



VOLUME 4

An inquiry into the nature, activities and results of leading from a spiritual basis



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A research project conducted by the Global Dharma Center



VOLUME 4



STORIES FROM SPIRITUAL-BASED LEADERS

A research project conducted by the Global Dharma Center

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Volume 1 – Spiritual-Based Leadership Interviews (A-K)
Volume 2 – Spiritual-Based Leadership Interviews (L-Z)
Volume 3 – Spiritual-Based Leadership Interview Excerpts
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	7
SECTION I – BUSINESS	9
▪ Downsizing, selling or closing a business (9 stories)	11
▪ Failure of a business (4 stories)	21
▪ Mission, vision and purpose (4 stories)	25
▪ Role of spirituality in business (10 stories)	29
▪ Start-up, growth, merger, acquisition, or turnaround of a business (9 stories)	40
SECTION II – CHARACTER	53
▪ Character building (4 stories)	55
▪ Crisis intervention (9 stories)	59
▪ Ethics (7 stories)	69
▪ Integrity and conscience (6 stories)	76
▪ Miracles (3 stories)	82
SECTION III – EMPLOYEES	87
▪ Communications (12 stories)	89
▪ Compensation/reward systems (8 stories)	101
▪ Development (13 stories)	107
▪ Discipline (7 stories)	121
SECTION IV – LEADERSHIP	129
▪ Career (8 stories)	131
▪ Empowering others (9 stories)	139
▪ Principles (9 stories)	148
▪ Spiritual experiences (9 stories)	156
SECTION V – ORGANISATION	169
▪ Conflict resolution (5 stories)	171
▪ Changing the organisational culture (10 stories)	176
▪ Creating and sustaining the organisational culture (11 stories)	189
▪ Quality assurance programmes (3 stories)	201
SECTION VI – STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS	205
▪ Customer/client/vendor relations (10 stories)	207
▪ Executive relations (6 stories)	217
▪ Influencing others (6 stories)	222
▪ Societal relations (5 stories)	229
▪ Union relations (3 stories)	234



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INTRODUCTION

The overall purpose of the Spiritual-Based Leadership Research Programme is to contribute to the emerging field of, and the consciousness about spiritual-based leadership in work organisations worldwide, by making high quality and reliable data, information, knowledge, and development methodologies about spiritual-based leadership easily accessible.

While consciousness about spiritual-based leadership is relatively new in the work world and as a field of study, we feel it has gained a strength and momentum such that it deserves a focus of research at this time.

The following are the *intentions* and *rationale* that underlie our engagement in this research:

- Many people are sceptical about the mix of business and spirituality. Some people are positive about business and sceptical about spirituality: “You can’t really be competitive in business if you’re spiritual.” Some people are positive about spirituality and sceptical about business: “Business greed is too corrupting for spirituality to make a difference.” Our intention is to address views such as these by investigating if and how business can be effective while operating from a consciously held spiritual basis.
- Traditional business goals typically focus on financial/productivity gains. Texts from spiritual traditions worldwide propose that there is a much more profound role for human endeavour – that of selfless service to society and the spiritual upliftment of everyone. Our intention is to help investigate how business goals can be defined and prioritised from a spiritual basis, and how businesses can thrive and evolve from that basis.
- The students and faculty at universities as well as consultants and organisational leaders require examples of, and knowledge about, spiritual-based leaders in work organisations. Our intention is to provide an easily accessible knowledge base and website, which will include cases, stories, examples, and analytical data for class work, teaching, and publications.
- There may be significant, demonstrable differences among spiritual-based leaders in their perspectives, qualities, and attributes. The practices and processes of spiritual-based leaders might also vary depending on the type of organisation (family owned, publicly traded, etc.) and the cultural traditions of the society the organisation operates in. Our intention is to develop a typology for these diverse types of spiritual-based leaders and to identify a framework within which people can consciously develop themselves as spiritual-based leaders.

Distinctive characteristics of this research programme:

- It is defined from a consciously held spiritual basis.
- Participation in this programme will be an opportunity for everyone involved to grow in their spiritual character, knowledge, and practice in the world.
- It will include spiritual-based leaders that are leading in work organisations in a variety of cultures and traditions around the world.
- The programme directors, researchers, and spiritual-based leaders will contribute their time, energy, and talent on a voluntary basis. All findings, information, and publications (other than published books) will be available at no cost.

