Put Your Spirituality to Work

Book 3: Spiritual-Based Leaders

Conversation starters for the workplace

Debra and William Miller
Edited by Vijay Srinivas

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2-sided printing and copying.

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INTRODUCTION

WHAT WOULD you think if a senior vice-president from a multinational telecom firm said to you:

> *Spirituality is very important to me as a person. I believe in God strongly. If ever there's a time for spiritual leadership, it's now. You must connect with a person's soul, at the deepest core. It can sometimes be lonely but you also feel happy and grounded inside. You also embrace your own humanness and imperfections and it keeps you humble as a leader and yet still strong.*

She, and other executives like her, have helped us realise that spirituality is an emerging basis for highly successful business leadership. While these words are an inspiration to many, they can also evoke scepticism, doubt, and criticism. To put these reactions into perspective, we've found that over the last 100 years, four distinct contexts of leadership have emerged in business[1]. Each context represents a fundamental change in how we view the *nature* of business leadership and will therefore shape the perspectives and reactions of its leaders.

1. *Paternal-mechanistic* – From this view, business is "survival of the fittest," and competition is a win-lose game. The goal of business and its leadership is wealth-creation (specifically, profit-maximisation) on behalf of business owners. Business leaders adopt the military model of command-and-control to serve the overall goals for efficiency and productivity. The common employee is usually seen as an interchangeable part in the big machine, expected to perform within clearly defined parameters.

[1] A full-length white paper, "Spirituality: The Emerging Context for Business Leadership" is available at: www.globaldharma.org/sbl-home.htm

2. *Humanistic* – From this view, the purpose of business and leadership is still wealth-creation, but with a win-win mentality in which “enlightened self-interest” supplants “selfish-interest.” The leader's job is to help employees become self-actualised “intra-preneurs” who invest both their emotions and their minds, for their own sake and the organisation’s. People are considered a resource to be managed sensitively. “Win-win" problem-solving is prominent in this context.

3. *Holistic* – From this view, the goal of business and leadership evolves beyond "wealth- creation for *shareholders*" to "wealth creation for the optimal benefit of all *stakeholders*" -- including shareholders, employees, customers, community, nature, society, and future generations. Leadership "control" lies more in having a common purpose and value-system rather than the “command-convince” or even "participative empowerment" leadership styles. This view recognises that people are, in fact, the principal assets of wealth-creation, especially in the knowledge-intensive, learning organisations.

4. *Spiritual-based* – From this view, the nature of business itself is transformed – so that the primary purpose of business and leadership is *spiritual fulfilment* and *selfless service to society*, where both are motivated from a transcendent Source of consciousness. Wealth creation is no longer the *goal*; it becomes a *means* for enabling and sustaining this purpose. Business leaders promote the spiritual fulfilment of everyone touched by the business: employees, customers, suppliers, shareholders, and society. Likewise, business leaders develop selflessness in their service to society, seeing the Source in all whom they serve.

Each of the four contexts of business leadership all currently co-exist, sometimes not very peacefully, in today’s business world. Within a company, different leaders might operate from any one of these four contexts, and any single leader might operate from a blend of contexts.

How about you? No matter what your work is, which context most represents the basis from which you lead? What might your leadership be like if it were from a spiritual context?

As we all become more and more conscious of the spiritual nature of life, we discover that spirituality can provide the practical grounding for solving the seemingly unsolvable issues in business. Bob Galvin, former CEO and chairman of Motorola, once described the primary job of leaders as, *Inspiring acts of faith (“things are do-able that are not necessarily provable”), spreading hope, and building trust*. When a vice president asked how these values relate to the “real world of business,” Galvin

replied that executives must develop strong character in themselves and others, not just good technical or financial skills. Then he concluded: *Faith, hope, and trust... Theology is very practical business.*

STARTING A CONVERSATION[2]. 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 how to be a spiritual-based leader. Each one is around 700 words in length and can be read in about 5 minutes. Throughout the articles we share how to lead from a spiritual basis, inspired by finding from our international research programme with business executives[3].

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"

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

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

[3] Use this link to access research interviews from our Spiritual-Based Leadership Research Knowledge-base: www.globaldharma.org/sbl-research.htm

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 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.

3.1 BECOMING A SPIRITUAL-BASED LEADER

> Anyone who expresses his or her spiritual Self with confidence can be a spiritual-based leader, whether they influence one or ten or a hundred others.

TWENTY-FIVE union leaders showed up one morning for a surprise visit to the company president. Security officers called the president for instructions. “Send them up to my office,” he said – and told his assistant to “prepare tea and coffee for 25.” The leaders didn’t trust the president to handle an important HR issue fairly. They stood and shouted what they were unhappy about.

He spoke calmly and respectfully, inviting them to sit and enjoy their drink while they talked. He reassured them that he’d quit before compromising his principles for fair and just hearings – and would reach a judgment based purely on merit, without giving in to favouritism and pressure. The dialogue softened, and the union leaders left his office with a new seed of respect and trust for the president. This seed was nurtured when he lived up to his word.

What made for this turnaround? Was he just using a diplomatic tactic? No. He was, and is, a person who bases his leadership attitudes and actions on his spiritual view of life. It was from this spiritual view that he experienced everything that was happening. As a result, he had no need to react; he listened attentively to discern where the misunderstanding had occurred and how he could give them reassurance of his intentions. He is a spiritual-based leader, and he’s part of a fast-growing movement in business.

Imagine with us this bold possibility for the workplace:

- Spirituality is the context for revolutionary, transformational leadership
- Leaders develop within themselves a purity and unity of thought, word and deed
- Leaders actively express their spiritual character in every aspect of their lives
- Spiritual values transform all aspects of life in business and society

Sound too good to be true? To most – yes. But to us, it’s a practical reality available to us when we dedicate ourselves to leading from a spiritual view of life. By leadership, we don’t just mean those in positions of power. We mean *anyone* who expresses his or her spiritual Self with confidence, whether they influence one or ten or a hundred others.

What does it take to be a spiritual-based leader? Every spiritual-based leader we have interviewed around the world has had their own, unique story about how they stepped onto the path of spiritual-based leadership. From our experience in the business world, such leaders have developed in themselves four key faculties:

- They have a clearly held spiritual view of life. That is, they have a clear definition of spirituality, they know their own relationship between spirituality and religion, and they continually ask, "How can I approach this situation from my spiritual view of life?"

- They explore their spirituality from the inside out. That is, they take consistent time to nurture their spiritual growth, they identify their spiritual purpose and values in life, and continuously check up on their purity and unity of thought, word and deed

- They embody their spiritual principles in their leadership. That is, they see spirituality as the basis of business success, they appreciate work in terms of spiritual opportunity and spiritual growth, and they seek to "talk their thought" and "walk their talk."

- They engage in revolutionary activities. That is, they promote fundamental change, based on their spiritual view of life, in their workgroup culture, company culture and society itself.

This may sound like a lot, and certainly people don't develop into spiritual-based leaders overnight. In fact, they tend to go through three stages, depending on which of these three questions they most focus on:

1. How can I bring spiritual values into business?
2. How can I integrate spirituality and business?
3. How can I do all my work from my spiritual view of life?

We'll explore each of the four faculties in future articles. For now, a beginning point is to contemplate on your heartfelt answers to these questions:

- *What is my spiritual view of life?*
- *How do I nurture my spiritual growth from the inside out?*
- *How have I put my spiritual purpose and values into action in the last 24 hours?*
- *How does my work culture currently look different when I view it from my spiritual view of life?*

3.2 DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGION AT WORK

Spirituality is by nature inclusive of all people and religions. It allows people of all religions to work together in harmony, even in the "secular" world of business.

SEVERAL YEARS ago William spoke at a large business symposium in New Delhi on the many varied aspects of becoming a spiritual-based leader in the workplace. During the question and answer session, a business executive asked him in a strong tone, "You've talked about how you can be spiritual and successful in business at the same time. India is known to be a spiritual nation. If we're so spiritual, why aren't we more successful in business and why is there so much corruption?"

William answered, "Over the last 10 years in the U.S., there has been a growing awareness of a distinction that you may or may not make here in India – the distinction between 'being spiritual' and 'being religious.' Spirituality is the single essence of all religions, while religions are the set of rituals and beliefs that are designed to evoke our spiritual nature. A person can be religious – engaging in all of the rituals and discussing all of the beliefs – without necessarily being spiritual. Perhaps people here are engaging in religious rituals and beliefs, without living the true essence of spirituality in their lives."

The man then replied with a full-hearted response, "I would say that in many ways we are more of a religious nation, than a spiritual one."

Each religion has its own understanding of the nature of creation and the Creator; this diversity provides people with different avenues for realising the *one, unifying spiritual basis* that we all share. But a religion that only focuses on the outer form of rites and rituals has lost its essence. When the rituals become the prime focus, rather than the spiritual nature they are intended to unite us with, then the differences become all-important. The result can be divisiveness and outright warfare, rather than the inclusive, unifying nature of spirituality.

Because spirituality is the single essence of all religions, it is by nature *inclusive* of all people and religions, rather than exclusive. From a spiritual (unity) view, the differences in religious understanding and practices deserve respect. The role of any religion is to help people tap into their spirituality, and to support that spirituality in the

shared circumstances of life and work. Spirituality allows people of all religions to work together in harmony, even in the "secular" world of business.

So… how do you, as a spiritual-based leader, keep your attention on the inclusive nature of spirituality at work, while respecting the religious affinities of those you lead?

While interviewing spiritual-based executives, both in India and abroad, we asked them about their advice on this matter. Two of them told us:

> *When leaders have the clear conviction to lead from a spiritual basis it will become evident in their behaviour. They will always seek and speak the truth, they will take the time to understand fully and respond properly. They will have no need to convince; they will lead others through their own example.*
>
> *It's okay to use religious texts at work if they are used to inspire or guide others, just as you would use other philosophical and meaningful works. The key is that the leader must be an example of one who puts the spiritual wisdom into practice and one who does not resort to empty preaching.*

From these and other executives, we have learned that a focus on spirituality can naturally lead to work perspectives and decisions that are harmonious and inclusive. And the different religious backgrounds can be honoured as providing pathways for people to know and practise their spirituality at work, for the betterment of all.

So, ask yourself: *How do I distinguish between spirituality and religion at work? How can I focus on spirituality, while honouring the religious paths of those I lead?*

3.3 VALUING THE "TRUE WORTH" OF THOSE YOU LEAD

The key to valuing people for their "true worth" is to realise that they are each a spark of Divinity. While we may not always be able to live up to this ideal, it is an inspiring framework that challenges us to grow spiritually.

WHILE SEARCHING through some quotes from our spiritual teacher, Sathya Sai Baba, we found one that has left a profound impression on us. It continually invites us to stop and ponder as to how it can be applied by leaders in the workplace.

> *If man is valued at his true worth, and treated as a Divine Spark enclosed in the body, then he will rise into new heights of achievement and produce all the necessities of life in profusion. He will not grab or cheat; he will be a good worker, a pure person, and a sincere spiritual aspirant.* (Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. IX)

The key here, of course, is to realise that each person's "true worth" is based on his or her being a spark of Divinity – consistent with the teachings of so many spiritual paths:

- *Wherever I look, there is God; no one else is seen.* (Adi Granth)
- *I pervade the entire universe in my unmanifested form*. (Bhagavad Gita 8:22, 9:4)
- *We are all of God, and towards Him we are progressing*. (Koran ii:156)
- *One in All, All in One.* (Zen Buddhist's On Trust in the Heart)
- *I am in my Father and you in Me and I in you.* (Holy Bible John 14:20)

.

Actively living by this spiritual principle must first show up in the everyday actions of a leader. We witnessed an obvious display of this one evening after spending three hours interviewing G. Narayana, Chairman Emeritus of Excel Industries, Ltd., about his experiences as a spiritual-based leader. Mr. Narayana is equally known as "Guruji" to both the employees and the union leaders of his organisation.

While driving out of the parking lot Mr. Narayana stopped his car and rolled down his window as the security guard came over to him. Mr. Narayana took the security guard's hands and cupped them in between his own. He spoke several soft, personal words to the security guard and they exchanged a long admiring look toward each other. That one moment together with Mr. Narayana, we knew, would remain in this employee's mind for the rest of his life.

Ashoke Maitra, former Corporate Director of Human Resources for the Times of India, brings this spiritual principle to life in his employee-training programmes,

> *My goal for each individual is that they manifest their latent Divinity and become happier. I know when an individual is happier and more joyful their productivity is bound to go up.*

Beyond such individual acts, how do spiritual-based leaders inspire *others* to value the true worth of people, and treat people as sparks of Divinity? Consider the ServiceMaster Company, one of the 500 largest corporations in the USA, which provides home services to 21 million residential customers each year, through a network of over 5,400 company-owned and franchised service centres.

ServiceMaster's business success is without question – and it's based upon four corporate objectives:

- To honour God in all we do
- To help people develop
- To pursue excellence
- To grow profitably

What does it means to them "To honour God in all we do"?

> *We believe that every person – regardless of personal beliefs or differences – has been created in the image and likeness of God. We seek to recognise the dignity, worth and potential of each individual and believe that everyone has intrinsic worth and value.*
>
> *This objective is not an expression of a particular religious belief, or a basis for exclusion. Rather, it is a mandate for inclusion, and a constant reminder for us to do the right thing in the right way.*

We might not always be able to live by the ideals of valuing those we lead for their true worth and seeing them as a spark of Divinity. Yet it is an inspiring framework that can continually challenge us to grow spiritually in our leadership.

