Put Your Spirituality to Work

Book 1: The Basics

Conversation starters for the workplace

Debra and William Miller
Edited by Vijay Srinivas

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INTRODUCTION

"SPIRITUALITY AT WORK." Seeing or hearing these words, some people feel sceptical about whether spirituality can mix with work. Others feel apprehensive that some religious pressure will be put on them at work. Still others feel enthused at the possibility of expressing a more meaningful part of themselves through their work.

How about you? What comes to mind when you think about spirituality at work?

People often ask us, "Can I really be spiritual at work? Can work be a meaningful part of my spiritual path?" For us, the answers are unequivocally "Yes." With confidence, we invite you to join us in exploring how you can indeed put your spirituality to work in practical and fulfilling ways.

Many people see life as a pie, with different slices belonging to family, personal time, health, learning, work, and spirituality/religion. We see it differently. We think of the pie of life as ALL spiritual, rather than spirituality being only one slice. Therefore family, personal time, health, learning, and work are all spiritual activities.

From this view, work is an important aspect of a spiritual life. But how well do we use that time for spiritual development and for expression of our most innate spiritual values? Most working adults spend 50% or more of their waking hours engaged in work. What a waste of spiritual time if we don't consciously put our spirituality to work!

To us, "putting your spirituality to work" is not an intellectual exercise. Nor is it a passing fad, where we look to others to know "what's in" or "how it can be the next salvation" at work. Instead, spirituality at work focuses on the Source of our essential, spiritual nature as human beings and is naturally inclusive and non-sectarian – spanning all cultures, languages, belief systems, and religions. It leads us to bring

forth from within ourselves the most meaningful, uplifting, practical course to take in our work.

Yet we don't work alone in a vacuum. In our work, we come together with many others who often have different views of life – whether they are co-workers, customers, bosses, suppliers, etc. So putting your spirituality to work can also become an enlivening process for a group, not just each of us as individuals. This is what "The Basics" is all about: starting conversations with others about spirituality at work – conversations that touch our souls, refresh our spirits, help each other to bring out our best, and use our work to grow spiritually.

So, ask yourself: *How can I put my spirituality to work – and have conversations with others who wish to do the same?*

STARTING A CONVERSATION[1]. Have you ever wished that you could more easily talk about spirituality at work, yet didn't know how to begin? The easiest way we've found is to have an inviting and stimulating topic, an atmosphere of open hearts and minds, and some contemplative self-inquiry questions.

Inviting and stimulating topics. Each article in this book can be a stimulus to start an inspiring conversation about the basics of spirituality at work. Each one is around 700 words in length and can be read in about 5 minutes. Throughout these articles we share from our own and others' work experiences and perspectives about how to make spirituality the most practical foundation for your work.

An atmosphere of open hearts and minds. We have found that inviting and stimulating conversations about spirituality at work absolutely require an open mind and, more importantly, an open heart if you truly want to go beyond surface talk. We also discovered what it means – and doesn't mean – to be in conversation and dialogue, rather than in argument and opposition. To us, conversation means:

- Listening and sharing from the heart – not arguing from the mind
- Inquiring with curiosity – not conducting an inquisition
- Self-disclosing – not lecturing
- Discerning – not criticising
- Learning with humility – not "knowing it all" with arrogance
- Respecting each person's own experience – not being dogmatic about "the right way"

[1] For a full discussion on how to start a conversation group, plus guidelines for facilitating a group, see Appendix A.

Spiritual texts in India make the distinction between the *mind* that excels in dualistic analysis and the *wisdom of the heart* that can see the unity underlying all diversity. We've learned that the type of conversation we are talking about is guided by that unitive intelligence, while arguments occur when the dualistic mind is solely running the show. To uncover and illumine what it truly means to make spirituality the foundation for our work, we found it was essential that we allow the wisdom of the heart to be in charge. It is far wiser than the analytical mind – it sees more expansively, more deeply, and more clearly. It also allows true conversation and dialogue without sacrificing the capability to observe, discern, and discriminate.

Contemplative self-inquiry questions. When you reach the end of an article, you will find self-inquiry questions; we heartily encourage you to "stop, look inside, and listen." Listen for your inner voice of wisdom and then hold each inquiry in silence without needing to have immediate answers. Allow your knowing to deepen slowly. From that space within you, begin to share and to listen to others with an open heart and mind.

Where to start?
Select an article that feels most enlivening
and invite your colleagues to engage in a conversation!

Also, see Appendix A for lots of ideas on
how to start a conversion group.

1.1 WHY SPIRITUALITY AS THE BASIS FOR WORK?

How often do you run on all cylinders at work - tapping into your highest wisdom to see the unity that underlies the diversity, and working pro-actively for the good of all?

IMAGINE riding in a car whose 4-cylinder engine is working on only 3 cylinders, and whose gasoline is diluted with water. The car will struggle along, using only a part of its inherent power. It might still get you where you want to go, but with difficulty (and probably not up the steep hills!).

At work, if we are running on only the power of mind, body, and emotions, we're running on only three cylinders. And if we find ourselves reacting to situations with anxiety, agitation, or anger – and feeling "there's not enough time to do our best" – we're using diluted fuel. What's missing?

The missing cylinder is our "buddhi": *the spiritual intelligence that recognises the unity in the diversity of the world*. With it, we can tap into our highest wisdom for making the right choices and working pro-actively toward a common goal. The pure fuel is "inner awareness": *knowing that we are all spiritual beings having a human experience*. This awareness gives us the strength and equanimity for being true to our spiritual values. When spirituality is the basis for our work, we have the full spiritual power to be – and do – our best.

So how many cylinders are you running on at work? And what is the quality of your fuel?

In our workshops and interviews, business executives with a consciously-held spiritual view of life (and who intend to lead from that basis) have enlightened us on what it means to operate from a spiritual basis at work.

First, they operate with a spiritual intelligence that shifts their experience of a situation to one of "unity" and guides their actions in ways that are not readily thought of by others.

For example, the human resource executive of an Indian corporation was in the midst of union negotiations. He realised during one of our workshops that his spiritual basis for work was centred on "awakening the inner self" and "peaceful co-existence." He then saw the possibility of creating a negotiation process that focused on awakening

the inner selves of each person involved. From this spiritual basis he was confident that an agreement would naturally exemplify peaceful co-existence.

Another attribute of these executives is an inner strength to make even the toughest decisions according to their spiritual values. One American executive told us of a situation where she had pursued a large contract in a foreign country, despite scepticism from her bosses about her chances of success. From her spiritual basis, she trusted her intuition to engage in the negotiations. She spent many long days and hours in that country putting together a huge contract.

The day she sat down to sign the contract with the representatives of the foreign government, they suddenly told her that she would need to write them a large check before they would sign. With inner calm and without hesitation, she refused... and went home without the contract.

With some embarrassment, and a great deal of peace, she explained to her management what had transpired. She had no difficulty acknowledging that their initial scepticism had turned out to be right – and also that she had gained invaluable new wisdom that would benefit the company. (By the way, her management applauded her refusal to give the bribe.)

Take a few moments to reflect upon your own spiritual basis for work.

How often do you run on all cylinders at work – tapping into your highest wisdom to see the unity that underlies the diversity, and working pro-actively for the good of all?

How often are you powered by pure fuel at work – being aware that we are all spiritual beings and feeling the strength and equanimity to be true to your spiritual values?

1.2 START EARLY, DRIVE SLOWLY, ARRIVE SAFELY

How can you bring your spirituality to work and express it in everything you do? Our spiritual teacher often advises, "start early, drive slowly, arrive safely."

FRED SCHWETTMAN, former president of the circuit technology division of Hewlett Packard, once told us:

> *We had a discussion one time about values and beliefs in our staff meeting. I think one of the most important things we can do is to articulate what our personal purpose is – really trying to understand what we're doing to grow, and to work on that. An example could be for me to know God or to find love associated with God and to practice that in whatever I do.*

Some people hesitate to have this kind of open discussion about spirituality at work, because they would be sharing a very personal part of their lives and they fear bringing up religious differences. But it's also an important and rewarding level of dialogue with others – one that can make work much more meaningful and motivating.

How can you bring your spirituality to work and express it in everything you do? Our spiritual teacher often advises, "start early, drive slowly, arrive safely." Some of the ways we have found to apply this wisdom to spirituality at work is to:

"Start early" by focusing on your own inner development and embodying what you personally find most relevant and energising for you. Strengthen your own inner awareness and confidence about your spiritual path and what's best for you. This is a time to have generous compassion for yourself as you start to integrate your spirituality with your daily work.

In short, ask yourself: *How can I strengthen my inner awareness and ability to embody my spirituality at work?*

"Drive slowly" first by building a supportive community. Create for yourself an accepting and nurturing environment in which to try on new ways of being and working. Share your spiritual thoughts and feelings with a select group of people who can understand and encourage you in this growth. As you share and explore your spiritual views with such people, you will gain the self-confidence for sharing with a wider range of colleagues, friends, and family in the future. By doing this you will slowly, but surely, begin to build a supportive community of people around you.

In short, ask yourself: *Who can I share my spiritual ideas and experiences with in order to receive wise, supportive reflections?*

Also, **"Drive slowly"** by beginning to put your spirituality into action at work one day at a time. At the start of each day, select one or two areas of your work to specifically apply your spiritual principles to. Be aware of your inner motivation and notice how that shapes your thoughts, words, and deeds. Offer your creative best to the people you work with based on your spiritual motivations and unique perspectives.

In short, ask yourself: *What can I do to put my spirituality into action today at work?*

"Arrive safely" by noticing how the quality of your work life is shifting, slowly but surely, week after week. Continue to build on the confidence and strength you're gaining. Feel appreciation for even the little steps you take toward your spiritual growth. It can seem that applying your spiritual understanding at work may be happening very slowly, especially in the beginning (we sometimes describe the process as "watching the grass grow"). However, if you stay with it day by day, before you know it, you'll be very surprised at how far you've come.

In short, ask yourself: *How can I acknowledge the growth in myself and others as we live our spirituality at work?*

Is it really possible to live and work according to our spiritual view of life? Joanne Zimmerman, CEO of a major hospital in the USA, assures us:

> *It's easy for our spirituality to be part of the workplace if it's is a sincere part of our context and who we are. If you wish to raise spirituality in a company, people must first experience it through you. Then they can accept it, and then reproduce it.*

1.3 IS YOUR CONSCIENCE SHOWING?

Our conscience provides guidance that comes directly from our inherent spiritual nature. It is more than just discerning right from wrong. It is the voice of our spiritual heart, our truest Self.

ONE DAY a devotee asked his spiritual teacher what to do in a situation he was facing. His teacher gave him very specific directions. The ardent devotee paused for a moment and then said softly, "But Swamiji, I can't do that as it would go against my conscience." The teacher smiled and replied, "Good. Follow your conscience."

On hearing this story we were struck with wonder. We began to ask, "What is this conscience that holds so much power within us? What might be possible if we were to follow our conscience at work?"

To gain a practical perspective, we first looked up "conscience" in our Webster's Collegiate Dictionary and found these definitions: *a faculty, power, or principle enjoining good acts; sensitive regard for fairness or justice*; *knowing.* Then, in spiritual texts we found that our conscience provides guidance that comes directly from our inherent spiritual nature. Just as its Latin root suggests, this guidance is like an "inner voice of knowing." It is more than just discerning right from wrong. It is the voice of our spiritual heart, our truest Self.

When you seek to follow your conscience at work, it naturally invites you to be attuned to your spiritual Self. This is precisely the experience of Ricardo Levy, CEO of Catalytica Inc., the inventor of a revolutionary new process for removing pollutants from engine emissions:

> *The very act of seeking to integrate our outer experiences with our inner voice is a key element of spirituality. In difficult moments, we realise that the skills that our ordinary business training provides are not enough to enable us to make good decisions. We are challenged with the need to reach deeper, the need to draw from our spirituality to find the right course.*

Letting our conscience show may seem bold and risky, even foolish, in the immediate moment. But it also brings a sense of inner peace, confidence and contentment. It was her conscience that led Sherron Watkins, a vice-president with Enron in the U.S., to expose the financial improprieties by boldly sending a letter to the CEO warning him that the company might "implode in a wave of accounting scandals." She wasn't seeking to be in the limelight; she was simply being what her mother described as "a

very independent, outspoken, good Christian girl, who's going to stand up for principles whenever she can."

Letting our conscience show can also be a way of life in our everyday work. Our conscience can assist us in deciding what projects would be best for us to give our time and energy to. Our conscience can even guide us in writing our daily e-mail correspondence. When we follow our conscience even in these small endeavours it gives us a feeling of confidence that we are in alignment with something greater than ourselves and are not alone in our efforts.

How do you discern the voice of your conscience? We will explore this in detail in future articles, but for now, consider this…

During a spirituality workshop, a speaker mentioned the importance of following our conscience. In response, a lady spoke up in a frustrated tone. She said she would love to follow her conscience, but couldn't hear it in the din of other confusing voices in her head. The speaker asked her, "What is it like when your conscience speaks to you?" After she thought for a moment, she smiled and said, "It's quiet, it's simple, it's direct and it doesn't waver." Then he asked her, "What is it like when you listen to your ego mind?" She readily answered, "It leaps all over the place. It's fickle. It's agitated. And it's all about me-me-me."

Many describe their conscience in much the same way: a quiet, still, wise voice inside that does not waver. The choice to follow your conscience only takes a second to make. It's the best "fuel" you can give your mind and ego, which will then direct your thoughts, words, and deeds in a way that will best serve you and others.

So, ask yourself: *How do I know when my conscience is showing? How can I remind myself daily at work to listen to my inner voice of knowing?*

1.4 "TUNING IN" TO WISDOM

Tuning in to your conscience naturally leads to thoughts, words, and deeds that are harmonious, full of goodwill, and beneficial to the greater whole – in short, the ultimate source of Self-satisfaction.

WHEN DEBRA managed a software development department years ago, she often gave her employees the motherly advice that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." This wise, old saying is most applicable when it comes to tuning in to our conscience.

Unfortunately, most of us are not aware of our conscience until it "bothers" us. By then, we are typically engaged in difficulties that require extra time and energy to clear up. And yet, it is possible to pro-actively tune in to our conscience, allowing it to be our daily friend and guide.

Why should we bother to tune in to our conscience at work? As we shared in an earlier article, our conscience provides guidance that comes directly from our inherent spiritual nature. It is the voice of our spiritual heart, our truest Self. Tuning in to our conscience naturally leads to thoughts, words and deeds that are harmonious, full of goodwill, and beneficial to the greater whole – in short, the ultimate source of Self-satisfaction and peace of mind.

So, how do you best tune in to your conscience at work *proactively* (rather than just when it bothers you)? For some, you may already have a practical way you have been taught to hear what this wise inner voice is telling you. If so, spend some time each day strengthening this skill so that you can, with confidence, listen to your conscience throughout your workday.

