



PUT YOUR SPIRITUALITY TO WORK

Conversation Starters for the Workplace

1.29 HAVING THE “IDEAL” MOTIVATION

It's important to have our highest spiritual wisdom be the “source of our motivation” and not our ego-personality, no matter how wonderful and ideal it may seem.

We have a dear friend in India who once sent us an e-mail asking for our insights on how to approach a difficult financial situation he was facing in his company. He is a sincere, hardworking entrepreneur with a most optimistic outlook on life and work. Yet at times, this outlook did not always work in a positive way when it came to running his business.

As we engaged in our own self-reflection to see what insights we might offer him, we found that we could relate to his ideals in many ways. As a result, we formulated the following response as a loving offering of support to him:

As we read about your difficulties with your company, it reminded us of some of the struggles we have encountered in our own work. Both of our personalities are naturally geared toward being optimistic, positive and idealistic. These are certainly valuable and wholesome (satvic) qualities to have. And when our personalities are properly guided from the source of highest spiritual wisdom, God's Will, then we truly have a wholesome nature. However, when we exert these optimistic, idealistic qualities solely from the ego, they get out of balance and quite easily become ego-centred, self-gratifying (rajasic) tendencies. In other words, we become passionate about the ideal way things should be, and we become attached to our ego-desire to having only positive outcomes.

For years, it was confusing to us as to why life seemed so challenging when we only wanted the most ideal outcome to occur for everyone. We have since realised that it is important for us to be aware of the “source” of our thoughts and motivations: Are they coming from our ego-personality or from our highest spiritual wisdom? When the source of our motivation comes from our spiritual wisdom, it often guides us in ways that our own optimistic, idealistic ego-personality would reject.

For example, a lady came to the ashram where we live, and within a few weeks ran into financial and health difficulties. We tried to help her, since we wanted her to have a positive experience here. One day she called and asked to borrow some money for a few weeks. If we had followed our ego-personality, we would have easily loaned her the money and hoped that, as a result, everything would turn out positive for her.

Fortunately, we took the time to consult our higher spiritual wisdom and realised that it would be a great disservice to her if we loaned her the money. We could see that her mind was quite agitated and she needed some direct, firm spiritual teachings from a loving heart. So we talked honestly with her about her own motivations for being at the ashram, and we shared spiritual teachings with her that were appropriate to her situation. As a result, she began to gain more confidence and faith in God's help, rather than seeking help "in the world."

We are not denying the importance of optimism – our new insight was to be aware of the source of that optimism, basing it on spiritual wisdom, as Sathya Sai Baba says:

Everyone should develop a hopeful and optimistic outlook. Hopes should be centred not on worldly things, but on Self-realisation. You must feel that whatever happens to you is for your own good. You must have the firm belief that whether your wishes are fulfilled or not, nothing harmful will happen to you. Be firm in your faith.

We finished our note to our entrepreneur friend with these words...

As we continually surrender to God's Will for every aspect of our existence, we find that one by one, these ego-personality driven attitudes and desires are becoming less and less powerful. We are continually discovering how important it is to have our highest spiritual wisdom be the "source of our motivation" and not our ego-personality, no matter how wonderful and ideal it may seem.

We have to admit, as we continue to surrender to this way of living and working, we encounter many surprises!

So, ask yourself: *What is the source of my optimistic, idealistic motivations at work? What issues do I have at work where I need to consult my higher spiritual wisdom for 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