As you seek to value the *true worth* of those you lead, ask yourself: *What would my attitudes and behaviour be like if I valued each person for his/her 'true worth'?*

As you seek to see the *Divinity in all* ask yourself: *How would I state in my own words what it means to treat everyone as a spark of Divinity?*

3.4 A SPIRITUAL VIEW OF THE BOTTOM LINE

When we focus on spiritual-based measures of a "bottom line," we are more likely to stay uplifted in our vision and see beyond the profit motive, beyond the self-interest of the organisation, and even beyond the welfare of society in material terms.

WHEN AN executive operates his or her business from a spiritual point of view, does it change their definition of the "bottom line"?

The term "bottom line" originally meant the last line of an income statement, the profits that remained after costs were deducted from revenues. Over time, it has come to mean something broader: "the key results" or the "most important outcomes" of an enterprise that drive its activities.

That shift in definition has followed the shift in the nature of business over the past century where the *purpose of business* and *its bottom line measures* have seen an evolution through four over-lapping contexts[4]:

Paternal-Mechanistic context:
Time Period – Arose in the early 1900's and dominated well into the 1960's
Purpose of Business – Wealth creation for owners, shareholders
"Bottom Line" Measures – Financial (profit maximisation)

Humanistic context:
Time Period – First gained momentum in the 1950's and 60's, and became the norm of many major corporations by the 1980's
Purpose of Business – Wealth creation with dignity, for owners, shareholders and employees
"Bottom Line" Measures – Balanced Scorecard (Measures for Finance, Customers, Processes, Employees, Shared Culture); "100 Best Companies to Work For"

Holistic context:
Time Period – First voiced in the late 1960's and has gained momentum since the 1980's and 90's

[4] You may download an extensive article on this subject titled "*Spirituality: The Emerging Context for Business Leadership*" from our website: www.globaldharma.org/sbl-home.htm

Purpose of Business – Wealth creation with accountability to all stakeholders (including, employees, customers, community, nature, society)
"Bottom Line" Measures – "Triple Bottom Line" (Measures for Finance, Society, and Environment); Social Responsibility Index

Spiritual-Based context:
Time Period – Just beginning to emerge
Purpose of Business – Spiritual fulfilment and selfless service to society that is motivated from a transcendent Source of consciousness
"Bottom Line" Measures – Purity and unity of thought, word, and deed

A working definition we've found useful for the "spiritual view of the bottom line" is: *Having a perspective of business that is sourced from a spiritual context, with corresponding measures for its activities and outcomes.*

For you, this means to first define the *fundamental purpose of business* from a spiritual context. To do that, start by defining what spirituality means to you, which will in turn define your spiritual context. From that perspective, formulate your view of the fundamental purpose of business. For us, that would be "Spiritual fulfilment and selfless service to society that is motivated from the Source of creation."

Once you have defined the purpose of business from a spiritual context, you can begin to determine the corresponding measures that will underlie the activities and outcomes of your own work organisation. For us, that would be measures organised around "Purity and unity of thought, word, and deed" – where purity is anything motivated from the Source of creation.

Because spirituality is naturally inclusive, its measures may also contain those of the other three contexts, including financial profitability, social accountability, and environmental awareness. In addition, there are likely to be measures of personal, organisational and societal health derived from spiritual texts and values – perhaps including explicit measures of spiritual fulfilment.

Here is where we're sometimes asked, "Why measure in the first place?" Isn't it a bit ludicrous to try to measure "spirituality" in the workplace – and make it something everyone strives for just like profits? Wouldn't that cheapen our spirituality – or worse, make it a servant to our pursuit of material gain through business?

There's an adage from the Total Quality movement: "You can only improve that which you can measure." And Buddha has said, "We become what we think." Together,

they mean that measures can focus what we think about in business, and where we can improve.

When we focus on spiritual-based measures of a "bottom line," we are more likely to stay uplifted in our vision. We are more likely to see beyond the profit motive, beyond even the self-interest of the organisation, and beyond even the welfare of society in material terms. We are likely to become embodiments of Spirit who can see what is eternally important and make sure the time and energy we spend at work truly contributes to what's ultimately important, day-to-day.

So, ask yourself: *Based on my spiritual context and its corresponding view of the purpose of business, what are the measures and activities that I can put into place in my work organisation that are aligned with this view?*

3.5 DEFINING BUSINESS SUCCESS

If we draw from the wisdom of spiritual teachings, we can see that business success, from a spiritual point of view, naturally becomes contribution to society and spiritual fulfilment.

ONE OF THE questions we love to ask spiritual-based executives is, "How do you define business success?" While their answers are as unique and diverse as their personalities, invariably they have the same theme: to promote the inner happiness and fulfilment of everyone involved, and to sincerely make a positive contribution.

With this theme, each of these leaders has been extremely successful in growing their organisations and generating financial prosperity. They are clearly demonstrating that it's possible to keep their attention on serving others and fostering spiritual fulfilment while being successful in worldly endeavours. The principles they're following seem to correlate with the wisdom we have found in the ancient Indian Vedas. These scriptures describe four goals of a "successful life":

- *dharma* – living in harmony with creation and contributing to the well-being of society
- *artha* –generating the wealth of good education, health, money, and character
- *kama* – satisfying desires through a life of comfort, health, enjoyment, and status for oneself and one's family
- *moksha* – attaining spiritual fulfilment

Most importantly these scriptures tell us how to balance these four priorities in order to attain true success:

- Generating wealth (artha) is to be pursued within the larger priority of contributing to the well-being of society (dharma).
- Satisfying desires (kama) is to be pursued within the larger priority of spiritual fulfilment (moksha).

In accord with the wisdom of these spiritual teachings, we can see that business success naturally emphasises *contribution to society* and *spiritual fulfilment*. When traditional measures of business success – shareholder return, market share, industry power, and so on – are subordinate to these higher priorities, wealth can be generated and desires can be satisfied while naturally promoting well-being rather than harm, service rather than greed, and an uplifted spirit rather than unscrupulous competition.

But are these priorities really practical in a business? Consider the example of the Hard Rock Café chain of restaurants, founded by Isaac Tigrett when he was less than 20 years old. He was living in London when he noticed…

> *In England in those days, the social classes were still completely separated. There was literally no place in London where a baker and a banker could meet to talk. I wanted to break that system.*

He opened an "absolutely classless" restaurant in the ultra-fancy Mayfair district. His timing, concept and location clicked from the word go: bakers and bankers, labourers and Labour politicians were all standing in line from the very first day. The rest is popular history of traditional success, as his chain of restaurants grew to become a worldwide phenomenon. But was this the only way Tigrett defined business success? No.

Success for him was making a positive contribution to society – "breaking the class system" – plus the spiritual upliftment of employees and customers. While on a spiritual pilgrimage in India he heard the saying, "Love All, Serve All." To him, it embodied the ultimate spiritual goal of life: to love people and to serve from that place. That became the spiritual source of the company culture:

> *All I did was put spirit and business together in that big mixing bowl and add love. I didn't care about anything but people... just cherish them, look after them, and be sensitive to them and their lives.*

An important conclusion we have drawn from all of this is that if we look to the worldly definitions of success – and thus pursue wealth and desires by themselves – we will continue the current cycles of greed, corruption and disparity of wealth that are now so prevalent in our world today. However, if we turn to the wisdom of our spiritual basis, we can indeed foster business success that produces harmony, wealth, satisfaction, and spiritual fulfilment.

Muhammad and Confucius sum it up well:

> *Wealth properly employed is a blessing, and a man may lawfully endeavour to increase it by honest means.* (Sayings of Muhammad)
>
> *Virtue is the root. Wealth is the result. The Great Teaching.* (Confucius)

So, ask yourself: *From my spiritual view, how would I define success for myself as a spiritual-based leader and for the organisation that I lead? How would I describe the balance of priorities in my definitions of success?*

3.6 DISCIPLINING AND REPRIMANDING

Spiritual-based leaders naturally consider the ultimate good of people even in disciplinary matters. They know that allowing a person to "get away with" a wrongful act will not serve anyone.

IT IS INEVITABLE that spiritual-based leaders will have to face and correct employees, contractors, suppliers, clients and even peers who have not acted as they had promised. Or sometimes the correction is needed because the person acted immorally, unethically or in a way that could have harmed themselves or others.

There is a misconception in the minds of many people who think that if you are spiritual you must be soft and lenient when dealing with situations such as these. We have found just the opposite to be the case. Sathya Sai Baba, a spiritual teacher in India, sets the example for us:

> *Generally, I speak sweetly, but on this matter of discipline, I will not grant any concessions… I shall not reduce the rigour to suit your level, for that will only ruin you – I pay attention to your ultimate good.*

Spiritual-based leaders naturally consider the ultimate good of people, even in disciplinary matters. They know that allowing a person to "get away with" a wrongful act will not serve anyone. Yet the discipline is aimed to give the person the opportunity to learn and grow from the experience even as they face consequences. And the consequences are given only so long as they are needed to stimulate the improvement in the person.

In this regard, G. Narayana, Chairman Emeritus for Excel Industries, Ltd., describes his philosophy for reprimanding employees:

> *Build the people for success and appreciate them. When you want to reprimand, do it like a dose of medicine. Appreciation is like food: morning breakfast, afternoon lunch, evening dinner. But, discrimination and punishment you do like a medicine: required dose, required time, doctor is present. If you give continuous medicine and no food, man will die. If there is only food and no medicine, there is no correction and improvement. Regular food and required medicine ensures health and strength. Integrate recognition and correction appropriately and optimally.*

While enforcing consequences, spiritual-based leaders make a clear distinction between disapproval of the actions versus disapproval of the person. For example, S.

K. Welling, former Executive Director of Corporate Planning and Policies for HMT Limited describes his approach to discipline:

> *When it comes to disciplining a person, I don't like to use the stick too much. When someone needs correction, I always tell the person, "Look Mr X., I am not against you. Please don't mistake me. I love you. I am not against you. What I am against is the act of yours that you did. And that is what I'm correcting."*

But what if firing a person seems to be the only answer? Even here, a spiritual-based leader takes a broader view of the situation. Ashoke Maitra, former Director of Human Resources for the Times of India, speaks of this by saying:

> *Suppose an employee director comes to me and tells me an employee needs to be sacked, as he is not performing. I think of the consequences of this to the employee: what will happen to his family, to his children, how will he get reformed? If there is something wrong, I ask what are some alternative ways he could improve, without terminating him.*
>
> *My philosophy is that when this employee was recruited he was perfect; otherwise why would he be recruited? So if he needs to be terminated today, then surely the organisation has to take some responsibility – otherwise why did I recruit him? So I cannot absolve my responsibility so fast.*

Whether there is a need to discipline, reprimand or let a person go, we can bring together the wise experience of all three spiritual-based leaders here: use discipline as medicine, only to the degree needed; be against the action, not the person; see what responsibility you need to take for the other person's "failure" and how you can help them reform. Then, whatever action you take can be done in a way that gives the person the best chance of gaining a difficult-yet-positive lesson for his or her future. Even then, as a spiritual-based leader you can be paying attention to the person's "ultimate good."

So, ask yourself: *From my spiritual basis, what is my philosophy for disciplining and reprimanding a person, as I pay attention to his/her ultimate good?*

3.7 START A REVOLUTION IN YOUR LEADERSHIP

An inner revolution is being called for in business today – a return to our spiritual roots, to our inner source of spirituality – and leading our businesses through a fundamental change from that place.

THE WORD "revolution" often conjures up an image of radical change and chaos. Actually, revolution has two meanings. The first is "fundamental transformation" that often does involve great uncertainty. But the other definition is equally important, especially in today's workplace. What does the earth do every 24 hours? It completes one revolution, returning to where it began. So, the second meaning of revolution is "to return to where you began."

We went through both types of revolution when the astronauts first went to the moon. Revolutionary technologies were required, which then had dramatic repercussions on the rest of society. Another, equally fundamental shift took place in our consciousness. William personally spoke with Edgar Mitchell, an American astronaut on the Apollo 14 flight, who said:

> *This powerful experience of seeing the Earth and our whole solar system against the background of the cosmos had a very profound effect on me... an overwhelming sense of being connected with the universe, of feeling connected to all things… We went to the moon as technicians – we returned as humanitarians.*

After revolving around the earth and moon, Edgar "returned" to his own sense of spirituality. This same type of inner revolution is being called for in business today. We need to go beyond the technical aspects of running a good and profitable business…to experience our own life floating in the cosmos and return reinvigorated as a spiritual leader. That means returning to our spiritual roots, to our inner source of spirituality – and leading our businesses from that place.

Both of these aspects of revolution have begun to take form throughout the world in the past 10 years. Dee Hock, the founder of Visa, has said:

> *We are at the very point of time where a four hundred old age is dying and another is struggling to be born, a shifting of cultures, science and institutions greater than the world has ever experienced.*

There is also a spiritual awakening occurring in business leadership throughout the world. In one research study involving eminent leaders (such as a college president

and a CEO in health care), 77% of these transformational leaders said there was a strong and vital relationship between spirituality and their leadership practices. And, 59% commented that they felt spirituality in the workplace was essential for organisational health and productivity. Many universities have added courses related to spirituality in business and conferences on this subject are becoming easily accessible.