For others, this may be a new awareness, and you would like to gain the skill and *pro-active* habit of hearing this voice. If so, first become aware of the indicators that your body, emotions and mind give you when you are "tuned in" to your conscience. Those indicators are reflected in phrases like:

- Body: "I felt like a weight was lifted from my shoulders." "I suddenly breathed easier/deeper."
- Emotions: "I felt such inner peace and gratitude." "I felt a quiet courage."
- Mind: "I knew this solution would be good for everyone concerned." "I knew it was my spiritual heart guiding the process."

Take some quiet moments for the next few days to see if you can notice the body, emotion and mind signals you get when you have tuned in to your conscience. Write down anything you notice that will assist you in growing in your awareness.

Another valuable step is to try this exercise, altering it as you gain experience to best fit your needs:

0. Find a quiet time and place during your workday (yes, this may be your biggest challenge in the process!)
0. Pose a question to your conscience
0. Write down whatever answer you "get" inside, no matter what it is
0. Notice your body, emotions and mind signals
0. Continue this process over the course of a day or two if necessary, until you know your answer has come from your conscience
0. After you take the action your conscience has guided, notice how things turn out and use that feedback to fine-tune how you hear your conscience

Ask yourself: *How can I strengthen my ability to tune in to my conscience throughout my workday?*

Even with all this, at times you might find it difficult to clearly distinguish the true voice of your conscience. For example, William once worked at an international management consulting firm that did a great deal of work with the US Department of Defense (DoD). One day he was offered a promotion to a position where he would have to market and manage DoD projects. At first, he felt this was against his conscience, since weapons projects were a possibility; so he turned down the promotion.

However, that evening, his conscience bothered him and he was quite confused. After all, it had felt like the "right" thing to do. He listened more deeply and realised that his conscience was guiding him not to avoid military work, but instead to accept the promotion with the affirmation that only "life-affirming projects" would come his way. And that's how it turned out!

With practice and patience you'll be able to easily "tune in" to your conscience, making it a learned skill and a natural habit. What better friend and guide could you ask for?

1.5 A TRUE VOICE

How do we fine-tune our ability to hear the true voice of our conscience? One important way is to be able to distinguish between the voices of (1) the ego-desire mind, (2) personal intuition, and (3) the true voice of conscience.

OUR CONSCIENCE is our true guide to what is wise, good and beneficial to the larger whole and ourselves. It provides the strength of character to sincerely and energetically promote various forms of wealth in our work: our well-being as an employee, our ability to capably serve our customers, our success in creating prosperity, and our desire to improve the health of our society. As Confucious said:

> *Virtue is the root; wealth is the result.* (The Great Learning)

Our conscience is an "inner voice" of truth and right action. This inner voice is essential at work today, according to Ricardo Levy, CEO of Catalytica Inc., which markets a revolutionary new process for "clean air" engine emissions:

> *At the root of the connection between spirituality and business leadership is the recognition that we all have an inner voice, and that it is the ultimate source of wisdom in our most difficult business situations.*

How can you fine-tune your ability to hear the true voice of your conscience? One important way is to distinguish between three types of thoughts – three different voices – in your mind: (1) your ego-desire mind, (2) your personal intuition, and (3) your conscience.

Your ego-desire mind is always vigilant in trying to get what you want and avoid what you don't want. At its best, the mind should be a servant to the ideals of your higher nature. But when driven by self-centred desires, its voice is noisy, restless, incessant, rationalising, judgmental, and usually driven by fear. In fact, if you can tune into any feelings of fear, it's likely that the voice behind it is the ego-desire mind.

Your personal intuition is like an advanced survival skill – it looks holistically to see what might serve or not serve your personal interests. Its voice tells you things that are beyond your analytical mind. Intuition by itself is a neutral tool in service of your personal values. Depending on where your intuition is tuned in, you might use it for anything from picking a lottery number to picking a school for your children, or for planning a questionable financial scheme to planning a way to save lives.

Conscience, on the other hand, is not neutral; it always points you toward the highest ideals of your true Self, your spiritual nature, for the benefit of all. You can depend on it to know what will best serve everyone, in harmony with your spiritual nature.

It's always important to distinguish between the voices of your ego-desire mind and your conscience, especially when making decisions with far-reaching consequences. In these cases, you might feel guided by your conscience to take an action that in the short-term would not satisfy the ego-desire mind. Be willing to take the longer-term view to discover the wisdom and goodness that naturally results from listening to your real conscience.

For example, Bob Galvin, former Chairman of Motorola, relates that in the 1950s they had the opportunity to get a huge contract from a South American country, one that would immediately grow the company revenues by 10%. To some minds, the desire to have that instant growth would be the loudest voice. But not for Galvin.

Motorola won the contract, but Galvin – following his conscience –didn't take it because the generals running the country also demanded a $1-million kick-back. Galvin also decided they would never do business with that country until there was a change of leadership. In the short term, they lost the new revenues. But by following his conscience, he kept the company's integrity and reputation alive, naturally spurring great growth in the future.

As you fine-tune your ability to hear your conscience, you'll find such strength in the choices you make in your work. As it says in the Jewish Testament:

> *As a man is, so is his strength.* (Judges, 21)

Take some quiet moments for the next few days to see if you can distinguish between your ego-desire mind, your personal intuition, and your conscience. Listen also for the degree of self-interest versus what's beneficial to the whole. Write down anything you notice that will assist you in growing in your ability to have the true voice of your conscience stand up in your awareness.

1.6 DEFINING SUCCESS FROM A SPIRITUAL VIEW

Success at work takes on an expanded meaning when we draw from a sincerely held spiritual view of life. And all of the "traditional signs of success" are not results we must strive to achieve -- they come naturally.

WHAT ARE the traditional ways in which people define "personal success at work"? For many, it means one or more of the following:

- Earning enough money to be materially comfortable in life
- Progressing in one's career path
- Gaining positional power and status
- Producing high-quality work
- Helping to grow/build an organisation or business
- Helping to grow people, personally and professionally
- Serving customers or clients
- Benefiting other stakeholders, such as society and the environment
- Providing for the well-being of future generations

How about you? In traditional terms, how would you define your "personal success at work"?

Have you ever thought about defining your success at work from *a spiritual point of view*? For most people, success at work takes on an expanded meaning when it is drawn from a sincerely held spiritual view of life. For example:

- Sincere Buddhists think in terms of "right livelihood."
- Sincere Christians see Jesus' life as a model of always being in service to others.
- Sincere Muslims follow the words of Muhammed: *Riches are not from abundance of worldly goods, but from a contented mind.*
- Sincere Hindus, drawing from the Vedas, focus on generating wealth (*artha*) within the larger priority of contributing to the well-being of society (*dharma*) and satisfying desires (*kama*) within the larger journey of spiritual fulfilment (*moksha*).

Taken together, these various spiritual teachings point to "selfless service to others" and "spiritual growth" as the basis of work success.

How would <u>you</u> define your "personal success at work" from a spiritual point of view?

In order to do this, start by defining what spirituality means to you, in your own words. Then, using this spiritual definition as a basis to draw from, identify what success at work means to you.

A perfect example of all this is Joanne Zimmerman, CEO of one of the largest hospitals in the western United States. Her definition of success is based on her spirituality and is naturally about serving others even in the smallest day-to-day details:

> *For me, spirituality is the expectation of the opportunity to live and hope and love and understand that there's a world larger than I can see. Every answer will not be on a spreadsheet. It all comes from a position of Love… I believe daily that each one makes a difference. It's not all about big things. Even giving directions to a visitor can make a difference. At the end of each day, I find one thing where I made a difference.*

Now, take a look at your traditional definition of success at work and your definition of success from your spiritual view of life. What differences do you see between the two? What shifts in focus do you see between the two? Does one or the other seem more inspiring and uplifting to you? And if so, which one?

In the most general terms, “success” is achieving what we have predetermined to do. Ultimately, we have found that when we “predetermine what to do” *from our spiritual view of life,* we look forward to each day with great enthusiasm and clarity of purpose. We find meaning to otherwise mundane affairs. We feel inspired to give selfless service to others. And we gain the deepest satisfaction and feeling of sincere success.

We have also found that when we unfold our work from a spiritual basis, all of the “traditional signs of success” listed at the beginning of this article are not results that we must strive to achieve -- they come naturally. Also, these natural results both support our own personal well-being and inspire us to serve others in the best ways possible. Thus “having the best of both worlds” is an apt expression when your sense of success at work is based on your spiritual view of life.

So, ask yourself: *What are the “natural results” I might achieve in my work, based on my definition of success from my spiritual view of life?*

1.7 CREATING WONDER QUESTIONS

From a spiritual point of view, wonder questions invite us to look deeper into ourselves. They are questions for which our minds have no immediate answer, and invite wisdom to emerge from within us.

AS YOU EXPLORE how to work from a spiritual basis, it is natural that you might have some concerns or reservations about its' "practicality" in your work environment. Your concerns might be challenges you face in integrating your spiritual ideas with your work, and your reservations might include doubts or hesitations about working in a spiritual way.

For example, some people are positive about business and sceptical about spirituality:

- "Business and spirituality just don't mix."
- "You can't really be competitive in business if you're spiritual."

Other people are positive about spirituality and sceptical about business:

- "Business greed is too corrupting for spirituality to make a difference."
- "If I want to be accepted and promoted, I have to compromise my spiritual values."

What concerns or reservations do <u>you</u> have about spirituality at work?

To us, all of these concerns and reservations are welcome. From a spiritual point of view, they simply invite us to look deeper into ourselves by turning all of them into "*wonder questions*[2]." These are questions for which our minds have no immediate answer. The questions invite wisdom to emerge from deep within us.

In order to turn your concerns and reservations into wonder questions, re-write each of them in the form of a question beginning with "How can I…?" Using our earlier examples, "wonder questions" might look like:

- *How can I* mix business and spirituality?
- *How can I* be competitive in business if I'm spiritual?
- *How can I* be spiritual and make a difference when business greed is so corrupting?

[2] This topic of "wonder questions" has been adapted from *Human Values at Work*, a self-guided workbook that can be downloaded for free at: www.globaldharma.org/hvw-home.htm

- *How can I* be accepted and promoted without compromising my spiritual values?

When William first joined the corporate world 30 years ago, he was very enthusiastic about making a good impression. But almost from the first day, he had conflicts with his boss. He was confused because he knew that both he and his boss were good-hearted people. He first asked himself, "How can two good people have such a conflict?" Then he refined his question to, "How can I come into harmony with my boss?"

After wondering about this for a week, the answer arose in him. "Stop seeing everything in your job as revolving around you – focus on serving your boss and others." He began to focus on how he could support his boss, rather than on how he could get his boss to recognise him for doing a good job.

William's question-and-answer not only saved him his job. It also taught him a valuable lesson: when stuck in a dilemma, ask an empowering question and wait for the answer to come from inside. That's the power of wonder questions.

When writing "wonder questions," it's important to personalise each concern and reservation in such a way that you have the power to fully implement the answer. For example:

- A *personalised concern* might be: "How can I be true to my spirituality at work even if business greed is widespread?"

Avoid making your wonder questions general or abstract; and avoid focusing them on changing other people. For example:

- A *general or abstract concern* might be: "How can people replace greed with spirituality in business?"
- A *concern focused on changing other people* might be: "How can I get the people I work with to focus on spirituality, rather than greed?"

When you personalise your concerns and reservations, and can answer your wonder question *for yourself,* you will gain the wisdom of your own experience to learn and grow from, and to share with others.

Remember, as you turn your concerns and reservations about spirituality at work into wonder questions *do not seek to resolve them right away!* Plant the wonder question inside of yourself, and let it be a seed that eventually sprouts as you nurture it with

the water of your heart's determination and the light and warmth of your mind's curiosity.

But don't be in a hurry – don't "pull up the roots to see if the plant is sprouting." Be curious even about how long it will be before your inner spirit provides you with your own personalised answer. You may be surprised by the wisdom of your inner guidance!

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*.[3]

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:

0. 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.
0. These human values represent humanity at its fullest.
0. These human values can be understood from three perspectives:
    - Their spiritual essence, based on the principle that *Divinity resides in all of creation.*

[3] To download this programme free of charge, go to: 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?*

1.9 SEEING THE TRUTH

Truth, from a spiritual basis, starts with recognising the unchanging, essential nature of Divinity in oneself and all creation. And this naturally leads to honesty, trust and wisdom in our relationships at work.

IN THIS ARTICLE we will explore *truth*, the first of five human values found in all spiritual traditions (truth, righteousness, peace, love, and non-violence). Most people think of truth as simply being honest. However, the spiritual essence of truth reveals much deeper implications as Sathya Sai Baba, a spiritual teacher in India, explains:

> *Truth is not merely telling the facts about what you see or hear or know. These are temporal truths. Truth relates to the unchanging reality. It is changeless in all three categories of time: past, present, and future. That is Divinity.*

Truth, from a spiritual basis, starts with recognising the unchanging, essential nature of Divinity in oneself and all creation. And this leads to seeing the Divinity in everyone. Ashoke Maitra, former Corporate Human Resources Director for the Times of India, once told us:

> *There is no difference between two human beings, because we are all creations and manifestations of the same energy, which is God. Even as a child, I could not see any difference between people, no matter what their caste, class or religion was.*

And S. K. Welling, former Executive Director for HMT International, Ltd in India, described his views this way:

> *That fellow who is typing for eight hours is as close to my heart as a general manager. Both are human beings. Both are creations of God.*

Just as a warm smile can be understood without words in any culture, truth from this spiritual basis can also be felt and understood across all cultures. Some ways that truth might be expressed cross-culturally are:

- Discerning and following what is helpful versus harmful to others
- Seeking the wisest action to take
- Connecting heart to heart to solve difficulties without judgments or superior attitudes

Because each of us has a unique purpose and role in life, we will also have our unique expressions of truth. Anand Pillai, who heads up a Centre for Leadership,

Intrapreneurship and Management Excellence, shared with us how he expressed truth in his work.

Years ago, soon after he had taken a new position, his secretary told him that an angry vendor was on the phone and asked if she should tell the vendor that he was not in the office. With a peaceful mind, he took the call. After listening intently to the vendor, he promised to call back in 30 minutes after researching the problem.

Then he went to his secretary and explained:

> *If you say that I am not here, you are only solving the immediate symptoms. What is important is that we solve the source of his problem. We don't want this man to leave as a dissatisfied vendor.*

Within fifteen minutes, Anand discovered the facts of the case and called back. He promised the vendor that when the missing items were received he would be fully paid. The vendor appreciated the truthful way he had been treated, sent the items, and received his payment.

Anand explains the natural results that occurred:

> *From this experience my secretary gained a clear conviction to solve the problems and not the symptoms. More importantly, neither I nor my secretary will dread his call in the future.*

The underlying basis for this leader's actions was the spiritual connection he felt with his secretary and the vendor. He naturally wanted to resolve the situation for everyone. He knew if he reacted only to the symptoms, he would not become aware of the "full truth" of the situation. By seeking the true cause of the problem, and being honest in his communications, the vendor's trust was re-established and his secretary became aware of the power of truth.

