



## PUT YOUR SPIRITUALITY TO WORK

Conversation Starters for the Workplace

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### 3.30 MINING THE GOLD

With the Indian ethos providing a foundation of spiritual purpose and meaning, the Western disciplines can take on their proper role in developing enterprises that serve the ultimate good of society.

**AFTER LIVING** in India for several years, we became aware of the enormous wisdom that is inherent in the Indian ethos. When asked to write a short article for the “Management Next” magazine, we felt compelled to express our deep gratitude for this wisdom in the following words.

Imagine a time before gold was considered to be the most precious metal - when instead, silver was the metal-of-choice for jewellery and other items. Imagine also that India was importing most of its silver from the West where it was more abundant.

Then, one day an Indian businessman realised that gold was superior not only to silver, but also India had the largest reserves of un-mined gold in the world. He saw the foolishness of letting such a rich resource remain untapped, so he began an intensive effort to bring this precious gold to the world.

From our past experience as business executives in America, the silver we're referring to is the set of Western leadership/management disciplines that have enabled success in the global marketplace, though at a great price to the health of many societies and the environment.

The gold we're speaking of is the ancient Indian spiritual heritage that has guided kings, sages, leaders, business people, and everyday workers to create wealth in a righteous manner for the benefit of all.

Like silver, the Western disciplines have their own value and can certainly play an important role in all business endeavours. However, the Indian ethos can provide the pure, wholesome spiritual foundation from which the ultimate health of all business endeavours can spring forth.

Comparing the two is like comparing technologists with strategists. Technologists have the resource-management skills to develop unbelievable manipulations of creation. But

strategists are the ones who determine the purpose and meaning for what will be developed, and how.

With the Indian ethos providing a foundation of spiritual purpose and meaning, the Western disciplines can take on their proper role in developing enterprises that serve the ultimate good of society... which then nurtures the ultimate good of the enterprises themselves. This would fulfil the advice of the Hindu scripture *Yagnavalkya Smriti*:

*Leaders should be pure in body and mind and free from avarice... and should do what is in the welfare of the society and the organisation. (Yagnavalkya Smriti 2. 191).*

The business environment in India and around the world sorely needs the active presence of the Indian spiritual ethos. The Enron scandal in the USA and the levels of bribery and corruption in India and many other countries equally point to the same problem: the lack of a deeply felt spiritual foundation from which to conduct all government and business activities.

Herein lies the opportunity for India: to mine its rich spiritual heritage and to become the spiritual leader of the global market place. Just like gold, this heritage has the power to transform the very nature of business and all of its activities within India and around the world. From this, we can all reap the benefits of a business environment that is grounded in spiritual and moral principles, while having the skills to produce efficient and effective products and services.

Where do we start? It all begins with being willing to embody what the Hindu scripture *Brihaspati Smriti* says:

*The businessman must be a person of character and integrity with self control... and be an example to others for the practice of ethical values. (Brihaspati Smriti 17.9)*

Here are some steps you can take to begin "mining the rich, bountiful reserves of spiritual gold" in your own organisation, no matter what country or culture you may be from:

- Strengthen your own personal spiritual foundation and draw from it in your day-to-day work
- Make spiritual principles the foundation for all of your relationships
- Embody spiritual principles in your everyday business transactions
- Build communities of like-minded people who genuinely desire to mine this gold and employ it within their organisations

Ultimately, these steps will naturally "export" the gold of your spiritual heritage to others and will ensure that spiritual-based business practices lead us toward a prosperous and sustainable future for the entire planet.

So, ask yourself: *How can you mine the rich spiritual heritage of your culture and put it into practice in your everyday leadership?*

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