Programme Directors:

This programme is the coordinated, volunteer effort of: Debra Miller, William Miller, Kirsten Pruzan Mikkelsen, and Dr. Peter Pruzan.



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SECTION I

Business Stories

During our 1½ – 2 hour interviews with leaders who participated in our international research programme, we asked each one to share specific stories that exemplified how they drew from their spiritual view of life to respond to a challenging situation.

In this section you will find 36 stories related to the broad topic of “Business”. These stories are organised according to the following categories:

- **Downsizing, selling or closing a business (9 stories)**
- **Failure of a business (4 stories)**
- **Mission, vision and purpose (4 stories)**
- **Role of spirituality in business (10 stories)**
- **Start-up, growth, merger, acquisition, or turnaround of a business (9 stories)**

This section contains only the stories excerpted from the full interviews. To review the career history, current responsibilities, spiritual views, and other aspects of leading from a spiritual basis, please refer to the complete transcript of each leader, which can be found in either Volume 1 or 2 or the on-line knowledge-base at www.globaldharma.org/sbl-research.htm.

THE FOLLOWING STORIES ARE CONTAINED IN THIS SECTION:

Business – Downsizing, selling, and closing

- Closing down the company – John Behner
- Taking responsibility in a downsizing – Amber Chand
- Downsizing in order to survive – Lars Kolind
- Expressing empathy and compassion while downsizing – Ricardo Levy
- Selling a business – Ricardo Levy
- Creating the spirit of downsizing – Anand Pillai
- Terminating employees and downsizing the organisation – Ananth Raman
- Following intuition – James Sinclair
- Developing a turnaround plan for the company – S. K. Welling

Business – Failure

- Facing the demise of an organisation – Amber Chand
- The struggles of a dual culture – Amber Chand
- Dealing with the pain of a failed organisation – Amber Chand
- Perspectives on “failure” – Parantha Narendran

Business – Mission, Vision and Purpose

- Developing and energising a vision for the company – Amber Chand
- Creating a long-term vision – Stephen R. Covey
- Discovering and living our purpose – Lars Kolind
- Relationship with results – Deependra Moitra

Business – Role of spirituality

- Exposing employees to spirituality – Floy Aguenza
- The role of spirituality and trust in business – Philip Budin
- Surrendering the company to the spiritual teacher – Francisco Canada
- Finding a new vocabulary for business – Amber Chand
- Spiritual intention in leadership – Stephen R. Covey
- Sharing spirituality in business – Federico Cuneo
- Measuring the spiritual progress of an organisation – James Sinclair
- Creating a new definition of man as a spiritual being – Magnus Vrethammar
- Explicit and implicit spirituality in the organisation – Magnus Vrethammar
- Dilemmas in developing a spiritually-oriented organisation – Magnus Vrethammar

Business – Start-up, growth, merger, acquisition, and turnaround

- Being creative and innovative – John Behner
- Starting a new enterprise – Amber Chand
- Turning around a failing organisation – A. K. Chattopadhyay
- Shifting the thinking of the company – Niran Jiang
- Reducing grief during a merger of two competitive companies – Ashoke Maitra
- Giving love – G. Narayana
- Merging two major firms – V. V. Ranganathan
- Doing the right thing – James Sinclair
- Developing a turnaround plan for the company – S. K. Welling

BUSINESS – DOWNSIZING, SELLING OR CLOSING A BUSINESS (9 STORIES)

Behner, John R. – El Salvador

“Former Country Manager for Nabisco in El Salvador”

Spiritual Theme

“Realising God by serving others.”

Only saying “serving everyone” does not include that, which is the most important to me, which is to realise my oneness with God.

Closing down the company

In 1996, I was in India when I received a cable from the company asking me to go to a meeting on Park Avenue in New York on the 5th of December. Usually we never travelled via New York, except this time we had travelled to India via New York, and I had a flight reservation to arrive in New York on the 4th of December on our way back to El Salvador. So it was perfect for the meeting. Before I left India I asked a friend where I could get a suit and tie, because I hadn't taken one to India, and he gave me the name of a store in Bangalore in South India. There I bought a suit labelled “Park Avenue Style”.