What does such a spiritual leader in business look like? Take for example William George, former Chairman of Medtronic Inc., the world's largest medical technology company. He says openly:

> *We are all spiritual beings. To unleash the whole capability of the individual - mind, body and spirit, gives enormous power to the organisation. It truly empowers members of the organisation to devote their entire beings to the ultimate purpose for which the organisation exists, which is to serve others.*

As we seek to start a revolution in business leadership, remember that leadership is a quality that *anyone* can possess, it's not just for those in an authority position in a hierarchy. When we are coming from our spiritual nature, we are all leaders.

To assist you in starting your own revolution, your own return to your spiritual roots as a leader, there are four faculties (which we'll explore more in upcoming articles) that will strengthen your spiritual leadership:

1. Establish your own spiritual context from which you can lead
2. Explore your spirituality from the inside out
3. Embody spiritual principles in your leadership
4. Engage in revolutionary activities

This spiritual revolution in leadership brings together the inner "return" to our spiritual roots with the transformation of business that reflects this fundamental change. The workplace is a mighty arena for this inner revolution, when we consciously make it that way. According to the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Dag Hammarskjold, our work is an ideal path for spiritual growth:

> *In our era, the road to holiness necessarily passes through the world of action.*

So, ask yourself: *How would I describe in my own words what it means to return to my spiritual roots? What would it mean to me to lead others from that spiritual basis?*

3.8 BUILDING A SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION

Before you invite people to return to their spiritual roots and operate in their work from that foundation, always start by doing your own inner homework first.

AS YOU BEGIN to consider the ways to foster a spiritual revolution at work through your leadership, it's natural that you will want to be as inclusive and as respectful as you can with those whom you lead. So, what is the wisest way for a leader to do this?

Before you invite people to return to their spiritual roots and do their work from that foundation, always start by doing *your own inner homework first*. If you haven't already defined the spiritual view of life from which you lead, take some quiet time to do that now[5]. As a refresher, here are the two main steps to take:

1. Describe what spirituality means to you
2. Identify a short, summary "theme" to that spiritual view

The purpose of your spiritual theme is to serve as a headline that you can remember easily. Then, you can use it frequently in your leadership by asking yourself: *Drawing from my spiritual theme as a guide, how would I approach this situation or make this decision?* As you consistently draw from your spiritual foundation in your leadership, you will naturally communicate your spiritual strength to others, even without words.

For example, Lars Kolind, former CEO of Oticon in Denmark – one of the world's premier suppliers of products for the hearing impaired – defined his spiritual view of life in this way:

> *For me, spirituality is the acceptance of the existence of a God, and to adhere to the religion that expresses that belief.*

He then identified his spiritual theme as:

> *To love God and love your neighbour*

Now, how do you expand this process of "leading with a spiritual theme" to include the group of people you work with? In this article, we'll address two ways that can help you get started. In these steps, we encourage you to use the word spirituality as

[5] If you need more background and information on how to do this, refer to the articles titled "Shifting to a Spiritual View of Work" and "Defining Your Spiritual Context" in Book 2: *Work as a Spiritual Practice*.

openly as you feel comfortable, though it is not required. In the next article we will share how to be more explicit in creating a group spiritual theme.

The first step is to start by bringing your workgroup together and initiating safe and open conversations. Begin by having people tell personal stories about times when they felt:

- A deeper meaning in their life as well as work
- Guided by an inner wisdom in their work
- A spiritual inspiration in their work

Allow people to share their views on a voluntary basis. This will help them become more comfortable with the idea of discovering and discussing a deeper source of meaning for their work.

As a second step, you can introduce a spiritual theme to your group in a way that is practical and meaningful to their goals and values. For example, Ananth Raman, the president of a manufacturing firm, tells us how he did this to introduce a quality improvement programme in his company:

> *Since the products we manufacture are made for specific applications it is extremely difficult to standardise things. An expert, however, told us this was all very simple: "You simply say what you are doing and do what you say." But my fellows did not think it was as simple as that. They were still completely worried.*
>
> *While contemplating this problem from a spiritual view, I realised that all that the expert was talking about was having unity of thought, word and action. So we went all over the company and said, "The company's objective with this quality control system is to have unity of thought, word and action."*
>
> *This began to catch on and people started raising all kinds of questions about how to operate in this way. I was amazed at the chain reaction that began to occur.*

As a result, Ananth began having monthly meetings where his people brought difficult situations to see how they could solve them with a unity of thought, word and action. Since Ananth's leadership came from a strong spiritual foundation, it helped him guide his people to cultivate this quality of inner unity.

As you take these first two steps, ask yourself: *Drawing from my own spiritual strength, what steps can I take to begin to build a spiritual foundation with those whom I lead?*

3.9 CREATING A GROUP SPIRITUAL THEME

When you identify a shared sense of spiritual meaning in your workgroup, you establish a firm foundation for your group members to work according to its most deeply motivating sense of what's important to them.

MANY YEARS ago, the Hewlett-Packard Corporation surveyed their 200 most consistently successful leaders to discover their common management practises. One of their key practises was to create a set of values for their own workgroup, independent of but related to the company values. Then they measured every decision they made in the workgroup according to these values.

You as a leader can also do this by asking each person in your workgroup to identify one personal value they would like to have incorporated into the way your group works, day-to-day. Post each person's answer on a large sheet of paper and ask the group to look for (a) commonalities and (b) important "unique" values. As key themes emerge, you can synthesise them into a set of 4-6 core values for your group – values by which to measure everything you do as a group.

Now, suppose you were to explore even further – to discover the spiritual roots of those values? By doing so, you can establish a shared sense of spiritual meaning that motivates everything your workgroup does together. Ananth Raman, president of a manufacturing firm, told us how he made this transition:

> *Values such as truth, respect, equanimity, honesty and integrity are the core values that became very strong for me when I went into business. On the surface, these values seem more on the ethical side. But as I began to look at things more spiritually, I discovered deeper values within each of them. For example, I realised that it's not just a good business practise to be ethical in dealing with others; I'm actually the same as everyone else, and we all come from the same Divinity. As I continued to look at these ethical values from a spiritual perspective, each of them became stronger.*

To create a safe, open climate for discussing the spiritual roots of your group's values, be sure to focus on the inclusive nature of spirituality, rather than on religious differences – while also honouring the diverse spiritual views of life that your group may have. A great way to start this process is to pose self-inquiry questions such as: "What does spirituality mean to you?" and "How can we appreciate work as a chance for spiritual growth?"

Then, have each person clearly define their own spiritual view of life and identify a concise "spiritual theme" in 4-6 words. Some examples that people have shared with us are:

- *Spirituality is "inspired responsibility towards people, other living beings, and the world… seeing and relating with Divinity in every aspect."*
  Spiritual Theme: "Noble actions, feelings, thoughts and responsibility."
- *Spirituality is the inner part of our humanness. It is our inner force.*
  Spiritual Theme: "To know thyself."

Have each person share his or her spiritual view of life and related spiritual theme with everyone else. Get to know the spiritual themes of others by making nameplates for their desk or nametags, or creating a poster with these spiritual themes. Use the group's imagination to come up with creative ideas to bring this spirituality alive. Then select a common work situation and have each person say how that situation looks through the lens of his or her spiritual theme.

Once everyone has become comfortable with this, have a dialogue about what might be the essence of your *group's* spiritual theme. Continue to fine-tune this until you ultimately create a word-crafted statement of the group's spiritual theme. Once this group spiritual theme has emerged, you can begin to ask, "Using our spiritual theme as a guide, how should we approach this situation or make that decision?"

As new people come into the group, take the time to have them share their spiritual views of life and their spiritual themes. Use this as an opportunity to evolve the group spiritual theme over time. This is a powerful way of continuing to tap into a shared sense of spiritual meaning for all the work your group does together.

So, ask yourself: *What is my own spiritual view of life and related spiritual theme? How can I begin to engage others in identifying their spiritual themes and creating a group spiritual theme?*

3.10 BE THE CULTURE, BEFORE CREATING THE CULTURE

> The executives must first embody the spiritual foundation that they want to create in the culture, before asking others in the organisation to do the same.

IF YOU'RE an executive who's committed to leading from a spiritual basis, you've undoubtedly considered its implications on your organisational culture. And you've probably wondered, "Can a group of executives generate a spiritual foundation that revitalises the culture of an entire organisation – from which even its mission and values can emerge?"

For us, the answer is undoubtedly "Yes." Four years ago the board of directors of the Methodist health care system in Texas (USA) decided to reinvigorate its organisation. They hired a new CEO and the executive team developed a new statement of beliefs, mission, vision and values. Their belief statement is a wonderful example of establishing a spiritual foundation from which the entire organisation can grow. It starts by saying that their health care system is intended to provide quality health care services. Then it adds:

> *As it fulfils this purpose, the system participates in the redeeming activity of God that makes the world a better place for all humankind. This health system is based on the belief that God can heal through the lives, actions and words of a person, regardless of various religious perspectives. Therefore, in all endeavours the Methodist health care system strives to treat everyone it serves as a person of sacred worth and value, created by God.*

Their mission is an extension of this spiritual foundation: "To provide high quality, cost effective health care that delivers the best value to the people we serve in a spiritual environment of caring in association with internationally recognised teaching and research." Similarly, they built their five core values – Integrity, Compassion, Accountability, Respect, Excellence: "I CARE" – upon their spiritual belief statement.

Words are nice, but what does it take to bring statements like these alive in the day-to-day work of people in the organisation? The first step is for executives to be honest with themselves: "How well can we as executives actually live and work in accord with our own spiritual view of life and the spiritual foundation we've identified for the organisation?"

William once worked with an entire executive team who approached this kind of transformation in their organisational culture in a most wise manner. The essence of their creed was:

> *We have to be the culture before we can change the culture. We will have to embody this change ourselves for at least six months – so there is no question that we are walking our talk – before we ask the rest of the company to align with this change and to follow our lead.*

Without exception, every spiritual-based leader we've interviewed has reinforced this same attitude about changing their organisational culture from a spiritual perspective:

> *If someone wants to become a spiritual-based leader, they must first put themselves in order. After that everything will follow*.
>
> *The power of example is important; you must practice what you preach. You must express what you believe, with your deeds, as best you can. Be open about it and invite dialogue*.
>
> *Before you implement any of your core values, which to me is the same as my spiritual values, be sure that you have sound faith in those values.*

The next step is for the executives to continually explore, feel and share their own experiences of beginning to live and work from the spiritual foundation they have created. This could include discussing questions openly like, "How has the spiritual foundation of our organisation impacted our leadership?" G. Narayana, Chairman Emeritus of Excel Industries, Ltd., shares why this is an important step:

> *To bring spirituality into work, first of all make it a group process. The moment you make it a group process you are touched with God.*

Ultimately, the executive team must embody and energise the spiritual foundation, mission and values so strongly that its words and concepts are alive and pulsating throughout the day-to-day reality of the business. Then and only then should the executives think about a process of dialogue and inclusion with all the employees of the organisation.

So, ask yourself: *What is the opportunity for our executive team to make spirituality the basis for the culture of the organisation? How would I start to identify a spiritual foundation for the entire organisation?*

3.11 ENGAGING IN A SPIRITUAL DIALOGUE

You can establish a spiritual foundation for the work of your entire organisation by following six golden guidelines for a successful dialogue with your employees.

TOM CHAPPELL and his wife co-founded the American company "Tom's of Maine" in 1971 on the principles of customer-focused, environmentally-conscious health products. As the company grew, profit maximisation began to dominate business planning, and Tom considered selling the business, as it was no longer fulfilling to him.

But in 1989, a new degree of spirituality awakened in him, and he called a special board meeting to create a new strategy and culture based on, "Respecting people for who they are and not for what they can do for us." As Tom said:

> *I wanted to change the way we saw work and the way we did our work, the business was to be a vehicle uniting values and work.*

Their new mission, born from Tom's spiritual-based leadership, began to give people permission to actualise the creativity and social responsibility that had been within them all along. At one point, Tom called his entire company to an outdoor meeting. The aim was to create a relaxed atmosphere where his executive team could listen as the employees talked about the new spiritual-based mission that the company was moving towards. The team heard many suggestions, and Tom made sure that they acted immediately on the key issues that the employees raised.[6]

Now, suppose you too, as a leader, have identified your own spiritual theme and values, and have dialogued with other executives or colleagues to identify a spiritual theme and values for your work together. How do you now engage a larger group of people in the same dialogue – ultimately to establish a spiritual foundation for the work of the larger group?

From our research and our experience in organisations, here are six guidelines we can offer for having a successful dialogue with the employees throughout your group or organisation:

First, be sure that your core group is exemplifying in their own work the spiritual foundation you want to dialogue about. Nothing bolsters a dialogue more than

[6] Tom relates their experiences in his book *Soul of a Business*.

sincerity – evidenced by a unity of your thoughts, words, and actions. Be strong and confident, peaceful and persistent. Be unattached to how it looks at any point of time – knowing that not every conversation is going to be smooth, not every attempt to change is going to succeed. As one of our favourite quotes from Winston Churchill reminds us:

> *Success is all about going from failure to failure without losing your enthusiasm.*

Second, set "safe" conditions for having these open dialogues: make them voluntary, and focus on the commonality of spirituality, rather than religious differences. Honour the diversity of thoughts and feelings and practice "peaceful acceptance" of what others have to share. Listen "generously" to each other and be sure there is no attempt to "convert" others to a specific point of view.

