



PUT YOUR SPIRITUALITY TO WORK

Conversation Starters for the Workplace

1.7 CREATING WONDER QUESTIONS

From a spiritual point of view, wonder questions invite us to look deeper into ourselves. They are questions for which our minds have no immediate answer, and invite wisdom to emerge from within us.

AS YOU EXPLORE how to work from a spiritual basis, it is natural that you might have some concerns or reservations about its’ “practicality” in your work environment. Your concerns might be challenges you face in integrating your spiritual ideas with your work, and your reservations might include doubts or hesitations about working in a spiritual way.

For example, some people are positive about business and sceptical about spirituality:

- “Business and spirituality just don’t mix.”
- “You can’t really be competitive in business if you’re spiritual.”

Other people are positive about spirituality and sceptical about business:

- “Business greed is too corrupting for spirituality to make a difference.”
- “If I want to be accepted and promoted, I have to compromise my spiritual values.”

What concerns or reservations do you have about spirituality at work?

To us, all of these concerns and reservations are welcome. From a spiritual point of view, they simply invite us to look deeper into ourselves by turning all of them into “*wonder questions*”¹. These are questions for which our minds have no immediate answer. The questions invite wisdom to emerge from deep within us.

In order to turn your concerns and reservations into wonder questions, re-write each of them in the form of a question beginning with “How can I...?” Using our earlier examples, “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 spiritual and make a difference when business greed is so corrupting?
- *How can I* be accepted and promoted without compromising my spiritual values?

¹ This topic of “wonder questions” has been adapted from *Human Values at Work*, a self-guided workbook that can be downloaded for free at: www.globaldharma.org/hvw-home.htm

When William first joined the corporate world 30 years ago, he was very enthusiastic about making a good impression. But almost from the first day, he had conflicts with his boss. He was confused because he knew that both he and his boss were good-hearted people. He first asked himself, “How can two good people have such a conflict?” Then he refined his question to, “How can I come into harmony with my boss?”

After wondering about this for a week, the answer arose in him. “Stop seeing everything in your job as revolving around you – focus on servicing your boss and others.” He began to focus on how he could support his boss, rather than on how he could get his boss to recognise him for doing a good job.

William’s question-and-answer not only saved him his job. It also taught him a valuable lesson: when stuck in a dilemma, ask an empowering question and wait for the answer to come from inside. That’s the power of wonder questions.

When writing “wonder questions,” it’s important to personalise each concern and reservation in such a way that you have the power to fully implement the answer. For example:

- A *personalised concern* might be: “How can I be true to my spirituality at work even if business greed is widespread?”

Avoid making your wonder questions general or abstract; and avoid focusing them on changing other people. For example:

- A *general or abstract concern* might be: “How can people 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?”

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.

Remember, as you turn your concerns and reservations about spirituality at work into wonder questions *do not seek to resolve them right away!* Plant the wonder question inside of yourself, and let it be a seed that eventually sprouts as you nurture it with the water of your heart’s determination and the light and warmth of your mind’s curiosity.

But don’t be in a hurry – don’t “pull up the roots to see if the plant is sprouting.” Be curious even about how long it will be before your inner spirit provides you with your own personalised answer. You may be surprised by the wisdom of your inner guidance!

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