was an armed robber, a member of a gang of robbers, and they had been looking for him. “How can he be working for you?” they asked. “He is one of my best employees in the factory,” I said. “No, he’s the head of a band of robbers!” They assured me that this was the truth.

I went back to the company and started asking some of the employees about this. They told me they had seen this guy with a gun in his locker. Nobody had ever told me. Somebody else had seen him in a gang when there was an assault in the outlying areas, so apparently he really was a robber.

A few years later I visited a rehabilitation centre, and here was this guy in a wheelchair. "Pedro?" I said, "What are you doing here?" "Oh," he said, "When I got out of jail, I went to the States. I was coming out of a liquor store when there was a robbery, and I got shot. I'm paralysed now, I can't get out of the chair." That was the way he told me the story. Obviously he had been robbing a liquor store and got shot. He got his pay.

I tried to believe in the people, and I think that 99 percent were very, very good. But I had some problems, like right after the civil war, which was finished in 1991. There were a lot of armed robberies then. Whenever they would see a truck without a gun on it, ex-guerrillas and ex-soldiers would assault it. In each of the first three years, we had about 36 assaults on our delivery trucks and on the office itself. I was reluctant to put armed guards on the trucks and at the plant, because I didn't like guns around. But then they were going to cancel my insurance, so I had to do it. That stopped the assaults. It only shows, sometimes you have to do something which you don't want to do.

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### **Chand, Amber – USA**

"Founder of the Amber Chand Collection: Global Gifts for Peace and Understanding, an internet-based company in the USA that markets the products of artisans from around the world"

#### **Spiritual Theme**

Compassion, balance, grace, and friendliness are words that ring as a spiritual theme for me. Yes, this is a "God-being tapestry."

#### **Two initiatives to cultivate spirit in the organisation**

As a co-founder of this company, I have a very interesting role. I have a tremendous amount of influence, but I have not been interested in seeing it as power. So in everything I do people see me as a co-founder and respect me for that role. It is a status and respect that I hold very humbly.

I know when I walk through this company that employees look to me sort of like a mother, a nurturing spirit. So I try to continually find ways to be that nurturing, reassuring, loving spirit for them. This allows me to authentically be my spirit-self. I am very grateful that I do not have to be any different than who I am. As a result I have been able to actually cultivate a great confidence in others by being more spiritual: they expect it of me, they see it in me, they laugh at me, they dismiss me, all of that.

There are two initiatives that I think my spiritual theme – this beautiful tapestry of compassion, balance, grace, and friendliness – has inspired. I created the first one about a year ago and called it "tea with Amber." To me this is exactly the way I see that spirit should work in a company. I was inspired to do this when, one day, my heart sank when I realised that the company had grown to such a degree that I no longer knew everybody. I could not see how I could be in the nurturer role if I didn't know everyone by name. I thought about this and began to search for a way that I could connect with everyone in the company.

So the idea came to me to just begin to have a cup of tea with every person. The first thing I noticed was that my office was not the nurturing atmosphere that I wanted, so I rearranged my office completely. I created a little sitting area where I have some lamps and plants, I got out my lovely Mexican tea set and then I began to invite people to tea.

One by one people began to come and sit with me for tea. Some people were very nervous because they were sitting with the co-founder. I would make them a cup of tea and what I noticed is that once they began to sip their tea, they would start to relax physically. Once we could both relax with each other, then we could actually open ourselves up to the “art of conversation.”

This whole concept has continued to grow and now it is on the website as a column. Who would have ever thought that it would have blossomed so much? What is so wonderful about this is that it is definitely something that the employees look forward to. It has become seen as a very important part of my work in this company and as a way for us to continue to highlight Eziba as a company with a social conscience.

The second initiative I started early on was to speak to the customers who were unhappy with us. I remembered my childhood where my mother and father taught me to treat a guest who came to our house as God. You do everything you can to make their time with you happy and satisfying and comfortable. So during our first customer training, I told them this story. I told them that at Eziba, I like to feel that the customer is God. So when the customer calls, we drop everything and we listen. People actually listened to what I said and thought it was nice.

We have a fabulous customer service group and yet I still want to speak with all of the unhappy customers. It is actually helpful for our employees to see that the co-founder is working alongside them, supporting the larger work, which is to satisfy all our customers. I always pick up the phone and call the unhappy customers. I begin by apologising to them, “I am so sorry that we have dissatisfied you in some way.” I must tell you that customers are amazed; they cannot believe that one of the founders is taking the time to call them. From this call, I always end up with a happy customer; we usually end up feeling a lot of joy and laugh together. I tell them to call me again if they ever have any problems and I give them my direct line. So it is another way of being thoughtful and it works.

### **Taking responsibility in a downsizing**

One of the most painful periods for me as a leader in this company was the time just after the tragedy that happened in New York City on September 11<sup>th</sup> through Christmas, 2001. We were restructuring the company and looking seriously at our goal of being a profitable organisation.

As a result we had to look closely at areas of the company that were not cost-effective, which then required us to let some people go. This happened very quickly and it was very painful for me. Here was a company that had promoted itself to be a kind, thoughtful, compassionate company and people came to work here because they had a sense of alignment with our mission of doing good for the planet.

And yet, I had to be realistic about the early, start-up phase that we were in. There were no guarantees, we were not a solidly profitable company yet, we were still young and our roots were still not embedded. Once we had communicated to everyone about who would be laid off, we had an open forum meeting with everyone in the company. We clearly expected people to express their distress, unhappiness, frustration and anger. I stood there in front of everyone along with the other members of our senior team.

Even though some people did become quite angry, I could feel my heart accepting all of this. I genuinely felt that there was a reason for all of this anger and frustration and that there was no harm in it. I knew that the last thing we needed to be was defensive. There was a moment when one of our senior members became defensive and it sparked a battle between two wills; it was awful. Everyone looked so sad and devastated. At the end of this, there was just this silence.

I then very quietly went and stood in the centre of the room and I looked around the room at everyone and said, "I am so sorry. I apologise for the way this has turned out." At that moment the faces of the people began to soften and a spaciousness was created that let them know that this was not about us versus them. It was simply all part of the journey of this company. The apology felt like a quiet, but powerful flame within me.

It was a moment when I stretched inside. I was accepting the responsibility for what had happened in the company and was also acknowledging that there was no right or wrong. It simply was what we needed to go through. I stepped into the circle, stood in my own space, and felt all of it. To me it made a great difference.

Humility would be the word I would use to describe that moment. It was in this humility that I found my greatest courage. Courage to me is not when I raise my voice and act aggressively and defensively against others; it is when I feel responsible and responsive to their needs. In that moment I literally re-defined what a leader was meant to be. We have become so consumed by the idea that leaders are strong and in charge, and that they are the captains of the ship. I am most interested in incorporating the great feminine principles into leadership: bringing in the art of grace and humility, dialogue, soft speech and deep listening, and eyes that may water, and allowing all of that to be there.

This is what it means to me to be a servant leader. This is very much how I see my leadership role in this company; I am founder-servant. I have always known that I was here to serve and anytime I forget this, I lose my way. Without this faith, this spiritual source, I do not feel it would be possible to be an exemplary leader.

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### **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

### **Turning around a failing organisation**

When I initially came in to head the operations of ACC Refractories in 1991, I saw right away that there was a big distance between the management and the workers. There was also not enough information being shared between them, so the workers felt totally disillusioned about what was going on. They had totally lost faith in management. To me, the workers are a part of the whole game and you cannot win the game without taking them into proper consideration.

So I started by working with the people. As a management team, we started working closely together with the factory workers and started sharing information with them. We shared what was happening and what was good or what was bad. Slowly the workers responded to this very nicely. I regained the faith of those people. After two years or so, they began to listen more to us than to their union leaders. So naturally the senior management people became their leaders and this was a big transformation.

The first thing I did was to introduce a monthly meeting, which we called a safety meeting. The idea was to address what had happened in the last month, what our market share was, how we performed, where we went wrong, where we went right, and how to learn from the things we did right. It used to be a one-hour meeting at the gate itself. When the workers came in the morning we were there and we would do some formalities and hold the meeting. We started by hoisting the safety flag. We talked about safety practises, including the accidents that took place in the plants and how they could have been avoided. Then we called a worker to talk about all different kinds of safety. Then we asked the engineers to talk about safety. Finally I would talk about the other things in the company. This became a fantastic thing. After a few months, people were eagerly coming to this meeting to listen.

Then we started a quality circle and brought people together to have interactions. We would visit one operation for the whole day and talk about things. Our people are good people; a few people have simply misguided them. So we tried to bring them into the right kind of attitude. As a management philosophy, we said that we are 80-85% responsible for difficulties with the business, and the workers are 15-20% responsible. That is, if we don't get a good price from the customer, that is management's fault. If we don't buy the raw material at a good price, that is management's fault. If inventory is lying in our yard, that is management's fault. When the material has been given to the worker, then it is their job to process it properly.

As a result of all of this, I also saw how we were doing things that were not getting us anywhere in our business, things that were losing money. So a lot of our business processes and strategies were changed. We looked at our product profile, we looked at our customer profile, and we looked to see if we could do the business in a different way. We phased out a lot of products that were not aiding the bottom line and it was a good transformation. We also got a lot of good support from the corporate office and that was what was needed.

We revived the business, and today I can tell you very proudly that we have grown from a 180 million rupee business (US\$3.8 million at the mid-2002 exchange rate) to 1,950 million rupee business (US\$41.5 million at the mid-2002 exchange rate) last year. The ten times growth occurred just by using a proper strategy to run the business and giving value to the people. In 1991 we were almost a non-entity and today we are a force to be reckoned with in the country.

Our products are good, our services are good, and our quality is good. During this same period the refractory industry overall was in very bad shape. However, we still managed to grow and grow.

