



PUT YOUR SPIRITUALITY TO WORK

Conversation Starters for the Workplace

2.5 SPIRITUAL CHARACTER PART 3: EMBODYING SPIRITUAL VALUES

Spiritual values are qualities that you already have inherent in you, They are natural, spiritual strengths that you can draw upon in your life and work, and are the basis of a happy, healthy, and whole human being.

IN THE PAST few articles, we've focused on various aspects of developing spiritual character, as found in our equation:

$$\text{Spiritual Character} = \frac{\text{Spiritual Context} + \text{Spiritual Purpose} + \text{Spiritual Values}}{\text{Ego Desires}}$$

Here we focus on how to embody spiritual values. The word "value" comes from the Latin verb "valere," which means "to be worth" and "to be strong." Spiritual values reflect what is important to us from a spiritual perspective. They are also natural, spiritual strengths that we can draw upon in our life and work. We like to say that they're built into our DNA – "Divine Natural Attributes" – as they are the basis of a happy, healthy, and whole human being.

Spiritual values are qualities that you already ARE. They are your natural strengths that you can draw from in the most challenging situations. For example, Ken Bertaccini, the Chief Quality Officer of AT&T Consumer Products was given the monumental task of turning around one of their least profitable divisions within two years, or the business would be abandoned. His overall strategy included a training programme focused on values such as truthfulness and right action – called "Project Miracles."

Ken continually brought forth his personal spiritual value of love throughout the process. Later when he became CEO of his division, he altered the business's statement of values to include the word, "Love." As he told his employees:

I think we're ready to legitimise the "L word" and put love in our business... Love in the context of love your neighbour as you love yourself, and treating others as you would like to be treated. Putting love in our Shared Values Pyramid sends a message to our people and to everybody, inside and outside AT&T, that we really do care.

By applying his most natural spiritual strength of love, Ken Bertaccini's division became one of the most profitable in AT&T within two years, and had the highest morale as well!

As we've studied spiritual texts from many religions, we've consistently found five common values that define human nature at its highest: truth, right conduct, peace, love, and non-violence. For example:

Baghavat Gita 16:1-3:

Be sincere and truthful; give freely and control the senses; be fearless and equanimous; be loving and show goodwill to all; don't harm any living creature.

Jesus said:

The Truth shall make you free... Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness... Peace be with you... Love one another... Love your enemies.
(John 8:32, Matthew 5:6, Luke 24:36, John 13:34, Matthew 5:44)

Sayings of Muhammad, #173:

When you speak, speak the truth. Perform what you promise. Keep your heart free from malice towards anyone. Love your fellow-beings first. Withhold your hand from striking.

These spiritual values are fundamentally important to work success:

- *Truth* can open lines of communication, leading to more informed, wise decisions.
- *Right action* can ensure that agreements are kept, building trustworthiness.
- *Peace* can foster proactive rather than reactive responses, and focus on resolving issues rather than blaming.
- *Love* can generate sincere caring that results in a more aligned teamwork among employees.
- *Non-violence* can provide an uplifting spirit of collaboration and respect for people, resources, and the environment.

When we are sincere about working by our spiritual values, even those who don't consider themselves spiritual can appreciate them. For example William once conducted an exercise (which you might also want to try) with school bus drivers, focusing on their values at work. He asked them to (1) *List the top ten things that are important to you;* (2) *select the top three;* (3) *name one that you would like to see more of in your workplace.* One person was rather resistant to this "values stuff," and was rather rough in his language. But when the group was reporting the top values they'd selected, everyone's head turned in surprise when he said, "Love." He explained, "Isn't that what life is about? Loving yourself and each other the best you can."

Drawing from your spiritual context and purpose, take a few moments to reflect and see what spiritual values come most naturally for you. Using your list of spiritual values, identify ways you can actively express them as strengths in your work.

This article is an excerpt from the book, *Put Your Spirituality to Work: Book 2 – Work as a Spiritual Practice*. 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