Third, give people a chance to identify their own spiritual theme and values. They will naturally engage in the dialogue more enthusiastically when they can invest their whole heart and soul into it[7]. You can "warm up" this type of dialogue by asking people questions like:

- *What are the 5 most impactful moments of spirit in your life?*
- *How can we appreciate work as a chance for spiritual growth?*

Fourth, share your proposed spiritual theme for the organisation and lead all the employees through a series of questions that will stimulate a deeper look into how they can embrace and live it in their work. For example:

- *From my personal spiritual theme, how can I align with this organisational spiritual theme?*
- *How can I specifically put this organisational spiritual theme into practice in my own work?*

Fifth, once you have involved everyone in this dialogue process, act on the applicable employee suggestions immediately, to provide the initial proof that "the executives are sincere in creating a spiritual-based culture."

Finally, celebrate the changes. Make sure there is a way to recognise, highlight, and show the spiritual growth that is taking place. And be sure to celebrate not only the successes, but even the attempts that may have failed temporarily.

[7] For more on this, refer to our previous article titled *Creating a Group Spiritual Theme*

So, ask yourself: *How can I encourage and lead a dialogue in my company to establish a spiritual foundation for our work? What questions can I use to nurture this process along?*

3.12 THE WHOLENESS OF MEANINGFUL CONVERSATION

Through the art of dialogue with each other, we can bring forth the inner shared meaning that resides in each of us and naturally tap into the spirit of oneness.

HAVE YOU ever had a heart-to-heart conversation with a colleague, or small group at work, that left you feeling inspired and motivated? Have you ever wished that your organisation could be filled with these types of conversations, rather than the more typical "superficial" conversations?

In recent articles, we've emphasised the importance of leaders engaging in meaningful conversations that touch the deeper dimensions of those they work with. Amber Chand, co-founder of Eziba, a company that markets the products of artisans from around the world, spoke to us about her vision of incorporating this most important element in the culture of her organisation:

> *I feel that in order for the company to succeed, we have to create the space for conversation. To me this is the most connecting, intimate way of creating happy people.*

How can business leaders intentionally inspire a culture of on-going conversations that naturally focus on their most meaningful goals and provide the energy and motivation to achieve them? We've found three resources that have been a wealth of wisdom for us as we have explored and practised this most important art.

The first practice is *dialogue*. In his book, *Synchronicity: The Inner Path of Leadership*, Joseph Jaworski speaks at length about the nature and power of dialogue. He explains that the word "dialogue" comes from two Greek roots, *dia* and *logos*, which relate to "the flow of meaning":

> *Dialogue does not require people to agree with each other. Instead, it encourages people to participate in a pool of shared meaning that leads to aligned action.*

Joseph learned the practice of dialogue through the late physicist David Bohm[8], who pioneered this concept. Bohm believed that ordinary thought in society today was "incoherent, going in all sorts of directions, cancelling each other out." He believed

[8] To learn more about Bohm's research and writings on dialogue, you can visit the website: http://www.infed.org/archives/e-texts/bohm_dialogue.htm

that if people were to think together in a coherent way, it would have tremendous power. Bohm compared dialogue to superconductivity:

> *In superconductivity, electrons cooled to a very low temperature act more like a coherent whole than as separate parts. At higher temperatures, they begin to act like separate parts, scattering into a random movement and losing momentum.*

The major concept underlying the practice of dialogue is quite spiritual – that beneath all of the diversity we see in our physical reality is a "wholeness," a "oneness" that precedes and pervades all that exists. G. Narayana, Chairman Emeritus for Excel Industries, Ltd., has an explicit way of speaking about the value of conversation as it relates to spirituality in our work:

> *When I join together with another person, then God is there and I move from "I" to "we." Then we begin to discuss hope, and Divinity is there. So if you search inside another human being, you will find God.*

As we engage in dialogue with each other and bring forth the inner shared meaning that resides in each of us, we naturally tap into this wholeness, this oneness. As Peter Senge, Jaworski's colleague, describes:

> *A flow of meaning begins to operate around us, as if we were part of a larger conversation.*

Debra once worked with a group of three partners in a financial firm. Each of the partners was distinctly different in their personalities and goals, and they often found it difficult to resolve their work issues together. Then Debra began to foster the practice of dialogue among them.

To begin each of their meetings, she had them sit in silence for 5 minutes, to help "cool down" their mental thoughts. Next, she helped each of them speak sincerely about areas of their work that were most meaningful to them, while encouraging the other two partners to listen with open minds and hearts, without judging what was being said.

Before long, all three of the partners naturally became more transparent, open, honest and spontaneous. Through the art of dialogue, their communication improved dramatically, and they began to experience a deeper level of harmony in their work.

In our next articles we will share more about the other two practices of conversation: the "world café" and "appreciative inquiry." For now… ask yourself: *How would I describe what is deeply meaningful to me in my life and work? How can I begin to engage in the practice of dialogue with those I work with?*"

3.13 FUELLING A POSITIVE FUTURE

Appreciative inquiry helps you to use the positive energy of the past and present to fuel a new future for your organisation. It is a way of expanding your vision beyond the limitations that you or others may have.

IN OUR LAST article, we spoke about the *art of dialogue* and how it can inspire meaningful conversations that lead to aligned action. Another way of fostering communication that creates energy and momentum is *appreciative inquiry*[9]. In an article titled *Appreciative Inquiry: A Transformative Paradigm*[10], the underlying concepts are explained as:

> *Appreciative inquiry seeks what is "right" in an organisation. It is a habit of mind, heart and imagination that searches for the success, the life-giving force, the incidence of joy. It moves toward what the organisation is doing right and provides a frame for creating an imagined future that builds on and expands the joyful and life-giving realities as the metaphor and organising principle of the organisation. It is about freeing ourselves to explore beyond what we already know and understand.*

We first experienced this process in a large group setting during the 2002 *Spirit in Business* conference held in New York City. The conference became much more than just "listening to speakers," as each person had a chance to share their most inspiring work experiences and to be a part of creating a positive future for business.

While we experienced appreciative inquiry in a large group setting, it can also be practised one on one with another person, or with small groups within your organisation. The two key elements to the process are: first, have each person reflect upon and share stories about the positive aspects of their past, their values, and their hopes for the future; and second, create statements as a group that describe a positive future for the organisation.

To begin, it's best to formulate a first set of questions that are appropriate to your organisational setting. For example, you might ask each person to reflect upon:

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[9] For more information on this concept, you can refer to: http://appreciativeinquiry.cwru.edu

[10] By Jane Magruder Watkins and David Cooperrider in OD Practitioner, Volume 32, 2000. This article can be downloaded from http://www.odnetwork.org/odponline/vol32n1/transformative.html

Recalling a time in your career when you did your very best work – when you felt the most alive and fulfilled – what were the circumstances and motivating factors? Who was involved? What was your inner motivation at the time?

What do you value about this organisation? What do you feel it has contributed to your life? And to the world?

What three wishes would you make to heighten the vitality and health of this organisation?

Then, divide the group into pairs and have each person share their stories, experiences, and points of view one-on-one with one other person. This provides everyone with the opportunity to feel that his or her experiences have been fully listened to and valued.

Once this process is complete, focus this energy by bringing the whole group together and begin to look for the themes and topics that are common to the stories that people told. These themes and topics then become the focus of the next step, which is to begin building positive future statements for the organisation. As described in the article *The Appreciative Inquiry Summit*[11]:

These are affirmative statements of the future organisation, stated in the present tense, that stretch the organisation toward its dreams.

Ultimately, bringing forth the positive spirit and vision of the organisation in everyone is the mark of a true leader, one who takes care of the long-term future of the company and all of society. Ramón Ollé, President of Epson Europe, a Japanese-based corporation, once told us:

Our responsibility as leaders is not about making the company survive for even the next few years. Our responsibility is to insure that the company will survive and thrive for the next 120 years. When you begin to think this way, you are really entering into the spirit of family, into the spirit of a multi-cultural environment, and into the spirit of humanity as a whole.

As a leader, appreciative inquiry begins within – to your own dreams of spirit and vision. As Ramón Ollé also told us:

Success for me means realising my dreams, making them happen. If those dreams can permeate in the organisation, then I know that I can transform the organisation.

[11] By Diana Whitney and David L. Cooperrider in OD Practitioner, Volume 32, 2000.

So, ask yourself: *How can I engage myself and others in an appreciative inquiry to elicit our most inspiring and energising experiences? How can I focus this energy on creating the most positive future for the organisation and everyone touched by it?*

3.14 HOSTING CONVERSATIONS THAT MATTER

How can you bring diverse people together to become aware of what's most important to them and to engage them in finding solutions to their most common challenges? Try the "World Café" approach!

EVERY LEADER knows that it's vitally important to stay in touch with those whom they lead and others who are impacted by their leadership (i.e., the stakeholders of their organisation). But how is it possible to stay genuinely aware of the things that are most meaningful to these people, especially if they have diverse and often differing views?

While our last two articles have focused on "dialogue" and "appreciative inquiry" as ways to foster meaningful conversations, bringing people together in the format of the "World Café" is another rich option.

The World Café is a structured approach to use in larger settings of 20 or more people, especially when there could be a wide diversity of cultures or viewpoints. The World Café is an immensely creative process to use when you want to empower breakthrough ways of thinking, or even to stimulate a transformation in your organisational culture.

Like the dialogue and appreciative inquiry processes, the World Café evokes the best that people have to offer. As stated in a quick reference guide that can be downloaded at no cost from the internet[12]:

> *The Café is built on the assumption that people already have within them the wisdom and creativity to confront even the most difficult challenges. Given the appropriate context and focus, it is possible to access and use this deeper knowledge about what's important.*

The World Café is a lively process that takes place in a friendly environment made up of small tables with 4 to 6 people. But just like all successful and meaningful efforts, it's important to start by creating an inspiring purpose for the conversation you want to have. For example:

> A bank brought 50 people together in a World Café setting to generate project ideas for "how technology could create new approaches to old business challenges".

[12] For more information and many stories about the World Café process, please visit: www.theworldcafe.com

A township outside of Oslo, Norway, employed the Café process to foster a more holistic view from a wide range of organisations for their future cultural activities.

A group in South Africa used the World Café to host African women with disabilities in order to set up a new African network that would inspire ideas and tools for their work.

During the Café process, people engage in conversations stimulated by a series of meaningful questions, which are designed to awaken the heart as well as the mind. For example, a group of 80 mediators for legal disputes engaged in a World Café after a week-long training program. The first question they discussed was:

What did you discover this week about mediation or yourself… and how will that discovery affect your work?

In the Café process, people move to different tables about every 20 minutes, sharing and receiving a wider range of ideas. One person remains behind as the "host" for each table, briefly filling in the new table-mates about what the previous group had discussed. This movement is unique, as described in the World Café guide:

The opportunity to move between tables, meet new people, and actively contribute your thinking, to ever-widening circles of thought is one of the distinguishing characteristics of the Café. As participants carry key ideas or themes to new tables, they exchange perspectives, greatly enriching the possibility for surprising new insights.

Each time people go to a new table, they converse on a new question. For example, in the 2nd and 3rd rounds, the mediators discussed:

What new things would you attempt to do if you knew you would NOT fail?
What does it mean to you to be REALLY GOOD at what you do?

After 3 rounds of 20-minute conversations, the entire group comes together and reports the key insights and ideas generated during the conversations. This final conversation among the whole group is the opportunity to heartfully connect the overall themes and ideas that emerged during the smaller conversations. Filled with energy and inspiration, the participants leave the Café meeting ready to engage in activities that forward the purpose that was set out for the Café.

So, ask yourself: *How could I use the World Café to bring diverse people together to become aware of what's most important to them? What questions could I create to engage people in finding heartfelt solutions?*

3.15 WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW... MAY ENERGISE YOU!

As leaders, we certainly have invaluable experience to offer in our day-to-day leadership. And, we also have the opportunity to tap into an infinite source of energy and growth when we are willing to "not know" all the answers.

SOME YEARS AGO, a corporate executive asked William to coach and do a 360-degree feedback with one of his human resource managers who was having difficulty relating to his peers. The evening before they started their work together, William and the manager met for dinner just to get to know each other. For the first 30 minutes they talked about their backgrounds and work experiences; although William found the conversation interesting, he didn't feel that they were connecting at a deeper level.

So William said, "Up till now, we've talked about what we already know and what we've already done. Let's talk about what we don't know: the mysteries and uncertainties we're facing. What are the things we've aspired to, but haven't yet actualised? What is it that we lie awake at night wondering about?"

This sparked a conversation that was truly provocative and energising. They became so engaged that they both leaned forward across the table, eager to hear each other's next thought. Ultimately, they learned far more about the deeper part of each other, and it gave William an excellent basis for the work they were about to do together.

