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THE CORPORATE HIGH ROAD: *The Power of Spirit*

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LEARNING FROM A MASTER OF BUSINESS POWER

Perhaps you are fascinated by what it takes to duplicate the enormous feats of people like Charles Schwab, just as I was. In the 1970's, Schwab saw an inherent conflict in the brokerage business: the person who is supposed to be on the side of the customer also makes his/her commissions on advising and getting the customer to make more and more trades. He also saw that no one was catering to the knowledgeable investor, who needed no advice. So he set up a company to (1) not to pay any commissions, and (2) not to give any advice. His was a transaction company for informed investors.

This level of integrity went even deeper when they were creating the breakthrough product *OneSource*: offering mutual funds from many fund companies for no fees to Schwab customers. It was designed so that mutual funds companies itself would pay Schwab for bringing in a new investor. Some fund companies wanted to create a special class of funds, with higher management fees, to cover what they were paying to Schwab. But Schwab management would have none of that. The investment through Schwab had to be the same as if the customer had gone straight to the mutual fund company directly.

By the mid-1990's, the competition had greatly expanded and customers began clamoring for advice on what investment vehicles were best for them. An internal debate raged at Schwab about how to respond. Employees were adamant that the company should not compromise its integrity -- that the company's ethics were the very thing that had attracted these employees to dedicate themselves to working at Schwab! Finally they found the right formula for offering information that could lead customers to more informed decisions without advising them on specific investment products.

In summary, Schwab's company has created a new industry, maintained superiority over coming competitors, and inspired employees beyond all measure for excellence and dedication. You might say he himself is a powerful man, and his business is a powerful player in financial industries. Schwab's story naturally leads us to inquire, "What's the source of this power? How can we exercise such power as well?"

Beyond these questions, perhaps you're also interested in duplicating the "high road" that Schwab took: high ethics, high integrity, and high standards for the use of power.

ENTERTAINING A BOLD POSSIBILITY

We all know that values such as quality, trust, creativity, collaboration, and service are all essential to sustainable business success. What we haven't deeply explored is *the true nature and basis of the power* that drives those values to be practiced for sustainable business success. Businesses that exercise their power based on spiritual values generate more sustainable corporate success and more global economic prosperity.

EXPLORING THE NATURE OF POWER

"Power" has two basic meanings in a business context:

1. To be able to energize, "To invoke spirit, enthusiasm, vitality, inspiration, and motivation."
2. To be able to make things happen, "To create, sustain, and dissolve something; to manifest one's wishes/plans/strategies, to achieve a goal, and to exercise "authority" (authority is the ability to "write the future" and/or to "write the rules" and enforce them.)

The first meaning of power is energy. Energy is the source of the life, the vitality that gets things done. We often call it "motivation" – that which moves things. We also call it "spirit."

The second meaning of power – to bring into reality -- is really a *creative* activity. We know from the quality movement that people throughout an organization have creative abilities to make incremental and breakthrough improvements in how things get done. Giving them "authority," via empowerment, has been the way to help unleash this creative ability.

But what is the source of this power? Finances? Information? Technology? Natural resources? No. Despite all the literature proclaiming these as sources of business power, these are but the *tools* of power, not the source. What about corporate reputation, or brand recognition? No again. These are but the *consequences* of the exercise of power. For the *source* of power, we must probe deeper! By finding the true source, we can determine how to best harness and use our power.

The most illuminating way to understand the source of business power is to probe the nature of power in creation itself. Physicists say all this diversity is simply energy -- a singleness of "stuff" in various forms. Since we are an integral part of creation, we share in nature's power of manifestation through this energy. But what is the source of this energy? Now, this is an ageless inquiry, into the very origin of creation. And that brings us to the arena of *spirituality*.

We hesitate, perhaps for good reason, to bring the subjects of spirituality and business together. Some people fear the "corporate takeover" of our values and souls. Some fear that conflicts over differences in beliefs could disrupt corporate life inappropriately. Even so, corporate success in these changing times is a challenging journey that demands new means for navigating difficult roads (including the information highway). The curves are tighter, and the road goes through some very stormy terrain.

The dictionary defines spiritual as the animating or life-giving principle within a human being, and the deep sense of the significance and meaning. And that's what business power is about: an energized, vital set of people working together to manifest and achieve something significant! So the question of, "How do we bring business into our sense of spirituality?" is potentially the most stimulating, far-reaching, and groundbreaking question for business people to discover the nature of business power.

LEARNING FROM THE MASTERS OF SPIRITUAL POWER

The great spiritual literature documents *nine key principles* that make up the foundation, walls, and roof of our spiritual home. Within this context of spiritual power, we can find room for a new understanding of the nature of business power. The first two principles comprise the foundation for the spiritual world-view.

