



PUT YOUR SPIRITUALITY TO WORK

Conversation Starters for the Workplace

3.23 THE MOMENT TO LET GO

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Laurie Beth Jones, *Jesus CEO*

HAVE YOU EVER seen a management or leadership course entitled “Letting go” – one that teaches business professionals how to recognise when it’s time to “let go”, even in the face of pursuing a business plan, an important goal, or meeting this quarter’s profit ratios?

Laurie Beth Jones, an author and president of a USA business development firm, once realised that Jesus’ leadership approach ran counter to most of the management styles and techniques we are taught today. As she studied his leadership approach more closely, she came to see him as a “CEO” who took a disorganised staff of twelve and built a thriving enterprise. In her book, *Jesus CEO: Using Ancient Wisdom for Visionary Leadership*, she speaks quite profoundly, and often humorously, about how to harness the strengths behind Jesus’ approach to leadership.

One strength we found most inspiring, and yet most under-developed in today’s leaders, is the ability to “let go”. In her chapter, “He Let it Go”, Laurie Beth says:

Perhaps Jesus’ ultimate act of faith was not so much in coming to earth as in leaving it. After a lifetime of preparation and only three years of implementation and training, he had to look at his mission and then let it go. “It is finished,” he said in his dying breath. And then he let it go.

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To illustrate her point in a provocative way, she describes a poignant scene in the adventure movie, *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*. Towards the climax of the film, Indiana Jones and his father have finally found the Holy Grail:

After many adventures and heartaches, Indiana is finally at the precipice – about to grasp the very item he and his father have been searching for. And yet, so precarious is his position on the cliff that his father realizes if Indiana retrieves the grail, he will lose his balance and fall into the pit below. As Indiana is about to lift up the prize, his father whispers, “Let it go.” There is a long pause, and you can see the anguish in Indiana’s face. Have they come all this way for nothing? Can’t he finally grasp the treasure

they've been searching for? Can't he finally make his father proud of him? Another second passes, and his father takes his arm and says more firmly, "Indiana, let it go."

Indiana does as he is instructed, and the audience gasps. It is so un-Indiana like – so un-Hollywood – that they should come all this way for nothing. And yet almost instantly the audience begins to realize that the trip wasn't about getting the grail. It was about spending time together on the journey – about being all tied up and facing death together and emerging with a stronger relationship. That was the prize.

From this illustration, Laurie Beth points out how leaders so often hang on to ideas, projects, plans, or relationships far too long such that they lose their balance and fall into pits that can be quite complicated to get out of.

Parantha Narendra, Strategy Director for Eurotel in the Czech Republic, spoke about his views of spirituality and an opportunity he had to "let go":

If I think of how spirituality affects me at work, it would be that spirituality challenges me and makes me grow. On one occasion, we were just on the verge of successfully raising a huge amount of money when the market collapsed. This disappointment of what looked like a huge business success did have some immediate effect on me, however, in the larger perspective, I didn't actually see it as a failure. To get that far I had to have faith and do the right thing. And at the same time I had an awareness that it was all a game. Succeeding wouldn't have made the things I've learned any more beneficial.

Drawing from Laurie Beth's self-inquiry questions, ask yourself: *What idea, plan or relationship have I been hanging on to so tightly that it is causing me to lose my balance? If I did indeed hear my inner voice whispering, "Let it go," would I?*

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