My spiritual philosophy behind all of this was that I was trying to do good for our employees. They were not aware of the things that they were doing that were actually harmful to them. So I wanted to do good and show them how to do good.

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### **Jensen, Niels Due – Denmark**

“Group Chairman for Grundfos Management A/S in Denmark”

## **Spiritual Theme**

Empathy, compassion, and love for my neighbour.

## **Honesty and openness**

Another story has something to do with my priority to honesty, and having an open and honest conduct towards our employees. About three years ago we had at Grundfos a situation where we had far too many “wild strikes”. People stopped working for a day or two or three, just to demonstrate what they would like to see, or even just to protest towards the way things were run. What I did then was to write an open letter to all employees, telling them in a really straightforward way, that Grundfos was not able to continue with this behaviour from some groups of employees, because it would simply ruin our company.

To begin with this openness and honesty with our people was taken very badly by quite a few, but as time has gone by, people realise that I was right in telling the truth about what our company needed from them. Today I believe that my openness and honesty to our employees at that time really has changed the agenda for our whole company, when it comes to working more in harmony and in dialogue with each other on a daily basis instead of confronting each other with problems.

My philosophy is clearly that it is important to inform in due time about the things which you as a top manager are aware of, as to what might happen in the company, and first of all to tell about unpleasant things before the more pleasant things. Be open in your dialogue, and be very honest. Discuss with your employees also those matters, which might not make them happy. In this way you will be able to create a dialogue and understanding, also for those unpopular decisions which now and then necessarily must be taken.

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## **Moitra, Deependra – India**

“Formerly the youngest General Manager within Lucent Technologies, who at the time had 70,000 employees worldwide”

“Associate Vice President with Infosys Technologies, Ltd. in India”

## **Spiritual Theme**

“Living with a purpose” would be my theme. True fulfilment is then the outcome of this journey.

## **Understanding and respecting emotions**

Associated with this path of spirituality is a set of values or traits that a person will demonstrate. In business, here are the ones that are important to me. First of all, it is very important to me that I deliver comfort to people around me, so I place a lot of emphasis on emotional values. If you look at some schools of spirituality, they will say that you should not be emotional. But the way I look at it, and what I practice in my work life, is that as human beings we all have sentiments and emotions. And therefore, we all have an emotional reservoir.

For me to be really successful in relationships and in doing productive work with others, I must tap into that emotional reservoir within myself and within others. When I tap into the emotional reservoirs of others, it basically makes people feel comfortable around me. I think that understanding and

respecting people's emotions is very, very fundamental to both my work life and my private life, and I place a lot of emphasis on this.

Related to this principle of comfort, or showing empathy to another person, there is another principle that I follow which is how to communicate. I must communicate in a way that makes people feel good about what I have said.

Let me explain this by telling a story. There was a king, and one day he found out there was a palmist who had come to his kingdom. He got excited and asked the palmist to look at his palm and tell him what his future held. This palmist looked at his palm very carefully and said, "I have very bad news for you, I'm afraid that you will die in the next seven days." The king obviously got very agitated, angry and distressed. He sent the palmist to the prison saying that he had disappointed him. Three days later, he found out that there was another palmist visiting the kingdom and so he called him to come and read his palm. He held out his palm and asked the palmist to tell him what his future held. The palmist said, "I have very good news for you. Your son will soon be occupying this throne." Both of these palmists basically told him the same thing, but in different ways. The first way made the king angry, but the second way made him happy.

So, I consistently try to communicate to people in a way that their dignity and emotions are respected when I talk to them; this type of communication and the emotions of people are very important to me.

Being truthful does not always mean that you tell your people everything. I would rather not tell my employees anything, than tell them things that are not true, such as trying to paint a glorious picture of the company's future when I know that there is not a foundation to support it actually happening. I think this is also related to an organisation being more spiritual, that is to always be honest and truthful.

When I talk about spirituality in business, I think it really boils down to taking care of people's emotions and being truthful. I think these two would constitute a business being spiritual.

Emotions are also important in the context of change. Nobody really likes change, but given today's world, we have to face many changes that we are not prepared for. I recognise that no one likes change, therefore, when a change has to be made, I try to position myself to facilitate this change so that it is made in a more comfortable way.

### **Cultivating loyalty**

Fundamentally, I do think that we all need to think about business in a radically different manner. In you look at most major corporations, you will find that basically they all react. What this indicates to me is that our footing is not solid. What good is strategy if it warrants you to react every alternate week? This means, that in actuality, we don't have a strategy. I think that as a corporation we need to change this pattern. We need to be very clear as to whether we want to stay focused and create opportunities, or whether we want to be driven by the market and continuously react.

The reason I am talking about this is that it has a tremendous effect on employees. I personally do not like the word "loyalty" because in today's world the employee cannot be loyal to the corporation, since the corporations are not loyal to the employees. If you look at most companies, the one thing they continue to do is lay off employees when the business takes a downturn. Now I see a fundamental conflict here. On one hand we want to increase the workforce, we want to do great things, we want to bring on new employees, and yet when we get hit financially, the first thing we want to do is get rid of employees. To be honest, we cannot really be financially sound or sustain our financial soundness by only eliminating our employees as a reaction.

If you think about this in family terms, if you have a sick child you do not just get rid of him or her. You have a commitment to your child, and so you do everything you can to help them get well. So I think we need to take a very different approach than what we are doing now. This would be an all-encompassing approach where we make sure that we utilise employee involvement in a manner that helps to make our position in the marketplace solid. We have to understand the emotional side of our employees and make sure that they feel part of the whole process, as opposed to being mere labourers in the process.

Employees are human beings, and they put their hearts and minds and emotions into the development of the business. We cannot play with their emotions, such as when you need them you pat them on the back, and when you don't need them you ruthlessly get rid of them. We have to recognise that the company exists because of its people, and that does call for a spiritual approach. I think this should be the very first step that every business should take in order to progress toward a spiritual way of doing business.

When I think about a company being spiritual, I think that the first and foremost place where spirituality has to be demonstrated is with its stakeholders. We must create a system where we can, without talking about loyalty, have loyalty become ingrained. No one has to talk about loyalty, no one has to ask about loyalty, but the whole operating framework is such that loyalty becomes a second name for everyone. What this means is that loyalty takes on a spiritual meaning, as opposed to an attitude of "I will stick with you." Loyalty must also work both ways. A business cannot seek the loyalty of their employees without being loyal to them.

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## **Ollé, Ramón – The Netherlands**

"President of Epson Europe in The Netherlands"

### **Spiritual Theme**

"To know thyself."

### **The value of family**

It is vital for leaders to have a lot of contact with their employees. It requires them to walk around the organisation and to learn employees' names. Before reaching my current position, I knew most of the employees in my organisation by name.

Today, what makes me the most happy is when people are friendly towards me, when we say hello to each other, and I ask them about their family and their lives. If you ask people what the most important thing is for them, they will immediately say it is their family. People think that this is more so in their particular culture, but it is not really the case. It is the same in all cultures. This becomes the first value in order for man to live in society. In my house in Spain we are a family that spans three generations: my father, my wife's mother, my wife and my four children.

I think that everyone is capable of sustaining the family unit if everyone in the family wants to do this. If my family wants to sustain itself, then we have a lot of strength and energy focused in that direction. But we must not consider the sustainability of the family as simply a matter of giving money to the family. The family needs many more things; your presence makes for a much richer family life. What I have observed is that most people who are younger than 30 years are beginning to give much more

value to the family and are sticking with those values. I don't have a lot of time with my family; however, my family life is still very rich. All of my free time is devoted to my family and not to anything else. And I give time alone to every member because every person needs me in a different manner.

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### **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.

#### **Correcting a mistake with employee compensation**

At Infosys, we were very fortunate that everyone believed in a common value system. While I was head of HR at Infosys, which was most of the time, I was responsible for the salary and compensation structures. At one point, we felt that the computer graduates who focused on software should be given a token recognition by giving them a very small additional amount of money.

To our surprise, we had a very strong negative reaction from the other employees who were non-computer graduates. They pointed out that when we came to the educational campuses to recruit employees we told them that we treated all graduates the same. They pointed out that we had never discriminated in the past and it wasn't correct for us to do this now. I tried to explain to them that this was just a token recognition and that it was based on a study which had a lot of validity to it. They felt as if we had gone back on our word.

So I selected a random sampling of computer graduates and asked them, “This is what I have done and this is the reaction. What do you think? Do you think this token recognition is fair?” To my surprise they said, “While we like the recognition we think that what they have said is true; once you have gone to the campuses and made the commitment to treat all graduates alike, you shouldn't change the policy.”

Several advised me that I did not need to backtrack. But I felt that if I had made a mistake, I must correct it. So I called all the people and told them that we would give the token additional money for only the current year and will call it a special allowance, and that we would not continue it in the future.

I always had a standard statement, “If you find a certain HR policy needs to be changed in order for it to be correct for the employees or to meet current day requirements, we should change it. There is nothing like a minimum longevity for a policy.” And, I tried to help people see that when you do change a policy you have to keep in mind that it will affect some people adversely, even if it is the right thing to do.

#### **Building trust with employees**

People who work for me have a lot of freedom. I remember reading that during the Second World War, the War Secretary at that time, was asked, “Sir, how do you make people trustworthy?” His answer was cryptic and profound. “Simply by trusting them.” To me, this is such a strong way of building a trusting environment.

It reminds me of the story where there was a lawyer who had prepared a multi-million dollar contract for that client with whom he was also a close friend. He took it to the client and asked him to read it over carefully before he signed it. The client told him, "No need for that. I trust the work you have done and if you are OK with it I will just sign." The lawyer immediately became worried and took back the contract to go over it once more before giving it to his client for his signature, as he could not let down his client who trusted him so much.

