

Want to be a revolutionary leader?

Business leaders who embody their spirituality spark an inner revolution in others around them. This bodes well when both creativity and courage are needed to grow in a turbulent world

by William Miller

Khalil Gibran once wrote in *The Prophet*, "Work is love made visible. When you work with love, you bind yourself to yourself, and to others, and to God." In a way, that is the bold possibility that is available to all of us.

Is it bold to say that executive corporate leadership is a vocation with equal dignity to that of a priest or a teacher? Perhaps. But consider that the average working adult easily spends 40 - 50 percent of their waking life at work. And that doesn't even figure in the average commute. What a shame if that time is spent in spiritual sleep. The invitation to each of us is to be spiritually awake at work, which quite naturally invites others to awaken to their own spiritual nature.

The first faculty of a spiritual-based leader is to establish your spiritual context. Why do I start here? It is because this has you jump right into the "heart" of the matter. The first practice to strengthen this capability is to define your own relationship between spirituality and religion. Many people have been thankful for this distinction between spirituality and religion as it removes a major stumbling block to engaging in this dialogue.

The second faculty is to explore your spirituality from the inside out. Carl Jung once said: "Your vision will become clear only when you can look into your own heart. He who looks outside dreams, he who looks inside awakes." It's important to explore your spirituality deep inside because our spirituality must be lived, not just thought about or talked about.

Embody spiritual principles in your leadership

The third faculty of a spiritual-based leader is to embody spiritual principles in your day-to-day leadership. Ed McKracken, the former CEO of Silicon Graphics, once told me, "My objective in life is not to have a spiritual part of life that is separate from the rest of my life. I meditate each day; it's an important part of my life. It gives me a more balanced point to operate from and the result is more risk taking, less anxiety, and less need to try to control everything." Socrates would add to this: "The shortest and surest way to live with honour in the world is to be in reality what we appear to be."

One practice to strengthen this capability is to see spirituality as the basis of your work success. Another practice is to appreciate work in terms of an opportunity for spiritual growth. This keeps your attention on the two-way street of spiritual growth: that we work in order to grow spiritually and we grow spiritually in order to do better work - it's a self-reinforcing cycle if you will. The third practice is to talk your thought and walk your talk.

As a result of living your spiritual principles day-to-day - by quietly being yourself and engaging in dialogues with others - you strengthen your ability to stay in your spiritual centre even in turbulent times.

Engage in revolutionary activities

The fourth faculty of a spiritual-based leader is to engage in revolutionary activities. A fundamental theme for these activities is found in the writings of Baha'u'llah, the Baha'i scripture, where it says: "Let your thought be fixed upon that which will rehabilitate the fortunes of mankind and sanctify the hearts and souls of men."

When you live by your spiritual principles, you cannot help but stimulate revolutionary change naturally because the essential nature of spirituality is creation itself. You can naturally spark an inner revolution in others just by your presence, and from that inner revolution naturally unfolds the transformative, outer change.

One practice for this faculty is to revolutionise wealth creation. A company's culture is built around people; wealth creation is built around what these people do, including product development, strategy and so on. Remember to allow your spiritual principles to drive the decisions for what you innovate and how you innovate as you generate new wealth.

Thus, to be a spiritual-based leader, there are four faculties to cultivate:

- establish your spiritual context
- explore your spirituality from the inside out
- embody spiritual principles in your leadership
- engage in revolutionary activities

Because the 3rd and 4th faculties are natural results of the first two, we can say that spiritual-based leadership is within the capability of anyone who holds a spiritual view of life and sincerely intends to lead from that perspective.

So, this is what a journey of a spiritual-based leader might look like, from a bird's eye view. With these four faculties you will be able to hold the entire consciousness of this spiritual revolution in leadership and can appreciate the strength that you have gained in your ability to actively live and work from your spiritual principles.



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