You might notice in this story how truth is inextricably linked with the other four human values. For example, if the executive had felt mental agitation, he could not have been so dedicated to the "truth."

Also, you can see how the strength of truth can bring out the other human values in yourself. When you are truthful from a spiritual basis, you will naturally be ethical (righteousness), self-confident (peace), pure at heart (love), and dedicated to equality (non-violence).

So, ask yourself: *How well am I recognising the unchanging, essential nature of Divinity in myself and all creation? To what extent do I have a clear, objective understanding of "what is" (free from personal opinions, prejudices, justifications, rationalisations and assumptions)?*

1.10 ATTUNING WORK WITH RIGHTEOUSNESS

Righteousness is a distinctive, spiritual quality of the excellence, duty, and virtue that each person naturally possesses. It comes from knowing your own spiritual basis, and acting from that basis with right conduct.

IN THIS ARTICLE we will explore *righteousness*, the second of five human values (truth, righteousness, peace, love, and non-violence) found in all spiritual traditions. "Righteousness" is one of the most common translations of the Sanskrit word "dharma," which essentially means to act in accord with Divine law, moral principles, and the unity of all life.

Righteousness, from a spiritual basis, is acting in accordance with your own Divine nature and in complete harmony with the essential, Divine nature of all of creation. This spiritual basis of righteousness is well expressed by Dena Merriam, Vice-Chairperson of Ruder Finn, an internationally prominent public relations firm:

> *Spirituality is attunement with a universal spirit. It is being so in tune with that spirit that you are not acting from a place of ego… you are acting from a place that is on behalf of the welfare of the totality.*

This is different from people who act "righteously" in their work – those who elevate their beliefs of right and wrong above all others and have very little regard for anyone who might disagree. These are people who do "righteous" work from an ego, self-centred basis – who have qualities such as:

- Narrow, rigid views of what is right and wrong
- Harsh judgments toward anything they consider wrong
- A desire to seek jobs that allow them to enforce their views of right and wrong

On the other hand, have you known people who made careers for themselves that were perfectly suited to their inner sense of purpose and their natural talents? And while they had strong moral principles, their attitudes were inspiring and created harmony around them? This is indicative of righteousness at work, which is work that is naturally aligned with:

- Their essential Divine nature, spiritual purpose and values
- Their natural gifts, talents and duties
- The universal laws of how everything works in harmony

Righteousness, we have found, is a distinctive spiritual quality of the excellence, duty, and virtue that each person naturally possesses. It includes following your own sense

of a “right path” in your career and expressing “right conduct” in your words and deeds.

Dena Merriam shared with us this experience of right conduct in not terminating a client relationship:

> *I was struggling with a client relationship that had suddenly gone amiss. I originally interpreted all of this difficulty to the fact that they were disorganised and unprofessional. I was at the point where I was ready to end the contract, and they were also ready to sever the relationship too.*
>
> *Then I realised what a tragedy this would be. Whenever there are human beings involved, there are going to be communication issues. I came to the place where I felt such a need to continue with them because of the love I felt for them and for what we were doing together.*
>
> *So I had that turnaround in my own heart and I initiated a conversation with this client. To my surprise they had had the same turnaround. We both acknowledged there were communications issues and that we saw this as a long-term commitment to each other.*

Dena also shares how her work is aligned with her spiritual purpose and values:

> *Most people in my type of business don’t use the word love – they use client service. For me the dedication that is required in my client relationships is love. There is just no other word for it.*

You might notice how righteousness is inextricably linked with the other four human values. For example, if Dena had not begun to feel her genuine love for the client, she could not have acted “righteously” – in harmony with her own and her client’s essential nature.

Also, you can see how the strength of righteousness can bring out the other human values in yourself. When you act morally from the wisdom of your true spiritual purpose and values, you will bring out your natural ability to be trustworthy (truth), contented (peace), helpful (love), and cooperative (non-violence).

So, ask yourself: *How am I ensuring that my work career is in accord with my spiritual purpose and values, and natural talents? How am I acting in accord with the universal laws of unity and harmony?*

1.11 LOVE IS THE ULTIMATE POWER

When love comes from the heart, it is the motivator, energiser and strengthener that gives you the power to speak boldly and act courageously – all the while respecting the people and conditions you find yourself in.

ONE DAY, this statement from Sathya Sai Baba, a spiritual teacher in India, really caught our attention:

> *There is no power more effective than Love.*

It reminded us of Mahatma Gandhi's leadership as he sought to free India through *satyagraha* (truth-force) and ahimsa (non-violence). He once said that love was the basis of satyagraha, and elaborated by saying:

> *Power is of two kinds. One is obtained by the fear of punishment and the other by acts of love. Power based on love is a thousand times more effective and permanent. Truth quenches untruth, love quenches anger. It is the law of love that rules mankind.*

If love can help free a nation, can it also help transform the workplace? We firmly believe so! To see how, we first have to understand what we (and Sai Baba and Gandhi) mean by "love." It's not the worldly love that comes from the mind and that has our self-interest desires as its basis. It's the Divine love that comes from the heart and has the wisdom and power of the universe as its basis.

When love comes from a spiritual basis, it inspires, motivates, energises and strengthens all aspects of our day-to-day work. For example, love is a common topic that spiritual-based executives often talk about in our interviews:

Love inspires. Dr. A. K. Chattopadhyay, former Senior Vice President for ACC Cement Refractories, turned around an ailing production plant by fostering a new spirit in how management served the needs of both employees and customers. Here's what he told us:

> *If I have a feeling of loving people, then I can provide a better service to the people. If I love, then I can serve better. This is success. It is my spiritual thinking that has led me to this.*

Love motivates. G. Narayana, Chairman Emeritus of Excel Industries, an agricultural-chemical company told us that love was the key to employee relations during an extremely difficult time. He also brings love to union-management relations:

> *We gave continuous love to every person, and made sure that each one was successful. I tell union leaders everywhere to offer love and receive dedication, offer value and receive work – just as I've taught our own managers.*

Love energises. G Narayana travels frequently and speaks not only to his own company's management and employees, but also to other organisations throughout India. His main message – which he also sincerely lives by – is love:

> *In giving continuous love, I don't get tired, even though I travel all the time. My wife thinks that I will be coming home tired and she gets tired waiting for me. But I come running and she wants to know how that can be. No matter where I go, I give love, even more than information. Then everyone gives me love back, so I receive more than I give.*

Love strengthens. Dick Eppel, an American executive also faced a drastic turnaround situation with a telecom company. He far exceeded everyone's expectations and was successful within two years. His said his rapid success was due to two factors beyond having a good strategy:

> *One factor was positive perseverance, positive expectations, and positive visualisation. The second factor was how the management team came together, which was very unique to me. There was a bonding beyond friendship and camaraderie – a genuine sense of caring and love, even though those words were never expressed verbally.*

To experience the power of love, we have to get beyond a typical mistaken belief. That is, most people see love as a more passive experience, and they think that in order to show love they must "overlook" transgressions and unfair behaviour, and just be nice. To the contrary, when love comes from the heart, it is the motivator, energiser and strengthener that gives you the power to speak boldly and act courageously – all the while respecting the people and conditions you find yourself in. Then you will experience the truth in these words of Sathya Sai Baba:

> *Divine Love is strong and steady enough to leap over all obstacles, confront with equanimity all changes of fortune, and defeat all attempts to delay or deviate.*

So, ask yourself: *How would I describe the source of Divine love within me? How can I best tap into the power of love in my everyday work?*

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[4] 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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[4] 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

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, 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?*

1.13 CONQUER YOUR INNER ENEMY

Harming others is never necessary for success. As we are aware of the Divinity that is in everyone, we can face our own tendencies to cause harm, even subtly, and discover non-violent ways of responding to our work situations.

HAVE YOU ever experienced…

- Being in a tough competition with someone for a promotion you really wanted?
- Having someone oppose your strongly-held point of view?
- Struggling with another company to get or keep a customer?

In these types of situations, it's so easy for us to see others as the "enemy" in our own minds! And we can easily find ourselves feeling critical and resentful, trying to control or dominate others, and wanting to retaliate or "take them down a notch."

As we explored "non-violence," the fifth human value in our series (truth, righteousness, love, peace and non-violence), we realised that we may not readily think of these situations or reactions as "violent." But the broadest and most common definition of non-violence is: *respecting all and causing no harm to any being by our thoughts, words, or deeds*. These examples above are some of the subtle ways that we may be harming others at work, without being aware of it.

From a spiritual perspective, we've discovered that non-violence is regarding and treating everyone and everything in creation as Divinity. In other words, when we're aware of the oneness that underlies all of creation, we realise that when we do anything that harms others, it's the same as harming ourselves. As Sathya Sai Baba, a spiritual teacher in India, says:

> *The only way in which one can take the path of non-violence is to recognise the oneness of Divinity that is present in all living beings and regard them as equal*.

We've found in our own lives that we often justify our critical and harmful ways of relating to others by thinking, "They're the ones who started it, not me." That is, we tend to go by the old adage, "An eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth." But when we reflect upon this from a spiritual perspective, we remember that Jesus taught:

> *Love your enemies and pray for those who harm you.*

And Muhammed said:

If you are able, keep your heart free from malice towards anyone. Enmity and malice tears up heavenly rewards by the roots.

How can we treat others at work without harming them, even if they seem to be intending to harm us? We've found three guidelines helpful to us:

4. Have a clear intention to respect others and not harm anyone, no matter what the circumstances are. This can be true even when competing for a treasured job. As one general manager told us:

   My purpose was always to be a leader; I knew that I would reach the top, but not by causing harm to anyone.

4. Trust that harmful responses are never necessary for success. This applies even in running an entire business, as a vice-president stated:

   In order for an organisation to be successful, the leaders must care for people, they must have a proper business strategy, and they should continuously think in terms of not doing any harm to the environment or people.

4. Live by the other four human values we've been writing about: truth, righteousness, peace, and love. The combined power of these human values makes non-violence a natural result, even in tough confrontations. One executive faced a hostile group of union leaders, but responded with empathy:

   Because of the spiritual feelings I have inside, I knew immediately when they came that they didn't mean anything against me, they just wanted to put up a show. I knew this very well in my heart and as such I could anticipate this right up front.

As you face your true "enemy" – the tendencies to cause harm that are within yourself – you'll know you are working in non-harmful ways when you:

- Harbour no feelings of resentment, criticism, or desire to retaliate against others
- Have self-control over any wish to possess, control or dominate others
- Experience no sense of separateness from others, but feel respect and a desire for the well-being and dignity of all people

So, ask yourself: *To what extent do I have respect, forgiveness and good wishes for all (free from any intention to blame, belittle, harm or oppress)? How well am I regarding and treating everyone and everything in creation as Divinity?*

1.14 "ALL FOR ONE AND ONE FOR ALL"

When your values come from a spiritual basis, you'll become a beacon, or a magnet, to draw forth those values in others; that alone will begin to resolve many of the value conflicts you may be experiencing.

FROM TIME to time, people ask us, "What if my personal values conflict with the values of the company or person I work for?" After inquiring intently into this question, we've found that when values (whether personal or organisational) come from a spiritual basis, there will always be harmony among them. When values come from egoistic, self-centred intentions, that's when conflicts occur.

Over the past few months, we've been writing about five human values found in all spiritual traditions. When you look closely, you'll see that they are a great example of the harmony of "all for one and one for all." Since all five human values have the same spiritual core – *seeing and appreciating the Divinity in oneself and all creation* – you cannot express one human value in isolation; each supports the others.

For example, telling the truth will not be done in a way that knowingly tries to hurt someone with that truth. Finding a peaceful time of the day will not be done at the expense of failing to act responsibly. Cooperating with others will not be done in a dishonest way.

In fact, a good test of the true expression of one of these human values is whether all five are present in some way when one is most strongly being expressed:

- If you are strong in truth, you can bring out your natural ability to be ethical (righteousness), self-confident (peace), pure at heart (love), and dedicated to equality (non-violence).

- If you are strong in righteousness, you can bring out your natural ability to be trustworthy (truth), contented (peace), helpful (love), and cooperative (non-violence).

- If you are strong in peace, you can bring out your natural ability to be authentic (truth), disciplined (righteousness), compassionate (love), and forgiving (non-violence).

- If you are strong in love, you can bring out your natural ability to have integrity (truth), be charitable to others (righteousness), be equanimous (peace), and respect others (non-violence).

- If you are strong in non-violence, you can bring out your natural ability to be honest (truth), dutiful (righteousness), patient (peace), and kind (love).

Sathya Sai Baba, a spiritual teacher that often speaks about these five human values, says:

> *Righteousness dwells in your heart. When the impulses arising from the heart are expressed in words, that is truth. To put into action your words is righteousness. For all these love is primary. Love in action is righteousness. Love in speech is truth. Love in thought is peace. Love in understanding is non-violence. When you realise that God is in everyone, you will practice non-violence.*

The next time you are feeling a "conflict" between your personal values and the values of another person or your organisation, first take a close look at whether your values are coming from a spiritual basis. You might ask yourself: *In this situation, how well am I seeing and appreciating the Divinity in myself and in all creation?*

If this approach seems too "lofty," the following questions (using the human values) can also help you discern whether you are coming from a spiritual basis:

- *Truth*: To what extent do I have a clear, objective understanding of "what is" (free from personal opinions, prejudices, justifications, and rationalisations)?

- *Righteousness*: To what extent am I acting in alignment with my inner sense of duty and character (free from unethical actions, insincere obligations and improper use of time, money and energy)?

- *Peace*: To what extent do I have quiet confidence, equanimity and calmness (free from stress, fear, anger, hate, and confusion)?

- *Love*: To what extent do I have compassion, caring and selfless concern for others (free from criticism, self-centeredness and selfish intentions)?

- *Non-violence*: To what extent do I have respect, forgiveness and good wishes for all (free from any intention to hurt, blame, belittle, or oppress)?

When your values come from a spiritual basis, you'll become a beacon, or a magnet, to draw forth those values in others; that alone will begin to resolve many of the value conflicts you may be experiencing. And, you'll have the wisdom, inner peace and compassion to know how to interact with others whose values may not be coming from a spiritual basis.

1.15 FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Imagine what your workplace would be like if it fostered service, sacrifice, balance, good order, endurance, attentive regard, sharing, kept promises, courageous respect for others, and a check on the appetite for excess.

HAVE YOU ever noticed that sometimes your parents can be a great resource of ideas for your work, especially in ways you least expect? We experienced this when William's mother recently sent us an article entitled "Finding Spirituality in the Workplace." It was written by a Jesuit priest named William Byron, and published in the Texas Catholic (USA) magazine.