As leaders, it's easy to fall into the role of being "the expert", "the one with all the answers". But with a spiritual orientation, in which we attune ourselves to the mystery of the transcendent, we are able to go beyond this role and become comfortable with – even energised by – the uncertainty of "not knowing" and "letting things unfold". For example, André Delbecq, former dean of the Santa Clara University School of Business, describes how he embarked upon designing a new course on spiritual leadership for executives and MBA students:

> *When I began to put together the course, I really didn't know what I was doing. Now this is a tough thing for a senior academic. Your whole sense of self is made up of your expertise. The whole currency is to know all of the answers before you open your mouth. And here I was, entering a field that I was obviously not an expert in.*

> *However, my spiritual path was to give up the need to be the expert and just allow it to unfold, and at this point I had discovered what it meant to surrender. Once having arrived there, it unfolded wonderfully; everything I needed was given to me.*

From our own experience, we know that when we face the unknown and don't have "the answers", *fear* can arise – fear of being embarrassed, fear of losing credibility, fear of things turning out badly. We've often seen, in ourselves and others, two unproductive ways that leaders sometimes deal with such fears: (1) they act as if they are "in control"; or (2) they become paralysed.

Ricardo Levy, Chairman of Catalytica, Inc., USA, is one executive who has taught us a great deal about the energising effect of "not knowing". He once told us about the lesson he learned when he faced the realisation that he would need to replace several CEOs he had previously hired to run a few of his subsidiaries:

> *I began to question, "How should I deal with this?" In retrospect, I could have used one of the more important spiritual lessons that I have recently learned: the ability to quiet the mind and let the unresolved issue sit while discerning the right path. In a strange way, by following my action-oriented personality I ended up being paralysed. If I had been more seasoned in my ability to live in the unknown and accept it, I probably would have made a replacement decision about those CEOs much sooner.*

As leaders, we certainly have invaluable experience and expertise to offer in our day-to-day leadership. And, we also have the opportunity to tap into an inner source of energy and growth when we are willing to "not know" all the answers. The French novelist Andre Gide sums it up in this way:

> *One does not discover new territories without losing sight of the shore for a very long time.*

So, ask yourself: *What is one area of my leadership that I could re-energise if I were willing to "not know"?*

3.16 INCREASING OUR GROSS NATIONAL CHARACTER

Character development is a business leader's greatest contribution to economic development, and business leaders steeped in spiritual values can best help build the Gross National Character (*GNC*) of our nations.

SEVERAL YEARS AGO, we met an MBA student named Kapil Jawa who was completing his studies at the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning in India. He shared with us a most fascinating masters thesis he had researched about a values-based approach to measuring economic development. The overall theme of his report was:

> *Just as economic growth is necessary for human development, human development is critical to economic growth. This two-way link must be at the heart of any enlightened policy action.*

One of the most startling things he demonstrated was that the *lack of wealth* was not the barrier to overcoming our world's hunger, poverty and social problems. Using data from the United Nations[13], he showed that in 1997, Europeans and Americans together spent more on cosmetics, perfumes and pet foods than it would have taken to provide reproductive health, basic health and nutrition for all people on the planet. And military spending in that same period was twenty times that. So the resources are not lacking in this world, but the will, the understanding and the compassion are!

In his thesis, Kapil also pointed out the philosophy found in Kautilya's Arthashastra[14] that inspired a revival of many kingdoms in India for years after his reign. As Kapil stated: the healthiest state of affairs was one in which values higher than worldly possessions received honour and approval; maximum production was not the supreme objective of the economic organisation; commerce or wealth-making was not an end in itself; and merchants and manufacturers carried out their activities in a trust for the society they lived in.

Kapil concluded his findings in this way:

- Gross National Product and per capita income are not holistic indicators to compare the progress and development of nations.
- A developmental philosophy should be framed in terms of achieving the overall welfare of society and not just economic growth.

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[13] From the *World Development Report 1998* and *Human Development Report 1998*. United Nations Development Programme. New York: Oxford University Press

[14] An ancient Indian text meaning "scriptures of wealth"

- Economic development should result in enabling people to achieve the final spiritual goal of human life.
- In addition to the use of economic indicators, we could use indicators of five universal values – truth, righteousness, peace, love, and non-violence – to measure national development.

We concluded from Kapil's inspiring thesis that the real wealth of a nation is the *character* of its people. As Swami Vivekananda once said:

> *The rise of nations comes with an increase of men of character and of strong ethical and moral fibre.*

Therefore, every country in the world that wishes to increase its real wealth must necessarily focus on increasing its Gross National Character (GNC), along with its Gross National Product (GNP)! As Kapil put it so beautifully:

> *The purpose of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy, and creative lives. This simple but powerful truth is too often forgotten in the pursuit of material and financial wealth.*

There are clearly important initiatives that are happening around the world along these lines. Since 1990, the United Nations has been publishing its Human Development Index (HDI); and in 1999, the late Pakistani economist Mahbub ul Haq developed the "Humane Governance Index" (HGI). .

While these initiatives are at a macro level; in our view, business leaders also have the opportunity to make a dramatic difference to the overall welfare of our world, by taking the lead in exercising their own character, inspiring integrity in their colleagues, and transforming the character of their organisations.

How? We've found that character springs most deeply and most directly from our spiritual nature! And therefore, the real call is for transformational leaders who base their leadership on their spiritual roots and values.

Character development is a business leader's greatest contribution to the development of an economy, which comes from the Greek word *oikonomos*, meaning "household management". When we step up to the call to be business leaders steeped in our spiritual values, we will manage our companies and our economies with the same character as we would our own households – and thus build the Gross National Character (*GNC*) of our nations.

So, ask yourself: *How can I contribute to the strengthening of character in myself, my colleagues, and my organisation? How can I contribute to the Gross National Character of my country?*

3.17 TAP THE SPIRIT OF ORGANISATIONAL VALUES

When leaders create their organisational values from a spiritual basis, they will naturally be universal and unitive; and will guide the employees to be concerned with all others – all stakeholders – rather than just "me or us".

IN A PREVIOUS ARTICLE, we wrote about how to have your values be "all for one and one for all." We explored the difference between values that have a spiritual-basis versus values based in self-centredness. But what does this mean to a leader of an organisation?

As a spiritual-based leader, it is natural that you want a strong foundation of organisational values, and want your employees to work from a strong foundation of personal values. In that light, what difference does it make for you to foster an environment that nurtures spiritual-based values?

Take two organisations, both with the same stated value of being customer-focused: "We care for our customers." One would care for their customers because they know it is the best way to get them to spend money, and thus maximise their market position and revenue. The second would care for their customers because they sincerely want to give the best value and treat them as they themselves would like to be treated.

In other words, one company would be customer-focused out of self-interest (to "get"), while the other would be customer-focused out of a sincere sense of serving (to "give"). Self-centred values are always separative, with a mentality of "me first" and "us vs. them", even with customers. But when leaders create organisational values from a spiritual basis, they will naturally be universal and unitive. These values will guide the employees to be concerned with everyone – all stakeholders – rather than just "me or us".

As an illustration, when Dr. A. K. Chattopadhyay was Sr. Vice President for Associated Cement Company's Refractory Division, he told us a story about how he faced a challenge with a customer:

> *A man who had previously worked for ACC supplied and installed some refractory material for one of our customers. He told this customer that he was an ACC employee and claimed that the material had come from ACC, which was not true. So the client agreed to let him do the work because he used the ACC name. It so happened that the work that he did failed after two months.*

The customer came to me and talked with me about what had happened. In this situation, we had no legal obligation. But I felt it was our moral responsibility to stand behind this job because this customer gave the job to this man based on the ACC name. I replaced the material and sent my engineer out to install it. We lost heavily as there was no income whatsoever on this job. Even though I faced a lot of audit queries about this, I had the support of ACC management behind me.

What was the spiritual basis from which Dr. Chattopadhyay made his decision with this customer?

I feel that my very existence has a spiritual purpose. If I am here, I have a purpose to serve; God has created me not just to hover around and do nothing. My spirituality has grown slowly, especially as a leader. I can remember thinking that if I react in a certain manner it may do harm, and if I react in a different way it will not harm. This is how it began to grow in me and I still think that way today.

While it may seem that being self-centred is natural to being successful in business, we have found the opposite to be true in the long term. As Dr. Chattopadhyay concluded:

For me, spirituality is when we do not think in terms of these short-term gains. When I gave the approval to have our people install new material for this job, I clearly told them, "I am willing to take this loss, because I know there is a much bigger gain."

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 the levels of the organisation and society. Then our actions will definitely bring prosperity to all of us.

So, ask yourself: *What is the motivation behind my organisation's values? How can I nurture organisational and employee values that are spiritual-based?*

3.18 EMPOWERING SPIRITUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE

If you are a leader that would like to bring spirituality more to the forefront of your organisation's culture, you are not alone. There are many examples to inspire and guide us on how to do this.

BUSINESS LEADERS we've met, and William's MBA students at the university where he teaches in India, sometimes ask us if it's really possible to make spirituality an *overt and explicit* part of an organisational culture – without causing religious conflicts or being inappropriate to an otherwise "secular" way of operating.

As we've interviewed spiritual-based leaders around the world, we've found that some feel it's best to lead by example and keep spirituality *implicit* in their leadership. Magnus Vrethammar, former President of Pergo Flooring Europe, told us his views:

> *After many hours of thoughts on this, I have to say that my conclusion is that the explicit part of business is the house-holding, or economic operation, and the implicit part of business is to support the employees' spiritual quest in opening up.*

Others we've interviewed bring spirituality quite *explicitly* into their organisational culture. In fact, we've found that this is beginning to happen more and more. For example, in the 1920s, Marion Wade founded a company called ServiceMaster in Chicago, USA. Wade and the executives who followed him in building a Fortune 500 company made their number one company objective to "Honour God in all we do":

> *We believe that every person — regardless of personal beliefs or differences — has been created in the image and likeness of God. We seek to recognize the dignity, worth and potential of each individual and believe that everyone has intrinsic worth and value. This is not an expression of a particular religious belief, or a basis for exclusion. Rather, it is a mandate for inclusion, and a constant reminder for us to do the right thing in the right way.*

And Kyocera, a Japanese company that makes cell phones, prominently displays these spiritual covenants on their website:

> *Corporate Motto: "Respect the Divine and Love People." Preserve the spirit to work fairly and honorably, respecting people, our work, our company and our global community.*

Management Philosophy: To coexist harmoniously with nature and society. Harmonious coexistence is the underlying foundation of all our business activities as we work to create a world of abundance and peace.

To encourage more leaders to have confidence in bringing spirituality explicitly into their organisations, four international business organisations[15] began sponsoring the "International Spirit at Work" award in 2002. In honouring various organisations, the intention of the award, as stated on their website[16], is to "bring to public recognition organisations whose spiritual-based practices, policies and procedures help to make the world a better place." The award honours organisations throughout the world that explicitly nurture spirituality inside their organisations.

Among this year's honourees is Excel Industries Ltd. of Mumbai, under the executive chairmanship of G. Narayana. They see spirituality as "self-improvement and world service" with the Divine lighting the way, where every human can become Divine light. They exercise this spirituality through a strong focus on social responsibility and sustainability – demonstrated by conscientious attention to concerns such as natural waste management.

Another honouree this year is Planters Development Bank in the Philippines, which serves the financial needs of small and medium enterprises. Senior management regularly acknowledges the role of Divine Providence in the organisation's success, and the employees are committed to serving their customers with their "whole heart and mind."

Past honourees in India include: SREI International Financial Ltd. in Calcutta, for its respect for all religions and for grounding all company practices and policies in a belief that everything they have is derived from the blessings of God; and the Times of India for its workshops that assist employees to achieve "human excellence" through spiritual practices, helping them to "catalyse the latent Divinity in each of us."

If you are a leader that would like to bring spirituality more to the forefront of your organisation's culture, you are not alone. You can take comfort in knowing there are many leaders around the world who are blazing that path, providing examples to inspire and guide others to do the same.

[15] Association for Spirit at Work, the World Business Academy, the Spirit in Business Institute, the European Baha'i Business Forum

[16] For a full list of honourees of this award, please visit: www.spiritatwork.org

So, ask yourself: *Do I feel called to bring spirituality more overtly and explicitly into my organisation's culture? What can I learn from other leaders and companies to help bring this about?*

3.19 EVOCATIVE LEADERSHIP

Evocative leadership affirms and draws out the deeper inner spirit of others, and then empowers them to discover and fulfil their spiritual purpose through their work.

IN 1993, two young owners of an American software company were tragically killed in a plane crash, and the company fell into disarray under the leadership of an aggressive president. The Board of Directors hired two outside executives to replace the president, to bring the company back into order and reduce the risk of losing key employees. Since the process was going to happen very quickly and the employees had not previously met these executives, they sincerely wanted to have a smooth transition and stabilise the company so it could continue its success.

Debra was asked by the two executives to coach them on how to address the employees for the first time. After gathering details of how they wanted to proceed, she asked one of them to stand up and practice what he planned to say. While he spoke, Debra put herself in the shoes of the employees so she could coach him from that perspective.

He began with a strong sense of confidence about the company's market position and then proceeded to declare that the customers were their most important asset and would be their priority focus. While he certainly spoke with authority and assurance, Debra could feel her energy and enthusiasm diminish – just the opposite of what they wanted! When she asked the executive how he felt after his practice talk, he said that it was too serious and something seemed to be missing.

So Debra asked the two executives to heartfully focus on the employees for a few moments and to feel the value and contribution that the employees had made to the company. Even though these executives were outsiders coming in, they knew how the employees had pulled together during this tragedy. They became quite enthused as they spoke about it. They felt positive that they could count on the dedication and competence of the employees to stabilise the company and take it to even higher success.

Drawing from this, Debra pointed out that without the employees there would be no customers, and she helped them to see the inherent value of both the employees and customers as people, not just as assets to the company. By this, she was helping them to tap into the inner spirit of these employees.

