



# PUT YOUR SPIRITUALITY TO WORK

Conversation Starters for the Workplace

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## 1.5 A TRUE VOICE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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