- 1. There is a single God who is the omnipotent source of manifesting and vitalizing this creation.*

Scientists as well as mystics hold that every effect must have a cause. At least for the mystics, the "effect" known as creation must have an original cause, variously called God, Allah, Jehovah, Brahman, the Father, the Atman, etc. John 1:1 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Hebrews pray: "Shema Yisraeil: adonai eloheinu, adonai echad! -- Hear, O Israel: the Lord is our God, the Lord is One!" Muhammad declared, "La ilaha illa Llah -- There is no god but God." The Hindu Mundaka-Upanishad, 1:6, states, "That which cannot be seen, which cannot be seized, which has no origin and no attributes... that which is eternal, diversely manifesting, all-pervading, extremely subtle... that imperishable One the wise regard as the Source of all created things." Therefore, the nature and the source of power is found in this Divine origin of the universe.

- 2. There is a more permanent "reality" than the temporary phenomena of this material world.*

This second “foundational” principle says that “things are not as they seem.” This material world seems like the basic “stuff” for fashioning meaning in our lives. Yet Gautama Buddha said, “Impermanent are all compounded things. When one perceives this with true insight, then one becomes detached from suffering; this is the path of purification” (Dhammapada 20.5). In the Hindu Vedas, we read in the Katha-Upanishad: “The Self-existent created the senses out-going; for this reason man sees the external but not the inner Atman (Self). Some wise man, however, desiring immortality, with eyes turned away (from the external) sees the Atman within.”

3. There is an entity -- some call it a soul -- that exists separate from and beyond the death of the body.

This is the first of four consecutive “walls” of our spiritual home. The Hindu Katha-Upanishad 6:6 states, “Knowing that the senses (of the body) are distinct (from the Soul), and their rising and setting separate (from the Soul), a wise man grieves no more.” Gautama Buddha said, in the Dhammapada XI:8, “Through countless births in the cycle of existence... I faced the suffering of a new birth.” (That is, his soul/mind left one body and reincarnated.) Jesus said, “What profits a man who gains the world and loses his soul?” There are countless other Christian references to the soul as well, as we shall see.

4. Man's soul shares in the divine nature of God, as created in God's image.

This is the second wall. Jesus spoke at the Last Supper: “In a short time the world will no longer see me, but you will see me because I live and you will live. On that day you will understand that *I am in my Father and you in me and I in you.*” Christian mystics have been explicit about this as well. Meister Eckhart (1260-1327) said, “The seed of God is in us. Given an intelligent and hardworking farmer, it will thrive and grow up to God, whose seed it is, and accordingly its fruits will be God-nature. Pear seeds grow into pear trees, nut seeds into nut trees, and God-seed into God.” From other spiritual paths, we find quotes like the Mundaka-Upanishad 2:7, “He who is all knowing and all-perceiving, to Whom belongs the glory of the universe, He dwells in the heavenly city of the heart.”

5. The goal of life is to realize and experience this union with God, primarily through selfless love.

This is perhaps the most difficult “wall” for many people to realize. There are three distinct experiences we might have of our relationship with God. The first is to feel separate from God, to be God’s servant, saying, “I am in the Light (of God).” The second is to feel a kinship with God, to be God’s “relative,” saying, “The Light (God) is in me.” But scriptures and mystics agree that *the ultimate goal of life is union of the soul with the One God, through love... and then serving God by serving mankind.* ALL ELSE takes its meaning only in relation to this goal.

Jesus proclaimed this union as, “*I am in my Father and you in me and I in you.*” St. Clement of Alexandria (150-215 A.D.) wrote, “I say the Logos of God became man so that you may learn from man how man may become God.” Saint Catherine of Genoa (1447-1510) wrote: “I am so... submerged in God’s immense love, that I seem as though immersed in the sea... My being is God, not by simple participation but by a true transformation of my being.”

St. John of the Cross (1542-1591 A.D.), a Doctor of the Catholic Church (whose theology is accepted as true), stated: “When the soul has reached this perfect union with God, all the appetites and faculties of the soul and their habits... are transformed into divine operations. The soul is as transformed and one in God, as the burning coal is with fire.” His contemporary, St. Teresa of Avila (1515-1582), the first female Doctor of the Church, wrote, “In the spiritual marriage, the union is like what we have when a little stream enters the sea; there is no means of separating the two. Or, like the bright light entering a room through two different windows; although the streams of light are separate when they enter the room, they become one.”

This goal is explicitly also stated in the Baghavad Gita, Mahatma Ghandi's favorite spiritual source. “Seeing all life as My manifestation, they (individual souls) are never separated from Me. This supreme Lord, who pervades all existence, the true Self of all creatures, may be realized through undivided love.” (6:30 and 8:22). Reflecting this state of union between soul and God, Muslims chant, “Ishk Allah Mabud Lallah -- The Lover and Beloved are One.”

While these experiences may seem well beyond what "the rest" of us have experienced, they point out the ultimate goal of spiritual life for all of us, as shown to us by our most shining examples of spirituality.

