



## PUT YOUR SPIRITUALITY TO WORK

Conversation Starters for the Workplace

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### 2.26 BEGINNER'S MIND

When we meet challenges with an open, beginner's mind, we tap into our own inventiveness as well as that of others who come forth to support us in reaching a solution to our challenges.

**Innovation** requires us to have the spirit of inventiveness, which enables us to find *creative* solutions to meet our goals and challenges. This quality of “inventiveness” is yet another aspect of being a SPIRITED person at work. Being inventive means challenging our own beliefs about what's possible so we can get unstuck from “business as usual”. We have found that this requires having a “beginner's mind”, one that looks freshly for what's possible, rather than what can't be done, and then generates a plenitude of ways to achieve it.

One person who inspires this through his own leadership is André Delbecq, the former dean of the business school at Santa Clara University. He shared with us the connection he sees between his spirituality and his sense of wonder, imagination, and inventiveness:

*Wonder is the theme that naturally comes to me. I have always had and continue to retain a great excitement associated with building collaboration between bright minds seeking to understand a complex problem and engaged in the discovery of a creative solution.*

*But now my sense of wonder is even enlarged. My eyes are opened to how the unimaginable emerges in all of creation; e.g. in nature in a blossoming flower, in the movements of the tides and the mysteries of the sea. I am increasingly appreciative of the insights from each of my colleagues when they join together for innovation. So the world is filled with wonder, echoing the limitlessness of the transcendent.*

As an example from his own life, about 10 years ago, he was urged by many high-tech executives in his area to offer a course on the spiritual side of business leadership. He felt totally unprepared – by his own personal spirituality as well as by his academic expertise – to offer such a seminar. But as he told us:

*Fortunately, I had begun to understand that this spiritual path required me to give up the need to be the expert. Once having accepted this truth, preparation for teaching the seminar unfolded with constant surprises. Everything I needed was given to me. People whom I had never met found out about my efforts and provided constant new resources. So the knowledge I needed began to arrive through others.*

*Somehow I was gifted with the beginner's mind and was at peace with my lack of both knowledge and wisdom. This was a very new experience for an arrogant professor – to be comfortable in the beginner's mind.*

His experience shows us that when we meet challenges with an open, beginner's mind, we tap into our own inventiveness as well as the inventiveness of others who come forth to help us reach a solution. Whether we are dealing with our own day-to-day challenges, or coming together to tackle the mega-challenges of our times, this combination of spirituality and inventiveness can make a positive difference, as André shares:

*I think a business exists to provide an innovative and compelling answer to a societal need in the form of a needed service or product. When this purpose is approached through a spiritual lens, it will be shaped differently in many ways. You become willing to let go of many trivial and opportunistic concerns, and instead increasingly put energy into important challenges. Your own willingness as a business leader to endure the mystery of suffering will shift. You will see all the elements of business challenges as part of a calling to service.*

André's faith in the inventiveness of business people is clearly based in his faith in Spirit:

*I don't think the creative answers for future generations will emerge through the government. Rather, long term solutions for all of these problems will emerge out of the creative energy that the private sector, acting at its best, unleashes. As we collaborate with Spirit by deepening the spirituality associated with organisational enterprise, I believe business leaders will continue to explore entrepreneurial solutions to address present and future challenges, and solve many of the paths of destruction that have been associated with our prior behaviour.*

So, ask yourself: *In what ways do I have a "beginner's mind" when I face challenges at work? From my spiritual basis, what daily habits could I begin that would strengthen my inventiveness?*

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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](http://www.globaldharma.org)