



# PUT YOUR SPIRITUALITY TO WORK

Conversation Starters for the Workplace

---

## 1.8 SPIRITUAL VALUES ARE HUMAN VALUES

The values of truth, righteousness, peace, love and non-violence are found in all major spiritual paths. These spiritual values are also human values and are the fundamental roots of a healthy, vibrant, and viable work career.

IN FEBRUARY of 2000, we began writing an in-depth programme for working people which explores five human values that are found across all spiritual traditions: truth, righteousness, love, peace and non-violence. The title is *Human Values at Work: Making Spirituality the Inner Context for Your Work*.<sup>1</sup>

We were inspired to write this programme because our collective business experience showed us that these five human values were the fundamental roots of a healthy, vibrant, viable organisation – and of healthy, vibrant, viable individuals. For example:

- Truth fosters trust and honest communications
- Righteousness fosters high quality work
- Peace fosters creative and wise decisions
- Love fosters self-less service based on caring for others' well being
- Non-violence fosters win-win collaboration

Yet we have chosen to call them *human* values rather than *spiritual* values. “Spiritual values” implies that they are something that human beings need to aspire to and hopefully someday achieve. We are well aware that most people see human nature as anything but spiritual – they typically see it as limited, imperfect, and so on. However, we know that we are spiritual beings first and foremost and that “to be human is to be spiritual.” So, by calling these spiritual values “human values,” it reminds us that they are inherent in our spiritual nature.

In the programme, we emphasise three principles:

1. These human values do not need to be taught or learned; rather, they must be evoked or unveiled, sometimes by unlearning the ways we keep them hidden.
2. These human values represent humanity at its fullest.
3. These human values can be understood from three perspectives:
  - Their spiritual essence, based on the principle that *Divinity resides in all of creation*.

---

<sup>1</sup> To download this programme free of charge, go to: [www.globaldharma.org/hvw-home.htm](http://www.globaldharma.org/hvw-home.htm)

- Their cross-cultural expressions, which we find in all societies though there may be variations and different emphasis from culture to culture.
- Their individual (personal) expressions, which reflect the attitudes and motivations beneath our unique personalities and behaviour.

While the spiritual essence of the human values is inherent within us, the cross-cultural and individual expressions are learned, developed and practised throughout our lifetime in the social environments we live and work in. By exploring the cross-cultural and individual expressions of these five human values, we can bring them forth in our everyday life and work.

One point we found quite interesting is that since these human values come from a common spiritual foundation, they are an indivisible whole; one human value cannot exist apart from the others. This integrated wholeness of the human values gives us tremendous strength as we seek to bring them forth in our work.

So, what does each of these human values look like when expressed in the typical workplace?

- A professional would tell the truth about errors or delays, even if it meant a temporary reprimand.
- A clerical person would do his or her best quality work, even if no one were watching.
- An executive would continually strive to find creative new ways to deliver goods effectively and efficiently, without adding undue costs to his or her customers.
- A sales person would actively seek to serve people rather than hide behind bureaucratic rules.
- A manager would seek to keep the environment clean and unpolluted by wastes from the business.

How can we practice all five human values in a practical way?

1. *Truthfulness*: speak honestly with co-workers and customers
2. *Righteousness*: keep your agreements with your manager and co-workers, as well as customers
3. *Inner Peace*: practice equanimity, even in crises, in times of profit or loss, and in times of praise or blame
4. *Love*: listen generously and compassionately to others rather than being judgmental
5. *Non-Violence*: find win-win solutions to problems, rather than winning at another's expense

In the articles to follow, we will take each of these five human values and will explore what their spiritual essence and cross-cultural and individual expressions look like in the workplace.

For now, explore for yourself: *What do each of these five human values mean to me personally and how do I currently express each of them in my work?*

---

This article is an excerpt from the book, *Put Your Spirituality to Work: The Basics*. To download the full book of articles, as well as additional book chapters, articles, workbooks, and research on the subject of “spirituality and human values for leadership and work”, visit our website: [www.globaldharma.org](http://www.globaldharma.org)