At the meeting in New York, they told me that they had decided to close down the factory in El Salvador and offered me an incentive to retire at that time. I saw it as a good opportunity and accepted it. And I believe they were happy to get rid of somebody like me who was a vegetarian having six weeks of vacation when they only had four, and who would go off and stay in India and not come back. I saw them at meetings two or three times a year, but it wasn't like the employees I was with all the time.

They looked at me as being a rebel, because I would do what I thought was best, and not necessarily follow the policies of the company. Although in all the time I was there, they never had any legal problems, they never had any tax problems, never any kind of a problem like dishonesty, which was so common in other companies and other branches of the company. Every year, our company in El Salvador was making more money than some of the much larger companies within Nabisco, because we had so many products.

Why did the parent company in New York decide to shut us down? I think that at the time it was becoming very chic in New York to have centralised manufacturing and downsizing the number of employees, so that there wouldn't be any labour liabilities. In El Salvador, this was a company that didn't fit in anybody's concept in Nabisco.

The sales were going up, the profits were going up. I had three buildings, and I was renting more space. At the head office in New York they wouldn't let me buy a building, “A war is going on in El Salvador. What do you want to buy there for?” they asked.

In the New York headquarters they wanted a slim company. In Central America they owned a building in Costa Rica, and had a long-term lease in Guatemala. My leases were just expiring when they decided to do this. They figured that it was easy to get out of El Salvador and get rid of all the stuff that they didn't know what to do with, and 300 employees, which I felt they didn't care

about. This was in 1997. They hired a manager to run the small distributorship that they were going to maintain in the country. In the end they moved the company to Guatemala. When that didn't work, they closed the company in Guatemala and moved it to Costa Rica.

When the whole thing fell apart it was very traumatic for many of the employees. But there's a company called "Little Nabisco" in El Salvador, where all of my production people and many of my sales people went when I left and headquarters closed the plant. Now it's a very booming business. One of its best products is the prepared gelatine, which Nabisco doesn't have anything to do with. When they finally got rid of me, the company immediately started buying non-vegetarian gelatine from their plant in Ecuador, and they brought back their yeast from Brazil. But they can't sell it. They simply gave away the right to selling the instant yeast-product, to a former employee, who is now the number one yeast-seller in El Salvador.

It's strange how the work ethics in a big company like Nabisco are controlled by people in an office in New York, who never get out of their chairs to see what is going on in the field.

Chand, Amber – USA

"Founder of the Amber Chand Collection: Global Gifts for Peace and Understanding, an internet-based company in the USA that markets the products of artisans from around the world"

Spiritual Theme

Compassion, balance, grace, and friendliness are words that ring as a spiritual theme for me. Yes, this is a "God-being tapestry."

Taking responsibility in a downsizing

One of the most painful periods for me as a leader in this company was the time just after the tragedy that happened in New York City on September 11th through Christmas, 2001. We were restructuring the company and looking seriously at our goal of being a profitable organisation.

As a result we had to look closely at areas of the company that were not cost-effective, which then required us to let some people go. This happened very quickly and it was very painful for me. Here was a company that had promoted itself to be a kind, thoughtful, compassionate company and people came to work here because they had a sense of alignment with our mission of doing good for the planet.

And yet, I had to be realistic about the early, start-up phase that we were in. There were no guarantees, we were not a solidly profitable company yet, we were still young and our roots were still not embedded. Once we had communicated to everyone about who would be laid off, we had an open forum meeting with everyone in the company. We clearly expected people to express their distress, unhappiness, frustration and anger. I stood there in front of everyone along with the other members of our senior team.

Even though some people did become quite angry, I could feel my heart accepting all of this. I genuinely felt that there was a reason for all of this anger and frustration and that there was no harm in it. I knew that the last thing we needed to be was defensive. There was a moment when one of our senior members became defensive and it sparked a battle between two wills; it was awful. Everyone looked so sad and devastated. At the end of this, there was just this silence.

I then very quietly went and stood in the centre of the room and I looked around the room at everyone and said, "I am so sorry. I apologise for the way this has turned out." At that moment the faces of the people began to soften and a spaciousness was created that let them know that this was not about us versus them. It was simply all part of the journey of this company. The apology felt like a quiet, but powerful flame within me.

It was a moment when I stretched inside. I was accepting the responsibility for what had happened in the company and was also acknowledging that there was no right or wrong. It simply was what we needed to go through. I stepped into the circle, stood in my own space, and felt all of it. To me it made a great difference.