As we read the article, we were delighted to find that Father Byron had so beautifully articulated how expressions of the basic human values we've been writing about can be applied in our work. We also enjoyed seeing how he used a teaching from the New Testament of the Bible in a way that all cultures could apply in their work:

> *Who would not like to possess and experience the following characteristics where they work: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control? These qualities are what St. Paul identifies in Galatians 5:23 as the "fruit" of the Spirit, evidence that the Holy Spirit is present within a human person. Paul wanted his Galatian friends to have guidelines for maintaining the right balance between matter and Spirit in their worldly pursuits.*

The idea is not to try to bring these qualities *into* the workplace – as if we were inserting a new "ingredient" into the soup of work. Rather, we agree with Father Byron that these fruits of the Spirit are *present within us* – so the idea is to embody these inner qualities, and our spirituality, making them the *source* from which we work. Then, the "right balance" is automatic: the fruits of the Spirit naturally result in the fruits of our work.

So why aren't these types of spiritual qualities focused on more openly in our workplaces? Father Byron gives us some insight:

> *I suspect the reason why these nine virtues so often fail to become adopted as workplace enhancing characteristics is that they are all too casually dismissed as "religious" and thus seen as irrelevant to everyday workplace life.*

We too have found that even very spiritual people sometimes view the idea of "religion" in the workplace with scepticism – seeing religion as a set of beliefs and rituals that separate people rather than bring them together. But we have found that

spirituality is the *inclusive*, unifying factor underlying all religions and spiritual paths. From a *spiritual* point of view, the fruits of the Spirit can be embraced in the workplace without being dismissed as "religious." Father Byron provocatively adds:

> *To say "this cannot be so" is to concede that there is no place for the Spirit of God in the material world created by God. These nine principles deserve, indeed demand, attention in our day. What have we, and our workplace world, come to if there is no room within for the Creator of both?*

So how do these fruits of the Spirit translate to practical results at work? Father Byron comments on this as well:

> *Contrary to what popular culture would have you believe, love is service and sacrifice. Joy is balance at the centre of the soul. Peace is good order. Patience is the ability to endure whatever comes. Kindness is attentive regard for the other. Generosity is the habitual disposition to share. Faithfulness is a promise kept. Gentleness is courageous respect for others. Self-control is a voluntary check on the appetite for excess.*

Imagine what your workplace would be like if it fostered service, sacrifice, balance, good order, endurance, attentive regard, sharing, kept promises, courageous respect for others, and a check on the appetite for excess. Sound like a good formula for success? It certainly matches our dozens of years of personal work experience, as well as the learning of organisational experts worldwide.

Father Byron inspires us by closing with these words:

> *Once assimilated, these values become contagious. They transform persons, and persons thus transformed can change the workplace without preaching, proselytising or arguing, but just by being their transformed selves.*

So, ask yourself: *Which one or two of the nine virtues Father Byron mentioned – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control – do you most naturally bring to your work? What results do you experience when you operate from these qualities?*

1.16 IS YOUR CAREER ALSO YOUR VOCATION?

We often end up choosing a career based on the money, promotions and status it might give us. But a "calling" focuses more on what we can give than what we can get – on serving and contributing to others.

WHEN WILLIAM was attending a Catholic secondary school, his teachers would ask the students if they had a "vocation", which meant a calling from God to enter a religious order, as a priest or monk. Only later as an adult did he understand the broader notion of "vocation" as a "calling" (vocation is from the Latin "*vocare*", "to call"). A "calling" is any "strong inner impulse towards a course of action, especially when accompanied by a conviction of Divine influence."

Therefore, from a spiritual point of view, a vocation is a calling from the Divine to serve a particular purpose in life. In India, that calling is also known as a person's "dharma", the practical application of our innate nature through our work. Thus, ANY work could be a calling, as Ricardo Levy, CEO of Catalytica Inc., the inventor of a revolutionary new process for removing pollutants from engine emissions, reminded us:

> *Spirituality has a very important role in the professional life of a business leader. Executive corporate leadership is a vocation that has equal dignity and equal societal impact to that of a priest or teacher.*

But is a career the same as a calling? The dictionary defines career as the "pursuit of progressive achievement, especially in public, professional, or business life." So, on the surface they both pertain to how we choose our work. But when we look more closely, we see that we often approach our careers based on "Where do I best fit in the job market?" We choose based on what jobs are available where we can apply our talents and interests – and often our ultimate choice is based on the money, promotions and status we might get.

A calling has a different feeling. It focuses on bringing out our natural talents and what we can *give* much more than what we can *get*. It focuses on serving and contributing, even amidst hardships. The satisfaction from a calling is an inner peace and pleasure for doing what feels right, rather than the attainment of extrinsic "rewards".

In our interviews with spiritual-based business leaders, we've found that they typically do not strive for promotions; instead, they follow their inner calling and allow their careers to unfold. Here's what some of them have told us:

> *Right through my career, I never asked anybody for a transfer or for a promotion. I always think that whatever comes is an opportunity given by God and I try to make the best use of it.*
>
> *I was never so ambitious that I had to advance my career no matter what the cost. I clearly did not want to do anything to harm my spiritual development.*
>
> *My purpose was always to be a leader; I knew that I would reach the top, but not by causing harm to anyone.*

We've also found that our calling may already be reflected in our current work, or we may need to make some shifts in our career to have our work be aligned with our calling.

For example, William once led a group of managers through an exercise to identify their sincere purpose in life. One woman saw that her purpose was to raise her children to become all that they could be, but was uncertain how this related to her career. Upon reflection, she saw that her "calling" included a wider perspective: it was to assist *anyone* to fulfil his or her potential. She realised that she was already following her calling in her current position, and that she could enlarge its span through a variety of different jobs.

On the other hand, once Debra began to follow her inner calling, she left her executive management position and began her own professional coaching practice with other executives. She was surprised to discover that from her first day as a professional coach, she felt such immense satisfaction from following her calling that she could not believe she was getting paid for her work. She also found that her work continually invited her to learn and grow in the same way that she was coaching her clients to learn and grow.

So, ask yourself: *Am I aware of my calling in life, a deeper sense of what my career is about? If so, what might that calling be? What are the implications of my calling on the next steps for my career?*

1.17 DISCOVER YOUR CALLING

The ways of discovering our calling are as diverse as our personalities and aspirations; just like spiritual enlightenment itself, there is no "one size that fits all".

IN OUR LAST article, we explored the difference between "having a career" and "following your calling". After reading it, our editor asked us:

> *How can anyone find out what their calling is? Is there any one way, or is it just a matter of waiting in silence for the heart to speak up?*

These questions had us pause and reflect, until we realised that, just like spiritual enlightenment itself, there is no "one size that fits all". The ways of discovering our calling are as diverse as our personalities and aspirations. However, we can always gain inspiration and confidence from other's experiences, so we decided to gather some stories to share with you.

We first thought of a young entrepreneur in Mumbai, India named Radhakrishnan Pillai, who started his own travel and tourism business at the age of 26. From the first time we met him, we could feel that he was a person of strong character who was pursuing his highest ideals through his business. This was further confirmed when he shared with us his spiritual background:

> *My father is a Yogi in the very sense of the word. While fulfilling all his family responsibilities, he still continues his daily spiritual practices and meditation for nearly 8-10 hours a day. Even as a child, watching my father do his spiritual practices with so much one-pointed devotion was inspiring. All the stories from our Indian heritage were also a part of my everyday bedtime stories and my mother helped me to understand their hidden depths.*
>
> *My real entry into spiritual life started at the age of 12 when I attended a 7-day camp named 'Game of Life' at the Chinmaya Mission. Swami Tejomayananda, currently the head of the Chinmaya Mission worldwide, led this camp.*

We feel that Radhakrishnan is one of the fortunate ones to have such a strong spiritual foundation as he searched for his choice of career. But how did he actually discover his calling?

> *I was inspired by watching Swami Chinmayananda work day and night in a spirit of total dedication. I wondered if I would ever get a chance in my life to do what*

he did. I never wanted to become a monk, yet I wanted to have a spiritual career. But how?

By the grace of God, I got an opportunity to visit a huge spiritual gathering, the 'Mahakumbha Mela' held at Allahabad in 2000. Almost 80 million people attended the Mela over 1½ months. While I was there, I came across a camp set up by a travel agency for foreigners. I was surprised that they weren't able to give a spiritual insight into the meaning of the Mela, and yet this was something I could do very well myself. From that experience, I discovered there was a great demand for spiritual tourism in India.

Radhakrishnan then formulated his vision for serving this need, and…

I asked Swami Tejomayanandji, and he blessed me to start a company of my own, a business where I would take people to various temples, ashrams and saints of India. Swamiji also gave the name – Atma Darshan.

That was 3 years ago. Since starting his business, over 2000 people have travelled through Atma Darshan to nearly 50 different spiritual destinations of India. And, it has evolved…

Discovering new places, temples, ashrams and saints has now become the heart of our company. We are not just a service provider, but also a "knowledge provider". We are happy to call ourselves "Spiritual Workers of the Knowledge Era".

We asked him how he felt about providing a service based on spirituality for a fee and here's how he replied:

Initially, I felt guilty about making money out of spirituality. But after discussing this with various spiritual masters, I know it was God who chose me for this work and I need only to do my work honestly and in the spirit of dedication to the service of humanity. Today, I realise that Atma Darshan is not about "commercialising spirituality", but about "spiritualising commerce".[5]

So, ask yourself: *From my upbringing, what spiritual strength can I draw from to assist me in discovering my calling? How would I envision a spiritual career for myself?*

[5] Radhakrishnan's forthcoming book 'The First Wing', describes in detail the journey of his spiritual life and business. More information about Atma Darshan can be found at: www.atmadarshan.com.

1.18 BLESSED LIFE; BLESSED WORK

> *"When everyone is true to their 'thumbprint', that is when we will experience heaven on earth."* Wendy Darling, Thumbprints International

EVEN AS WE were writing our last two articles on what it means to follow our calling, another person's inspiring story was in our minds. Wendy Darling is a close friend in Dallas, Texas (USA) who, by discovering and following her calling, lives what she feels is a blessed life. She started her career in a typical fashion: getting a good education and then acquiring jobs that would advance her career:

My undergraduate work in elementary and secondary education prepared me to be an educator. But after teaching for a year, I decided to go back to college and obtained two graduate degrees, in counselling psychology and in organisational development.

My first job out of graduate school was as Dean of Students for "Semester at Sea", a study-abroad programme for undergraduate students. After sailing around the world and achieving one of my long-term goals as my first job, I decided to make a change.

I went to work in corporate America as a management consultant and corporate trainer. This provided an excellent base for me to learn how to write training programs, as well as utilise my skills as a diagnostician and strategist. As the years progressed, so did my responsibilities. I eventually started my own consulting company, travelling throughout the United States.

But then Wendy experienced a major turn in her life, which brought her to her calling:

About ten years into my career, I had a serious accident that resulted in five surgeries and a year of recovery. Subsequently, I divorced and my former husband received full-time custody of our son. I'd been delving into my spirituality and personal growth when this happened, so I knew that it was a turning point where I had to examine who I was and what was really important to me. I knew that what I was going through was serving a purpose greater than I was aware of. I can remember making a promise to God that if I found ways to heal my heart, I would turn that around to help others.

So I began searching for the real me. What I discovered was how much of my life had been designed around how I "should" live my life: "I should have a career that provided financial security". "I should be in an environment that reflects success".

I don't believe that these were inappropriate goals, but they just happened to be out of alignment with who I really was.

Wendy then turned her attention from the outside world and other's expectations of her:

I began examining and measuring myself from the inside. Once I started honouring the richness and uniqueness of me, that's when miracles started happening in my life.

I discovered that my purpose was, and is, to help others identify their uniqueness and their life's purpose. This has resulted in my business today, "Thumbprints International" – where "thumbprint" means your unique gift, your way of fulfilling your purpose in life. Thus, I am a Life and Family Coach who helps adults, children, families, and organisations to discover, cultivate, strengthen and celebrate their uniqueness.

Looking back, Wendy reflects on the road she has travelled:

I love how every step I took in life – including the heartaches, the trials and tribulations – got me to this place where I am now living such a blessed life. Even when I was going through difficult times, I always knew that God had a special plan for me, a purpose for me to fulfil.

Even though I was experiencing success before my accident, I believed in God and had somewhat of a spiritual relationship with God. But once I began living my true mission in life, I found my relationship with God was even more meaningful and precious.

I feel blessed that God has chosen me to have the joy and responsibility to help children and families today. I am honoured that I was chosen to provide easy methods for healing and turning people's lives around. I believe that when everyone is true to his or her "thumbprint", that is when we will experience heaven on earth.

So, ask yourself: *What is my unique thumbprint, my God-given purpose in life? How can I express this in my work?*

1.19 FROM RATIONALITY TO MORALITY TO SPIRITUALITY

All my work as an economist and a businessman focused on the world around me. Almost overnight, this focus was supplemented by a powerful urge to know myself, and to live in accord with my truth.

Peter Pruzan, Professor Emeritus, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark

IN PREVIOUS articles, we've shared inspiring stories of people who have found their "true calling" in their work. Another way that some people have walked this path is to deepen their calling as their career progresses. The story of Peter Pruzan, Professor Emeritus from the Copenhagen Business School – and one of our colleagues in researching and writing about spiritual-based work – exemplifies that kind of deepening.

His career was influenced each step of the way by his personal evolution "from rationality to morality to spirituality", as he describes it. For his retirement celebration from the business school, Peter wrote an essay about his journey; we found it fascinating to see how his career correlated with his inner awakening…

> *I grew up in a middle class, intellectual family in New York, where logic, facts, rationality were the only acceptable perspectives on reality – and where "success", in the forms of economic wealth or intellectual achievement, was paramount. There was little place for intuition and metaphysical conjecture – or for joy. And there was certainly no room for faith based on a religion or in a benevolent Godhead.*
>
> *During my graduate studies and my early professional work, I looked at the world through an optic of hyper-rationality. My expertise in applying mathematical optimisation techniques to complex decision problems in business was in great demand. I worked for IBM and the Technical University of Denmark before starting a highly successful international consulting firm that worked at the leading edge of theory and application.*
>
> *When I turned 40 in 1976, I sold my business and returned to academia. It was in connection with my renewed academic work that I slowly moved from my "rationality phase" to my "morality phase". Personal experience and intellectual reflection had led me to challenge my previous world-views and to evolve a concept of ethics that was a natural expansion of my work with economic rationality. From the mid-1980s, I worked at the forefront of emerging fields such*

as business ethics, social and ethical accounting, values-based leadership and corporate social responsibility.

I achieved international recognition in both of these phases of my career path. But underway, there was also suffering in my personal life that no amount of success could compensate for. Perhaps the pain I experienced led to a softening of my heart, so that I was able to open myself to my spiritual teacher, Sathya Sai Baba, whom I met in India in 1989. I was fascinated by this teacher's extremely inclusive, non-sectarian approach to the notion of spirituality and his emphasis on the notion of loving and serving others as the key devotional practice. I was also challenged by the focus on our ego as the major barrier to our personal development.

This radically altered my aspirations in life, my understanding of reality and my relationship with myself. And this of course had a significant feedback to my professional development. All my work as an economist and a businessman focused on the world around me. Almost overnight, this focus was supplemented by a powerful urge to know myself, and to live in accord with my truth. This "spirituality phase" has led to my lecturing internationally on spirituality and business, and to my meeting and marrying my soul-mate, Kirsten.