One time we had this tight-schedule short-term project and one of the key members wanted to go on leave for urgent work. It was a close-knit team and I told them that she, or anybody else for that matter, could go on leave as long the group decided how to manage during her absence. I did not feel that it was my place to tell her whether she could go on leave or not; I trusted her and her group members to decide this. I told them that as long as the customer was properly served, that is what counts. I told them that I had full trust in them to meet the project objectives and I didn't need to know the details of how they decided to manage issues like temporary absence or leave.

### **Being open and honest with employees**

I believe that if you explain things honestly, even if it is negative, people will listen and will accept it. When you are genuine, people will accept it.

One year, we initiated a loan programme at Infosys where the employees could get loans for their homes or vehicles. It was a difficult exercise to determine how to allocate the limited funds effectively. I felt it was important for our employees to gradually build their assets starting from two wheelers then to cars and finally to homes over a period of time. So the loan distribution model was based on this.

Every year at the time of compensation revision, I personally used to go around the various facilities in India to explain the rationale of pay revisions and compensation policy decisions. On the loan model, all those people who did not get the benefits complained about various issues. After explaining the logic of the loan model, I let them know that if they had ideas about how the model could be fairer and more effective, I would be open to revising the model. Overall, people found that the model was very fair and accepted it.

My toughest year was when I had to effectively use our limited salary budget to go a longer distance to attract good people. I had to persuade the employees sitting on a large quantum of ESOP (employee stock options) and consequently on a good deal of share capital to allow me to give them a smaller salary increase in that year, so that this savings could be used to attract better people from the market into the organisation.

After lot of painstaking explanations, the affected employees told me that they were not altogether happy to forego salary increases that they were entitled to, but they understood and appreciated the spirit behind the exercise. I believe that their acceptance was the result of total openness with which the scheme was shared with them.

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### **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."

## **Current style of leading**

When I first took this position as senior vice president of technology, they gave me this office; it used to be the office of the current president of the corporation, so it has a history to it. Because there are so many new players here now, sometimes being an old-timer with a 30-year history is not a good thing. Some people even think that if you've been here more than 2 years it's not good. Also, because I worked for the former president for 10 years, people think that I have special privileges, which is just not true.

In truth, I believe that a position of power is a position of serving the people around you. I feel it is my job to serve people. No one gets anywhere by themselves. To me relationships are very much like making deposits into accounts. I cannot be constantly taking out from the account; I must continually make deposits. I must give energy to people and not be draining their energy all the time. I am only powerful when my energy is connected with other people's energy and we do things as a team. While there are some sages who are powerful in and of themselves, I have not earned that level yet.

I have found that it's okay to admit that you are spiritual and have certain beliefs at work. However, it's important not to try to get someone else to believe the way you do. When I know that someone can handle the subject of spirituality, I talk and discuss it openly. When I know someone cannot handle it, then I just "be" my spirituality and I don't talk about it openly. I can be it, I can show it, and I can exhibit it in my behaviour and attitudes, and I don't have to label it.

I am aware of the fact that sometimes my level of joyfulness can bother people. Sometimes they get angry and attack me in unfair ways. So for the longest time I hid my inner joy and shied away from sharing it here at work. But now I am not afraid to share who I am and let it shine through.

I am only as good as the people around me. I can only achieve our organizational goals by nurturing the people. I encourage people to really believe in themselves and not let the system dictate who they are. I also encourage them to forget about the corporate hierarchy structure. I don't identify myself with my title; that's a label that someone decided to put on me, and I ask them to not let that get in the way.

Sometimes I lead them and sometimes they lead me, I have to be willing to let them do that too. Yes there are times when a command and control style is necessary in a crisis, but for me it must be needed and it must be short lived.

What I have done is make sure that I communicate in every meeting that anyone can speak up and say whatever they need to say to me. I tell them that I am just as fallible as they are and that I don't have any more grand ideas than they do. I feel that I am here to learn from them because they know much more about what we're doing than I do, and I tell them that. I encourage them to enlighten me if I say dumb things. I remind them that we are all trying to solve this problem together.

## 2. COMPENSATION/REWARD SYSTEMS (8 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.

#### **Basing pay on productivity**

Wage and salary administration is an area where there has got to be a tremendous amount of balance and care taken, so that there are not inequities. We did not have to say that everybody would get a 10 percent wage increase, because we did not have any unions. When there is a very paternal type of administration, there is really no way to have a union.

As to salary administration, I would say, “OK, this year there has been quite a bit of inflation, let us try to give wage increases of say between 5 to 15 percent.” But not even the 5 percent was necessarily guaranteed. If somebody wasn’t working very well, they wouldn’t get anything. It was a way of motivating and at the same time slapping their hands if they weren’t really doing a good job; but you have to be very, very just. We would ask the department head to grade and recommend, and then sit down with the personnel manager and talk about each individual case – and there were 300, so it took time. Then they would pass it to me, and I would look through it and occasionally recommend a little change. Surprisingly enough, over the years it worked very well. The people accepted it, and they tried to do better when they didn’t get as much as they thought they should have. But we had to be very equitable.

I think that from the spiritual angle, people appreciate it when you evaluate them for what they really do that is productive. Regarding paperwork, it is a necessary thing in most companies, but I was especially negative on any paperwork from salespeople. I told the sales manager that the philosophy was, that the orders that the person brought in every day would speak for what he was doing. Of course we knew who the clients were in the zone, and whom he should be visiting. To have him sit down and say that he went here and there, and that he visited 30 clients and 15 bought something, seemed like just an enormous amount of work for nothing. So we asked our salesmen to spend more time on the street and less time in the office, and to bring in the orders. According to the number of orders that they brought in, we could see if they were doing a good job or not. This worked really well.

I had a philosophy which said, that he who works can make good money, especially in sales, where we paid no salaries, only commissions. This was really a boon since occasionally some of my salespeople would even make more than I did. I would make an example of them, and tell people, “Look at what this person is doing. He makes more than the sales manager, and more than the supervisors.” I think this was a grand motivator, not to be tied to the limiting factor of a base salary and a little tiny commission. It’s true that sometimes it may have cost the company a little more, but I think that in the long run it didn’t.

What actually happens is that the salesmen are paid not on the basis of sales, but on the basis of collection. If a salesman were ill, we would put someone else on his route, not to sell, but to collect what he was supposed to be collecting. Then we would give the sick man probably 50 percent of what he was supposed to get, and the other person would get the rest of the commission. We had to send people out to collect the money for the goods they had been selling. It all had to be done personally - no checks-in-the mail type of thing. In Latin America, unfortunately you cannot just send out an invoice, even if it would be beautiful if it worked that way.

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### **Franklin, Carol – Switzerland**

“Former Head of Human Resources for Swiss Re Insurance in Switzerland”

“Former CEO of the World-Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) in Switzerland”

### **Spiritual Theme**

Caring for and being responsible for the earth and its inhabitants. Be responsible. Be the change you want to see in the world. Help move the world forward.

### **Not working for money only**

In 1996 everything was changing at Swiss Re. As the head of the Human Resources Department, I introduced training on a worldwide basis for developing our employees’ potentials. I had to introduce many changes in the way things were run. I introduced a new remuneration system, which included a bonus. At the time, I thought this was a good idea.

However, after about two years I realised that we were giving the wrong people the wrong bonuses, and that the way it was being done was not really fair. I went more or less into opposition, as I felt it was going in the wrong direction. We said we would compensate teamwork, but we compensated individual performance – as if there is any such thing within such a large company. We were rewarding people to work against the interests of the company.

If you measure performance on the basis of figures in such a business as re-insurance, which is a long term business based on trust and confidence in your business partners and your employees, and you give them a bonus on an individual annual basis, it’s going in the wrong direction. People used to feel – and Swiss Re was known for this – that “we like to work for the company, because we’re part of the family,” “we’re part of a good company,” “we help people who have lost their house,” or whatever. But now it was going in the direction of purely making money. One department would say “this is ours, not yours;” they didn’t work together any more. The company was going in the wrong direction.

I started off believing that bonuses were good, but then I came to the conclusion that bonuses in general lead to corruption, because they assumes that people only work for money and not for intrinsic values or because of intrinsic motivations. If you assume that people do that, then they become like that, and then they will only work for money, and you lose the best part of the people. That’s why I said, I can’t agree with this any more, and I have to leave.

Some of my colleagues thought that leaving was over the target, but if they had been there for a long time, they agreed. My superiors, mostly new people who came in from banks and not from insurance companies, were very much in favour of this bonus system. Greed was getting to them. And that is why I left.

## **Transparency as to salaries**

While I was CEO at WWF, we changed the remuneration system. We decided that it was going to be totally transparent. A group, mainly consisting of employees, rated the positions and that was put on the Intranet. Then the individual employees were rated accordingly, and those ratings along with their salaries, was put on the Intranet. Also we made the decision that the highest salary could not be more than five times the lowest salary. This new system went well; out of 180 people only 4 people said that they were not in agreement. One said that he thought that his colleague at the next desk was not earning enough. One said that we had rated the positions incorrectly, and two said that they thought that they were actually earning enough, but when they saw how much their neighbours earned they thought they should earn more. We looked at these four, and we agreed to make corrections as to two of them.

We had to explain things; I think that is the attraction of this system. It's not that everybody is treated the same or everybody receive the same salary, it is that you have to think very carefully about the differences, which forces you to think and to be able to explain the differences. And there should be differences; I am all for differences, not everybody in the same position does the same job or does the job as well as others. But you have to be open and transparent about why one earns more than the other. It's taking people seriously; it's taking care of people.