6. This union with God includes a sense of oneness with all people and all creation, through Love

Ruysbroeck articulates this fourth wall of our spiritual home: "We are all one, intimately united in our eternal image, which is the image of God and the source in us of all life." The Isa-Upanishad 1:6, sums it up: "He who sees all beings in God and God in all beings, he never turns away from God." John of the Cross elaborates saying, "The soul is substantially in God, as is every creature. And this is the great delight of this memory: to know creatures through God, and not God through creatures."

7. This sense of love and Oneness naturally expresses itself actively, as service to others

This principle supplies the roof to our spiritual home. Jesus spoke clearly: "Love one another even as I have loved you" and "Whatever you do for the least of your brethren you do as to Me." The Baghavad Gita 6:32 states, "When a person responds to the joys and sorrows of others as if they were his own, he has attained the highest state of spiritual union." Teresa of Avila adds, "God demands of us both action and fruition (inner), in such a way that the action never hinders the fruition, nor the fruition the action, but they strengthen one another. This is the supreme summit of the inner life." In the Upanishads we find this lovely statement: "The Lord is enshrined in the hearts of all. Rejoice in him through renunciation. Thus alone will you work in real freedom."

8. The purpose of having a body is to have an instrument (a means) for realizing union with God and for serving others.

The body is the door for entering our spiritual home. For mystics, it's a blessing to have a body, since it's the means for the soul to take up this spiritual task: doing what it takes to experience union with God and then to serve others. . To the extent the body serves this goal, it becomes sacred. However, any preoccupation with the body -- whether from sickness, health-fanaticism, or indulgence in sensory pleasures -- is a distraction from the inner-viewing that's essential to spiritual union. For example, the Katha-Upanishad 5-6 states, "He who is without discrimination and whose mind is always uncontrolled, his senses are unmanageable like the vicious horses of a driver. But he who is full of discrimination and whose mind is always controlled, his senses are manageable like the good horses of a driver." Gautama Buddha adds in the Dhammapada, 14:5, "Abstain from all unwholesome deeds, perform wholesome ones, purify your mind -- this is the teaching of the Buddhas."

9. The evidence of spiritual growth is congruence of thought, word, and deed in expressing basic spiritual values.

This principle supplies the furnishings for our home. In all spiritual paths we have some version of the Golden Rule: "Do to others what you would have them do to you." Likewise we find variations of the teaching from the Bhagavad Gita: "Discrimination, wisdom, understanding, forgiveness, truth, self-control, and peace of mind... non-violence, charity, equanimity, contentment, and perseverance in spiritual disciplines - all the different qualities found in living creatures have their source in me."

Five basic spiritual values -- love, truth, responsible action, inner peace, and non-violence -- are found in all spiritual traditions. For example, in Buddhism we find the Dukkappattadigatha saying, "Give charity (right action) out of devotion (love), always maintain the moral precepts (truth and non-violence), find delight in meditation (inner peace), and you will attain the celestial life."

BRINGING "BUSINESS" INTO OUR SPIRITUALITY

There are profound implications for augmenting business success buried in these spiritual insights. They may be hard to see, but please continue. Just as milk has to be churned to reveal butter, we'll churn these insights until the business lessons are revealed.

The core inquiry into the nature of business power goes beyond the question of, "How do we bring spirituality

into business?" which implies that the nature of "business" supplies the larger context in which to test the viability of spirituality to contribute to it. We are spiritual beings first, and we need to be asking, "How do we bring business into an expanded understanding of our spirituality?" In that light, there are at least five major implications to consider:

1. The spiritual view of life says that God is the omnipotent source of creation, that there is a more permanent "reality" than the temporary phenomena of this material world, and that the soul exists separate from the body. Webster's New World Dictionary defines "soul" as:

- An entity which is regarded as being the immortal or spiritual part of a person
- The moral or emotional nature of a person
- Spiritual or emotional force

This soulful vitality naturally occurs in life as our sense of meaning when we contribute to others, our enthusiasm to learn and grow and our intrinsic motivation to express our uniqueness. Since the power of energizing and manifesting is "built into" this creation, and since we are an integral part of nature created by the Divine, our relation to power is based on our relation to Divinity. Therefore, ***business power is a subset of spiritual power.***

2. The spiritual view says that the soul shares in the Divine nature, created in God's image, and that the goal of life is to realize and experience union with God. Work occupies more time than almost any other activity in our lives, it allows us to exercise and grow in all the major spiritual values found in all spiritual paths -- such as love, inner peace, truthfulness, responsible action, and non-violence -- just in the course of day-to-day business decisions and relationships. Therefore, ***work is one means to grow towards the experience of union with God.***

3. The spiritual view of life says that union with God through love includes the sense of Oneness with all creation, and that love naturally expresses itself in service and contribution to others. Making a contribution to others, first of all, is an exercise in the spiritual values listed in B. Serving others also promotes the highest possible exchange of value(s) in a customer-business relationship. This extends to serving society at the same time, since it's impossible to have a sustainable, healthy business in a society that isn't socially, morally, and economically well. Therefore, ***the spiritual purpose of work is to serve others, making a contribution to them and to the society that supports us.***

