



# PUT YOUR SPIRITUALITY TO WORK

## Conversation Starters for the Workplace

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### 1.12 PEACE THAT TRANSCENDS UNDERSTANDING

Without inner peace, there can be no real contentment and inner fulfilment in our work. Inner peace puts us in touch with our highest wisdom and enhances our work quality dramatically.

AS WE BEGAN to write this article on *peace*, which is the fourth of five human values we've been writing on (truth, righteousness, love, peace and non-violence), two things came to mind. The first was a Christian scripture that has meant a lot to each of us since childhood:

*And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds.*

The second was a common experience we've had while conducting workshops focused on these five human values at work. We have a simple self-evaluation<sup>1</sup> that allows the participants to discover which human value they draw upon the most, and which they draw upon the least (we call this their "hidden strength"). Inevitably the most frequent "hidden strength" is the human value of peace.

It seems that, by far, peace is the most challenging human value for most people to draw upon and experience in their work. We've often wondered, "Why?" While thinking about this, we found a spiritual teaching from Sathya Sai Baba that helped answer our question:

*There is a constant quest for peace; everyone is seeking it. But peace is not just an external polish, which can be put on or brushed off. It is also not resignation, which comes of frustrated ambition or satisfied desire. Peace is not to be had from the external world. Peace is within you.*

Why is peace important at work? Two reasons readily occurred to us. First, without inner peace, there can be no real contentment and inner fulfilment in our work. When we are always looking for more and more, we suffer, as Dr. Chattopadhyay, the Executive Director of Tata Refractories, explains:

*There is so much suffering because of competition among people to see who can have the better shirt, the better house. When I can feel that I have peace in what I have, rather than looking to what I don't have, to me this is spirituality.*

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<sup>1</sup> This self-evaluation can be found in Module 2, Exercise 7 of the workbook *Human Values at Work: Making Spirituality the Inner Context for Your Work*. This workbook can be downloaded at no cost at: [www.globaldharma.org/hvw-home.htm](http://www.globaldharma.org/hvw-home.htm)

Second, inner peace puts us in touch with our highest wisdom, thus enhancing our work quality dramatically. André Delbecq, former dean of the Santa Clara University School of Business, remembers a profound experience he had while facilitating a seemingly impossible intervention with a group:

*The meeting was getting more and more tense; people were really passionate, and we were headed for great trouble. I did something that I had never done in my life: I asked them to go into silence. Then I asked them to go for a walk in the garden. After that we came back together to address the problems. Going into silence, being with the Spirit and reminding people of the path of heart did the impossible.*

So, how can we cultivate this “peace that transcends all understanding” in our daily experience of work?

The first step we have found most helpful is to make inner peace a priority in our life and work. Deependra Moitra, an executive in Bangalore’s high-tech industry, talked to us about his dedication to peace:

*Right now when I try to sit quietly for meditation, my mind is filled with lots of thoughts. So, the most immediate focus of my spiritual practice is developing calmness in my mind.*

Ashoke Maitra, the former Corporate Human Resources Director for the Times of India, shared with us his on-going practices for developing inner peace:

*I practice breath control and meditation everyday because to me they are a system of self-purification. From this I can tide through most difficulties in a very peaceful manner.*

The second step is to realise that peace is our inherent nature, not a function of our minds – that’s why it “transcends our understanding.” When we know that it’s a natural part of our being, we can make an earnest effort not to let even the most dire circumstances, or darkest inner feelings, cloud over this peace. As André Delbecq explains:

*Being on a spiritual journey doesn’t mean I don’t have days of great unknowing, or that I don’t experience desolation and anguish. But these experiences don’t interrupt that core sense of peace and wonder that the spiritual journey unfolds.*

So, ask yourself: *How can I cultivate this peace that transcends understanding? What would my work be like if this peace were present in my everyday experiences?*

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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)