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### **Kolind, Lars – Denmark**

“Former CEO of Oticon in Denmark, one of the world’s premier suppliers of products for the hearing impaired”

“Chairman of Grundfos in Denmark”

#### **Spiritual Theme**

I believe that the theme of my spirituality would be: “love God and love your neighbour.”

#### **The difference between shares and stock options for employees**

We work for a common purpose and this is a moral purpose. We need to make money, but the reason we exist, our *raison d’être*, is much more than that; there are things that are more important than making money. We are a team with a common purpose and we do everything we can to live up to that purpose. In that context it is totally natural to introduce shared ownership.

I have always argued that shared ownership means that you share responsibility; you make an investment. So I have worked against stock options, but I have worked strongly for shares that people pay for. To me there is a tremendous difference between the two. We give them a discount in the price, that’s okay; but we are now taking joint responsibility to run the company by sharing ownership.

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### **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.

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### **Ollé, Ramón – The Netherlands**

“President of Epson Europe in The Netherlands”

#### **Spiritual Theme**

“To know thyself.”

#### **The human aspects of compensating employees**

Even when we are working on quantitative things such as salaries or grades, and we say we want to be fair, create justice, and align things in a proper manner, if we understand what is behind the desires of the people, it is easy to achieve these goals. If we just try to create mathematical precision, then it doesn’t fit with our being human.

Sometimes a person’s salary is not a matter of just rewarding someone. It is a matter of giving mental motivation. If we increase the salary of a person in order to satisfy or reward him, then one month after that increase he may again feel that his salary is not high enough; this can be never ending. But

if that person is working happily, experiencing and expressing his creativity and his positive values, then even with a low salary that person will work well. These are the human aspects.

I consider that life is like a pendulum. Do you see any middle managers today who are happy with their stock options? Do you see any organisations that have senseless and unreasonable priorities with happy and satisfied employees? Once again, the pendulum is moving back and compelling us to re-consider certain basic concepts. It has been proven that when executives make short-term big money, it just creates more desire for the future. As a Japanese organisation, we do not have these big benefits; we are always looking ahead, even to future generations. As a result, we are much more committed to our sustainability when we face difficulties, because our commitment is long-term.

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### **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.

#### **Correcting a mistake with employee compensation**

At Infosys, we were very fortunate that everyone believed in a common value system. While I was head of HR at Infosys, which was most of the time, I was responsible for the salary and compensation structures. At one point, we felt that the computer graduates who focused on software should be given a token recognition by giving them a very small additional amount of money.

To our surprise, we had a very strong negative reaction from the other employees who were non-computer graduates. They pointed out that when we came to the educational campuses to recruit employees we told them that we treated all graduates the same. They pointed out that we had never discriminated in the past and it wasn't correct for us to do this now. I tried to explain to them that this was just a token recognition and that it was based on a study which had a lot of validity to it. They felt as if we had gone back on our word.

So I selected a random sampling of computer graduates and asked them, “This is what I have done and this is the reaction. What do you think? Do you think this token recognition is fair?” To my surprise they said, “While we like the recognition we think that what they have said is true; once you have gone to the campuses and made the commitment to treat all graduates alike, you shouldn't change the policy.”

Several advised me that I did not need to backtrack. But I felt that if I had made a mistake, I must correct it. So I called all the people and told them that we would give the token additional money for only the current year and will call it a special allowance, and that we would not continue it in the future.

I always had a standard statement, “If you find a certain HR policy needs to be changed in order for it to be correct for the employees or to meet current day requirements, we should change it. There is nothing like a minimum longevity for a policy.” And, I tried to help people see that when you do change a policy you have to keep in mind that it will affect some people adversely, even if it is the right thing to do.

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**Raman, Ananth – USA**

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

**Spiritual Theme**

“Awareness” and “Realising Divinity”

**Measuring “quality of effort” rather than “success”**

One time, there was a particular merger and acquisition proposal that I was working on where we arranged for a bank loan. However, at the last minute it fell through because the subordinate lender insisted on some conditions that the seller was not comfortable with. Then I went to a second banker and raised the money and again it fell through because of perceived environmental hazards at the seller’s business. This also happened a third time; it went on for about 18 months. It was as if it was absolutely futile to do anything to make this successful. I even prayed earnestly about whether to try again to make this happen.

By this time my spirit was completely broken and I didn’t know whether to continue with it or not. So then I decided to go back and see if there was anything that I had done wrong. I saw that the first time I tried I had done something wrong. While I had corrected that error the second time, still I did something wrong. And then the third time I corrected that error but it still didn’t work.

At that point I felt that I had succeeded because I had corrected my errors and had done everything correctly the third time. That is the only way that I see to evaluate this properly. Now that I have gone through this process three times and I understand the mistakes that I made, I know how to do it and the next time I need to do it I will be able to do it perfectly. So to that extent I have succeeded, even though I did not get the result.

From experiences like this I have come to realise that once the effort is made, the results are not in your hands. You are not the one to decide the result; thus, there is really no such thing as your “success” or “failure”. Ultimately, I think the only thing you should measure is the quality of your effort: I have consciously tried not to measure successes and failures at all. If I have given my best effort and I have done everything properly, then I have succeeded. Other than that, I should not bother about it.

My knowledge of the spiritual texts tells me that this is the best way to look at success. Have I followed my inner conscience? Have I given my best effort? Have I done what was right? Have I learned from my effort? Have I used all of my senses and values that I am conscious and aware of? This is what is most important.

### 3. DEVELOPMENT (13 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.

#### **Bringing people up from within**

As a General Manager, I wanted to help our employees to be satisfied with what they were doing. So I always tried to promote from within the organisation and not bring people from the outside to take over supervision or managerial positions. When the people know that they can move up in the company, and they see examples of others who have moved up, they think that this is a great place to work, that the future is bright here. So they’ll do a better job.

One guy who was there when I came was the street guard at night and a student at the university during the day. He would look after the property, walking up and down at night, making sure that nobody was going to break in. When he graduated, we made him a salesman. Later he became a sales manager, and when I left the company he got his own distribution company.

Many of the salesmen worked themselves up to supervisory or sales manager positions. Other employees may have started in the factory bottling something, and then as we saw that they had possibilities, they might work themselves up to a supervisory position. Generally we moved people up. This kind of work ethic creates a lot of satisfaction.

As to the training in the organisation, it was very important that the people understand what they were supposed to do. I didn’t like to send people outside; I liked to get them trained on the job. This was my own personal experience as a young man. Recently graduated from college, my first job was washing barrels at the Union Oil Company. In supervisory positions, they should get involved with the people that they have to supervise, doing what the people are doing, so that they learn that way.

We also had a study programme, where we would pay the tuition for studies that were relatively related to what they were doing in the company. A secretary could study English, for instance, and in the accounting department the boys could take computer courses, and it would be paid for. Even some of the production people who were doing a little bit of clerical work would be able to take computer courses, and the company would pay for it. So we actually had a very paternal and very good relationship from this standpoint. The people appreciated this. It goes back to the love I talked about, just taking care of the people.

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#### **Chand, Amber – USA**

“Founder of the Amber Chand Collection: Global Gifts for Peace and Understanding, an internet-based company in the USA that markets the products of artisans from around the world”

### **Spiritual Theme**

Compassion, balance, grace, and friendliness are words that ring as a spiritual theme for me. Yes, this is a “God-being tapestry.”

### **Developing and energising a vision for the company**

My original vision for this company was that it would be an antidote to what I believed was happening on the planet. I noticed that there was a lot of information about the negative aspects of life in many cultures, especially the sufferings of many people. I kept thinking, “Why not create a company that celebrates the most beautiful things that people make?” I felt that the artisans and craftspeople would be the best place to start. I also felt that because these people create from their hands that they would be conduits of spirituality. They have a connection to the earth and through their hands they are able to create and manifest.

I wanted this company to honour and celebrate the creative spirit and to applaud cultural diversity through the crafts we sell. I wanted us to find the best craftspeople all over the world and showcase their beautiful objects to the consumer who appreciates this type of cultural expression. As a result, we are now in over 70 countries throughout the world and have an extensive network through which we source our products. We go directly to some of the countries and get directly involved in some of the villages and cooperatives. We meet with the artisans and create objects that are relevant to the global marketplace while at the same time are authentic to the techniques of their tradition. We have also aligned ourselves with lots of non-profit organisations who help us to find and identify the artisans communities that we want to work with.

In a quiet way it seems as if Eziba is becoming a celebrity company. People are beginning to look at us as a case model of what business can look like if it is truly steeped in a mission that looks at its impact on the people and the planet, as well as profits.

I have actually talked with our CEO about bringing some of this spiritual essence into the lives of our employees. I feel that our employees have all bought into our mission and our business model, but I do not feel that they take pleasure in the daily practice of work in this way. So that is why I have decided to bring someone in to do some ‘visioning’ sessions with our employees. Now that we, the leadership of Eziba, have clearly unveiled our values, I would like for people to see and speak about how they would like for it to be and how they can feel personally empowered and accountable.

I am putting together a small hour-long program for our employees, where we can sit together in conversation and dialogue about the vision of the company... to give our employees a blank canvas and have them create what they would like Eziba to look like. This is very much like the process I have recently been through: “If you wake up in ten years what would you like for the company to look like?” So we are looking at a structured process for this.

Personally, this year, I have invested a great deal of time and energy in supporting the basket weavers of Rwanda, many of whom are widows from the genocide, by bringing their baskets – which I termed Peace Baskets because they were made by both Hutu and Tutsi women in a spirit of reconciliation after the genocide – to market. This was an initiative I led both as a co founder of Eziba and as a founding member of the Business Council for Peace, a newly formed coalition of business women who are supporting women’s enterprises in areas of conflict and post conflict. We have partnered with The United Nations Development Fund for Women in order to do this work. Seeing

myself as a peacemaker, committed to building bridges between people who are living in conflict areas of the world has become a new focus for me, and one that I find deeply empowering. Next year I will head to the Middle East and potentially Afghanistan – identifying talented craftspeople and finding ways to not only bring their craft to the international marketplace through Eziba, but also to strengthen their communities. All of this work is part of my sense of engaged, spiritual practice.