4. The spiritual view says that a body is an instrument (a means) for realizing union with God and for serving others. The Latin word for "body" is "corpus." Our corporations are literally corporate *bodies*. Just as the individual body is separate from the individual soul, a corporation is a body that has a life separate from the people who temporarily serve as board members, management, or employees. (Such a business entity may not be called a "corporation" in some countries, but the essence is the same by any name.). Together we act as organisms, not machines. We are embodiments of our aspirations and actions, our gifts and greatness, our foibles and failures. Therefore, ***the purpose of a business entity (the "body") is to be a disciplined vehicle in direct support of this spiritual purpose.***

5. The spiritual view says that the evidence of spiritual growth in congruence of thought, word, and deed in the expression of core spiritual/human values. As mentioned earlier, five core values -- love, truth, responsible action, inner peace, and non-violence directly support business success. For example:

- Truthfulness -- fosters trust and honest communications
- Responsible action -- fosters high quality work
- Inner peace -- fosters creative and wise decisions
- Love -- fosters great service based on caring for others' well-being
- Non violence -- fosters win-win collaboration

These five values are *found in all spiritual traditions*. Therefore, ***spiritual values are THE fundamental underpinnings to sustainable business success.***

UNLEASHING SPIRITUAL POWER IN THE VITAL CORPORATION

Business power is a subset of spiritual power. The key question is, "Is this power well-used or well-abused?" There's no need to go into much detail about how business has operated from selfish interests. The signs are all there just by the plethora of laws enacted to protect against the misuse and abuse of corporate power: anti-trust and anti-monopoly laws, anti-bribery laws, environmental clean-up laws, consumer protection laws, civil rights laws, union laws. All these types of laws were created in reaction to a widespread misuse of power. Business cries in the dark against these laws, but the business community has by-and-large brought them onto itself by its own non-spiritual behavior.

So, how does this "spiritual power" come together in the form of the business power to energize a workforce and manifest a vision in the marketplace... especially when the whole spiritual journey is based on *love*, not yet a regular word in business journals?

Consider the case of AT&T Consumer Products, handling their residential telephone business with 13,000 people. In 1985, it had been the least profitable division of AT&T, and the job of turning it around was given to Senior VP and Chief Quality Officer Ken Bertaccini. He was also given an ultimatum: turn it around in two years, or the business would be abandoned. One of the initiatives he sponsored was focused on a training program focused on living and working with much greater levels of honesty, integrity, commitment, and caring -- it was called "Project Miracles," run by Harvin Rutigliano. As a result, within the two-year timeframe, his division became one of the most profitable in AT&T and had the highest morale as well!

What Ken learned from the experience showed up most clearly in 1989 when he, now as President and CEO of the division, changed his business's statement of values to include the word, "Love." As he stated in the division newsletter:

Using love in this context is a bold step, but I think we're ready to legitimize the "L word" and put love in our business... We're talking about love in the context of love your neighbor as you love yourself, and treat others as you would like to be treated. We don't hold to the scenario that there's no room for love in business. We all need to love one another to exist individually and collectively, whether it's on a personal or business level. Adding love to our Shared Values challenges us to own and live our personal values of caring, trust, and respect. Certainly these are all definitions of love. You can't care for someone, trust or respect them if you don't love them. And putting love in our Shared Values Pyramid sends a message to our people and to everybody, inside and outside AT&T, who looks at consumer Products that we really do care about each other.¹

Bob Galvin, chairman of the executive committee on Motorola's board of directors, was the man most responsible for leading Motorola's superlative growth in the sixties, seventies, and eighties. He once described the primary job of leaders was inspiring acts of faith ("things are do-able that are not necessarily provable"), spreading hope, and building trust. When asked how these values relate to the "real world of business," he replied that executives must develop more than good technical or financial skills. They must develop character in themselves and others. He concluded, "Faith, hope, and trust... Theology is very practical business."²

As part of forming that new ethos, Motorola has experienced that their high ethical standards (no gifts, especially bribes, are ever given to customers or suppliers, and no gifts are accepted from them) might mean a competitive disadvantage in the short term but sustainable advantage in the long term. For example, a distributor of telecommunications products in the Asia Pacific region dropped a competitor's products and signed up to carry Motorola's specifically because the distributor was tired of the unreliable relationships built on pay-offs. They could count on a high-integrity relationship with Motorola. That is a high level of corporate power to transform the marketplace and transform people at the same time.