Looking back at the path I have travelled so far, my "quality of life" has undergone a metamorphosis. In my youth, coping was in focus. Then came structuring and achieving via a powerful, often cynical focus on my (and others') rational behaviour. Later on my rational reflection led to a broader, moral perspective. And since my spiritual awakening, I have gradually become more aware of who I truly am and of the joy and peace and love that is our birthright.

I know from experience that practices such as meditation, prayer, enjoying the company of like-minded people and actively seeking a meaning in existence, which transcends my senses and my intellect, will support me on my path… a path from myself to my-Self, a path from becoming to being, a path that ends where it begins, at the wellspring of rationality, morality and spirituality.

So, ask yourself: *What has been the relation between my personal, spiritual development and my career path?*

1.20 KEEPING YOUR BALANCE

When we tap into our spiritual nature and trust in our inner Divine guidance, work-life balance simply becomes a natural result.

IN 1978, when William was hired by an American manufacturing firm to be head of management development, his boss told him, "We believe in having a balanced life, and that includes working only 40-45 hours per week. If you can't get your work done in that time, then we need to talk about it." What an introduction to executive life! And how far away that possibility of a balanced life now seems in our work world today!

People in every corner of the globe feel as if their lives out of balance. It's not just between home and work – though that's what most people speak of. It's between our spiritual life on the one hand and our work-personal-family life on the other. As Sathya Sai Baba, a spiritual teacher in India, says:

> *Humanness has declined because man lacks balance in life. By losing balance, people acquire only an outward vision and do not cultivate inner vision or insight. Human excellence will blossom only when the relationship and balance between the physical and the spiritual aspects are intimately established.*

When we *do* have a healthy sense of balance, then all aspects of life are imbued with peace and fulfilment. For example, talking about her sense of spirituality, Janiece Webb, formerly a senior vice president with Motorola, had this to say:

> *For me, spirituality is getting in touch with the essence of God inside of me – finding God inside myself. Spirituality is also learning to manage my energy – not in a controlled way, but as a balance of life. With this, there is harmony and peacefulness because I am not allowing myself to chase false gods.*

Avoiding the temptation to "chase false gods" – money, status, power, achievement – is what a spiritual foundation can bring to the equation, thus helping us to naturally find an inner balance. From there, we can tap into our Divine, or higher guidance to find wise and meaningful choices in how we spend our time and energy.

But there's one trap we've seen in our own lives and others'. Many companies have become quite good at creating meaningful, challenging and fulfilling jobs. But such jobs can seduce us into putting in extra long hours at work, especially if there are troubles at home (children misbehaving, difficulties with spouse, and so on) or if one's inner life is dry. Knowing this, people like Deependra Moitra, an executive at Infosys, take a very deliberate approach to making sure they maintain balance. As he told us:

> *What is most important to me is joy, satisfaction, peace and fulfilment. Now how do I get this? I have a 4-pronged approach. Here is society, here is my family, here is my professional life and here is my personal life. I look to see how I can achieve joy, satisfaction, peace and fulfilment in each of the four areas of my life.*

Does Deependra always succeed in this?

> *Perhaps I am doing well in some of these dimensions and not so well in others. That is my challenge as an individual: to balance and take an integrated perspective of all four. I do not want to do one thing at the cost of another. Something that is fundamental to me spiritually is creating a wealth of joy and being balanced.*

Ultimately, we've found that the real starting place is to tap into our spiritual nature and trust in the Divine guidance drawn from that deep well. From there, work-life balance is simply a natural result. Swami Tejomayananda, the spiritual head of the Chinmaya Missions worldwide, once put this into perspective when he spoke about how to balance spiritual and worldly life:

> *I do not create a division between the two. A spiritual man will find even worldly life spiritual, while a worldly man will make even spiritual life worldly. (As the saying goes – a drunkard will make even the monastery a bar, while a monk will make a bar his meditation cave). A spiritual man will be able to operate from a spiritual vision everywhere in every activity of life.*

So, ask yourself: *How would strengthening my spiritual foundation help me to have inner and outer balance in my life? How might my life and work priorities shift as a result?*

1.21 ATTAINING THE HARMONY OF SUCCESS

When we allow our spiritual goals to subsume our career goals, we find true harmony in life – a state where our inner values naturally align with our worldly results.

IF YOU ASK people at work, "What does success mean to you?" most of them would likely say things like "making money", "getting promotions", or "having what I want". But do these 'symbols' of success make for a truly harmonious life and career, especially from a spiritual point of view? What about the feeling that your job is meaningful and that it makes a difference to customers and society? What about the feeling that you're growing and learning through your work – not only in job skills but also spiritually?

As we look back on our own careers and think about the people and leaders we've met and interviewed along the way, we've found that "success" takes on an expanded meaning when it emerges from our spiritual view of life. For example, the spiritual scriptures of India dwell upon this notion by describing *four goals* of "success" in life:

- *Dharma*: Living in consonance with creation and society
- *Artha*: Generating wealth for oneself and others (the wealth of good education, health, character and material well-being)
- *Kama*: Satisfying basic desires (a life of comfort, health, enjoyment and respect for one's family and community)
- *Moksha*: Attaining spiritual fulfilment or liberation

While we look forward to delving more deeply into each of these goals in future articles, we were inspired by the words of Sathya Sai Baba, a spiritual teacher in India, when he described how we can integrate all four goals of life in order to reap the feeling of true harmony and success:

> *Man should earn wealth through right means, and direct desires towards spiritual liberation. But man ignores righteousness and liberation and struggles to direct desires towards wealth. His sense of values has become topsy-turvy. Let righteousness dominate wealth, and liberation dominate worldly desire. Then your life will be a success.*

But, we wondered, what does it look like to integrate these four goals from a spiritual point of view *and* in a practical, day-to-day way? The executives we've interviewed gave answers that had a distinctly personal perspective – one that highlights *dharma* and *moksha* in some way and brings harmony to their busy careers. Here's how

some of them have translated their spiritual view of life into definitions of personal success at work:

1. Spiritual View of Life: Opening up to love

   Personal Success at Work: *Success for me is a lasting, positive attitude towards an opening up in the people that I have touched, I measure my results by the level of contentment I feel.*

2. Spiritual View of Life: Compassion, balance, grace, and friendliness

   Personal Success at Work: *To me, in order to be successful I must embrace all three aspects of mind, body and spirit.*

3. Spiritual View of Life: Wonder

   Personal Success at Work: *I define success as being as prepared as I can be, knowing that no matter how well prepared I am, I am not prepared because things unfold according to the mystery of the universe, of which I am a small player.*

4. Spiritual View of Life: Spirituality challenges me and makes me grow

   Personal Success at Work: *I would say that success in my life would be learning to conquer my fears.*

5. Spiritual View of Life: Awareness, and realising Divinity

   Personal Success at Work: *I think you should not measure success or failure at all. What's most important is to determine: Have I given my best effort? Have I followed my inner conscience? What was my underlying motivation? Did I analyse things with the proper sense of ethical values? My learning from spiritual texts leads me to this view of success.*

When we allow our spiritual goals to subsume our career goals, we find true harmony in life – a state where our inner values naturally align with our worldly results. As Sathya Sai Baba so beautifully puts it:

> *(Spiritual) liberation is the goal that must dominate all the activities of life. That is to say, man must earn wealth through righteous means and desire above all for spiritual liberation.*

So, ask yourself: *From my spiritual view of life, how can I bring the four goals of life into harmony as I strive for success in my work?*

1.22 BEING TRUE TO YOUR ESSENTIAL NATURE

Dharma is being true to one's essential Divine nature, while working in the spirit of harmony and unity, knowing that all things and events are part of an indivisible whole.

IN A PREVIOUS article, we talked about four goals of life that, if pursued properly, could bring us harmony and success in our lives and work:

- *Dharma*: Living in consonance with creation and society
- *Artha*: Generating wealth for oneself and others
- *Kama*: Satisfying basic desires
- *Moksha*: Attaining spiritual fulfilment

As we began to delve into each one more deeply, we decided to focus first on one that provides an important foundation for all the others: dharma. The concept of dharma is very dear to our hearts; that's why we chose to name our organisation the Global Dharma Center. Before we founded this organisation, we sought to more thoroughly understand what dharma meant. Here's some of what we discovered, as we now share on our website:

> *Dharma is a Sanskrit word that has many varied meanings, depending on the context in which it is used. For us, at its most expanded meaning, dharma is being true to one's essential Divine nature, while acting in the spirit of harmony and unity, knowing that all things and events are part of an indivisible whole. Individually, everything has its own expression of its Divine origin and nature, and has its own purpose, its own role to play, and its own responsibility in harmony with all.*

Sathya Sai Baba, a universal spiritual teacher, defines dharma in these ways:

> *... the unchanging genuine nature of every entity - its essential characteristic*
> *... the inner voice of God in the individual and community*
> *... the harmony of thought, word and deed, which results in the purification of our minds and hearts*
> *... principles and guidelines that are laid down in the sacred scriptures*
> *... an action which is a translation of a pure idea emanating from the heart*

What does dharma mean in our everyday work? As we've grown in our own spiritual view of life, we've come to see that each person has a unique purpose and role to play in the grand scheme of creation. And we each have special talents and abilities

that assist us in fulfilling that purpose and role. Dharma also includes carrying out our job responsibilities while we serve others and care for the environment.

To help ourselves stay in touch with dharma in our own work – whether we are writing, researching, or providing our services – we've developed some "dharmic guidelines":

For us, dharma is a light, fun, and simple life in harmony with all beings… living from the full awareness that:

- *Divinity is inherent in all of creation*
- *Divine Love is the essential nature – the universal dharma – of all creation*
- *Each person, family, organisation, and society has its own unique purpose and role in a Divine Plan*
- *The dharma of all work organisations is to operate from a spiritual basis, naturally resulting in success that serves the highest good of all*
- *Life works best when we see, love and serve the Divine in everyone, and treat them as we would best treat ourselves*
- *The evidence of living by one's dharma is a purity and unity of thought, word, and deed*

If an issue or important question comes up for us personally at work, it helps immensely for us to come back to these guidelines as they always help us to know the highest integrity choices and decisions to make.

Whether you work by yourself, with a small group, or in a large organisation, you too can seek to consciously be true to your essential nature – your dharma – in your work. Here are some self-inquiry questions to assist you:

0. *How would I describe my essential Divine nature?*
0. *What is my unique purpose and role in creation, in harmony with my essential nature?*
0. *What skills and talents do I naturally possess?*
0. *What roles and responsibilities do I have when I am working from my dharma?*
0. *Am I acting ethically and with integrity, in alignment with my spiritual aspirations?*
0. *Am I respecting the resources where I work and using them for the good of others?*
0. *Am I supporting the success and harmony of those around me in helping them to identify and fulfil their essential Divine nature?*

1.23 THE WEALTH OF LIFE

When we tap into our spiritual roots, we can manifest true wealth – we need not split ourselves with one attitude towards our personal wealth and another towards the world of business.

AS WE BEGAN to reflect on the second of four goals in life that we've been writing about – wealth ("artha" in Sanskrit) – a flood of old associations welled up in our minds:

Money cannot buy happiness
The one with the most toys wins
Money is the root of all evil

Not surprising, our dictionary showed us how much the idea of "wealth" is wrapped up in material considerations – defining it in terms of "an abundance of valuable material possessions or resources; all material objects that have economic utility". Yet spiritual literature from around the world goes beyond this, saying that wealth includes wisdom, love and health. For example, the universal spiritual teacher Sathya Sai Baba says:

Artha does not merely mean wealth of money. It means wealth of wisdom. Seeing unity in diversity is the true wisdom.

All wealth and prosperity cannot confer true happiness. Without Love, no object can give you real happiness. Hence, the primary wealth for man is Love.

There is no greater wealth than health. What is the origin of this word 'health'? It is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word 'Heilig ', meaning that which is sacred and pure.

Even the original Middle English root of wealth ("weal") was much more expansive than our current definition; weal means *welfare – the state of doing well, especially with respect to good fortune, happiness, well-being or prosperity*. It's as if in our consumer-hungry fervour we've become absorbed with well-*having* rather than well-*being*!

Moving further in our exploration about wealth, we went through the interviews which we had conducted with spiritual-based business executives, and found some provocative statements about both personal and corporate wealth. For example:

Deependra Moitra, an executive with Infosys, talked about wealth in this way:

> *Something that is spiritually fundamental to me is creating the wealth of joy and being balanced. I think that peace and joy are a form of wealth that businesses can create. Wealth is about protecting everyone's interest, creating joy, and growing.*

Anita Roddick, founder of The Body Shop, an international retailer of natural body-care products, talked quite explicitly about sharing wealth with others:

> *My spiritual theme is kindness. Kindness is my religion. With profits, the purpose of business is to do something remarkable within the community, because it is the community of your customers that gives you your wealth.*
>
> *My husband and I publicly say that for us to die rich is to be obscene. There is no value in accumulating wealth; accumulated wealth is like water in a vase that has gone rancid. I think that my responsibility for the last 20 years of my life is to get my hands really dirty, giving it away on a proactive basis, and seeing the fruits of that.*

N. S. Raghavan, Joint-Founder of Infosys, broadens this notion of sharing wealth to the employees as well:

> *I think it is important to help the employees create their own wealth so that they can help others who are not in a position to help themselves. As a result the community as a whole benefits.*

And Dr. A. K. Chattopadhyay, Executive Director of Tata Refractories, brought all of this together for us when he spoke of wealth in terms of manifesting our spiritual perfection:

> *Spirituality is the manifestation of the perfection that is already there within you. If we as business leaders can manifest this perfection, we will create good things for the society. When leaders start working from the mindset that, "Yes I love society, I love my colleagues and people," then this will be transmitted to all levels of the organisation and society. Then our actions will definitely bring prosperity to all of us.*

What surprised and pleased us about these executives' views on wealth was that these themes applied equally to our personal and work lives as well as to the purpose of business. When we tap into our spiritual roots, we can manifest true wealth, we need not split ourselves with one attitude towards our personal wealth and another towards the world of business.

So, ask yourself: *What is "true wealth" for me in my personal life? How can I apply that understanding in my work as well?*

1.24 VOLUNTARY SIMPLICITY

When we subsume our desires for worldly outcomes within a larger desire for spiritual outcomes, it elevates our desires and we make different decisions.

WHILE READING spiritual literature, we've so often come across quotes like:

Strong desire is the origin of pain. (from the Buddhist "Lotus Sutra")

Where there is no desire, all things are at peace. (from the Tao Te Ching)

When it comes to "satisfying desires" – the third of four life goals, called *kama,* in India's ancient culture – *desire* seems to be portrayed as a barrier to spiritual progress. Yet desire seems to be a natural part of being human, and certainly a strong motivator for achievement at work. Can we be spiritual and still aim to fulfil desires – particularly at work?

Few would argue that we should abandon basic desires such as good health, enjoying one's family life, and gaining respect in one's community. But what about the typical desires we have at work, such as making money to support our chosen lifestyle, or gaining promotions, better job/project assignments, and praise?