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## **Daugherty, Thomas – USA**

“Former Vice President of Spiritual Care and Values Integration with the Methodist Health Care System in the USA”

### **Spiritual Theme**

One theme for me would be caring and compassion. Another would be faithfulness. A part of that has to do with persistence and perseverance, courage and humility.

For me, the Christian cross itself evokes all of this for me because it is such a powerful symbol of the Divine-human encounter. It represents the very best and the very worst of human experience, and it also represents the ultimate in God’s love and compassion for all humankind.

The Divine-human encounter is certainly a theme that expresses all of this for me.

### **Integrating values in everyone’s day-to-day work**

As we move forward with our values integration effort, one of the things we are trying to do is to integrate these values into every aspect of the employee’s life cycle: from the application process to the hiring interviews, all the way through the evaluation processes and exit interviews. We want to hire people who are the kind of people who will live these values and will fit with this environment. While we expect people to have the best clinical and technical competence, we feel that this alone is not enough – a person can be competent and capable; however, he or she may not fit into this culture. Living these values, which will in turn cultivate a spiritual environment, is just as important. The way our employees treat each other in their workgroup, the way they treat their internal customers, the way they treat people who come here to be served – the way they go about treating people is just as important as *what* they do in their job.

The training process we currently have in progress will continue from now on. It will take us twelve months just to train our current 8,000 employees. However, we plan to make it a part of our new employee orientation. We also plan to expand this training as well.

The next phase we will be introducing in the next couple of months is called the “workgroup commitment process.” This is a process in which we ask all executives, managers, directors, and supervisors to engage the people who report to them in a process of looking at and integrating the five core values. They will first ask “Who are our internal customers and who are our external customers?” and “How well are we doing with the services we provide them?” Next, they will take each of the five values and ask “in our particular workgroup what does it mean to...” For example, in our day-to-day working with each other, what does it mean to show respect? This is exploring group-specific behaviours. I, myself, will start this process with the CEO Council.

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## **Franklin, Carol – Switzerland**

“Former Head of Human Resources for Swiss Re Insurance in Switzerland”

“Former CEO of the World-Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) in Switzerland”

### **Spiritual Theme**

Caring for and being responsible for the earth and its inhabitants. Be responsible. Be the change you want to see in the world. Help move the world forward.

### **Increasing the opportunities**

In Swiss Re (which later on changed this policy) as well as in WWF, we made it our policy to employ handicapped people. For example, in WWF we had an apprentice who was very hard of hearing.

When I was head of Human Resources at Swiss Re, we increased the number of apprentice positions from 6 to 45 in three years. It's important to be able to educate and train young people.

What I also did in Swiss Re was increase the opportunities for women. That was easy. When I took over HR we had 15 women in middle management, and when I left 3 years later, we had 45. On the senior management level we had 2 when I took over, and when I left we had 12. This was all part of my established policies based on my spiritual orientation of caring for people. And I think it is good for the business, too. If you do business on an ethical basis, you'll make more profit and get better employees.

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## **Jensen, Niels Due – Denmark**

“Group Chairman for Grundfos Management A/S in Denmark”

### **Spiritual Theme**

Empathy, compassion, and love for my neighbour.

### **Social responsibility**

My principle of trying to ‘love your neighbour’ has guided me in the direction of also developing what we call ‘social responsibility’ at Grundfos. It wasn't something I started; it was in fact my father who already in the late 1960's began our tradition of practising social responsibility. Because of my spiritual background I have always had this activity within Grundfos high on my agenda. Over the years it has developed in such a way, that today we have a considerable number of employees who would probably not be able to be with us without a certain support and attention from our company. Out of about 4,500 employees in our Danish factories and companies, close to 3,000 being hourly paid, we have about 150 who are employed under, what we call ‘special conditions’.

Having employees with a mental or physical handicap working for Grundfos has become a natural part of the company's life and behaviour. We in the management have made it clear that this is our responsibility; this is our policy, and these are conditions you have to accept as an employee, if you want to work for Grundfos. People have accepted that over the years and they are more and more proud of Grundfos having this tradition. They are also increasingly accepting that it is a natural and

right thing for a company like Grundfos to acknowledge and act in accord with our responsibility towards the general society.

So today we do not hear any protests against employing these workers; it is simply accepted as a natural part of our responsibility. They work part time or full time, they might have eight hours of work, but in a very easy job, and they are helped to be able to perform as well as they can.

If I had not had my Christian background, including the desire to do something for such unfortunate people, we would not have had this tradition at Grundfos. You may call it the need to love your neighbour, and this means your neighbour in this local society, but first of all your employees in the company. It is my strong belief, that my example has been of importance to many business leaders in Denmark, and therefore I believe that I have inspired them to go in the same direction.

I have been able to spread this message out to many other Danish companies over the years, not only as an example through the way I have behaved, but also through the way I have spoken about social responsibility. We have a Danish National Network of Business Leaders working with Corporate Social Responsibility. This network was founded in 1997 by the then Minister for Social Affairs. I became a member of the board; later I became the chairman.

Through this network we have been able to spread into other companies the tradition of engaging themselves in social responsibility on a daily basis; first of all towards their own employees, but secondly, if they have the energy to do it, to helping in the local society. We now have about Danish 700 companies as members of this network through six regional networks. It has spread, and I think that Denmark is one of the nations in Europe that is at the very forefront in exercising social responsibility on a daily basis, first of all focused on the employees.

About a year ago we introduced a new policy for what we call Corporate Social Responsibility within Grundfos. We have laid down some major framework and policies as to how we could like to see the foreign Grundfos companies be active in living up to a social responsibility. We do not demand that they do exactly as we do in Denmark, as the cultural environments differ from country to country, and therefore the way you execute this corporate social responsibility on a daily basis is very different. We allow and encourage our local companies to lead the activities, which they feel are most helpful to them in being socially responsible towards their employees and their local community.

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### **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.

### **The scorpion and the sage**

The way we look after the teachers is special. The teachers' welfare is very, very important. We see them not as tools, but as human beings whose needs we must strive to meet. This includes housing, the solving of domestic problems and time to attend funerals (there are many funerals in Zambia where AIDS is widespread). So they see this caring attitude and take it as an example to be followed.

A big inspiration for us has been the story of The Scorpion and the Sage: A sage was seated on the bank of a small river when he noticed a scorpion being carried away by the current. Four times he jumped into the water to save it from drowning. The scorpion stung the sage each time he tried to save it. Observing all this was another man who was seated not far away from the sage. He asked him, "Why do you want to save the scorpion who keeps stinging you. You should have let it drown." "It is the nature of a scorpion to sting. It is my nature to love and help those who sting and hate me," replied the sage.

We have given the young people opportunities to go for further studies. A few years ago we sent 11 of our graduates to Teacher's Training College, and "bonded" them for four years. We said that when you come back, you must teach for four years before you decide to leave, if you want to leave. They all returned, but then three ran away, they broke the bond, and we dismissed two others. But that did not stop us from sending more. We have sent two young women to Teacher's Training College, and this year we have sent two students to work for University degrees. So our continuing to send students for further education, even though some of the recipients do not behave according to their promises, surprises people, they wonder how we can continue to do that.

Normally we would have said, "You are ungrateful; we don't trust you, so we are not going to send anybody anymore for further studies." We could have closed the door, but we did not. Up until now we lost fifty percent, fifty percent remained, and they are very good teachers. We are sending more for teacher's training.

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### **Maitra, Ashoke – India**

"Former Director of Human Resources for the Times of India"

"Chief Mentor and Advisor of Organisation Development for the Somaiya Trust and Group"

### **Spiritual Theme**

I think my spiritual theme is "Manifestation of latent Divinity."

### **Conducting trainings on joy and self-mastery**

In HRD we have only one mission and that is to "add intellectual capital" and "create happiness." My name is Ashoke, which means "one without grief," so I made my name the "core" value. We said that the only thing we will do is create "griefless-ness" or "increase bliss." To my mind if a person is joyful, happy and inspired, then only can that person reach the highest level of productivity and performance.

The old Western school of management that prescribed control as a major function has given way to leadership through mentoring, coaching, developing and counselling. You can only do your best when you are at equipoise (a state of equilibrium); when you are contained, happy, and willing to give to others.

In our company anyone who joins goes through a program for managing self, where we basically de-school them. We provide them inputs to manage themselves by teaching them: how to control their body and mind, how to be detached, and how to present themselves powerfully.

We tell them that the ego that you have, the degrees which you have received, are fine so long as you use them as an instrument to give you some level of comfort, which all of us need. But if you get

married to them and think that is what life is all about, then that is the greatest foolishness you have done, because you are not that. Those are instruments that you need, just like you need food to survive; however you are not the food.

So our work is completely experiential; we do not give any lectures. We do exercise after exercise after exercise to help people analyse and understand the meaning of “true joy.” We are telling people that, “Yes you have joined an industry. Yes, you need your children, family, a certain amount of technology, and money to survive in life. Yes, you must have, but this is not all there is. Your true joy will come in your own spiritual realisation.”

So when we talk about joy, we also talk about being congruent to the dynamism of your innermost self. The real joy comes when you are in touch with your original self. We are telling our employees: “You cannot be happy by the reward the company gives. If we give a reward and you are happy, then there is something wrong. That means your original consciousness is not ripe. You are reacting to a situation. You are not centred in your own existence.”