¹ From *The New Bottom Line*, edited by Renesch and DeFoore, 1997, New Leaders Press, San Francisco

² From *Quantum Quality*, William C. Miller, 1993, Quality Resources, White Plains, New York

SEEING WORK AS A SPIRITUAL AUTOBAHN

The second implication of the spiritual view is that work is a means to for spiritual growth – specifically towards the experience of union with God and all creation. Gibran said in *The Prophet*, “Work is love made visible. When you work with love, you bind yourself to yourself, and to one another, and to God.”³ The key question is, “Are people growing in character and exercising their spiritual purpose and power in their jobs... or just working as inter-changeable cogs in the corporate machine?” You might say work is a spiritual pathway, but it is more than that: very many of us spend the majority of our waking hours at work, so it’s more of a major highway than a pathway for getting us closer to God.

Fred Schwettman, as head of Hewlett-Packard’s Circuit Technology Division, underscored how important it is for people to experience making a meaningful contribution through their work, when he related to me:

We had a discussion about values and beliefs in our staff meeting to really articulate what our personal purposes were -- what we’re doing to grow. An example could be to know God or to find love associated with God and to practice that in whatever I do. If you’re not accomplishing something here that’s really important to your basic reason for existence, perhaps you haven’t really thought about it a lot. As time goes on, my purpose turns more and more spiritual. What can I contribute to people’s lives? I also have to spend my time trying to figure out how we’ll survive within this industry. You can practice honesty, integrity, and caring, and all of those things, but at the same time, this is a tremendously competitive environment. But overall, when the time comes to check out, you better feel really good about what you accomplished -- and making a little profit here and there is probably not going to cut it.

When it comes to tapping the energy and spirit of the workforce to actually “make something happen,” research by Barry Posner and W. H. Schmidt shows that *clarity about our personal values is more important to our job commitment than clarity about our company’s values.*⁴ Greater clarity about company values had NO increase in job commitment, whereas greater clarity about personal values increased commitment by 30 percent.

This is really a two-way street: (1) we can use work as a place to grow our spiritual selves, which directly affects the quality of relationships we form; (2) this in turn gives us greater power to achieve significant results in our jobs.

Anita Roddick, founder and CEO of The Body Shop -- with over 1,300 outlets in more than 46 countries – has seen her business flourish when her people develop their spiritual side through their work:

*Work is where a continuous sense of spiritual education can take place, and where the word “service” included both the desire to express ourselves and the desire to contribute selflessly to a greater good. Through compassionate service and caring with passion, people can feel connected and uplifted. I have found that people become motivated when you guide them to the source of their power. They have a secret ingredient called enthusiasm. Enthusiasm created from the heart guides your whole system, so there is no resistance. Everything flows and seems possible.*⁵

Work challenges become the “stuff” for growing spiritually and then for using that growth to excel at work. For example, a few years ago I worked with DuPont to conduct a “new business opportunity search” for a material they called Nomex. The first day seemed very creative -- 400 or more ideas -- but nothing really sparked; there was no flash of brilliance, and I drove home puzzled. When I returned the next morning, I asked the participants to share with all of us one thing in the world situation that genuinely concerned them. Instantly, the room became alive as they anchored themselves in real-life, passionate issues: hunger, drugs, crime, resource depletion.

When I had them brainstorm ways that Nomex might possibly contribute to solving their deep concerns, their creative energy rose exponentially. Ultimately, they produced over 1,000 ideas, which they then organized into the top fifty key concepts, of which ten later tested out with the highest technical and market feasibility.

³ From *The Prophet*, Kahlil Gibran, Random House, New York

⁴ In “Values Congruence and Differences Between the Interplay of Personal and Organizational Value Systems, *Journal of Business Ethics*, December 1993: p.174

⁵ From *The New Bottom Line*, edited by Renesch and DeFoore, 1997, New Leaders Press, San Francisco

Of those, over the next two years, the first concept to achieve a significant profit and market share was only #8 on the initial top ten list: The opportunity of protecting precious art during shipment from museum to museum was made into a new business by a manager whose passion was preserving and appreciating art.

What made the difference? In brainstorming and implementing their top ideas, the participants came together to tap into their creative wellspring to find something personal, compelling, and soulful. Their work became an act of love. Besides producing great results, this expansion of love opened the passage to a closer union with each other, with their customers, and ultimately with God. At least for the while, the worlds of work and worship were united.

DISCOVERING A PROFOUND PURPOSE FOR CORPORATE POWER

The third implication of the spiritual view is that the purpose of work is to serve people and society. The key question is, "Is the main goal of the business to make a contribution to the lives of others, or is it to acquire and gain for itself and shareholders?" *Corporations CAN and DO have a spiritual purpose...* a mission, vision, and values set by the people (souls) inhabiting that body. For a business vision to have inspirational value, it MUST be based on how the organization can serve -- not just its customers, but also employees, society, and the planet.

I once conducted a survey of executives asking this question: "What is the primary driving force behind your corporate success? Is it: Increasing shareholder value? Beating the competition? Making profits? Serving customer needs? Growing an organization?" The vast majority of them had three observations:

1. Businesses at the top of their industry strive for success by "serving customers better than anyone else."
2. Businesses near the industry bottom drive themselves to "beat the competition" or "maximizing profits."