Let's see how attempting to satisfy these desires can either aid us on our spiritual path or get in the way…

When it comes to the desire for money to support our chosen lifestyle, we have experienced making financial choices based on inflated desires rather than on our real needs – such as buying a larger home than we truly needed. We were following what the Jain text, Uttara-Dhyayana Sutra, warns about:

The more you get, the more you want; your desires increase with your means.

Rampant consumerism is all around us, feeding this inflation of desires to buy more than we need and forcing us into long, pressure-packed work hours to meet large financial obligations. The best antidote we've found is to ask, "In relation to my spiritual view of life, what are my true needs? How can I aim my lifestyle, and thus my income requirements, on those needs rather than on the marketing-prompted desires for more and more?"

When it comes to desires for career advancement, top executives we've interviewed typically look at promotions (and they've had many of them!) the same way that S. K. Welling, former President of HMT International, does:

> *I was once selected as a candidate for the Chairman's post, but I had no thoughts that I should aspire for that post. You might say I'm not a man of ambition. Yes, I have ambition, but I am not ambitious. There is a difference. If you are ambitious you bring pain to yourself since it is desire-based. So I always tell the people, "Whatever has to happen will happen. Whatever is not to happen will not happen. So let's be off."*

What about our desires for gaining better job/project assignments and praise for our achievements? The question we ask ourselves is, "What is the basis for these desires? Is it a self-centred desire to gain something for ourselves?" Often, self-centred ambitiousness brings about a *decline* in our work performance rather than a rise. In the *Bhagavad Gita* (2:47, 49) Krishna gave Arjuna the antidote for this kind of folly:

> *Desire for the fruits of one's actions brings worry about possible failure. Then your anxiety robs your energy. Work performed with anxiety about results is far inferior to work done in a state of calmness. Equanimity – the serene mental state free from likes and dislikes – is truly the ideal attitude in which to live your life. This is the secret art of living a life of real achievement!*

Ultimately, when we subsume our desires for *worldly* outcomes within a larger desire for *spiritual* outcomes, it elevates our desires and we make different decisions. Ananth Raman, Chairman of an American firm, Graphtex, told us:

> *The desire that life must have a purpose, the desire to add value, and the desire to set an example are the basic principles that I use to evaluate and take all decisions when I am dealing with a customer, or an employee, or a competitor.*

When it comes to satisfying our desires at work, we've found it helpful to embrace the attitude, and behaviour, of "voluntary simplicity"[6], in accord with ancient Taoist advice:

> *Manifest plainness, embrace simplicity, reduce selfishness, have few desires.*

So, ask yourself: *When I draw from my spiritual foundation, how does it simplify my life and work desires?*

[6]A term popularised by Duane Elgin in his book *Voluntary Simplicity*

1.25 FEET IN SOCIETY; HEAD IN THE FOREST

It's common to think that in order to be spiritually liberated, we must renounce our worldly life, especially work associated with business. Yet, this world, and even our work, is the perfect vehicle for that liberation.

WE ONCE MET Philip Budin, a man who had been so successful in his investment business that he retired at the age of 30. For 10 years he focused on meditating and spiritual consciousness, then he and his wife decided to travel around the world on their sailboat:

> *Everything was arranged for us to travel around the world for the next 5 or 10 or 20 years, if not the rest of our life. The sailboat was stocked, the food was on board, the crew was picked out.*

Three weeks before their voyage began, a friend asked him to travel to India to be godparent to his son and also to see his spiritual teacher, whom he calls "Swami"… this trip dramatically changed Philip's life:

> *Swami asked me what I was doing. I gave him a great 'spiritual' speech, and at the end he said to me, "No! Go back to work. Keep your feet in society and your head in the forest." Now I didn't like that answer. To me it didn't seem spiritual to go back to work, and it wasn't something I wanted to do. He repeated this about nine times, and each time I sank a little lower down onto the floor until I just surrendered and said, "Okay, what do you want me to do?" He said, "Don't worry, I will help you." So I went back to work, doing the same things I had done – except I had a new basis to operate from, and that was equanimity.*

As we began to write this article about the fourth goal of life, *moksha* – spiritual liberation and fulfilment – we readily thought of this story. It's common to think that in order to be spiritually fulfilled, we must renounce our worldly life, especially work associated with business. Yet, just as Philip Budin learned, this world, and even our work, is the perfect arena for that fulfilment, as described by the 13th century Jewish mystic Moses de Leon:

> *The purpose of the soul entering this body is to display her powers and actions in this world, for she needs an instrument. Thereby she perfects herself above and below, attaining a higher state by being fulfilled in all dimensions.*

But what is spiritual liberation and how can our work support us in attaining it? Different spiritual texts describe it in different ways; the Buddha speaks of liberation in this way:

Cut down the whole forest of selfish desires, not just one tree only. Cut down the whole forest and you will be on your way to liberation.

This is echoed in the words of the Paramahamsa Upanishad, which gives us a detailed picture of this state of liberation:

What is the state of the illumined man? He has renounced all selfish attachments… He lives his life for the welfare of all… He faces heat and cold, pleasure and pain, honour and dishonour with equal calm… Free from the sway of doubt and false knowledge, he lives united with the Lord of Love… Entering the unitive state, he attains the goals of evolution.

Is it possible to be liberated while in this life? Mother Teresa gave us a very practical answer that applies directly to our day-to-day work:

We all long for heaven where God is, but we have it in our power to be in heaven with Him at this very moment. But being happy with Him now means: loving as He loves, helping as He helps, giving as he gives, serving as He serves, being with Him 24 hours, touching Him in his distressing disguise.

Sathya Sai Baba puts spiritual liberation into perspective and shows us how to balance it with the other three goals of life:

Spiritual liberation (moksha) is the goal that must dominate all the activities of life. That is to say, man must earn wealth through righteous means and desire above all for spiritual liberation. Analyse the four goals of life and realise that moksha is the goal, the culmination. Start craving for that… Seek that which, when secured, all else is secured.

So, ask yourself: *What perspectives about work do I need to shift so I can see it as an opportunity for spiritual liberation?*

1.26 SEEING OTHERS IN A NEW LIGHT

When we perceive human values in our colleagues, even if they seem to be covered up at times, it helps us to see them in a new light, and gives us a way to connect even when there are differences.

WE WERE recently in Arusha, Tanzania, near the base of Kilimanjaro conducting a programme on "Human Values and Ethics in the Workplace" for 3 dozen top educators from 12 African countries. They were brought together by UN-Habitat for an intensive 2-week workshop on integrating human values with classroom and community education on water, sanitation, and hygiene. The entire effort is on behalf of helping to meet the UN Millennium Development Goals for bringing safe water and sanitation to the more than 1.5 billion people on this planet who don't yet have it.

What is the role of human values in this effort, especially for working people? Human values are the positive qualities that represent humanity at its fullest – such as truth, righteousness, peace, love, and non-violence. Since these values are found across all cultures, nationalities, and spiritual traditions, and are inherent in all human beings, they evoke new levels of shared meaning and inner motivation to solve such enormous problems.

An important skill we have found to bringing human values alive in the workplace is to actively recognise them in the people we work with day-to-day. This can be easier said then done, since so many of us have been trained to look for what's not working, rather than seeing what's positive and affirming.

One way to practice this skill is to examine the lives of well-known people who have worked in accord with human values in clear, obvious ways. By seeing human values in their lives, we can then sharpen our capacity to see, affirm, and elicit them in those we work with.

While conducting this type of exercise in our Arusha workshop, we were reminded of Bishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa. Let's look at his story to see what human values we can discover:

> *Early in his career, Desmond Tutu was a high school teacher; then, at the age of 30 he became a Christian priest. Over the next 10 years, he taught at a seminary, was a university lecturer, and worked for the World Council of Churches. By the time he was 45, social injustice in South Africa had gotten worse and peaceful means of change had failed, so anger and violence broke out in protests and*

riots. Around that same time, he became General Secretary for his nation's council of Christian churches. Under his leadership, he made the council a strong voice for the ideals and aspirations of millions of African Christians... and a provider of assistance to the victims of racial injustice.

Combining the spiritual with the political, he spoke out without holding back: "I am opposed to all forms of violence – that of those who wish to uphold the vicious and unjust and totally immoral and evil system of apartheid, and of those who want to overthrow the system." He also saw the ultimate solution: "If we recognize our own self-worth, we will respect the worth of others and have reverence for life." His unrelenting efforts to affect a peaceful, non-violent dissolution of his country's apartheid system earned him the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984.

In 1995, when apartheid was finally overturned, President Nelson Mandela asked him to head up a commission to probe into the gross human rights violations of the past. He knew his mission: the healing of the spirit of his country. He deeply trusted that "the truth shall set you free", plus the capacity of people to forgive once the truth was known.

We ourselves see the life of Bishop Desmond Tutu as an example of human values such as persistence, respect, forgiveness, trust, non-violence, and honesty. Many people around us also practice these types of human values at work, making a positive difference that we may not always be aware of. When we perceive human values in our colleagues, even if they seem to be covered up at times, it helps us to see them in a new light, and gives us a way to connect even when there are differences.

So, ask yourself: *How can I be more aware of human values in the people I work with? Who do I know at work who practices any one of these human values: persistence, respect, forgiveness, trust, non-violence, or honesty?*

1.27 FEEL THE DIFFERENCE

When we work in resonance with our true spiritual nature, we will set the tone for our relationships. We will "feel" the difference inside ourselves rather than striving to "see" the difference in the external world.

A FRIEND of ours, who likes to share inspiring messages about spirituality in the workplace over the Internet, sent us an e-mail he had received and asked how we would respond:

> *I find it very difficult to practice the human values of truth, love, peace, righteousness and non-violence at work or to trust anyone at work. My colleague who I considered my best friend betrayed me, so I cannot be sincere and tell everything that is in my heart or my mind because she is not sincere. It is the same with other colleagues, I have to lie sometimes, which is something I hate doing.*

Our friend's question prompted a great deal of reflection on our part. Feeling betrayed by a best friend at work can be a very painful experience and can cause us to lose faith in the goodness of others. It can also weaken our resolve to practice goodness ourselves, in reaction to how others treat us.

This reminded us of the tendency we often have to smile when someone first smiles at us; but we rarely smile when someone scowls at us. We often let others "set the tone" of a relationship, rather than taking the firm initiative to create a relationship based on our own high standards. To us, that means expressing our selves with courage and resolve in accord with our true, spiritual nature.

Reflecting further, our thoughts went to the epic teaching that Krishna gave Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gita*. Arjuna was overcome with grief in the middle of the battlefield and did not want to fight. Krishna dispelled Arjuna's delusions by elevating his awareness of his true, spiritual nature: that we are the Divine spirit (Atma) that inhabits the physical body, not the body itself. Jesus gave this same teaching to Nicodemus, a well-respected Jewish leader who asked Jesus for spiritual wisdom.

What difference can this awareness make when faced with the ups and downs of relationships at work? Ashoke Maitra, former Director of Human Resources for the Times of India, spoke to us about how he addresses this in the corporate world:

> *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. The real joy comes when you are in touch with your original self. If you are happy by your own self, then anywhere you go you will be happy."

When we express our inherent spirituality in our daily work (which we like to call "working from the inside out"), we naturally begin to practice human values such as:

- Extending unconditional love to others, no matter what their attitude or actions may be
- Speaking honestly in ways that resolve issues and bring people together
- Feeling peaceful whether our circumstances are positive or negative
- Seeing others as spiritual beings, even though they may not be aware of it
- Seeking to find harmonious solutions

Working in resonance with our true spiritual nature helps us to realise that what is "internal" is more important than what is "external". We will "feel" the difference inside of ourselves, rather than striving to "see" a difference in the external world. Wayne Dyer, a popular international author who wrote *You'll See It When You Believe It*, shares how we can "feel" the difference inside when we stay true to our spiritual nature:

You will find yourself slowing down and living in that quiet inner space where you can appreciate what comes your way. You will know in your heart that you need not be threatened by the view or actions of anyone else. You will find it easier to accept contrary views, knowing that you are not defined by anything or anyone external to yourself. You will eliminate conflict and confrontation as you find it unnecessary to prove yourself to anyone. You will discover things about yourself that you have perhaps not considered before.

So, ask yourself: *What difference do I feel inside when I am living true to my spirituality at work?*

1.28 SOLVING THE 84TH PROBLEM

> *"As to what happens to us in life, we may have little or no choice. As to how we deal with it, we have total choice."* Steve Hagen, author, *How The World Can Be The Way It Is*

WE CANNOT recall a time when we met a working person who did not have concerns or problems. It seems that so much of our normal workday is spent in solving one problem after another, often leaving us exhausted at the end of the day, wishing it could be different.

As we were pondering on how we might shift the frustrations and stresses that often accompany our work problems, we found this story in Steve Hagen's book, "How The World Can Be The Way It Is":

A man came to the Buddha for help. He was unhappy with his life. There was nothing overwhelmingly terrible about it, but it always presented him with an endless succession of little disappointments and complaints.

He was a farmer. And he enjoyed farming. But sometimes it didn't rain enough, or it rained too much, and his harvests were not the best. He had a wife. And she was a good wife; he even loved her. But sometimes she nagged him too much. And sometimes he got tired of her. And he had kids. And they were good kids. He enjoyed them a lot. But sometimes…

The Buddha listened patiently to the man's story until finally the man wound down. He looked at the Buddha expectantly, waiting for some word to fix everything. The Buddha said, "I can't help you."

The man was startled. He said, "I thought you were a great teacher. I thought you could help me."

"Everybody's got problems," said the Buddha. "In fact, we always have eighty-three problems, each one of us, and there's nothing we can do about it. If you manage to solve one problem, it's immediately replaced by another. You'll always have eighty-three problems. You're going to die, for example. For you, that's a problem. And it's one you'll not escape. There's nothing you nor I nor anyone else can do about it. We all have problems like these, and they don't go away."

The man became furious. "Then what good is your teaching?"

"Well,", said the Buddha, "it might help you with the eighty-fourth problem."

"The eighty-fourth problem?" said the man. "What's the eighty-fourth problem?"

"You don't want any problems," said the Buddha.

The author then goes on to point out some very wise advice:

If we can free ourselves from our desire to be free of our difficulty, then what difficulty do we really have? Thus with a clearer mind do we face our real circumstances. As to what happens to us in life, we may have little or no choice. As to how we deal with it, we have total choice.

We were struck by the simplicity and practicality of this story, and its wise advice: that too often we react to our external circumstances at work rather than choose to respond from our spiritual centre. But to exercise that choice, we have to master our minds (how we perceive what is happening) as well as increase our awareness and ability to tap into our inner, spiritual wisdom. But where do we start, especially if we are overwhelmed by our difficulties? The Buddha shed some light on this in the *Dhammapada*:

A trained mind can bring health and happiness. The wise can direct their thoughts, subtle and elusive, wherever they choose. Be your own guide first. Your own self is your master; who else could be? Use your body… your tongue… your mind for good, not for harm. Train your mind in love.