Our first level of training is to be “super skilled” and “self reliant.” This is where we add knowledge and skill to the areas where they really excel. Today the average lifespan is around 75 years and most people will retire at 58 years. In those 20 years after retirement, people should come to you because of the skills you possess. You could be a skilled writer, or a skilled painter, or a skilled manager or a skilled recruiter, trainer, etc., but if you sit at home and people don’t come to you, then there is something wrong.

The first level of orientation we do is on “bliss” and “self-perfection.” The second level that we do is to control and integrate our body and mind. The third level of work we do is to examine the values and mental balance. All of this has to do with your original self. We tell them, do not bother about this industry; the Times of India will exist even without you. It has existed for 164 years; it may exist another 164 years with or without you. You look at yourself. If you are happy, not by the cars and houses you have, but by your own self, then anywhere you go you will be happy. We are not even telling them to stay in this company. We are saying that you be happy, not by material rewards, you be happy internally.

Not long ago I was doing a public program on Self-mastery for decision makers in industry. One person, who was the vice president of a bank, told me that he had not slept well for three years. He had taken sleeping pills every day. He said, “I do not know what you have done in these three days, but I am sleeping like a log without my pills. Now I am scared that when I go back I won’t be able to sleep.” All that we were doing was teaching him breathing exercises and pranayama (breath control). I was not doing any magic. He had simply not been breathing the way one should breathe and was not relaxing in life.

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### **Moitra, Deependra – India**

“Formerly the youngest General Manager within Lucent Technologies, who at the time had 70,000 employees worldwide”

“Associate Vice President with Infosys Technologies, Ltd. in India”

### **Spiritual Theme**

“Living with a purpose” would be my theme. True fulfilment is then the outcome of this journey.

## Implementing quality programmes

I have been responsible for the total quality programmes in both my current company and in the company I last worked for. Typically, this is all about change, and it is usually dictated from the top down. The orders are usually handed down from the top without really explaining the purpose and context for why it is they are wanting this change.

I think I have been very successful in running quality programmes, not in terms of merely achieving certifications, but also making sure there are results that impact the bottom line of the business. There are two things that I realised in all of this. I feel that most people who have to implement these quality programmes are not clear about their purpose or how the programmes help the business. The new graduates are hired and they want to lay their hands on writing software code. They do not have a real appreciation for what these quality programmes are all about and why are they needed.

I have found a way to address this. I use a principle called TCP-IP. TCP-IP is something that any electrical, electronics or computer science engineer can easily relate to. It is a protocol that is used in communications networks. So I knew that anyone who came from this background would immediately get interested because it sounds like a technology to them. In terms of a quality programme, to me it stands for “Technology, Customer, Process, Information and People.”

So one way that I have really helped them understand what these quality programmes are all about is to use this TCP-IP concept. It really helps to give them a purpose and create that missionary zeal in them. I tell them:

*The ‘T’ is for technology. You are getting into the technology world and of course it is important for your success to understand technology, to develop new technology, and to continue to acquire new skills and knowledge. But this technology is no good if you don’t have ‘C’ – customers who will pay for the technology, or customers who are happy with the technology. So having a grasp of technology itself is important, but it is not sufficient in and of itself. You must understand what your customer wants and why they want it. Then you package your technology to do this. In order to understand what your customer wants and how to best give your customer what he wants, then comes the ‘P,’ the process.*

So I help them understand the role of process in this whole chain of technology and customers. I help them understand the need for processes and how they play a meaningful role in translating your technological products into customer delight.

With respect to information and people, you have to realise that the high technology workforce is not like factory workers who easily follow your instructions. They are highly educated people and that is why we must take a different approach to all of this. It’s the distinction between a labour-intensive economy and an information-and-knowledge-intensive economy. Here, nothing will work by force. You have to influence people by creating a cause, by creating a mission, and helping them to identify their position in the whole process and how they can contribute. I help them to realise how all of this will contribute to their own growth first, before we talk about the growth of the organisation.

In terms of my senior management, I have had to take a different approach. I have had to help them identify the context, or the purpose, for why they want these quality initiatives. I am very frank and honest with my superiors, but not at the cost of their dignity. Within certain boundaries, I do not hesitate to confront them if it is needed. So, in terms of these quality programmes, I have had to confront some of my most senior managers and ask them these types of questions: “Do you know what you are getting into? Do you want a set of certificates to hang on your wall, or do you really want it to translate into business results?” I have even told them that if they were just looking to get some certificates to hang on the wall, that I was not interested in getting involved.

While I saw that senior management was committed to this quality process, I felt they were reluctant to get involved. There is a difference between commitment and involvement. So I told them that I wanted their involvement and that would come only when our context was very clear and our goals in that specific context were clear. So it was both a negotiation and education process with my management. And at the same time, I was helping everyone to identify the cause, the context, and make sure that all of our actions were aligned with that context.

I have led brainstorming exercises that helped the senior management identify the reasons for why they wanted to do these quality programmes and have these quality certificates. My fundamental focus there was to help them identify the context of what they wanted the quality team to do, so that we could make sure that we did everything within that specific context and not just in a mechanical manner.

At the workforce level, I also needed to show them what benefits they would get from this process and then link it to the benefits that the organisation would gain. Focus and purpose were very much present here – and that’s how it links to my way of defining spirituality as an approach to fulfilment.

As a result of all of this, when we engaged in a quality programme to be certified as a Bell Labs, we were able to become certified in just one year’s time, which is the only time this has happened in the history of Lucent Technologies. We not only received this quality certification, we also got a few other quality certifications in the same timeframe.

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## **Narendran, Parantha – Czech Republic**

“Strategy Director for Eurotel in the Czech Republic”

### **Spiritual Theme**

If I think here of how spirituality affects me at work, it would be that spirituality challenges me and makes me grow.

### **Empowering people**

Now that I am in this company as a leader and not as a consultant, another principle I have is to try to help the people I work with to achieve their best potential. To get them to look upon work not as something that they just have to do, but as a way of living life – to get them to see that they can do things differently, and can have a better career and do more things with their lives. I also try to get those who are very focused on their work to realise that there are other things they must do in order to have a balanced life. I also try to mediate between people and ask them, “Why do you have these problems in getting things done? Is it because of your ego? Is it a problem of communication?” I try to help the people I work with in a very practical sense.

I do run a small team at the moment. The way I have tried to develop that group is to give them challenging goals, which make them grow. In order to get things done, we have to learn to communicate better and to trust each other. However, I believe my success here is limited, as they tend to only come and talk to me when there is a problem. I see them therefore more as a group of individuals who are working more or less together, not as a well-structured team.

This is an area where I think that spirituality and the objectives of an organisation happily coincide for me. I think that when a leader believes in empowering individuals, he has the best interests of the company at heart, and can use the empowerment as a vehicle to this end. Having the individual realise his potentials along with the spiritual aspects, and having the organisation develop itself at the same time, are my primary and secondary goals. I regard empowering the individual and making him learn to some extent as an end in itself for that person; and if it helps the organisation and all of the remaining people in the organisation, that is great.

But I do not want to improve my ability to empower people so as to benefit me personally, for example by helping me to get a better bonus at the end of the year, or to be better recognised for my achievements. Whereas this would not be the case for a leader who looks upon employees not as human beings to be empowered, but simply as means to ends – such as company profit and one’s own wealth. I would look upon such a leader as focusing not on employee empowerment, but on achieving his own criteria, his own bonus or whatever as a primary goal.

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**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.

**Being open to new ideas and experiments**

I tried some interesting experiments in Human Resources at Infosys. When we were recruiting the new head of HR, I talked with him and asked him if it was okay for the current HR team to speak with him. He said he didn’t mind, so I called the team who would be working for him. I told them to spend an hour with him, ask him any questions, and then come back to me and tell me how they felt about him. So they went and interviewed a person who could become their new boss. It worked out very well.

Similarly, we had a team of four people to whom I gave the job of deciding their own salary increments. I gave them the total amount that was available for pay hike and let them decide to share this amount. I had them sit down in a room and decide, then come back to me and let me know. I also gave them a few rules. Rule number one was that it could not be distributed equally among the four. And rule number two was that they all had to agree as to the distribution among the members. Initially, each had the attitude that his/her contribution was better, but once they got over that, then it became a very open discussion. So I really was fortunate to have a free hand to try all kinds of experiments at Infosys.

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**Raman, Ananth – USA**

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

**Spiritual Theme**

“Awareness” and “Realising Divinity”

## **Unity of thought, word, and action**

There was a time when we were introducing ISO 9000, which was a system of quality control measures for our company. One of our companies was a job shop where we do specialty items for our customers. Since these products are made for specific applications it is extremely difficult to standardise things and is a very complicated process. This made it a difficult environment to introduce these types of quality measures, since it involves a lot of rigid procedures.

The expert said, "This is all very simple. All you need to do is write down each of the procedures that you are already doing. You don't have to make any improvement; you don't have to say anything else except exactly the way you are doing it. This has nothing to do with right or wrong, you simply say what you are doing and do what you say." Even after he said all of this my fellows were still completely worried.

One evening I was thinking about this while attending a study circle with my spiritual group. I saw that all of this was simply talking about unity of thought, word, and action. So, I called in my employees and gave them a talk about unity of thought, word and action. I told them, "This is nothing but the concept of having what you feel, what you write and how you act be the same. This is all that ISO 9000 is about."

So we went all over the company and said, "The company's objective with ISO 9000 is to have unity of thought, word and action." If I had used the word spiritual to describe the basis of this concept, I would have probably gotten some negative reaction. To me I didn't feel that I needed to tout this as spiritual. It was just truth and honesty, that's all. When I explained what unity of word, thought and action meant, they understood the concept very easily.