The two executives readily accepted what Debra shared with them, and seemed a bit embarrassed about their oversight. Over the next two hours they designed an introduction that focused on a sincere, authentic appreciation for the employees as well as their own personal sense of commitment to them. They practiced this with faith and confidence, and looked forward to the future event.

What Debra was practicing in her coaching was “evocative leadership” – that type of leadership that affirms the inner spirit of others and empowers them to discover and fulfil their spiritual purpose through their work. According to the Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, the Latin root word of evocative is “evocare”, which means “to call forth.”

Evocative leadership is, in the words of Terry Pearce, author of *Leading Out Loud*, “leadership that recognises and values deeper human needs, where leaders are closer to workers, more communicative, and more vulnerable.” And as Willis Harman, author of *Global Mind Change*, would add, it is leadership that requires a shift “from feeling a need to control to feeling a need to express one’s authentic self, *to be*, with deep trust in the human spirit, and in a spiritual universe.”

When the day arrived for the two executives to meet the employees for the first time, Debra waited outside the auditorium. To her surprise, she heard clapping and laughter coming from the employees. Within 30 minutes, the two executives emerged with radiating smiles on their faces. They shared what a difference it had made for them to focus on expressing their sincere, high regard for the employees and to acknowledge their strengths and inherent value. They felt confident that this had made a decisive difference in their transition as the new, top two leaders in the company.

So, ask yourself: *What would my communication be like if I were to evoke and empower the inner spirit and spiritual purpose of those whom I lead?*

3.20 LEADING OUT LOUD

The leader that people most trust, and follow, is the one who communicates authentically from the heart. *"Authenticity is a way of being as a leader, rather than things you do."* (Terry Pearce, *Leading Out Loud*)

HAVE YOU EVER read a book title that had such a clear meaning that you naturally felt attracted to it? Our friend Terry Pearce, founder of Leadership Communication, wrote such a book. Its title, *Leading Out Loud: Inspiring Change through Authentic Communication*, captures the essence of what he has consistently found: the leader that people most trust, and follow, is the one who communicates authentically from the heart. As Terry says, the need for personal depth, openness and honesty is here to stay:

> *Authenticity calls us to respond. Authenticity is a way of being as a leader rather than things you do as a leader. Through a combination of introspection and discipline, you have to find your authentic voice and amplify it so that it resonates with those who follow you.*

We can think of no better example than Amber Chand, co-founder of Eziba, a company that markets the products of artisans from around the world. In an interview, she told us:

> *As a co-founder of this company, I have a tremendous amount of influence, but I have not been interested in seeing it as power. It is a status and respect that I hold very humbly. I try to continually find ways to be that nurturing, reassuring, loving spirit for the employees. This allows me to authentically be my spirit-self. As a result I have been able to actually cultivate a great confidence in others by being more spiritual: they expect it of me, they see it in me, they laugh at me, they dismiss me, all of that.*

For Terry, one of the greatest challenges is to be authentic in the midst of the most frightening, demanding times we face at work:

> *The change that is now required is no longer merely incremental*; *it is discontinuous, radical and frightening to those who participate. Leaders are faced with inspiring followers to jump this chasm with them. To inspire, the new leader must authentically engage in the issue at hand.*

That's exactly what Amber had to do in December, 2001:

> *We were restructuring the company and looking seriously at our goal of being a profitable organisation… which required us to let some people go. This was very*

painful for me. And yet, I had to be realistic about the early, start-up phase that we were in.

Terry details four principles for authentic leadership: faithful attention to what matters, courageous voicing of those values, developing the emotional intelligence to lead, and continual emphasis on connecting with others[17]. Here's how Amber demonstrated that at an open forum with her employees:

We clearly expected people to express their distress, unhappiness, frustration and anger. There was a moment when one of our senior members became defensive and it sparked a battle between two wills; it was awful. Everyone looked so sad and devastated. At the end of this, there was just this silence.

I then very quietly stood in the centre of the room, looked around at everyone, and said, "I am so sorry. I apologise for the way this has turned out." At that moment the faces of the people began to soften and a spaciousness was created that let them know that this was not about us versus them. It was simply all part of the journey of this company.

The apology felt like a quiet, but powerful flame within me. It was a moment when I stretched inside; I felt as if I literally re-defined what a leader was meant to be. I have always known that I was here to serve and anytime I forget this, I lose my way. Without this faith, this spiritual source, I do not feel it would be possible to be an exemplary leader.

Thus, leaders who truly know themselves deeply, who draw from their own sense of vision and meaning, call forth that same depth and authenticity from those they lead…These are the true *leaders* who can inspire people to participate, even co-lead, major change.

So, ask yourself: *How can I touch into my deepest, most authentic self and communicate to those whom I lead? What would authentic communication be like for me as a leader right now?*

[17] To download an article that outlines the core principles and communication framework in *Leading Out Loud*, please visit: www.blessingwhite.com/Library/Press/AuthenticLeadership.pdf

3.21 A SPIRITUALLY NOURISHING WORKPLACE

The Philippines-based Planters Development Bank is an organisation whose leaders recognise and nurture the spiritual aspirations of their employees and everyone else they touch in the course of their business.

IN OUR WORLD TODAY, many working people have a desire to make spirituality a more explicit part of their work, but are struggling to figure out how. As a result, they typically focus their spiritual growth more on their personal life, rather than their work life.

Yet more than ever, we are finding business organisations whose leaders recognise and nurture the spiritual aspirations of their employees and everyone else they touch in the course of their business. One such organisation is Planters Development Bank in Manila, Philippines, whose President and Chief Operating Officer is Floy Aguenza.

Plantersbank, as it is commonly called, was one of ten organisations world-wide to receive the "International Spirit at Work Award"[18]. Here's how they define spirituality for their organisation:

> *At Planters Development Bank, we define spirituality as the essence of one's person – the divine and the human qualities present in each one of us. It is the working together of these qualities which shape who we are and connect us to our Supreme Creator.*
>
> *Spirituality is our inner being – heart, soul and spirit- which gives greater meaning and purpose to our daily work and helps to transform our community into a better place to live through respect and love for others. We believe that spirituality behoves us to act in the best interest of the institution and of all the stakeholders.*

As you can imagine, a spiritual environment can and does have a valuable impact on those who work there. Rhodora Batalla, an employee of Plantersbank, wrote a letter describing the influence this environment has had on her life:

> *When I was younger, I used to live a life full of spirituality. For more than 10 years, I was a member of the choir in our church and actively participated in all our parish activities. I focused myself on knowing, loving and serving God. During those years my family and the church were my life.*

[18] To learn more about other recipients of the International Spirit at Work award, please visit: www.spiritatwork.org.

When I graduated from college, I got busy looking for a job and when I finally had one I got busy at work which took all my time. Nevertheless, I didn't lose the hope that one day I would find my way back… Then I joined Plantersbank in 2003, a bank full of spiritual life… I'm very thankful to be a part of the bank which encourages employees to get closer to God. Now, I can say, that I'm starting to live the life I used to live before: A life where God is the center of everything.

The organisation culture at Plantersbank has the theme "Whole Heart and Mind", reflecting its character as a caring organisation that is committed to serving small and medium enterprises. This sector is often unserved by large financial institutions because it is considered more costly, risky and difficult to lend to. However, they chose to focus on this sector because of their determination to make an impact where it is needed most:

We take pride in the fact that we are aligning ourselves with an indispensable force for our country's economic development. Through our support to the small and medium enterprises (SMEs), there is always an over arching objective of supporting an often neglected sector and contributing in a vital way to national progress… not only doing business and making a profit.

Being a recipient of numerous awards and citations for the past ten years, Plantersbank has also been asked to share their knowledge and experience with other developing countries through training and consultancies. They are very clear about the role of spirituality in their success:

We have always attributed all our successes to the hard work and dedication of the men and women of Plantersbank, the support and confidence of our clients, and the help of the Almighty. Our leaders are very explicit in their acknowledgment of Divine Providence in making all these things happen.

It is not surprising, therefore, that spirituality in the work place is a way of life in Plantersbank. Our leaders' spirituality is embedded in the way they deal with people, whether clients, employees or friends.

So, ask yourself: *How can I influence my organisation to support the spiritual growth of everyone it touches?*

3.22 A GLOBAL SOUL FOR A GLOBAL SOCIETY

We as business leaders must commit to a new, spiritual-based "response-ability" as we participate in a world transformed by globalisation and technology.

WHILE SPEAKING at the 2004 World Urban Forum in Barcelona, Spain, we were acutely aware of the global consciousness that is fast-becoming a reality in our world. But how do business leaders embrace this global consciousness from a spiritual basis? While pondering this, we found a speech given by Steven C. Rockefeller in August, 2004 at the University of the Philippines[19].

Steven Rockefeller, Chairman of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, worked with a large number of international groups to produce the Earth Charter[20] – a UN initiative calling for establishing "a sound ethical foundation for the emerging global society and to help build a sustainable world based on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace". In his speech, he gave a unique perspective about globalisation:

> *A new planetary civilization is beginning to emerge, and it is interconnecting all cultures. The communications, transportation, and economic systems that are creating this global society are expressions of an industrial-technological society. In order for this new planetary civilization to fully realize its potential, it must generate a spiritual and ethical consciousness consistent with its geographical, ecological, intellectual, social, and economic situation.*
>
> *We are globalising the outer world, and I doubt we can stop the process even if we wanted to. We can, however, work to guide and shape the process by giving it a soul – that is by creating an ethical vision of where we want the process to go and committing ourselves to it in a spirit of solidarity and hope. This is the inner globalisation that must occur to build global cooperation and community and reverse negative trends that threaten the future.*

Willis Harman, renowned futurist and author of *Global Mind Change*, points out the important relationship between this new planetary civilisation and business leaders:

> *Leaders in world business are the first true planetary citizens. They have worldwide capability and responsibility. Their decisions affect not just economies,*

[19] A full copy of the speech can be downloaded from: http://www.rmaf.org.ph/Awardees/Lecture/LectureRockefeller.htm

[20] A full copy of the Earth Charter can be downloaded from: www.earthcharter.org

> *but societies… and the world problems of poverty, environment, and security. World business will be a key actor in the ultimate resolution of the macro-problem; the business corporation is far more flexible and adaptive than the bureaucratic structures of government.*

In practical terms, this means that we as business leaders must commit to a new, spiritual-based "response-ability" as we participate in globalisation and technology, no matter how large or small our role may be. In his speech, Steven framed this spiritual perspective about global consciousness:

> *The objective is to give the emerging global consciousness the spiritual depth – the faith and wisdom – needed to build a just, sustainable, and peaceful world community and to protect the integrity of Earth's ecological systems. In and through this process, the modern world created by science, technology, and globalisation has an opportunity to find its spiritual centre. This is the spiritual challenge presented by industrial-technological civilization in the twenty-first century.*

For Steven, one of the key forces for bringing about this new civilization is the transformation of the world's religions based on a global, universal spirituality. The ideas he offers are twofold, and apply equally to the world of business. The first impact of a planetary spiritual awareness would be a deep respect for the diversity of cultures and life around the world:

> *… a planetary spiritual awareness will embrace an ethic of respect for other traditions and an openness to learn from others, while remaining faithful to its own particularity. It will seek the divine as the spiritual centre of the greater community of life in all its cultural and biological diversity.*

The second impact would be the emergence of a strong sense of character:

> *It will pursue spiritual disciplines that involve a quest for purity of heart and clarity of mind. It will embrace a practical ethic that is world affirming and life affirming and that expresses itself in and through compassion, love, tolerance, justice, environmental protection, and peace.*

Finally, Steven underscores the importance of bringing about this global consciousness based in spirituality:

> *It is doubtful whether humanity can find any lasting solution to the big problems it faces without taking this spiritual challenge to heart.*

So, ask yourself: *How can my organisation contribute to the emerging spiritual-based planetary consciousness, locally and globally?*

3.23 THE MOMENT TO LET GO

> *When you have done everything humanly possible – with a project, with a business, with a relationship – then the only thing left to do is to let it go.*
> Laurie Beth Jones, *Jesus CEO*

HAVE YOU EVER seen a management or leadership course entitled "Letting go" – one that teaches business professionals how to recognise when it's time to "let go", even in the face of pursuing a business plan, an important goal, or meeting this quarter's profit ratios?

Laurie Beth Jones, an author and president of a USA business development firm, once realised that Jesus' leadership approach ran counter to most of the management styles and techniques we are taught today. As she studied his leadership approach more closely, she came to see him as a "CEO" who took a disorganised staff of twelve and built a thriving enterprise. In her book, *Jesus CEO: Using Ancient Wisdom for Visionary Leadership*, she speaks quite profoundly, and often humorously, about how to harness the strengths behind Jesus' approach to leadership.