Being our own guide and mastering our mind in love, while focusing our body, tongue and mind on good – what a powerful formula for creating the choice of how we respond to our difficulties at work! A mantra that came to our minds was: "What good can I do right now?"

And, guess what? If we were to practice this simple, spiritual exercise throughout our workday, it would go a long way to helping us solve our 84th problem ("not wanting any problems"), eliminating disappointment and optimising happiness in our life and work.

So, ask yourself: *How would I perceive my work if I stopped wishing I had no difficulties and focused my mind on doing good, based in love?*

1.29 HAVING THE "IDEAL" MOTIVATION

It's important to have our highest spiritual wisdom be the "source of our motivation" and not our ego-personality, no matter how wonderful and ideal it may seem.

WE HAVE a dear friend in India who once sent us an e-mail asking for our insights on how to approach a difficult financial situation he was facing in his company. He is a sincere, hardworking entrepreneur with a most optimistic outlook on life and work. Yet at times, this outlook did not always work in a positive way when it came to running his business.

As we engaged in our own self-reflection to see what insights we might offer him, we found that we could relate to his ideals in many ways. As a result, we formulated the following response as a loving offering of support to him:

As we read about your difficulties with your company, it reminded us of some of the struggles we have encountered in our own work. Both of our personalities are naturally geared toward being optimistic, positive and idealistic. These are certainly valuable and wholesome (satvic) qualities to have. And when our-personalities are properly guided from the source of highest spiritual wisdom, God's Will, then we truly have a wholesome nature. However, when we exert these optimistic, idealistic qualities solely from the ego, they get out of balance and quite easily become ego-centred, self-gratifying (rajasic) tendencies. In other words, we become passionate about the ideal way things should be, and we become attached to our ego-desire to having only positive outcomes.

For years, it was confusing to us as to why life seemed so challenging when we only wanted the most ideal outcome to occur for everyone. We have since realised that it is important for us to be aware of the "source" of our thoughts and motivations: Are they coming from our ego-personality or from our highest spiritual wisdom? When the source of our motivation comes from our spiritual wisdom, it often guides us in ways that our own optimistic, idealistic ego-personality would reject.

For example, a lady came to the ashram where we live, and within a few weeks ran into financial and health difficulties. We tried to help her, since we wanted her to have a positive experience here. One day she called and asked to borrow some money for a few weeks. If we had followed our ego-personality, we would

have easily loaned her the money and hoped that, as a result, everything would turn out positive for her.

Fortunately, we took the time to consult our higher spiritual wisdom and realised that it would be a great disservice to her if we loaned her the money. We could see that her mind was quite agitated and she needed some direct, firm spiritual teachings from a loving heart. So we talked honestly with her about her own motivations for being at the ashram, and we shared spiritual teachings with her that were appropriate to her situation. As a result, she began to gain more confidence and faith in God's help, rather than seeking help "in the world."

We are not denying the importance of optimism – our new insight was to be aware of the source of that optimism, basing it on spiritual wisdom, as Sathya Sai Baba says:

Everyone should develop a hopeful and optimistic outlook. Hopes should be centred not on worldly things, but on Self-realisation. You must feel that whatever happens to you is for your own good. You must have the firm belief that whether your wishes are fulfilled or not, nothing harmful will happen to you. Be firm in your faith.

We finished our note to our entrepreneur friend with these words…

As we continually surrender to God's Will for every aspect of our existence, we find that one by one, these ego-personality driven attitudes and desires are becoming less and less powerful. We are continually discovering how important it is to have our highest spiritual wisdom be the "source of our motivation" and not our ego-personality, no matter how wonderful and ideal it may seem.

We have to admit, as we continue to surrender to this way of living and working, we encounter many surprises!

So, ask yourself: *What is the source of my optimistic, idealistic motivations at work? What issues do I have at work where I need to consult my higher spiritual wisdom for guidance?*

1.30 DHARMIC EXCELLENCE

A commitment to dharmic excellence leads us to do our work to the best of our ability in accord with our Divine nature, and prompts us to reflect on what we are doing and why.

A FRIEND recently wrote to us with a challenge that we, and many others we know, have also faced in our work careers. For her, work is her worship – she dedicates her work to God and puts forth her very best effort, and she is quite talented in doing so. The impact of her work affects the quality of life for many people. Yet she faces within her organisation many obstacles to having her own work, and the work of her entire team, be the best it can be.

She told us that when she has raised the issue among her colleagues, "No one seems terribly bothered." They tell her, "Don't upset the apple cart. You'll just be the odd person. You're doing well, so be satisfied with that." However, she remains dissatisfied and knows they can all do much better, especially when it comes to genuinely serving the people. She asked us, "How do I make others understand?"

It is in the face of struggles such as these that we like to bring forth a perspective we call "dharmic excellence". Excellence literally means "to rise" – rising to the level of the eminently good, being "first class" – a concept recognisable in cultures throughout the world. And "dharma" is a Sanskrit word that, in its most expanded sense, means being true to one's essential Divine nature, while acting in the spirit of harmony and unity with people and nature, knowing that all things and events are part of an indivisible whole.

When we look at dharma from an individual level, it reminds us that everything has its own expression of its Divine origin and nature, and has its own purpose, its own role to play, and its own responsibility in harmony with all.

Our friend reflects the quest that we find throughout humanity for doing excellent work motivated by "dharma". And her difficulty with her situation is a reflection of her feeling that she is not able to exercise her role in alignment with her true Divine nature, and that she and her team are not actively treating others in the spirit of harmony and unity. Thus, she feels out of alignment with dharma, and with the ability to rise to the level of "dharmic excellence".

A spiritual commitment to dharmic excellence leads us to do our best no matter what the outcome may be. Victor Kanu, a former ambassador to the U.K. from Sierra Leone in Africa who has co-founded a school based on human values in Zambia for village boys and girls, told us an inspiring story along these lines:

> *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 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." The sage replied, "It is the nature of a scorpion to sting. It is my nature to love and help those who sting and hate me."*

A commitment to dharmic excellence also leads us to reflect on what we're doing and why. As a starting point, ask yourself:

What does it mean to me to…

- *Work in alignment with my Divine nature?*
- *Stay in tune with my spiritual roots (with what gives me a true perspective on the meaning of life) and work from that basis?*
- *Distinguish between my ego (which can at times seem noble but still comes from ego…) and my Divine assignment in life (my dharma)?*
- *Do my best and offer the fruits to God, and be unattached to the results?*
- *Be firm, confident and respectful in following my inner guidance –not allowing personal desires, and the emotions related to them, rule the day?*

As an overall question, ask yourself: *What does it mean to me to follow dharma and strive for excellence in my work?*

APPENDIX A: STARTING A CONVERSATION GROUP

You may already be doing your work from a spiritual basis, or you may want to learn more about how to have spirituality be a fundamental aspect of your work. Either way, there's a great deal you can gain from participating in group conversations about putting your spirituality to work. Here are some of the benefits we have discovered:

- By sharing your own answers out loud, you can gain clarity and confidence in what you think and feel about the message in the articles.
- By hearing others' answers, you can broaden your own perspectives and deepen your own understanding.
- By applying the messages of the articles to real-life work situations, you can support each other in working from a spiritual basis

There are many different types of conversations you can have about putting your spirituality to work. For example:

- You can bring together a close community of friends, family or co-workers to read the articles and share spontaneously
- You can bring together a close community of friends, family or co-workers with a purpose and structure – this might fit within another event or could be an on-going gathering
- You can bring together a broader and more diverse community to read the articles and share spontaneously
- You can bring together a broader and more diverse community with a purpose and structure – this might fit within another event or could be an on-going gathering

There are many different venues in which you can hold your conversations, such as:

- Lunchtime gatherings

- Office meetings
- After work get-togethers
- Management retreats
- Workshops
- Informal gatherings at home

Particularly with the on-going gatherings, sometimes your group may want someone to act as group leader or facilitator. At other times, your group might want to share the leadership among everyone.

In this Appendix, we offer you some suggestions and guidelines:

- For everyone in your group, to help make your conversations as enlightening and enjoyable as possible, this appendix includes:
    - Self-inquiry – the basis of good conversation
    - Living with "Wonder Questions"
    - Guidelines for good conversation
    - A suggested group process
    - Getting the most from a good conversation

- For leaders and facilitators of your group, this appendix includes:
    - The purpose and role of a group leader or facilitator
    - Facilitating good conversations
    - Facilitating a large group and/or sub-groups
    - Simple group dynamics
    - Working with very talkative or very quiet participants

FOR EVERYONE IN YOUR GROUP

Self-inquiry – the basis of good conversation

To us, the best way to bring the most, and get the most, from any conversation is to start with sincere *self*-inquiry – rather than trying to get others to change or to agree on "the right thing to believe." Therefore, throughout the "Put Your Spirituality to Work" articles we have designed many stimulating self-inquiry questions.

These self-inquiries can provide you with a rich personal learning, as well as the practical insights for applying that learning in your work life. So, when you reach the end of an article, we heartily encourage you to "stop, look inside, and listen." Listen for your inner voice of wisdom and then hold each inquiry in silence without needing to have immediate answers.

For some people, this self-inquiry process may be new and may seem awkward at first. Give yourself time to see the benefits of it as you progress through the articles. Allow your knowing to deepen slowly and from that place within you, begin to share and listen to others with an open heart and mind.

Living with "Wonder Questions"

You might have concerns or reservations about something written in the articles. Your concerns can include: challenges you might face as you apply these new ideas in your work; and deeper questions you may have about your life and work. Reservations may include: doubts, hesitations and scepticisms about the ideas contained in the articles and how you might apply them at work.

For example, some people are positive about business and sceptical about spirituality:

- "Business and spirituality just don't mix – the business of business is business."
- "You can't really be competitive in business if you're spiritual."

Some people are positive about spirituality and sceptical about business:

- "Business greed is too widespread for spirituality to make a difference."
- "You can't really be spiritual if you're involved in business."

Other concerns and reservations about spirituality at work that are common are:

- "Even if I'm spiritual in my own life, I can't be spiritual at work. My boss would have a fit."
- "If I want to be accepted and promoted, I have to compromise my spiritual values."
- "What if I find that my spiritual aspirations are contrary to the type of work I'm doing or to the goals of the company I'm working for? Do I have to quit my job?"

Each of these concerns and reservations are welcome, as are any others that you may have. From a spiritual point of view, they simply invite us to look deeper, to inquire with determination: "How can I put my spirituality to work?"

You can turn all of your concerns and reservations into "Wonder Questions" that invite your inner wisdom to emerge over the coming days and weeks. To do this, write each one in the form of a question beginning with "How can I…"

When asking Wonder Questions, avoid making them general or abstract; and avoid focusing them on changing other people. For example:

- A *general or abstract concern* might be: "How can we replace greed with spirituality in business?"
- A *concern focused on changing other people* might be: "How can I get the people I work with to focus on spirituality, rather than greed?"

Instead, personalise each concern and reservation in such a way that you have the power to fully implement the answer to your question. For example:

- A *personalised concern* might be: "How can I be true to my spirituality at work even if business greed is widespread?"

When you personalise your concerns and reservations, and can answer your Wonder Question *for yourself,* you will gain the wisdom of your own experience to learn and grow from, and to share with others. Using the examples of concerns and reservations, personalised Wonder Questions might look like:

- *How can I* mix business and spirituality?
- *How can I* be competitive in business if I'm spiritual?
- *How can I* be true to my spirituality at work even if business greed is widespread?
- *How can I* be spiritual if I'm involved in business?
- *How can I* be spiritual at work in a way that's aligned with my spirituality in the rest of my life?
- *How can I* be accepted and promoted without compromising my spiritual values?
- *How can I* deal with my job if my spiritual aspirations seem contrary to the type of work I'm doing or to the goals of the company I'm working for?

One note of caution: do not seek to resolve any of your wonder questions right away – that's why we call them "Wonder Questions." It's enough just to bring them to consciousness. Each of them will no doubt yield a pearl of wisdom, to be gained in due time. You may want to keep a list of your Wonder Questions and from time to time see what wisdom you have gained as a result.

Guidelines for good conversation

For a flower garden to flourish, you need healthy seeds, fertile soil, pure water, warm sunshine and invigorating air. In the same way, for the flowering of vibrant group conversations, you need some good guidelines. Here are some guidelines we have

found helpful based on five fundamental human values[7] that are found in spiritual traditions throughout the world:

Conversation Guidelines	The Human Values
• Listen and speak from the heart • Care enough to hear fully from each person (no side conversations)	Love
• Be authentic in sharing your thoughts, words and deeds • Honour the time available for all to share – stay focused	Righteousness
• Listen patiently and openly; welcome all points of view • Uplift and encourage everyone's confidence	Peace
• Give the "headline" of your thoughts before the details • Share *your own* personal experiences rather than talking about others' situations	Truth
• Respect differences and avoid criticism of others • Honour confidentiality	Non-violence

In short, to have uplifting, enriching conversations, focus on *conversing*, rather than *converting*. That is, focus on self-reflection, listening (to one's inner voice as well as to others), and respecting the range of insights – rather than trying to convince others that your point of view is the "right" way. Allow your spirituality to work in its own way and in its own time.

We highly recommend that you post the "Conversation Guidelines" where you meet so that everyone remembers them easily. Maybe you can ask a youth group to make a creative poster for you…

A suggested group process

[7] To learn more about these five human values, see the following articles in Book 1 – The Basics:

- Basics 1.08 Spiritual Values are Human Values
- Basics 1.09 Seeing the Truth
- Basics 1.10 Attuning Work with Righteousness
- Basics 1.11 Love is the Ultimate Power
- Basics 1.12 Peace that Transcends Understanding
- Basics 1.13 Conquer Your Inner Enemy

There are innumerable ways you can start and have a good conversation about "putting your spirituality to work". But if you would like some suggestions as a starting point, we have a few …

3. Begin with several minutes of quiet time. Let everyone relax and mentally put away the stresses of the day.
3. Even if people have read a particular article ahead of time, read the article aloud in the group (perhaps passing it around and letting different people read two or three paragraphs each).
3. Spend a few minutes in quiet, reflective time, posing the self-inquiry questions that are contained in the article.
3. Begin your conversation with an emphasis on personal sharing using any of the self-inquiry questions that are contained in the article.
3. End by going around the group and have each person give a brief (15-30 second) summary of one insight or application that they are going to put into practice in their work as a result of the conversation.

In addition, you can use a variety of approaches to deepen your conversations, such as: appreciative inquiry, dialogue and world cafes[8]

Overall, feel free to be creative in your group process, making sure that your focus is always aimed at a sincere effort at gaining spiritual insights from the articles and applying them in your everyday work life.

Getting the most from a good conversation

Ultimately, *what* you learn from a good conversation depends on *you* and your willingness to contribute to and learn from others. To help you give and receive the most from a conversation, we encourage you to:

- Read each article closely and carefully – inquiring into your own experience and applying it to your own work life.
- Keep in mind that a fundamental intention of a good conversation is for you to come to your own answers – through introspection and direct experience – as well as by listening and sharing with others.