Sometimes they would even come back with an example such as this: "If a customer wants us to deliver a product the next day and we know it is going to take one week, usually we tell them it will be the day after tomorrow so we can buy some time. Can we do that? If we do, then it disturbs the unity of thought, word and action. So, what do we tell them? Do we tell them the truth?"

They started raising all of these questions throughout the departments; I was amazed at the chain reaction that began. So I told them, "Let's not go mad about this unity of thought, word and action. Let's have a monthly meeting where we can discuss these problems where you find it difficult to be totally truthful." I tried to help them see the difference between telling a customer, "no, it won't go tomorrow, we are having difficulties," which is the truth, versus "it will go day after tomorrow," which is a lie. In this way they could still buy some time without promising something which was not going to happen. We continue to have these monthly meetings where we examine these difficult situations and look to see how we can solve them with a unity of thought, word and action.

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### **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."

## Quietude and introspection

At one time I had a desire to understand why two people with the same opportunity and background didn't have similar results, and how this happens. I also wanted to know what it was in people that differentiated individuals throughout history. When I looked deeper into this, I found only one thing in common among the more successful people: introspection.

What is introspection? It is quietude. What the young men at the Sathya Sai University in India want, what I want, and what you want, is to be a conduit of sorts for this Divine essence to materialise in whatever form it chooses to be. Maybe we can do this by getting out of its way, and striving gets in the way.

Rather than saying, "If you do the following, the following will happen..." (because that will detract, rather than attract) you have to go and look to see what it was in those that have actually been successful and find that modicum of what you will now expand on. You're going to find, I believe (because I found it in every great individual), this personal constructive period of silence. Also, it was easy to understand who they were, and they had a well-defined personal or corporate goal.

So in my organisation, everyday we start here with meditation, right in this office. Previously, I had an office with hundreds of people and even then we started exactly the same way. I tell them, "Take your time and be quiet; begin all activity in silence. Before or after lunch, however you do it, be silent. And before you leave the office at the end of the day, be silent." I've done this with hundreds of people, but I've never told them how to do it. Why? Because I don't know how to it; it does me.

The theory is that any activity done in silence will naturally slow down thought and will open the individual to that which is true spirituality. Everything else is preparation. I think silence speaks to silence; I don't know why. People worry too much about how they're going to act in the corporation and not enough about their "being" in the corporation. So I remind them, "It is not your job to get anywhere. It is your job to be here. If you can quiet yourself in the moment of any problem or shock, then you will be able to sit back for a moment and practice what this is all about."

There is no key to how to foster this in others. You can't give anyone a definitive way to open their channel, except the following: stop trying. And by stop trying, I mean to quiet your mind. Quiet does something; silence is powerful.

When you live spirituality, the quietude will start and there will be a time when there will be a perception of a monolithic block of silence that sits somewhere above your shoulder and all of a sudden you will start to get a feeling of "who am I?" in the sense of "what is it that tells me I am?" And the answer will come in the perception of a sound. It is that silence that is the capsulation, if there is any, of all the miracles, and all the powers, and all the creation, and all of the change that ever existed in the world.

If you have the good fortune of finding your way to Sathya Sai Baba, a universal spiritual teacher in southern India, you will have these moments of quiet; he gives you everything you need. There's nothing left out and there's nobody who can avoid this happening once you open yourself up. Why? Because you cease trying to stop something wonderful from happening. But then the needs of humanity, the need to save the world and do wonderful things, and to be noted for having done that, tends to find its way in. I believe that as long as we have a human body, we will never be free of greed.

## **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.”

### **Opening up others to their potential, their self, and greater responsibility**

I have often thought about how I can contribute to the process of “opening up” in others. My personal feeling here is that the way you can do this changes over time. When you first open yourself up to spirituality, you can very easily find yourself becoming a missionary of one kind or another. You feel that your experience is good, and you want the whole world to experience specifically what you have experienced – not necessarily the good that *others* have experienced, but what *you* have experienced.

Over time I feel that that missionary attitude does become more and more balanced and attuned to circumstances and other minds. You begin to realise that others exist, and that there is far more than just your own self-imposed importance. Then, hopefully, I think it turns to being an inspiration to others for their opening up. This would be more an implicit, rather than explicit inspiration; it takes place without having to say anything about it.

I think this change has been there for me in both my life and work – and quite dramatically. When I think of spirituality in my work life, I think about how I used to be a missionary, and the fact that that belongs to my past. I could even declare now that I am no longer a missionary of spirituality.

One way I have experienced this process of opening up in others was with a very traditional business like the paper mill business. It had a very traditional, production-oriented, corporate culture that was formed way back in the 1920's, and we turned it into a process-oriented organisation. I am extremely committed to the process-orientation, to organising an organisation according to how things happen, not according to what people know and can do, which is a functional approach.

We gave a lot of responsibility down the lines to the machine operators, sales representatives, customer service, and so on. There was much less control from above. People can accept such responsibilities because they live much richer private lives today. They tie into the Internet, they are on local sports club committees, and they do a lot of work privately that qualifies them for much more sophisticated and independent work professionally.

So during this process, we had a lot of opportunity to have the attention of the people, and that included the opportunity for spiritual development, because people felt they were opening up. This is the key word for me to the whole thing: they were ‘opening up’ to their own potentials. They were ‘opening up’ to their own self.

I think that opening up is a challenge, which means you have to challenge the organisation to open up. You have to do that by giving people the responsibility so they themselves can open up. No one can open up anyone else. And you have to do this in a structured way. The culture should be process-

oriented and organised according to how things are made, rather than what people can do at the moment, because people can learn.

When you give people a better responsibility, which means they understand what they are doing from A to Z and they understand their contribution to the whole, they can see the inputs and outputs and their roles in this transformation from input to output. Since they are now contributing to a 'whole', they feel that, within their own groups, they are a company within the company, and they can participate in building the whole and in the house-holding of the company.

I would also add on here that turning an organisation towards spirituality, or towards opening up the potential of the individual, which I think are identical, is a long process that takes time. It is like quality, it takes maybe a decade, and you need a decade of quiet, stable circumstances in order to succeed. Because what you are bringing out in people is their belief in themselves and that is a very fragile thing to start with – it has to be pampered, in particular in the beginning, for the process to continue. You come to realise that their belief in themselves is like that of a little scared rabbit coming out of its hiding place; if you push too hard on it, it goes down its hole and hides for good.

Since the business world is changing so rapidly, it's very seldom you can have that stability and safety for the roughly ten years that is required to turn the organisation fully towards spirituality. But whatever shorter time is available can enable the organisation to cope with some circumstantial pressure and still stay spiritual - because surely it will be seriously challenged underway and management changes can limit the process. This is also the reason I want to be implicit, because if I work implicitly with spirituality, a lot of individual changes happen and that stays. If it is implicit, it stays; if it is explicit, it goes.

There was also one very bad experience I had when I was making an analysis for process-oriented change in an organisation. A new management came in and used that analysis for the purpose of zero-based budgeting the company. So they took away all of the values, all of the aspirations, and they just did the cuts. This destroyed the company for 10 years and it was a huge operation. This all happened because the management did not understand spirituality, or the quest or principle of opening up and what it can do for the individual and the company.

## 4. DISCIPLINE (7 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.

#### **Ensuring discipline through strength and humility**

The authority structure was such that, in terms of discipline and guidance of the people, each of these department heads would have to go through the personnel manager to recommend that somebody be disciplined. Then they would all have to meet and listen to why the person wasn't doing what he was supposed to be doing, before anything would take place.

This was sort of a check and balance, because if somebody got mad at somebody else, they just couldn't take it out on the person unilaterally. They had to go with the person to the personnel manager and sit down and listen and find out what had really happened. In that way, you limited the authority of your department heads. That was very important, in order that things would work well. I wouldn't get involved, unless there was some really gross abuse of authority.

Every year we did a survey of our employees' satisfaction, and we tried to make sure that we were getting better. When we could detect areas where we were not doing so well, we would put a lot of attention on that. I was a real stickler on morality, and this was one way for me to check.

For instance, in Latin American countries all the men think of themselves as lovers, and they don't look at it as being immoral. For them, it's just part of a normal, macho behaviour. One of the questions, which the employees would answer anonymously, was if they had a problem with sexual harassment. By the numbers I could see if it was serious or if there were only one or two cases. We would pick up the answers by department; in that way we could see where there might be a problem, and we could put more attention to it. We would especially look at the supervisors, because they could threaten by saying, “You'll lose your job, if you don't go out with me.” We wanted to keep this type of thing under control. I let people go for that – I would throw the guy out. Everybody knew that I was really strong on that, so they were very careful.

What do you do in a situation when you get mad at somebody, and then you cool off and figure that maybe you were a little bit wrong? I actually had this situation. I can remember one day I got really mad at a lady who handled the merchandising in the supermarkets. I don't remember for what reason, but I really got mad at her and told her off. I didn't fire her or anything, just told her that she was doing wrong, and I balled her out for it. Then I thought I was really mistaken. I got into my car and drove to the place where she was working and apologised to her and told her, I was sorry. Ever since that day that lady would have done anything for me and for the company. She had been there before me, and when I left she was still there. You have to be humble, even if you are the boss.

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**Budin, Philip – USA**

“CEO of Royaltons, Ltd. in the USA”

**Spiritual Theme**

For me spirituality is equanimity.

**Firing an employee**

My firm, Diversified Investors Corp., owned a company that processed debit and credit card transactions. We had an account executive who was handling a large supermarket account for our company. One day this account executive went to the office of the man who was the head of the supermarket chain, but the man wasn't there. Our account executive went into the man's office and was supposed to leave a note for him, but instead he walked out with the man's personal computer. He hid it under a newspaper and then put it in his attaché case, walked out and took it home with him. So, one of our employees, who was in an executive vice president position, took the personal computer from the desk of the top person of this supermarket chain.

