



PUT YOUR SPIRITUALITY TO WORK

Conversation Starters for the Workplace

2.4 SPIRITUAL CHARACTER PART 2: IDENTIFYING YOUR SPIRITUAL PURPOSE

Spiritual purpose supplies direction and energy to our work, beyond the normal motivation to do a good job. It gives meaning to otherwise mundane affairs, and inspires selfless service to others.

AS WE DISCUSSED in our previous articles, the first step in developing spiritual character is to identify your spiritual context, which is your spiritual view of life. The second step is to identify and live your spiritual purpose.

William once attended a dialogue between a Christian monk and a Jewish rabbi on the similarities of their spiritual purpose. Brother David Steinelrast and Rabbi Dinn spoke eloquently of their common belief in One God and their similarity of spiritual values. Finally, during question-and-answer, a woman in the audience said, “I’m thrilled to hear what you’ve said, but let’s face it: Brother David, you’re a celibate monk, and Rabbi Dinn, you have a family with 12 kids. What’s so similar about that?”

William moved to the edge of his seat to hear their answer. Brother David smiled and replied, “It’s really very simple. For each of us the goal of life is to find the circumstances in which we most easily experience an intimate relationship with God, and then repeat those circumstances as often as possible. For me, that’s when I’m alone; for Rabbi Dinn, it’s in the context of family.”

Each of us has our own way of naming our unique spiritual purpose. In Sanskrit, this purpose would be called our individual *dharma* and signifies our unique role or duty in life. It grows out of our spiritual context and can find a powerful expression through our work. For Brother David, his spiritual context was “intimacy with God” and his spiritual purpose was “to pursue that experience of intimacy alone and to communicate about it with others.” As an author and speaker, he is most eloquent in helping others find within themselves their own sense of spirituality and purpose.

Spiritual purpose supplies direction and energy to our work, beyond the normal motivation to do a good job. It gives meaning to otherwise mundane affairs, and inspires selfless service to others. In a life sciences company, whose mission was to help provide food for the

expanding population on this planet, executives spent time together defining their individual sense of purpose. Here's what key individuals said about their purpose:

- Corporate President: *I inspire and connect people, capabilities and strategies to feed the world and make it a better place to live.*
- Business Sector President: *I nurture and am nurtured by the extraordinary potential of people and the magnificence of nature.*

To identify your spiritual purpose, begin by tuning into your spiritual context, and imagine you are 75 years old looking back over your life. From that vantage point...

1. What would you want to have acquired?
2. What would you want to have achieved?
3. What would you want to have experienced?
4. What gifts and talents do you want to have developed and expressed?
5. What contributions do you want to have made?
6. What type of person do you want to have become?
7. What relation do you want to have developed with the Creator and the creation?

Look through all your answers and see if you can find a theme, especially in the last three questions. See how your theme relates to your spiritual context and try on this theme as your "spiritual purpose." Look closely with your heart, for as Carl Jung once said:

Your vision will become clear only when you can look into your own heart. He who looks outside, dreams; he who looks inside, awakens.

In a workshop for managers at an industrial gas company, the participants answered these questions and then formulated their purpose statement. One woman said her purpose was to help each member of her family fulfil their potential 100%. When she started to connect that purpose to her work, she saw that she could consider *all* her employees as part of her family; thus making her spiritual purpose at work to help each employee fulfil their potential as human beings, not just as productive workers. Making this connection, she immediately felt her enthusiasm and her motivation for her work rise exponentially.

So, ask yourself: *What would I consider to be my spiritual purpose? How is it based in my spiritual context? How do I see I can use my work to fulfil that spiritual purpose?*

This article is an excerpt from the book, *Put Your Spirituality to Work: Book 2 – Work as a Spiritual Practice*. 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