



## PUT YOUR SPIRITUALITY TO WORK

Conversation Starters for the Workplace

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### 3.26 A TURNING POINT

Spiritual growth often requires a turning point – which impacts not only our personal life, but our work life as well. Although such moments may come as a surprise, we have to be ready to take advantage of the opportunity.

**WHEN WE** interviewed G. Narayana, Chairman Emeritus of Excel Industries, Ltd. in India, he made a statement that we could readily relate to:

*Spiritual growth often requires a turning point.*

Looking over Narayana's career history we found that he had experienced a spiritual turning point in his life that dramatically impacted his work:

*During my postgraduate studies, I stood first and received a Gold medal in management. I absorbed the lessons of management by objectives, planning, organising, directing and controlling. That's why my rise was so high. I had engineering plus management, but spirituality was missing.*

*In eleven years at Voltas, I received eight promotions. My ego was rising. Then I joined New India, a joint venture company with German partners, producing and exporting large numbers of cameras. I became the first Indian General Manager, produced fantastic results, and my ego further rose. I thought I was the greatest man on earth.*

After this tremendous success, Narayana started his own company, called Prism, and his troubles quickly began:

*In 1985, at Prism, we purchased a hard disk computer. I invested all of my savings in Prism and my friends invested 50% of the capital. Within six months, the personal computers came into the market. Our then-outdated system could not compete, and the people we trained had many opportunities outside so they started leaving Prism.*

*Prism had yet to pay a considerable amount of loans. At this point, my ego started melting. I realised that it was not my greatness that made things successful at Voltas and New India. It was the greatness of those organisations. Because of their resources, I was able to be so successful.*

Narayana told us that the situation was so critical he even contemplated suicide, but decided against it due to his family responsibilities. Back in his home-place, he went to

bathe in the Godavari River and while there asked his cousin if they could go to a nearby temple and get a memento...

*My cousin said, "Wait! Something is touching me in the river!" He reached down and brought out two Shivalingams attached to a common base. He gave them to me. The two Shivas represented death (Kaleshwar) and liberation (Mukteshwar). The message was clear: liberation from my death-like situation was in the offing! I thought it was a fantastic day.*

Later that day, his brother-in-law gave him a copy of the *Bhagavad Gita*. Narayana told us:

*I always thought, "What is the need for Gita, when one is working 14 hours a day? Gita is teaching about karma yoga (yoga of work) and that's what I am already doing!" I was about to return the book when I remembered the good omen of the Shivalingams in the morning. I thought this book, the Gita, was another blessing and I should not lose the opportunity.*

He took the *Gita* and spent the next 18 days studying it:

*I read one chapter everyday, eating only one time a day, and completely avoiding alcohol, non vegetarian food, tobacco, smoking, onions, and garlic. I observed silence and practised celibacy. I underlined whatever appeared wonderful, although everything looked wonderful in the Gita!*

That was his spiritual turning point. While he didn't plan it, he took advantage of the opportunity to turn his life and work around...

*It was a fantastic experience. At the end of 18 days, I stood up and the world stood up with me. I assured the bank that I would pay back every rupee of the loan. I rang up my partners and told them that I would pay back their investment. During those 18 days, new revelations, new understandings flowed in my thought and consciousness. My fear was gone.*

*When I took responsibility with this new spirit, things started occurring that turned around my situation. First I changed internally, but the physical qualities took two years. Prism was closed after paying all the loans and a new company of mine, Procon, did better and better. With the new confidence and consciousness, solutions were shining and problems were dissolving. Then companies approached me and I became a management and turn-around advisor.*

So, ask yourself: *When have I faced a spiritual turning point in my life? How did I respond to the opportunity?*

This article is an excerpt from the book, *Put Your Spirituality to Work: Book 3 – 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](http://www.globaldharma.org)