Indeed, Bill Lambert, former Manager of Innovation Resources at Procter and Gamble, said, "If our sole goal is to maximize profits or beat the competition, we will not make the investments that are necessary in the long run to serve customers better than anyone else, and we won't end up #1 in our industry. We need to focus on the breakthrough choices that increase value for and delight our customers."⁶

Missions based only on "increasing shareholder wealth," "beating the competition," etc. all fall short because the human urge to serve is deeper than the urge to acquire. Consider the wildly successful Hard Rock Café chain of restaurants, founded by Isaac Tigrett when he wasn't yet 20 years old. Isaac was raised in a rich family in the Southern USA during the 1960's. His town was 90 % African-American and rigidly segregated, which greatly offended his sense of human fairness. When the Civil Rights laws were passed, and segregation signs came down, he was struck that "All of a sudden, all of us, not just Blacks, are more human."

In London, he saw a similar scene of segregation: "In England in those days, the social classes were still completely separated. There was literally no place in London where a baker and a banker could meet to talk. I wanted to break that system." He decided to open an "absolutely classless" restaurant with a friend, and rented a space in the ultra-fancy Mayfair. He opened the first overtly-American restaurant in England connected with the youth-movement of those times. With his timing, his concept, the location - it was a smashing success from the very first day. Standing in line were those bankers and bakers, Labor politicians and laborers. The rock icons of the era also came there. The rest is popular history.

So much for manifestation... What about spirit?

Being one of the Hard Rock Café family was therapy for people. Even if they came from a violent home-life, here they were loved and they loved back in return. Respect was the key. We respected people and expected respect in return. The same goes for customers. I hated seeing people in a queue in bad weather... We decided to extend the boundary of our restaurant to the end of the waiting line. We didn't consult lawyers; we just proclaimed it. We appointed a Queue Maitre d' who would bring out umbrellas in rainy weather (and we never lost one); when it was hot, iced tea, and when it was icy, cocoa and soup.

⁶ From *Creativity: The Eight Master Keys*, William C. Miller, 1989, Global Creativity Corp., Dallas

While on a spiritual pilgrimage to India, he was struck by the saying, "Love All, Serve All;" to him, it embodied the ultimate spiritual goal of life (consistent with the mystics quoted earlier). After he returned, he began printing such epigrams in every kitchen, on paychecks, menus, T-shirts, and sweatshirts... thinking that if people love the Hard Rock so much, why not reflect that love back at them? He sold millions of sweatshirts to lots of different kinds of people - "some of them pretty rough. And on every one of them was that sign: "Love All, Serve All."

This continued to be his basic operating principle as the business exploded around the world. He continued his personal and business mission of fostering "classlessness." For example, in Tokyo, he insisted that women, "who are non-entities there," be treated absolutely equally. In conclusion, Isaac has stated,

All I did was put spirit and business together in that big mixing bowl and add love. I didn't care about anything but people. Just cherish them, look after them, be sensitive to them and their lives.⁷

"Love All, Serve All," which so aptly describes the work of Mother Teresa, was also the fundamental operating principle of a business that started with a \$60,000 investment and turned into approximately a \$108 million sale of the business around 20 years later. You might be saying, "But that's with a 'counter-culture' business." I ask you, "How many counter-culture businesses ever make it that big?" Almost none. Actually, "How many *restaurants* ever become that successful?" Very, very few.

(Thanks to Jack Hawley and his book *Reawakening the Spirit in Work*, 1993, for this example.)

BUILDING A PHENOMENAL CORPORATION AROUND SPIRITUAL PURPOSE

How can a corporate body think, speak, and act as a powerful vehicle to fulfill a spiritual purpose and thrive as an economic entity at the same time? As an exercise of power, we've seen that two conditions must be met:

- Manifesting a specific mission, vision, and values in the marketplace
- Stimulating the energy and spirit of the workforce

Consider the case of Medtronic, a hi-tech corporation specializing in products and services to meet the needs of heart patients since in the early 1950's founded by Earl Bakken, who invented the first battery-operated pacemaker. William George, current Chairman and CEO, also describes him as a "great spiritual leader."

Their corporate body is based on self-directed work teams and "leading by values" rather than "management by objectives." Those values, in priority order, are:

- Restoring people to full health
- Serving customers with products and services of unsurpassed quality
- Recognizing the personal worth of employees
- Making a fair profit and return for shareholders
- Maintaining good citizenship as a company

Regarding this priority order, George wrote in 1993:

Medtronic is not in the business of 'maximizing shareholder value,' but rather, our purpose is to 'maximize patient value.' We like to say that the 'real bottom line' for Medtronic is the 1,300,000 patients who were restored to full life and health last year by Medtronic products... At Medtronic we believe that if we first serve our customers well, provide products and services of unsurpassed quality and empower our employees to fulfill themselves and the company's mission, we will indeed provide an outstanding return for our shareholders.