One strength we found most inspiring, and yet most under-developed in today's leaders, is the ability to "let go". In her chapter, "He Let it Go", Laurie Beth says:

> *Perhaps Jesus' ultimate act of faith was not so much in coming to earth as in leaving it. After a lifetime of preparation and only three years of implementation and training, he had to look at his mission and then let it go. "It is finished," he said in his dying breath. And then he let it go.*
>
> *When you have done everything humanly possible – with a project, with a business, with a relationship – then the only thing left to do is to let it go.*

To illustrate her point in a provocative way, she describes a poignant scene in the adventure movie, Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade. Towards the climax of the film, Indiana Jones and his father have finally found the Holy Grail:

> *After many adventures and heartaches, Indiana is finally at the precipice – about to grasp the very item he and his father have been searching for. And yet, so precarious is his position on the cliff that his father realizes if Indiana retrieves the grail, he will lose his balance and fall into the pit below. As Indiana is about to lift up the prize, his father whispers, "Let it go." There is a long pause, and you can see the anguish in Indiana's face. Have they come all this way for nothing?*

> *Can't he finally grasp the treasure they've been searching for? Can't he finally make his father proud of him? Another second passes, and his father takes his arm and says more firmly, "Indiana, let it go."*
>
> *Indiana does as he is instructed, and the audience gasps. It is so un-Indiana like – so un-Hollywood – that they should come all this way for nothing. And yet almost instantly the audience begins to realize that the trip wasn't about getting the grail. It was about spending time together on the journey – about being all tied up and facing death together and emerging with a stronger relationship. That was the prize.*

From this illustration, Laurie Beth points out how leaders so often hang on to ideas, projects, plans, or relationships far too long such that they lose their balance and fall into pits that can be quite complicated to get out of.

Parantha Narendra, Strategy Director for Eurotel in the Czech Republic, spoke about his views of spirituality and an opportunity he had to "let go":

> *If I think of how spirituality affects me at work, it would be that spirituality challenges me and makes me grow. On one occasion, we were just on the verge of successfully raising a huge amount of money when the market collapsed. This disappointment of what looked like a huge business success did have some immediate effect on me, however, in the larger perspective, I didn't actually see it as a failure. To get that far I had to have faith and do the right thing. And at the same time I had an awareness that it was all a game. Succeeding wouldn't have made the things I've learned any more beneficial.*

Drawing from Laurie Beth's self-inquiry questions, ask yourself: *What idea, plan or relationship have I been hanging on to so tightly that it is causing me to lose my balance? If I did indeed hear my inner voice whispering, "Let it go," would I?*

3.24 HARMONY WITHIN DIFFICULTY

> *"One measurement of business success for me is 'harmony within difficulty'. That would be a sign of spiritual progress in an organisation."* James Sinclair, Chairman, Tan Range Exploration, Ltd.

SUSTAINABILITY and endurance seem to be popular words these days as organisations around the world are seeking to ensure long-term success. What might be possible if our pursuit of sustainability and endurance were based in our spiritual roots?

During an interview with James Sinclair, Chairman of the Tan Range Exploration, Ltd., he offered some perspectives on endurance that were different from normal business thinking, causing us to pause and ponder over his wisdom.

James' views on long-term success are founded in his particular view of spirituality:

> *I would say that spirituality is birthed in silence. It lies in the musings of the musician, or the reverie of the professor teaching that one point that's been built over a long period of preparation, one that gives this man a moment of success. It's that point when the mind is quieted, and the circumstances, problem or event is looked at from a different perspective – the perspective of the observer.*
>
> *I believe that every calamity is an opportunity. It's what you've unconsciously trained all your life for; this is why you are alive. So when a calamity comes upon you, this is your opportunity. The spirituality we are trying to deal with here must be the most practical aspect of our lives.*

Organisations face calamities and difficulties too. For James, when this kind of practical spirituality finds its way into organisational life, it results in what he calls "harmony within difficulty":

> *One measurement of business success for me is "harmony within difficulty". That would be a sign of spiritual progress in an organisation. This would be seen as a cohesive ability to draw conclusions and recommendations in periods of stress.*

James believes that developing this "harmony within difficulty" has many positive "returns", or benefits, which can actually be measured:

> *I do think you can measure "return on harmony" because that's exactly what I call it. I would look at the long-term industries and not the hype industries that fly in and out. I would look for the characteristic of "harmony within difficulty" within*

the ethic of the company. Then we should be able to go back in time and find some piece of this characteristic within the individual corporate leader, the corporate leader's family, or policies of the corporation instituted by an enlightened individual. I would also look to see if there are policies and procedures which give understanding to what the company is about, to what its corporate being is.

I believe that spiritual development within an organisation would need to be a statistic defined over a long period of time. If an organisation was spiritually progressive, then within the industry in which it works, it would obviously create for itself an endurance. It would be an entity in which the growth of spiritual consciousness was taking place. And I believe that over a long period of time, this type of organisation would be known for having contributed the most to its industry.

If what we're saying is correct about spirituality, then I believe we'll find that companies that came and went did not have this capacity for harmony within difficulty, while the ones who have endured were the ones who had cohesiveness during crisis.

James concluded that this capacity for harmony within diversity culminates in a corporate experience of "contentment":

The most successful person is the person with the least desires. That is, the successful individual is the contented individual. This contentment can also be a corporate experience, an outcome of the ability for "harmony within difficulty".

Contentment means recognition of having accomplished what can be accomplished in a particular area. When the respect for the stakeholders equals the respect for the stockholders, it results in a "content" corporation, because now the personality of the corporation is the stakeholder and the stockholder together.

Reflecting upon James' words, we've seen that a leader's capacity to foster contentment and a culture of harmony within difficulties is born of a spiritual view of life that Bede Griffiths, a Christian mystic, expresses this way:

We are no longer isolated individuals in conflict with our surroundings. We are part of a whole, elements in a universal harmony.

So, ask yourself: *How am I as a leader fostering "harmony within difficulty" and "contentment" in my organisation?*

3.25 FROM LEMONS TO LEMONADE

As a business leader, we sometimes have to deal with the consequences of someone else's mistake. How we handle those situations can make all the difference to the morale, and spiritual upliftment, of everyone involved.

AS A BUSINESS LEADER, we sometimes have to deal with the consequences of someone else's mistake. How we handle those situations can make all the difference to the morale and spiritual upliftment of everyone involved. We liken this to a saying we heard growing up, "When something goes wrong – use the lemons to make lemonade!"

Anand Pillai, former Vice President of Sales and Marketing for a leading IT company in India, told us how he handled such a situation by drawing from his spiritual basis:

> *We were submitting a bid for a World Bank tender for US$4-1/2 million. We worked through the night to prepare the documents and gave the bid just at the time it was due. When the bid was opened, it was discovered that our supporting document for the annual maintenance contract was not there. As a result we were disqualified.*
>
> *The first reaction everyone had was to find the guy who made the mistake and sack him. However, I said, "No, there is no point in doing that. It was a mistake. If he did it intentionally, then yes, there is no reason for him to continue with the company. But if he did it unintentionally, that is a different matter."*
>
> *So, instead of getting angry and upset and sending nasty e-mails, I said, "Let's take control of this situation and see what we can do to salvage this. Let us focus our creative energy on supporting him, so that he has the initiative to stay on through the night when we have the next bid."*
>
> *This is what motivates people to go beyond the call of duty, to do what they are supposed to do. I took the lead and told them, "I am not getting angry, and so I am asking you not to get angry either." I started to give them direction and ideas and told them to go to the evaluation committee, explain what happened, and give the document to them in writing.*
>
> *The committee said they would follow a law which says that if you have not submitted a bid for a component, it will be assumed that your quote is the highest*

quoted figure from among the other competitors. As a result, our quotation became costlier and we were out of the race.

We received this information and again kept our focus on trying to find a solution. After some further research, we found out that the other competitor had also violated one of the specifications. As a result this vendor was disqualified and we won the bid. For that year, it was the largest contract we received.

The moral of this story is this: we focused our creative energy not on the person who made the mistake, but on the process. The question we asked ourselves was "what" went wrong, not "who" made this mistake. The customer also had a lot of respect for us because they watched us go through this process. We took the person who had made the mistake with us and admitted the mistake, and we all worked together to find a solution.

The spiritual basis that I came from in this situation is that I knew this person had not made this mistake intentionally. If I had berated him for being irresponsible, then I would be telling him that he is an irresponsible person. That would have demeaned my faith in him. So instead I focused on the process and showed him respect. I also gave him the liberty to do wrong.

In the Bible there were times when Lord Jesus did this very same thing. One time he sent his disciples to cast out demons, and they failed to cast out the demon of a small boy. Jesus then cast out this demon and said to them, "I will empower you even more. After I go, you will receive the Holy Spirit and you will be able to do even greater things than this." He gave them a task to do and then reassured them that he was always with them.

So, ask yourself: "How would I have responded differently to a past mistake made by someone else if I had drawn from my spiritual basis to guide me?"

3.26 A TURNING POINT

Spiritual growth often requires a turning point – which impacts not only our personal life, but our work life as well. Although such moments may come as a surprise, we have to be ready to take advantage of the opportunity.

WHEN WE interviewed G. Narayana, Chairman Emeritus of Excel Industries, Ltd. in India, he made a statement that we could readily relate to:

Spiritual growth often requires a turning point.

Looking over Narayana's career history we found that he had experienced a spiritual turning point in his life that dramatically impacted his work:

During my postgraduate studies, I stood first and received a Gold medal in management. I absorbed the lessons of management by objectives, planning, organising, directing and controlling. That's why my rise was so high. I had engineering plus management, but spirituality was missing.

In eleven years at Voltas, I received eight promotions. My ego was rising. Then I joined New India, a joint venture company with German partners, producing and exporting large numbers of cameras. I became the first Indian General Manager, produced fantastic results, and my ego further rose. I thought I was the greatest man on earth.

After this tremendous success, Narayana started his own company, called Prism, and his troubles quickly began:

In 1985, at Prism, we purchased a hard disk computer. I invested all of my savings in Prism and my friends invested 50% of the capital. Within six months, the personal computers came into the market. Our then-outdated system could not compete, and the people we trained had many opportunities outside so they started leaving Prism.

Prism had yet to pay a considerable amount of loans. At this point, my ego started melting. I realised that it was not my greatness that made things successful at Voltas and New India. It was the greatness of those organisations. Because of their resources, I was able to be so successful.

Narayana told us that the situation was so critical he even contemplated suicide, but decided against it due to his family responsibilities. Back in his home-place, he went

to bathe in the Godavari River and while there asked his cousin if they could go to a nearby temple and get a memento…

> *My cousin said, "Wait! Something is touching me in the river!" He reached down and brought out two Shivalingams attached to a common base. He gave them to me. The two Shivas represented death (Kaleshwar) and liberation (Mukteshwar). The message was clear: liberation from my death-like situation was in the offing! I thought it was a fantastic day.*

Later that day, his brother-in-law gave him a copy of the *Bhagavad Gita*. Narayana told us:

> *I always thought, "What is the need for* Gita*, when one is working 14 hours a day?* Gita *is teaching about karma yoga (yoga of work) and that's what I am already doing!" I was about to return the book when I remembered the good omen of the Shivalingams in the morning. I thought this book, the* Gita, *was another blessing and I should not lose the opportunity.*

He took the *Gita* and spent the next 18 days studying it:

> *I read one chapter everyday, eating only one time a day, and completely avoiding alcohol, non vegetarian food, tobacco, smoking, onions, and garlic. I observed silence and practised celibacy. I underlined whatever appeared wonderful, although everything looked wonderful in the Gita!*

That was his spiritual turning point. While he didn't plan it, he took advantage of the opportunity to turn his life and work around…

> *It was a fantastic experience. At the end of 18 days, I stood up and the world stood up with me. I assured the bank that I would pay back every rupee of the loan. I rang up my partners and told them that I would pay back their investment. During those 18 days, new revelations, new understandings flowed in my thought and consciousness. My fear was gone.*
>
> *When I took responsibility with this new spirit, things started occurring that turned around my situation. First I changed internally, but the physical qualities took two years. Prism was closed after paying all the loans and a new company of mine, Procon, did better and better. With the new confidence and consciousness, solutions were shining and problems were dissolving. Then companies approached me and I became a management and turn-around advisor.*

So, ask yourself: *When have I faced a spiritual turning point in my life? How did I respond to the opportunity?*

3.27 ONE LEADER CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Just one leader with strong human values, who has the strength and personal character to bring out the very best in others, can make the seemingly "impossible" possible.

IT'S COMMONLY known that today, on this planet, there are 1½ billion people who lack access to safe drinking water, and over 2 billion who lack adequate sanitation facilities. The United Nations "Habitat" agency and the Asian Development Bank are collaborating on a project called "Water for Asian Cities" (WAC) that provides not only the funding for mega-projects to ease the suffering caused by this lack, but also to build the professional skills and human values needed to develop and maintain these facilities over the long term.

Last year we were preparing a presentation to community leaders in India who would be participating in the WAC program, speaking on the role of human values to help deliver the promise of "water for all". We saw that human values – those noble qualities found in people across all cultures – are powerful, internal motivators for doing our best on behalf of all. They are the spiritual foundation for good character, morality and ethics – and they cultivate an environment of trust, transparency, responsibility, caring, respect, and cooperation.

In our UN presentation, we showed how even just one leader with strong values can make the seemingly "impossible" possible. Ek Sonn Chan, Director of the Phnom Penh Water Supply Authority (PPWSA), is an inspiring example of this, particularly when it comes to meeting the daunting challenge of providing access to safe water and sanitation.

When he became the Director of PPWSA in 1993, there had been no maintenance of the system and virtually all documentation of the water infrastructure and customer base had been destroyed. Over 70% of the water produced was "lost" to leakage or illegal taps to the pipes. The PPWSA staff of 500 were under-qualified, underpaid, with low motivation, and working with low efficiency.