I did not find out about it until about a month and a half after it happened when the executive from the supermarket chain personally called me and told me what had happened. Our employee was caught on video actually taking the personal computer. This man had seen the video the evening of the day it happened, called our employee at home, our employee said it happened by mistake and brought him his computer back that night.

I thanked him for telling me and the next day I brought the young man in and I fired him, very calmly, with love and with peace. I knew he had to be let go. Did I feel bad for him? Yes in one way, and no in another. I spoke to him and told him that we all have to be responsible for our actions now or at some point in the future. So I guess in a way he was lucky that this was happening to him now and not at some point in the future, when he might not know what it was happening for. He apologized and said it wouldn't happen again; however, within our company he could no longer have been trusted.

Because he was interested in spirituality, we had a small spiritual talk before he left. We talked about right action, right state of mind, consciousness, and being clear about our goals. I have had some brief contact with him since then; however, my choice is not to associate with him in the future.

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**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.”

## Exploring the issues of when to let employees go

I feel as if only in the last 7 years or so have I internalised the spiritual principles that I've learned. Before that time, it was more superficial, although it was always important for me to be honest with a customer and to admit a mistake if I made one. If I did not act this way, it would really bother me. And I tried to get everyone around me to be the same way. I made it a rule with anyone who worked for me, that if we made a mistake we must call the customers and tell them.

The challenge in all of this for me was what to do with a person who made the same mistakes over and over again. You have to realise that at Bankers Trust, our retirement account customers were huge corporations like IBM and General Motors, so if we made the same mistake even twice, we were running the risk that they would fire us. Also, we would from time to time have to write off millions of dollars due to these mistakes and that would affect every person's salary and bonus pool. So there were major consequences if we did not do our job correctly.

For years, I simply let people go the first time they made a mistake. Today it would be very painful for me to fire a person, whereas in years past, I didn't feel the same way. I was looking out for the customer and that is what justified my actions. Today, looking back, I feel much differently and would try to help them not make the mistake again. If they did make a mistake a second time, then I would try to help them find another place in the company where they would be better suited.

Now I am aware of the suffering that these decisions have caused others and their families. Previously, I felt it was their problem, not mine. Today, I feel their pain and it bothers me, that is why my outlook on these situations has changed.

At Bankers Trust, ultimately I was responsible for the managers who had to let people go. Unfortunately, I was not strong enough spiritually to help them see this from a spiritual perspective. However, I did tell them to be fair and help the person distinguish between right and wrong. I also tried to give a person as much severance compensation as I could when they were let go.

There are some exceptions, but for the most part, I know that people make mistakes because they are not competent, not because they don't care. I think that levels of intelligence are God-given faculties and not everyone is equal. Maybe we hired the wrong people, maybe they had been allowed to stay too long, or maybe they were promoted more than they should have been.

This is very similar to what is happening in the school systems today. Students are being allowed to pass on to the next grade, without really learning what they needed to learn. This happens with employees; sometimes we keep giving them higher promotions when they really don't fit. I think it is so important to evaluate people properly according to what they are capable of doing and then promoting them accordingly. I feel that this will keep them from getting hurt later in their career. And this will keep the company from getting hurt as well. To me this is what I am talking about when I talk about acting with a righteous attitude.

Throughout my career at Bankers Trust, we had a tremendous focus on results. People were fine, but they were secondary. After I left, I would have thoughts back to all of the people that I had fired; it was a very tough game there. I felt overwhelmed by the fact that in some way I would have to pay for all of that. So when I joined Lord & Abbott, I decided that I was not going to work in this way anymore; I wanted to see how I could make things different.

This was difficult at first, because they wanted me to let people go who were not performing well from the very start. However, in the four years I was there, we didn't fire a single person. Some people improved because they were willing to change, and some people did not improve. I think everyone is

capable spiritually, but I don't believe that everyone is equally capable to work in the commercial world. Some people think quicker, some are better at sales, some are good at technology, everyone is different. Some people fit in organisations and some people don't, this is just how God has made us. I think that when you work for a corporation you do need to have certain attributes.

Even knowing all of this, I was determined not to fire anyone. So I tried very hard to coach the people and help them to improve. It wasn't easy because so many of them did not want to change. I had a lot of pressure to fire the people who were not productive, but I was not willing to do that. Now I sit back and wonder if that was right or wrong. I did it because I thought, rightly or wrongly, that is what a spiritual person should do. I felt that I needed to figure out how to improve the people, rather than just fire them. My guess is that 80% of the people were willing to change and embrace new things and 20% were not.

I cannot say for sure that they would not have been happier if they had been let go. Maybe they could have found something better for them. I wished I had tried this experiment ten years earlier in my life and could have learned what I have learned now. I do feel that people do not want to be "extra baggage" for the company, so when the people are not able to change in the direction that the organisation is going, it may be good to let them go.

I think that it was good for the organisation that a large percentage of the people did change. They had a valuable history with the company that was very useful. So getting rid of them and starting again with new employees would not have been a smart thing to do. I think that the ability to want to change people for the better is what all management should want to do. I don't think that people intentionally do not want to work well; I think they were shaped by the previous management. So now it was important that we help them understand how to change.

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## **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.

### **Reprimanding employees**

You must build the people for success and appreciate them. When you want to reprimand, do it like a dose of medicine. Appreciation is like food: morning breakfast, afternoon lunch, evening dinner. But, discrimination and punishment you do like a medicine: required dose, required time, doctor is present. If you give continuous medicine and no food, man will die. If there is only food and no medicine, there is no correction and improvement. Regular food and required medicine ensures health and strength. Integrate recognition and correction appropriately and optimally. So in an organisation, reprimands and punishments should not be given continuously, like a mother-in-law might do. It should be mother-in-love, not mother-in-law.

Whenever any person comes to me, in each transaction I evaluate: "When he leaves from my office, has he become small or has he become tall?" I measure. If he has become small, I will not let him go; I make him sit. Only when he becomes tall he can go. Only when he becomes happy he can go. An unhappy man cannot leave my room. If I were to abuse someone, when he went away I would be unhappy, and he would be unhappy. I may fight with him for eight hours, but I keep at it until he is

happy. An unhappy man cannot escape from me. Only a happy man can escape from me. And everyone can judge whether the man is happy or not.

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### **Narendran, Parantha – Czech Republic**

“Strategy Director for Eurotel in the Czech Republic”

#### **Spiritual Theme**

If I think here of how spirituality affects me at work, it would be that spirituality challenges me and makes me grow.

#### **Dismissing people**

Sometimes with very hard decisions I have to think about how I can justify my behaviour. The question I ask myself most frequently in a work context – and probably in a personal context as well – is: “Am I doing the right thing?” And this often starts a pyramid of analyses as to what is the right thing, what is motivating me to do this, which outcome do I want? Often I ask myself these questions, since I have to justify my actions from a spiritual and values perspectives. Does this decision fit with my natural set of values? If this is positive, then it is the right decision. This optimally encapsulates every other decision or question that might come about when I am looking at the particular problem.

For example, when dismissing people I have to think about their interests, the interests of the people who they work with, and the company’s interest. In one way, you have an obligation to dismiss someone who is not performing well, because their poor performance hurts everyone else in the company and you have a responsibility to look after their livelihood – that is why you are entrusted with a certain position. If you are not strong enough to do it, then you are failing in your responsibility.

At the same time you have to ask yourself: Is your ego getting in the way? Is your impatience getting in the way? Can you help change that person, to help him or her achieve their potential in life? I am constantly aware of my doubts, my reflections.

If I am going to fire someone, is it the right decision? If my answer is yes, it is because it is right for the organisation, it is right for what I want to achieve for the group, and it is probably right for the individual in question because it will help him at a later point in his life, even if he doesn’t recognise it at the time.

I do expect people who are being fired to react negatively. But if I do not let a person go, I will go home in the evening and look at myself and say, “Because I didn’t fire this person, there are two other people who are better at their job who deserve their bonus or who deserve to be promoted, who might lose their jobs because I didn’t fire the person here and now.” So, I think this is when you learn that being honest with yourself also requires you to be strong.

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### **Raman, Ananth – USA**

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

## **Spiritual Theme**

“Awareness” and “Realising Divinity”

### **Terminating employees and downsizing the organisation**

I would say that the most difficult moral dilemmas that I have had have been around terminating a person if they have done something wrong and letting people go due to economic difficulties.

There was a plant manager in one of the companies who was passing off some of the company drawings to our competitors. We learned about it and warned him a couple of times. But he didn't stop. Since I knew his family I called his wife and told her what was happening and told her he would be facing serious problems if he did not stop.

He still did not stop doing this, so one day I had to dismiss him. I knew that his family would experience great difficulties with this kind of dismissal, as it was in the middle of a deep recession. While I felt that dismissing him was troubling to me initially, when I finally made the decision to do it, I felt that it was important in order to protect the company as a whole. I felt that I had to perform this role, that I must do it. This is how I answered my own question when I asked myself if I was doing the right thing in this matter.

Again, there was another occasion where we had to let a group of people go because the economy, market and business were bad. I felt really uncomfortable about this decision and asked myself, “Am I doing the right thing?” I knew that this would cause the people difficulties, as it would likely be hard for them to find jobs. But at the same time I had a responsibility to protect the company and the shareholders. I knew that I could not continue to pay salaries to these people and not get the economic benefit from it. As a responsible executive I knew that I needed to reduce the cost of our salaries in order to protect the company.

I agonised over this decision for several weeks and finally I decided to let this group go. I have never been that comfortable with the decision and I still do not know what the right answer is. We gave them some extra weeks of pay and assured them that when we were able to hire again, we would take them back. In fact, we did hire most of them back in the following year.

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## **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.