Those results? Between 1963-93, their stock grew at more than a 25% annual compounded rate, compared to the Dow Jones or S&P 500 average growth of 10-12 per cent. The stock did even better between 1985-93.

⁷ From *The New Bottom Line*, edited by Renesch and DeFoore, 1997, New Leaders Press, San Francisco

These values and results seem not very different than many other successful, customer-driven, value-based companies. But then, George also talks about what's behind the values of "serving customers" and "recognizing the personal worth of employees" -- which he says is a necessary condition for their financial results:

We are all spiritual beings, composed of minds, bodies, and a spiritual side. To unleash the whole capability of the individual -- mind, body, and spirit -- gives enormous power to the organization. It truly empowers members of the organization to devote their entire beings to the ultimate purpose for which the organization exists, which is to serve others. That's what I believe is 'spirituality in the workplace,' to unlock the real sense of significance of the organization's purpose.

This has nothing to do with religion. People of many faiths, or no faith at all for that matter, can join together in a common cause of service to others through their work. To ask employees only to utilize their minds and bodies, while not acknowledging the power of the spirit which resides in every person, not only diminishes their individual gifts and contributions but also limits their ability to contribute fully to their work and their organization. Why should we ask employees to 'check their values and their spiritual selves at the door' when they come to work? They lose, the organization loses, and ultimately the customer or beneficiary of the company's work loses! No wonder so many organizations ultimately "lose their souls."⁸

Recall that the mystics taught that just as a horse has to be brought under the mastership of the rider, the body has to be brought under the direction of the soul. In corporate terms, selfish pursuits like maximizing profits and dominating competition waste the potential of the corporate body, because these outward pursuits that diminish the realization of the more powerful "inner" goals of serving people with excellence.

PUTTING SPIRITUAL VALUES TO WORK

Peak-performing organizations demand a mastery of their own collective power to create. Our original source for this comes from our relationship to creation itself; since we are integral parts of creation, and as such share its creative power. We can focus the power of creative ideas for two purposes in business: to achieve greater revenues (for the "top line" on a balance sheet) and to achieve greater efficiency of work processes (affecting the "midline" areas of the balance sheet). In addition, innovation can be either revolutionary or evolutionary.

Can we focus on such practical matters and run a successful business, while emphasizing spiritual values such as love, truth, inner peace, responsible action, and non-violence? After all, the fifth implication of our spiritual principles is that spiritual values are THE fundamental underpinnings to sustainable business success. For Dick Eppel, general manager of the communication systems division of a major electronics corporation, the answer is a resounding, "Yes!" He exercised true corporate power: tapping the spirit of employees and manifesting a complete turnaround of an ailing business.

It was definitely a division in serious trouble, a result of too much success in their marketing activities without enough forethought for how they were going to execute that successfully. Clearly, one goal had to be to satisfy the customer. And the second thing was to get the people to believe that there was a recovery possible here. Everything had to be credible - the roadmap, the vision, the how-you're going-to-get-there - all had to be credible. I was the one who had to say, "Trust me. Once we get through this, then we are all going to win."

Dick had to model this credibility and trust with truthfulness. One time, a salesman came to Dick with a potential new customer who wanted a delivery date that Dick knew they couldn't meet. The salesman wanted an exception to their strategy so he could get the sale.

I hung tough on not accepting business that we couldn't deliver on. That was a test. I would talk to a customer, look him in the eye, and say, "Do you want me to lie to you?" There was no ambiguity. It turned out that we could execute good business, deliver on that business, and manage it to a schedule, even though there were threats of going someplace else. After two years, things were significantly improved. Turnover was down. We got the division to break even, or pretty close to break-even. Every contract got delivered on. Every contract. The most important piece that we saved has represented

⁸ From *The New Bottom Line*, edited by Renesch and DeFoore, 1997, New Leaders Press, San Francisco

about \$13-20 million per year of cash-rich profits ever since.

What did it take for Dick and his division to succeed? He named two things beyond having the right strategy: *One was a sense of positive perseverance, positive expectations, and positive visualization. The second thing was that the management team. In this one, there was a bonding beyond friendship and camaraderie. There was such a sense of caring, a genuine sense of love, even though that word was never expressed.*⁹

Truth telling, love, business – they need each other. Spiritual values such as truth and love enrich business success.

Not all companies operating by spiritual values will necessarily succeed – it takes business acumen and skill as well. What they all will do is to embody the spirit that when we serve, we can be serving God and advancing our spiritual wisdom. It allows us to use our work as a spiritual fulfillment of the mystics' vision for life. As Christ and others have stated, when we serve even the least of our brethren, we are doing it also directly to and for God." This allows us to "Love God and Serve God" simultaneously as we "Love all and serve all." Then the walls between worship and work come quickly tumbling down.