To restore and ensure everyone's right to water, and solve these seemingly insurmountable problems, Ek Sonn Chan began a "changing of culture". He first tapped into his own personal values: responsibility, service, quality, safety, health, and high integrity. He developed around him a staff of 20 people totally dedicated to his vision and values.

They conducted an accurate survey of their customer base and discovered that only 40% were paying water bills (some never received them). Ek Sonn Chan even went house to house to convince non-paying or low-paying customers, including rich and powerful VIP's, to pay their fair share for water. They installed new water lines, especially to the poor. They repaired old facilities and leaking pipes. They installed water meters. Within 3 years, they were generating enough revenue to cover the costs of operating the system, and they reduced the lost water from 70% to less than 25%.

Many people and organisations around the world applaud such initiatives, but hesitate to step forward to help. They distrust the capability and integrity of the leadership in the more impoverished countries. They are suspicious that funds will be used inefficiently or will end up in private bank accounts.

Ek Sonn Chan and others like him give us a different picture… a view of "water for all" leaders who create a culture of trust and excellence, and then initiate innovative policies and practices. In fact, there is no scarcity of capable, values-driven, innovative leaders in the developing countries.

Many people also may feel it's inevitable that universal access to safe water and sanitation will never be reached. But to quote Mr. N. Vittal, Chief Vigilance Commissioner of India (in charge of anti-corruption measures):

> *It was Alexis de Toqueville who said that the inevitable becomes intolerable the moment it is perceived to be no more inevitable*.

Ek Sonn Chan is a leader who does not see a lack of "water for all" as inevitable – only *intolerable*. He is a leader who has the strength and personal character to bring out the very best in others: staff, customers, community stakeholders alike. He does this by putting into practice values that are fundamental to human existence and found in varying degrees in all societies, cultures, nationalities, classes, and spiritual traditions – values such as honesty, integrity, trustworthiness, inner peace and confidence, caring, compassion, and respect for all.

So, ask yourself: *In what ways do I practice human values and high quality character in my leadership?*

3.28 GETTING FIRED WITH A SMILE

As a leader in business, we sometimes hold ourselves back from actively contributing to others at work, out of the fear that our actions would not be accepted.

HAVE YOU ever met a business leader who was so authentic and "down to earth" that you just had to like him or her? That's been our experience with Kenny Moore, a former Catholic monk who became Corporate Ombudsman and Human Resource Director at KeySpan, the largest distributor of natural gas in the Northeast area of the USA, with 13,000 employees.

Kenny has co-authored a book with the CEO of his company, Robert Catell, called *The CEO and the Monk: One Company's Journey to Profit and Purpose.* "Business Week India[21]" fittingly summarised it with this review:

> *This is a corporate Akbar-Birbal story. Here, Akbar is a corporate emperor, Birbal a wise, retired Catholic priest. They combine to convert a gas company into an enterprise with warm soul and commitment. The most important lesson of this story is an ancient one: a court jester is necessary to provide wise inputs to an emperor and to keep him from straying onto the path of short-lived glory.*

Kenny says, "The Divine's will is often revealed in the context of community with others, and in using our God-given talents to make the world better. Bosses, co-workers, and the economy will provide us with more than ample opportunities to practice kindness, forgiveness, and a note of hope to a sometimes beleaguered world." He often comes up with creative ways to find and act upon those opportunities.

For example, in one article, "How to get fired with Pizzazz[22]", Kenny reflected on the possibility of winning a large amount of money in a lottery. He mused that he might delay cashing in on his good fortune and "spend the next twelve months showing up at work the way I always wanted to, but was too afraid."

Here are some things he would do "that would be both fun and meaningful" – for which he also speculated, "By the end of the year, the company in its infinite wisdom would surely terminate me. But not without a smile on my face."

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[21] You can find this book review at: http://www.businessworldindia.com/sep2004/bookmark.asp

[22] Pizzazz means "with exciting, attractive boldness". You can find this article at: http://www.strategicconnections.com/article_getfired.htm

Waste time at the water cooler. *I'd spend an obscene amount of time just [standing] around, muttering compliments about my fellow employees. By focusing on the positive, I'm sure to be criticized for violating some hidden policy on corporate decorum. But who cares, I'm going to be fired anyway.*

Abuse the company mailroom. *I'd send lots of cards to co-workers: birthday, anniversary... Any chance to personally acknowledge, encourage and thank the many people who I work and play with on a daily basis. Particular attention would be given to those who irritate me. Learning to tolerate and forgive them would help me grow in tolerance and forgiveness of myself.*

Develop an attitude. *I would conduct myself in a way that gives testimony to the belief that people are doing the best they can, with what they have, every minute of the day. And that includes my boss and me too.*

Squander limited resources. *I'd spend [my time] mentoring some young employees. Teaching them the ropes, sharing all my corporate wisdom (this could be a short conversation...). It's mostly about forming relationships, learning to be playful and using our God-given talents to contribute to something larger than ourselves.*

Look good. *Make others look good, that is. Sometimes even do their job for them. I succeeded in my career very often by the support and performance of others. It would be a good time to return the favor.*

Kenny concludes the article by saying:

Having lived 12 months like this in a corporate setting, I would expect to be fired. But possibly if corporate America has truly embraced change, it might do the opposite: promote me… At least for now, I'll still keep dreaming.

Kenny shows his unique openness as a corporate leader by extending this invitation at the end of his articles[23]:

[23] To find other articles Kenny Moore has written, visit these links:
"Kenny Moore Held a Funeral and Everyone Came" –
http://www.fastcompany.com/magazine/79/firstperson.html
"Growing Old in HR – One Alternative" – http://www.refresher.com/!knmhr.html
"Become a Better Communicator by Keeping Your Mouth Shut" –
http://www.itstime.com/jun2005.htm

If you're thinking about writing me, give in to the temptation. I love getting mail ... and being influenced by what you have to say. Please E-mail me at kennythemonk@yahoo.com.

So, ask yourself: *What are ways I've been dreaming of how to contribute to others at work, but have been afraid to do so? How could I implement at least one of those dreams?*

3.29 DHARMIC LEADERSHIP

"Dharmic leadership" inspires us to live authentically in thought, word and deed, thus showing us the way to moral uprightness and true fulfilment in life.

IN HIS ARTICLE, "Leadership for the Next Millennium"[24], Sudhir Chadalvada speaks about dharmic leadership, a subject dear to our hearts. For us, "dharma" aptly describes a fundamental quality that is so urgently needed in our leaders today. Sudhir Chadalvada provides an excellent insight into the nature of dharma when he says:

> *Dharma means being true to oneself, treading one's own authentic path of thought, speech, and action – the path we each must travel for material, emotional and spiritual fulfilment. On a broader scale, dharma signifies moral uprightness, righteousness, and displaying behaviour that upholds life and growth.*

As we pondered the question, "What does it look like when a leader rises up to inspire others to be true to themselves and to tread an authentic path of behaviour that upholds life and growth?" we immediately thought of several political leaders.

One leader was Vaslav Havel, the first president of the Czech Republic after the fall of the Iron Curtain. Vaslav Havel describes his spiritual view of life as "mankind's intimate relation with the great mystery of creation", which he called "Being". And to him, the key to social reform was a sense of responsibility based on this relationship with Being:

> *Responsibility leads man to a permanent, and permanently-deepening, relation with the integrity of Being.*

Havel began his presidency by speaking authentically – dharmically – to the people of his country in his inaugural address:

> *We have been lied to a great deal, and I don't presume you elected me to lie to you more. We are a morally ill country.*

He went on to say that unless they learned to be truthful, open, and respectful with each other, they would never succeed in rebuilding the economy and the country. He later expressed that this renewal of society must be based in spirituality:

[24] The full article can be found at: http://www.siliconindia.com/magazine/Dec99millennium.html

> *It is necessary to restore humanity's sense of responsibility for this world, and this responsibility must have a metaphysical anchor. Humankind's only way out of this narrow pass is a far-reaching spiritual regeneration.*

Alvaro Cruz, former Governor of the largest state of Colombia is another example of dharmic leadership. In an interview with our colleagues, he expressed his spiritual view of life as:

> *Spirituality is a permanent attention to the inner self. To be able to perfect one's behaviour and attitudes, both inwardly and externally with others, basing one's conduct on the human values of love, truth, peace, right conduct and non-violence.*

Before running for governor in 2000, Alvaro Cruz had visited South India and had learned a poem that left him feeling "…like I was experiencing enlightenment." He decided that this poem would become the key message of all of his campaign programmes and presentations:

> *The poem goes like this: "If there is righteousness in the heart, there will be beauty in the character. If there is beauty in the character, there will be harmony in the family. If there is harmony in the family, there will be order in the nation. If there is order in the nation, there will be peace in the world."*

Alvaro Cruz shared that in no political campaign before had any politician ever expressed "a spiritual slogan describing a moral situation". This so inspired the populace that he was voted into office and was given the chance to bring about this kind of restoration.

The president of India, the Honourable A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, has also taken the message of this same poem throughout India. When our colleagues asked him about the purpose of business in society based in his spiritual view of life, he commented:

> *The most important thing is righteousness, dharma. When there is righteousness in the heart, there is beauty in the character... When there is order in the nation, there is peace in the world. You see the beautiful connectivity between these (dharma, character, harmony, order and peace)? The question before all of us today is, how do we get righteousness in the heart?*

These three political luminaries are showing us the way to authenticity and moral righteousness within ourselves and our societies. They are showing us the way of dharmic leadership.

So ask yourself: *How can I be an example of dharmic leadership – helping to restore authenticity and energizing righteousness in others?*

3.30 MINING THE GOLD

With the Indian ethos providing a foundation of spiritual purpose and meaning, the Western disciplines can take on their proper role in developing enterprises that serve the ultimate good of society.

AFTER LIVING in India for several years, we became aware of the enormous wisdom that is inherent in the Indian ethos. When asked to write a short article for the "Management Next" magazine, we felt compelled to express our deep gratitude for this wisdom in the following words.

Imagine a time before gold was considered to be the most precious metal - when instead, silver was the metal-of-choice for jewellery and other items. Imagine also that India was importing most of its silver from the West where it was more abundant.

Then, one day an Indian businessman realised that gold was superior not only to silver, but also India had the largest reserves of un-mined gold in the world. He saw the foolishness of letting such a rich resource remain untapped, so he began an intensive effort to bring this precious gold to the world.

From our past experience as business executives in America, the silver we're referring to is the set of Western leadership/management disciplines that have enabled success in the global marketplace, though at a great price to the health of many societies and the environment.

The gold we're speaking of is the ancient Indian spiritual heritage that has guided kings, sages, leaders, business people, and everyday workers to create wealth in a righteous manner for the benefit of all.

Like silver, the Western disciplines have their own value and can certainly play an important role in all business endeavours. However, the Indian ethos can provide the pure, wholesome spiritual foundation from which the ultimate health of all business endeavours can spring forth.

Comparing the two is like comparing technologists with strategists. Technologists have the resource-management skills to develop unbelievable manipulations of creation. But strategists are the ones who determine the purpose and meaning for what will be developed, and how.

With the Indian ethos providing a foundation of spiritual purpose and meaning, the Western disciplines can take on their proper role in developing enterprises that serve the ultimate good of society… which then nurtures the ultimate good of the enterprises themselves. This would fulfil the advice of the Hindu scripture *Yagnavalkya Smriti*:

> *Leaders should be pure in body and mind and free from avarice… and should do what is in the welfare of the society and the organisation. (Yagnavalkya Smriti 2. 191).*

The business environment in India and around the world sorely needs the active presence of the Indian spiritual ethos. The Enron scandal in the USA and the levels of bribery and corruption in India and many other countries equally point to the same problem: the lack of a deeply felt spiritual foundation from which to conduct all government and business activities.

Herein lies the opportunity for India: to mine its rich spiritual heritage and to become the spiritual leader of the global market place. Just like gold, this heritage has the power to transform the very nature of business and all of its activities within India and around the world. From this, we can all reap the benefits of a business environment that is grounded in spiritual and moral principles, while having the skills to produce efficient and effective products and services.

Where do we start? It all begins with being willing to embody what the Hindu scripture *Brihaspati Smriti* says:

> *The businessman must be a person of character and integrity with self control… and be an example to others for the practice of ethical values. (Brihaspati Smriti 17.9)*

Here are some steps you can take to begin "mining the rich, bountiful reserves of spiritual gold" in your own organisation, no matter what country or culture you may be from:

- Strengthen your own personal spiritual foundation and draw from it in your day-to-day work
- Make spiritual principles the foundation for all of your relationships
- Embody spiritual principles in your everyday business transactions
- Build communities of like-minded people who genuinely desire to mine this gold and employ it within their organisations

Ultimately, these steps will naturally "export" the gold of your spiritual heritage to others and will ensure that spiritual-based business practices lead us toward a prosperous and sustainable future for the entire planet.

So, ask yourself: *How can you mine the rich spiritual heritage of your culture and put it into practice in your everyday leadership?*

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[25] 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

[25] 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 …

1. Begin with several minutes of quiet time. Let everyone relax and mentally put away the stresses of the day.
2. 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.
4. Begin your conversation with an emphasis on personal sharing using any of the self-inquiry questions that are contained in the article.
5. 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[26]

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.

[26] 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:

1. “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.
2. “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.

1. 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.
2. 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
3. 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