



PUT YOUR SPIRITUALITY TO WORK

Conversation Starters for the Workplace

2.18 GENERATING YOUR FUTURE

Now is the time for you to put the Creative Journey to work generating your future; a future that reflects your spiritual values and character.

IN OUR LAST two articles, we discussed how to use the Creative Journey to turn work challenges into creative opportunities. We asked you to recall a creative journey that you've experienced in the past, and described how USA astronaut Edgar Mitchell creatively handled the challenges he faced in his flight to and from the moon.

Each stage of the Creative Journey has two distinct steps, each with its own unique question. The story of Mary Nelson, President of Bethel New Life in West Side Chicago, USA, illustrates how she followed these steps to create a new future out of a definite challenge: to rejuvenate housing in run-down urban communities:

The Challenge

1. What was your initial goal?

We wanted to create a low-income housing alternative to the welfare system.

2. What was at stake? What made it a difficult challenge?

We needed to do something about housing in our community. Over ten years, we had lost 200 housing units per year in a one-square-mile area. Soon there would be no community left.

The Focus

3. What about *you* —your spiritual values, your experience, your character—gave you confidence you could somehow do it?

People said, "We've got to do it, because this is going to be a visible symbol that the church cares, that this is our community. As Martin Luther King Jr. said, 'We know finite disappointment but we know infinite hope.' We have a sense that what we do, with God's help, makes a difference."

4. What were the most important issues that would require some creative ideas to resolve?

Financing housing was a big issue. So was getting people involved. We also needed the right skills, and a "can do" attitude.

The Creative Solutions

5. What were some of the options you considered, even if you didn't use them?
Having the government sponsor the housing. Doing "sweat equity" – in which people gave their "sweat" in the form of actually helping to build their own dwelling, as their form of "down payment" for the home. Mortgaging the church to gain capital. Asking contractors to donate funds, labor, and/or materials.
6. What were the options you chose?
Mortgaging the church to gain capital. Doing "sweat equity".

The Completion

7. What did you do to implement those solutions?
We mortgaged the buildings five times—it gave the bankers comfort that we would do everything in our power to ensure the project wouldn't fail. We enlisted people who wanted to be homeowners rather than tenants. We had meetings to hash out issues and used these as occasions to practice communication skills that would help people continue to manage "their" property in the future.
8. What were the results, and the satisfaction you gained from them?
It not only made affordable housing available to people who didn't have any cash, it was a great leadership development tool. A building is so visible. It is a positive accomplishment that bolsters everyone's self-image and "can do" spirit. So now when it comes to the drug dealer down the street, they say, "Wow, we did this building, then why can't we get rid of the drug dealer. We can do it."

Now it's time for you to put the Creative Journey to work. Think of a challenge you're currently facing at work that requires a new, creative solution. See what creative future you can generate that reflects your spiritual values and character:

The Challenge

Establish the Goal: What is my goal?

Assess the Risks: What makes this goal a difficult challenge?

The Focus

Tap into Character: What about *me*—my spiritual values, my experience, my character – gives me confidence I can do it?

Analyse Priority Issues: What are the most important issues I need to resolve with some creative ideas?

The Creative Solutions

Generate Options: What are creative options I can think of, even if I don't use them?

Decide on Solution: What options would I choose?

The Completion

Implement Change: What can I do to implement this solution?

Celebrate Results: What are the results, and the new learning I gained from my journey?

And then, continuing this as an ongoing practice, ask yourself: *How can I generate a creative future at work?*

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