LIVING UP TO THE POTENTIAL AND THE RESPONSIBILITY

Truly, a new era in business is ready to be born, a golden age of business based on spiritual values such as love, truth, peace, right action, and non-violence. The world at large, and the Spirit within each of us, calls upon us to recognize our inherent spiritual nature and to bring it to our work. When business sees its mission is to serve, it taps into the most profound and noble levels of the human spirit. That is what Charles, Schwab, Ken Bertaccini, Bob Galvin, Anita Roddick, Isaac Tigrett, Earl Bakken, William George, and Dick Eppel have done. That is what we call can do.

Business has a key role in transforming society and our quality of life. Certainly the problems of the world at the dawn of this new millennium demand our deepest, most sincere efforts to "clean up our mess." But even more, our souls urge us to ignite our lives with spiritual purpose, and rededicate our work to making a difference, not must making money, to be concerned with good not just goods.

Willis Harman, in *Global Mind Change*, points out the opportunities and the responsibilities that business leaders (at all levels!) face as we approach the early days of the 21st century.

Leaders in world business are the first true planetary citizens. They have worldwide capability and responsibility; their domains transcend national boundaries. Their decisions affect not just economies, but societies; and not just direct concerns of business, but world problems of poverty, environment, and security.

*World business will be a key actor in the ultimate resolution of the macro-problem. It crosses national boundaries with much more ease than do political institutions and the business corporation is far more flexible and adaptive organization than the bureaucratic structures of government. Up to now, there has been no guiding ethic... (but) such a new ethos for business may be in the process of forming.*¹⁰

Together, we face a choice, difficult for some and easy for others, between: (a) continuing the status quo, with cut-throat competition, never-satisfied spirals of desires, unsustainable depletion or destruction of natural resources; or (b) using our God-given power to transform ourselves. When it comes to the exercise of corporate power, the best is yet to come. We can fulfill the possible, the vision: businesses exercising their power based on spiritual principles... and thereby building more sustainable corporate success and global economic prosperity.

It's too late to argue about whether spirituality belongs in the workplace or doesn't. Our souls go to work with us, and it's time to express our spirituality consciously. We have to stop working six days and worshipping separately for an hour on the seventh day.

⁹ From *Creativity: The Eight Master Keys*, William C. Miller, 1989, Global Creativity Corp., Dallas

¹⁰ From *Global Mind Change*, Willis Harman, 1998, Berrett Kohler, San Francisco

If you choose to make it your personal purpose, you could bring the power of your spiritual values to your own workplace. Here's one starting point. Perhaps you'll think of others as well.

1. **Truthfulness:** speak honestly with employees and customers; speak directly rather than behind someone's back; speak unarguably in terms of facts rather than opinions

2. **Responsible Action:** conduct business with fair prices and ethical practices; keep your agreements, with employees as well as customers; take responsibility for problems, rather than making excuses

3. **Inner Peace:** practice equanimity, even in crises, in times of profit or loss, and in times of praise or blame; see yourself as the source of your emotional reactions, rather than the victim of someone else's behavior

4. **Love:** connect to a higher purpose in your life in which you can care for and serve others through your work; listen generously and compassionately to others rather than being judgmental

5. **Non-Violence:** conduct business that is environmentally friendly; find win-win solutions to problems, rather than winning at another's expense

These values are "built in" to our human nature; they do not have to be inculcated, just evoked. What would these look like around you? It means a clerical person would do his or her best quality work, even if no one was watching. It means a professional would tell the truth about errors or delays, even if it meant a temporary reprimand. It means an executive would continually strive to find creative new ways to deliver goods faster, without costly delays to his or her customers. It means a sales person would not over-promise what a product would do, or overcharge for them. It means a manager would actively seek to resolve a customer complaint rather than hide behind bureaucratic rules.

As stated by Michael Ray, professor at Stanford University's Graduate School of Business,

*The real heroes of today are people dealing with the challenges of a world in chaotic transition... operating from a perspective of what they can do in service, competing yet moving more and more into cooperation and co-creation with others. They know the difficulty and suffering that is part of this world. But they also have full faith in their inner creativity or spirit with its infinite intuition, will, joy, strength, and most importantly, compassion. They know that the joy and promise of life is taking these inner qualities and bringing them forth in a constant quest for the highest for themselves and everyone around them.*¹¹

Into this wondrous, mysterious world, we're all born, and we all die. The measure of our lives is what we create with our time on earth and what character we bring to bear on our creations. We *are* the organizations we work for, responsible for every use, or abuse, of our power. When we act with truthfulness, responsibility, equanimity, love, and non-violence, we carry the spirit and power of all creation in everything we do. Only then will we experience true corporate vitality. Only then will we achieve true material and spiritual prosperity.

¹¹ From "The New Entrepreneurship: A Heroic Path in a Time of Transition," by Michael Ray, in Renesch and Ray, *The New Entrepreneurs*, New Leaders Press, 1994