Humility would be the word I would use to describe that moment. It was in this humility that I found my greatest courage. Courage to me is not when I raise my voice and act aggressively and defensively against others; it is when I feel responsible and responsive to their needs. In that moment I literally re-defined what a leader was meant to be. We have become so consumed by the idea that leaders are strong and in charge, and that they are the captains of the ship. I am most interested in incorporating the great feminine principles into leadership: bringing in the art of grace and humility, dialogue, soft speech and deep listening, and eyes that may water, and allowing all of that to be there.

This is what it means to me to be a servant leader. This is very much how I see my leadership role in this company; I am founder-servant. I have always known that I was here to serve and anytime I forget this, I lose my way. Without this faith, this spiritual source, I do not feel it would be possible to be an exemplary leader.

Kolind, Lars – Denmark

"Former CEO of Oticon in Denmark, one of the world's premier suppliers of products for the hearing impaired"

"Chairman of Grundfos in Denmark"

Spiritual Theme

I believe that the theme of my spirituality would be: "love God and love your neighbour."

Downsizing in order to survive

If you look back at the Oticon story, there were two phases. One was the downsizing and the other was the building of the new company. In the downsizing phase we were under extreme pressure because the whole company was falling apart. And the pressures were coming from everywhere. I met with the management of our bank once a month and they were looking critically at everything we were doing. We were pressed to an extent that most people simply cannot imagine.

We were forced to reduce staff very dramatically. On one occasion we cut away 10% of the staff overnight. I was really under pressure to determine which principles we should use to make the decisions as to who to lay off. I took the decision, which *no one* understood, that we would not fire anyone over 50. Neither would we fire people who were so essential that we didn't think we could survive without them. But other than that, we would let those people go who we thought would have the best chance of getting another job quickly - even though these were obviously the ones I

would have preferred retaining. I just couldn't look into the eyes of all of the people that we would kick into prolonged unemployment in order for the rest of us to make money and prosper. I just couldn't do that.

I must admit that I simply made these decisions and I didn't really think about where they came from, which was from my conscience. Normally someone in my position would let the department heads talk to the people. But I didn't do it that way. I talked to every single person that was to be laid off and told each of them that they were going to be fired and that we would work with them to get a new job the best we could. I was experiencing all their bad feelings as I was confronting myself with the doubts and fears of all of these people. To me it would have been an act of cowardice to let others do this for me. I made the decision. Then I explained it to my managers - and I explained to those being fired why I had chosen to do what we were doing.

The interesting point was that we got through this amazingly well. There was total acceptance, even though no one really understood it. But once it was done, people said "wow" and really respected my decision. I maintained a number of the people who were fired as very good friends because they respected that it was necessary. It turned out that we managed to work with almost all of them to get new jobs. Obviously this had a price for me and for the company as well, and the price was that there were lots of people that I would have rather laid off that we retained.

Later I realised that this was really an expression of my spiritual principles. But I must admit that while doing it I didn't think much about it. Yes, I did follow my conscience and that is certainly the voice of spirituality.

Levy, Ricardo – USA

"Co-founder and CEO of Catalytica, Inc. in the USA"

Spiritual Theme

"Oneness"

Expressing empathy and compassion while downsizing

In 1991, I was having one of the most difficult times I have ever had in my career. By then we had about 80 scientists working for us and we were in a transition, forming focused subsidiaries and moving into the commercial world. We had 17 years of history behind us, so we weren't just a start-up. We only had research and development revenues at the time because we didn't have a commercial product to sell as of yet. But we were doing well, with many inventions and patents, and we were breaking even from the R&D revenues from our development partners.

In our dream to become commercial, we thought it would be best to partner with some larger companies in order to supplement the skills and capabilities that we didn't have, such as sales infrastructure and market capability. There was one company that we thought would be a good partner because they wanted to be more technology-intensive and didn't have a technology group themselves. We had focused our innovations in the areas of interest to them, and we thought the match would be excellent.

We spent three years doing some very intense work together at significant cost to them and time commitment on our part. In the mutual enthusiasm of the relationship, they became more and

more key in our total R&D revenue base, which were our core revenues at that time. Quickly, they came to represent about half of our US\$12 million in revenue. The partner was a very large private company that was run by two brothers. Then one day, quite unexpectedly, one of the brothers decided he wanted to get out of technology. I got a call and was told that they were pulling out. I was so upset I went home and cried.

