



PUT YOUR SPIRITUALITY TO WORK

Conversation Starters for the Workplace

3.1 BECOMING A SPIRITUAL-BASED LEADER

Anyone who expresses his or her spiritual Self with confidence can be a spiritual-based leader, whether they influence one or ten or a hundred others.

TWENTY-FIVE union leaders showed up one morning for a surprise visit to the company president. Security officers called the president for instructions. “Send them up to my office,” he said – and told his assistant to “prepare tea and coffee for 25.” The leaders didn’t trust the president to handle an important HR issue fairly. They stood and shouted what they were unhappy about.

He spoke calmly and respectfully, inviting them to sit and enjoy their drink while they talked. He reassured them that he’d quit before compromising his principles for fair and just hearings – and would reach a judgment based purely on merit, without giving in to favoritism and pressure. The dialogue softened, and the union leaders left his office with a new seed of respect and trust for the president. This seed was nurtured when he lived up to his word.

What made for this turnaround? Was he just using a diplomatic tactic? No. He was, and is, a person who bases his leadership attitudes and actions on his spiritual view of life. It was from this spiritual view that he experienced everything that was happening. As a result, he had no need to react; he listened attentively to discern where the misunderstanding had occurred and how he could give them reassurance of his intentions. He is a spiritual-based leader, and he’s part of a fast-growing movement in business.

Imagine with us this bold possibility for the workplace:

- Spirituality is the context for revolutionary, transformational leadership
- Leaders develop within themselves a purity and unity of thought, word and deed
- Leaders actively express their spiritual character in every aspect of their lives
- Spiritual values transform all aspects of life in business and society

Sound too good to be true? To most – yes. But to us, it’s a practical reality available to us when we dedicate ourselves to leading from a spiritual view of life. By leadership, we don’t just mean those in positions of power. We mean *anyone* who expresses his or her spiritual Self with confidence, whether they influence one or ten or a hundred others.

What does it take to be a spiritual-based leader? Every spiritual-based leader we have interviewed around the world has had their own, unique story about how they stepped onto the path of spiritual-based leadership. From our experience in the business world, such leaders have developed in themselves four key faculties:

- They have a clearly held spiritual view of life. That is, they have a clear definition of spirituality, they know their own relationship between spirituality and religion, and they continually ask, “How can I approach this situation from my spiritual view of life?”
- They explore their spirituality from the inside out. That is, they take consistent time to nurture their spiritual growth, they identify their spiritual purpose and values in life, and continuously check up on their purity and unity of thought, word and deed
- They embody their spiritual principles in their leadership. That is, they see spirituality as the basis of business success, they appreciate work in terms of spiritual opportunity and spiritual growth, and they seek to “talk their thought” and “walk their talk.”
- They engage in revolutionary activities. That is, they promote fundamental change, based on their spiritual view of life, in their workgroup culture, company culture and society itself.

This may sound like a lot, and certainly people don't develop into spiritual-based leaders overnight. In fact, they tend to go through three stages, depending on which of these three questions they most focus on:

1. How can I bring spiritual values into business?
2. How can I integrate spirituality and business?
3. How can I do all my work from my spiritual view of life?

We'll explore each of the four faculties in future articles. For now, a beginning point is to contemplate on your heartfelt answers to these questions:

- *What is my spiritual view of life?*
- *How do I nurture my spiritual growth from the inside out?*
- *How have I put my spiritual purpose and values into action in the last 24 hours?*
- *How does my work culture currently look different when I view it from my spiritual view of life?*

This article is an excerpt from the book, *Put Your Spirituality to Work: Spiritual-Based Leaders*. 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