



PUT YOUR SPIRITUALITY TO WORK

Conversation Starters for the Workplace

2.23 CLEARING THE FOG

When we fully see and acknowledge the truth of what is going on, it helps us focus our creative thinking and find solutions beyond what we believe is possible.

AS WE REFLECTED upon the next quality of a SPIRITED person, being *Incisive*, we recalled the famous prayer from the Hindu Brihad Upanishad: “*Asatoma sadgamaya... Lead me from delusion to truth.*” We especially need the fulfilment of that prayer at work – clouded as it can be with an overload of information, stressful issues to sort out, and uncertainty about the future. Incisive is an important spiritual practice at work: being open to discern and acknowledge the truth about what is happening.

Incisiveness often means speaking the simple truth when there’s something everyone knows but is afraid to talk about – a failed project, a misjudged decision, a relationship conflict. Typically in such situations, we feel fearful, constrained and suppressed.

Nilofer Merchant, an American consultant who specialises in market strategies, exemplifies a person who draws from her spirituality to be incisive:

To me, spirituality is “Living fully the glory of God and being fully alive.” To me this means using your gifts to the fullest and being in true, intimate relationships with other people.

I am often the voice of truth in a group; whatever is unsaid I am usually the person who can articulate that. This is how I use my gifts in my work. Many people are afraid to speak their underlying fears, and so I help create a safe environment for them to do that.

In one case, a client was in the midst of making decisions about a new marketing strategy that would require a great change in their organisation. Nilofer’s incisiveness came from keen listening and then asking the right question at the right time:

Everyone was talking about this in a very intellectual way, presenting all of the options along with the pros and cons. I was well aware that there was lots of tension in the room that no one was addressing.

I had really prayed that morning that the group could come to a consensus and use their decision as a positive move forward. I was very quiet for some time as I watched

the group. I kept feeling there was an important question that needed to be asked. I closed my eyes for a second, and then asked, "What is it we are not saying? What are we not addressing?" Because of the way I asked these questions, it created a sense of safety, and people were able to say what was true in their hearts.

When we fully see and acknowledge the truth of what is going on, that new awareness positively impacts our creativity. It gives us the clarity to focus our creative thinking in the best direction, even as it also gives us the expansive energy to seek and find creative solutions beyond what we believe is possible.

As those in the meeting began to speak the truth, their creativity came alive, as Nilofer shared:

A Vice President who had been reluctant to speak said, "I am afraid about what this will mean for my people." It brought everyone together and people began to step forward and say, "I'll take 50 of your people" and "We'll take care of your people." For the first time in that discussion, that executive was able to agree to the new organisational structure even though it meant he would be sacrificing his organisation. This was really the big decision that was on the table, even though it had not been said explicitly. This process of telling the truth drew upon people's goodness.

I had no idea those questions were going to come out of my mouth; it was one of those moments where I offered to the group the gift from my heart. I happened to be the one who could help them find the truth that was already there.

Incisiveness helps us to clear the fog, overcome our fears, and see the full, complete truth of what is going on. From there, we can find the creative solutions to the challenges we face.

So, ask yourself: *In what areas of my work am I not seeing or speaking the "simple truth" of what is going on? How could doing that, from a spiritual basis, assist me in creatively addressing the challenges I face?*

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