



PUT YOUR SPIRITUALITY TO WORK

Conversation Starters for the Workplace

2.8 TOTALLY INVOLVED – COMPLETELY DETACHED

When your source of motivation comes from your spiritual basis, you will naturally experience an equanimous detachment, while at the same time being fully dedicated to and acting toward your goal.

G. NARAYANA, Chairman Emeritus of Excel Industries, Ltd. in India, once told us:

If you worry about the fruits, then you have your attention on the scoreboard and not the ball. If you concentrate on the ball, the scoreboard will happen automatically. If you are looking at the scoreboard, you will lose the ball. If you do good work, you will get the returns, so do not worry about them.

The text of the *Bhagavad Gita* further explains:

Do your worldly duty, but do it without any attachment to it or desire for its fruits. Keep your mind always on the Divine.

Both of these statements have enlightened us personally about what it means to be “totally involved, yet completely detached” in our work. We also refer to this as desire-less action or self-less action. But how is this possible in the workplace, where everything is so goal-driven? Isn't it natural to be attached to meeting goals? If we weren't attached, wouldn't we put forth less effort?

Yes, setting goals and working toward them is natural. So, what makes the difference between being attached and being unattached to a goal? The key we have found is to recognise the *source* of our motivation. Is our goal intended to satisfy a self-serving ego-desire? Or is our goal coming from our spiritual basis?

When our source of motivation comes from our spiritual basis, we naturally experience an equanimous detachment, while at the same time being fully dedicated to and acting toward our goals. Here is what we have found happens when we work from this spiritual source of motivation:

We engage in our work at our full capacity. Have you ever wanted to accomplish something so badly that you felt extremely worried and tense, and you couldn't really think clearly? In sports, it's well known that the athletes who can be totally focused, yet relaxed, perform at their very best. At work, when we are unattached to an outcome, we open

ourselves to a higher wisdom that enables us to use our full potential to accomplish the goal.

We focus on goals that come from a transcendent source. Have you ever accomplished a goal only to discover that having achieved it, it was not very satisfying? When we ask our inner guidance, “What goal is most called for here?” we are more likely to set goals that are transcendent, not ego-based – ones that have a pure meaning that provides a true sense of fulfillment.

We gain wisdom from the outcome, no matter what it is. Have you ever failed to reach a goal and later realised that not reaching the goal was the best thing that could have happened? If a goal is not reached, it’s the perfect opportunity for learning – for gaining new Self-awareness and knowledge, and to strengthen our ability to listen to our intuition and conscience.

We grow spiritually. Have you ever felt that you were a personal failure when you didn’t achieve something? Coming from a spiritual basis, we can trust in our inherent worth as a spark of Divinity, rather than feeding our egos and measuring our self-worth by our achievements.

V.V. Ranganathan, a senior partner with a leading professional services firm, sums up these lessons:

Yes, God has given me the equipment to pursue my desires, but I must do so in such a manner that they are not fuelled by selfishness or egoism. This means to immerse myself in the work that I have been entrusted to do and perform it with devotion, without expecting anything in return. And I know from my own experience that this works.

Some people approach self-less, desire-less action as “following the Will of God” -- they tune in to a “higher will” rather than their individualised ego-will. Others see it as dedicating the fruits of their actions to a Divine Source, which leads them to give their very best no matter what the circumstances. Still others simply foster an inner equanimity about the results and act from that basis.

So, ask yourself: *When have I experienced being totally involved, yet completely detached at work? What was my source of motivation at that time? How can I build on the strength of this experience?*

This article is an excerpt from the book, *Put Your Spirituality to Work: Book 2 – Work as a Spiritual Practice*. To download the full book of articles, as well as additional book chapters, articles, workbooks, and research on the subject of “spirituality and human values for leadership and work”, visit our website: www.globaldharma.org