



# PUT YOUR SPIRITUALITY TO WORK

Conversation Starters for the Workplace

## 1.3 IS YOUR CONSCIENCE SHOWING?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

she was simply being what her mother described as “a very independent, outspoken, good Christian girl, who’s going to stand up for principles whenever she can.”

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

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

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

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

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

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This article is an excerpt from the book, *Put Your Spirituality to Work: The Basics*. 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](http://www.globaldharma.org)