[8] To learn more about these types of conversations see the following articles in Book 3 – Spiritual-Based Leaders:

- SBL 3.12 The Wholeness of Meaningful Conversation
- SBL 3.13 Fuelling a Positive Future
- SBL 3.14 Hosting Conversations that Matter

- Do not rush to a solution for your concerns or reservations. Be patient and allow your wisdom and insights to unfold naturally as you progress through the articles. And, be sure to create "Wonder Questions" along your journey.

If you're not feeling that a conversation is as meaningful as you'd like, then *take the initiative*…

- If you feel lost or confused, ask yourself, "What is the key question that would give me clarity?" and *ask it*!
- If you feel passive or distant, ask yourself, "What would energise me to be totally engaged?" and *propose it*!
- If you feel disinterested or impatient, ask yourself, "What do I most want to learn from this conversation?" and *say what that is*.

FOR GROUP LEADERS AND FACILITATORS

The purpose and role of a facilitator / group leader

The *purpose* of a facilitator is to assist a group to:

- Explore a variety of individual answers to the self-inquiry questions in each article and to probe the depths of the group's collective wisdom
- Uplift and encourage participants in the learning and application of their new insights
- Create a sense of community and support
- Share stories as well as the wisdom gained from putting spirituality to work

The role of the facilitator is to take care of what happens during a conversation and to provide support to participants *between* conversations. Some things to keep in mind include:

- Set a tone for the conversation using the "Conversation Guidelines" given earlier from the five fundamental human values
- Help each individual to participate as they feel most comfortable
- Bring your own energy and heartfulness to the group
- Lead through your own experience and example
- Focus on the participants' own learning and avoid becoming the "answer/expert" person.

Facilitating good conversation

Sometimes, conversations can get "off the track." With ongoing gatherings, it can be helpful to have a person who monitors and facilitates the "quality of conversation"

according to the guidelines given earlier. If you find yourself in that role, to best facilitate these group discussions, we suggest that you:

- Encourage everyone to find their own unique individual answers, rather than relying on you or others in the group to formulate them.
- Avoid philosophical debates and stay focused on heartful insights and practical applications.
- Allow each person's personal experience to be his or her best teacher, and avoid pressing for group agreement.
- Assist each person in coming up with their own best answers, using phrases such as: "Say a little more about that..." "Thank you…" "What I understand (or hear) you saying is…"
- Invite others to share their experiences from similar inquiries or situations, so long as it is not "advice." The key is to have each person speak about themselves, and not focus on "problem-solving" someone else's concern.
- Keep your focus during the group sessions on the participants' own reflections and learning and avoid becoming the "answer/expert" person.
- Share *your own* experiences from similar inquiries or situations – as inspiration, not as "advice." Such sharing can open and expand the dialogue and give participants more confidence to share their experiences. For example, start with, "I once had a similar confusion…"
- When a question remains unresolved, or a person has concerns or reservations, remind them about creating "Wonder Questions".

Facilitating a large group and/or sub-groups

Facilitating the entire group together

Depending on the size of your group, you may want to keep everyone together. The advantages of keeping everyone in the full group include:

- You can maintain control of when to start each article and how much time you give the participants to share their insights and experiences.
- Everyone can hear what everyone else has to say.
- You can more closely monitor that everyone gets a chance to share and participate.
- You can see when a conversation has finished and it's time to move on to the next article; you can also see if some extra time is needed before you move on.

Typically groups of 5 – 15 can have an open, flowing sharing where most everyone can have the "air time" to express their ideas. If you have a group with more than 15

participants and want to facilitate the entire group together, it usually works best if you create a selection process so the participants can share one at a time (see the next section on “Simple Group Dynamics” for ideas).

Facilitating with sub-groups

Rather than facilitating the full group, you may wish to form sub-groups of 3 – 6 people for the group sharing. The advantages of using sub-groups include:

- As with the large group, you can maintain control of when to start each article and how much time you give the sub-groups to share among themselves.
- It gives everyone a more equal chance to share their insights, stories, experiences, questions, points of view, etc.
- It gives participants who are quiet, or shy about speaking in a larger group, a more comfortable way to share.
- You can change the composition of the sub-groups from one article to another so participants have a chance to listen to a variety of insights, stories and experiences.

If you choose this option, it is best for you to introduce each article and then have the participants form smaller sub-groups of 3 - 6 people to maximise the individual sharing time of insights, stories and experiences. Before putting them into sub-groups, be sure and let them know how much time they have to share, so that everyone in the sub-group has a chance to speak.

Simple group dynamics

There are many ways to have individuals speak and share in an orderly fashion, whether in large groups or smaller sub-groups:

3. “Go around the circle” – Start with one place in a circle (or other shape) and have each person share in turn, without being interrupted. We suggest giving participants the option of “passing” if they have nothing they want to say, with the option of speaking up later on the second go-around.
3. “Passing the card” – Pass around a card (or the microphone or other object) to signify whose turn it is; it doesn’t have to go around a circle. *Only the person with the card can speak*.
3. “Call on someone” – You can call on each person to speak from among those who raise their hands to share.
4. Refer to the “Conversation Guidelines” when needed to remind participants of how they can each contribute to a positive environment for the group.

Working with very talkative or very quiet participants

Here are some suggestions for eliciting the "even" participation of everyone, especially if you have a few people who are speaking much more than the others.

0. If only a few are consistently speaking and the rest of the group tends to be quiet, use the "go around the circle" or the "pass the card" techniques… or switch to sub-groups of 3 – 6 participants.
0. If one or two people tend to talk "on and on" – telling long stories or never getting to the point of their sharing – you might talk to them privately and remind them of the "Conversation Guidelines":
    - Listen and speak from the heart
    - Care enough to hear fully from each person (no side conversations)
    - Be authentic in sharing your thoughts, words and deeds
    - Honour the time available for all to share – stay focused
    - Listen patiently and openly; welcome all points of view
    - Uplift and encourage everyone's confidence
    - Give the "headline" of your thoughts before the details
    - Share *your own* personal experiences rather than talking about others' situations
    - Respect differences and avoid criticism of others
    - Honour confidentiality
0. Ask the quieter participants to read aloud from the articles. This might give them a more comfortable experience of speaking that could eventually lead to more sharing of their own ideas.

In closing

Remember, to gain all of the benefits that a good conversation has to offer, speak from your heart and be sure to focus on:

- Learning with humility – not "knowing it all" with arrogance
- Inquiring with curiosity – not conducting an inquisition
- Self-disclosing – not lecturing
- Respecting each person's own experience – not being dogmatic about "the right way"
- Listening and sharing from the heart – not arguing or philosophising
- Uplifting – not criticising

APPENDIX B: ABOUT THE CO-AUTHORS AND EDITOR

As we began to ponder the question of what to share about ourselves in this book, we decided to follow our own guidance and turned our dilemma into a Wonder Question: *How can we share our career history so that people feel confident in our skills and gain insights from our experiences, without bringing undo notice to ourselves?* Once we pondered this Wonder Question, we realised that the solution was to write our career history from our spiritual view of life, which naturally revealed how our spiritual growth has impacted our careers.

While this may sound like a simple solution, it was truly a new learning skill for us. We went through several attempts to do this before we began to understand what it meant to write our career histories authentically from the heart.

Once you have read our career histories, we encourage you to go through the same process for yourself. If you were going to write your career history from your spiritual view of life, what would it be like?

We hope you will gain as much insight from this exercise as we have!

Co-author Debra R. Miller

DISCOVERING "TRUE WORTH"

When I was 31, I had a spiritual awakening of the heart: for the first time in my life, I had a direct experience of Divine Love. That experience is still with me today and was the turning point for me to realise that all the worldly status I had acquired was not a measure of my "true worth". This experience redirected the course of both my life and career.

I started my corporate career in Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA in 1975, at the age of 19. For years I worked earnestly to climb the corporate ladder, as it seemed the way for me to prove my worth as a human being and to feel good about my life. I was a young mother with one daughter when I held a full time job and went to college at Tulsa University, where I majored in accounting and computer science.

During this time I experienced many career successes. At the age of 22, I was promoted to my first supervisory position; and soon after was put in charge of building a new computer department. At the age of 27, an international oil and gas firm, Santa Fe Minerals, recruited me and I was relocated to Dallas, Texas. After three years, I became head of their software maintenance and development and by the age of 32 I was on the executive management team.

In 1991, I began to design my career from my spiritual understanding of "true worth", which led me to become an entrepreneur. Because I loved sports, I was inspired by the idea of being a coach for business professionals and executives. To me, this meant helping others to bring out their deepest values and most natural talents in their work. My client experiences were so rewarding that before long, I felt an inner calling to write my first book: *Beyond Motivation: Waking Up The Knowing Within.* This helped me to discover my love and talent for writing and opened up a whole new direction for my work.

As I grew spiritually, and with my clients' encouragement, my work took on a broader dimension, resulting in my developing two methodologies related to spirituality as the source of consciousness: "Business by Design: Mastering Business from the Inside Out" and "Spiritual Life Design: Living a Fully Conscious Life". Through all of this, I discovered that my "true worth" was in living my life congruent with my spiritual nature and being an example of what I wrote and offered to my clients.

After William and I married, we wanted our life and work to be a reflection of “oneness expressing as two”, a spiritual theme we chose for our marriage. So, in the spring of 2000, we co-founded a non-profit organisation called the Global Dharma Center and began to create many diverse projects that focus on spirituality as the basis for life and work. We also moved our home from the USA to India to live in the Sathya Sai Baba ashram, an international spiritual community that honours the diversity of all spiritual paths.

Today our work projects continually challenge us to grow spiritually. Some of these projects include: writing an on-going column for the Times of India on “Spirituality at Work”; developing the *Human Values at Work* programme; conducting an international research programme on “Spiritual-Based Leadership”; and writing two books on the life and teachings of Jesus from a universal perspective.

Co-author William C. Miller

SPIRITUALITY, BUSINESS, & CREATIVITY: A MULTI-FACETED DIAMOND

In 1986, an executive at 3M Corporation invited me to make a presentation on strategic innovation management. At the time, I was head of innovation management at SRI International (Stanford Research Institute). After the presentation, he asked me about a book he saw in my briefcase. I said, "Oh, its a book about Christian saints from the 13th to 16th centuries." That's all I planned to say, but he asked me to say more. I added, "For a few years now, I've realised that a major theme in my life and work is how spirituality, creativity, and business are facets of the same diamond, rather than separate subjects." He responded, "That's exactly what I've been thinking about these past months!"

I've always marvelled at how many people I've met have shared that interest with me, which emerged slowly but surely in the years after I graduated from Stanford University, USA, in 1970 with studies in psychology, mathematics and physics. When I studied for my M.A. in humanistic psychology, with a specialty in organisational psychology, I was intrigued to learn how Buddhist and other spiritual cultures have influenced that field.

In 1975, I embarked on a corporate career with the intention to assist people in actualising their full potential through their work. My first job was with a health insurance company teaching employees how to communicate better with each other and customers. Then, in the late 1970's, at the age of 30, I became corporate manager of training and development for a major American manufacturing firm, where I developed management programs based on values I sincerely believed in: honesty, trustworthiness, and caring.

Around the time I started my consulting career at SRI International in 1982, I had a spiritual awakening and realised that my "humanistic" inclinations were turning more strongly towards "ideas of Divinity". That's when I also met Sathya Sai Baba and began to take annual trips to India, which in turn deepened my love for my own Christian heritage.

While at SRI, I managed its international consulting practice on values-driven innovation and had my first book published: *The Creative Edge*. The final chapter was entitled, "From Prophets to Profits", explicitly speaking of the spiritual basis of corporate creativity. In 1987, I left SRI and started my own consulting firm with a

strong interest in how the spiritual/human values of truth, righteousness, peace, love, and non-violence were the foundation for true, sustainable business success. I drew from spiritual texts as the inspiration for models of corporate innovation. As a consultant, I have worked with over 100 corporate clients in more than a dozen countries worldwide. In 1999, I had the satisfaction of consolidating my knowledge, experience and methodologies into a book called *Flash of Brilliance: Inspiring Creativity Where You Work*, which was selected by Executive Book Summaries as one of the top 30 business books that year.

In May of 2000, my wife Debra and I co-founded a non-profit organisation called the Global Dharma Center, focusing on spirituality as the basis for work. That same year, we also moved our home from the USA to India to live in the Sathya Sai Baba ashram, a place we heartfully feel is “home” like no other place on earth. There, my spiritual practice is focused on deepening my experience of “the Divinity in myself and all creation”.

Editor: Vijay Srinivas

FROM RESTLESSNESS TO SURRENDER

At 22, I was a restless mass of opinions, desires and dreams. I started my professional life as a correspondent with BusinessWorld magazine (currently, the number one business publication in the country) – probably one of my best breaks in career. The stint here gave me a ringside view of the fascinating world of industry, finance, economy and corporates. Even as my journalistic skills began to take shape, I began to dream of becoming an editor of a business magazine or newspaper. The dream run continued and led me to another opening in the India Today magazine (arguably, still the leading Indian current affairs weekly).

I would have ideally settled down in the magazine for a long innings here, but destiny had other ideas. Within a few months, an opportunity to work for an English newspaper in Saudi Arabia fell in my lap. The lure of the overseas was strong enough to pull me off my perch. I headed off for my first and last job abroad. All along these initial years of my career, I followed my heart, and threw logic and reason to the winds. The unsettled soul that I was, I felt happy to explore new dimensions to my growth in the lap of freedom. Could that have been the first stirrings of a free spirit trying to discover its place in the world? Perhaps yes.

By the time I was 25, surprisingly, I did not want to stick to journalism. I came back to India, got married, and joined the communication division of World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). This was the time when I opened my eyes to the magnificent power of nature and ecological forces that sustain life on our planet. Gradually, my sense of awe towards the natural world began to translate into a deep respect for the Ultimate Power that created it all.

Before I turned 30, the wheel of destiny brought me back to journalism, though of a different kind. For the next four years, I worked as a TV journalist for India This Week (a popular current affairs weekly programme on Doordarshan, the national broadcaster). Television journalism excited me in the beginning, but its 'instantness' and 'ephemerality' gradually made me weary of the medium. The real search for something beyond the mundane probably began at that time.

Marriage and the birth of my two children brought inside me the joy, responsibility and pains of fatherhood. It was a difficult period where I learnt to juggle my roles as an employee, husband, father and son. My children taught me to enjoy both the simple pleasures and difficulties of daily life.

In the past few years, my decision to work as a freelance communication professional has given me more freedom to manage my life and career. As I look back, I realise that my restlessness and discontent with the outside world was more a reflection of my inner turbulence. My inward odyssey towards my spiritual purpose in life may have just begun, but it has already made me a much more tranquil person today than I ever was. As I learn to take everything in a spirit of surrender to the Almighty, life suddenly seems a cakewalk – despite the hurdles and obstacles.

To download additional book chapters, articles, workbooks, and research on this subject of “Spirituality at Work”, visit our website: www.globaldharma.org