It was so difficult because I had no choice but to cut the company. I had personally recruited each individual in this company and we had to let about 25% of them go. I admit that I was not equipped to really do this. But what I was able to do – that does speak to the principles that I have always embodied – is that I was able to downsize the company in such a way that I have remained a friend or colleague to everyone who was dismissed. No one was left with bad feelings toward me or toward the company. That means that, even in the face of the extremely difficult complexities of the moment, I was able to do this with respect for the dignity of each individual.

What enabled me to do this was that I felt the same pain that they were feeling. I felt and lived the pain of everyone who was impacted. I think that is a fundamental concept for me throughout my work career. I have never managed my company as just a job to do, like it was just a set of numbers to act on.

When I deal with people it must be with compassion and empathy. Empathy is deep connectivity. Compassion is “with passion.” I think if one displays passion for another person, you can do what needs to be done and you can do it with dignity. I think this is one of the most important spiritual behaviours of a leader. You are living the experience, there is no artificiality or ulterior motive about it, and people feel it. You are honest and sincere.

Selling a business

When we sold the pharmaceutical company it involved the dismemberment of the business that we had built over 27 years. It took me months to be convinced that it was the right decision; there were so many things we had to consider. Perhaps the most difficult one was the future of the employees. People that we had attracted because they wanted to be a part of our dream of an entrepreneurial company were now going to have to face being sold to a large European conglomerate. The situation of our operation in Michigan illustrates this point.

The company in Michigan was a successful private business and the owners prided themselves in their independence and had spurned many overtures from larger organisations. When we approached them, they were excited that they were now going to be a part of our entrepreneurial growth plan. And here we were turning around and doing just what they had avoided for so long. .

There were many areas to think through. It helped me throughout this period to be able to live in the unknown: to let the problem *be with me* and just rest there. I also followed the Jesuit practice of discernment, which is learning to quiet my mind and get into my deeper inner self. And from that place to listen to the voice of God and allow my inner spirit connected to God to give me the signals of my path. I am still an amateur at this. It takes an enormous amount of practice to be able to sense these signals and make sure that I am not using my ego to rationalise my actions.

I wrestled for weeks with this sale decision. I finally reached the point where I really felt that selling the pharmaceutical subsidiary was the right thing to do. The practical result is that once I got to the point where I had reached this internal compass marker, the ability to harness the forces around me to get all of this done was enhanced ten fold. This is actually hard to describe, but the energy of my conviction and deep sense of rightness allowed me to gather these forces and go forward. Mahatma Ghandhi is such a beautiful example of this spiritual multiplier effect.

During the intense negotiations that followed, lasting over nine months and involving numerous bankers, lawyers, accountants, board members and executives, I was required to convince many sceptics and make many complicated and far-reaching decisions. It made such a difference to come from this centre point, which I had found through this deep spiritual process.

Pillai, Anand – India

“Head of the Learning and Development Department for HCL Technologies in India”

Spiritual Theme

Connecting with God, the source of “being.”

Creating the spirit of downsizing

When the recession hit our industry, we all said that we did not want to downsize. We said that instead we were willing to go into the “spirit of downsizing.” Yes, our revenues had gone down, so we knew we must reduce our costs. We focused our creativity on how we could reduce our costs. One way we did this was to work longer hours during the weekday and not work on Saturdays. This allowed us to completely shut down the lights and air conditioning on Saturday, which in turn reduced this overhead cost. Finding creative ways to reduce our costs worked for us and we were able to ride through the recession without having to let any people go.

Raman, Ananth – USA

“Chairman of Graphtex, Inc. a manufacturing company in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

“Awareness” and “Realising Divinity”

Terminating employees and downsizing the organisation

I would say that the most difficult moral dilemmas that I have had have been around terminating a person if they have done something wrong and letting people go due to economic difficulties.

There was a plant manager in one of the companies who was passing off some of the company drawings to our competitors. We learned about it and warned him a couple of times. But he didn't stop. Since I knew his family I called his wife and told her what was happening and told her he would be facing serious problems if he did not stop.

He still did not stop doing this, so one day I had to dismiss him. I knew that his family would experience great difficulties with this kind of dismissal, as it was in the middle of a deep recession. While I felt that dismissing him was troubling to me initially, when I finally made the decision to do it, I felt that it was important in order to protect the company as a whole. I felt that I had to perform this role, that I must do it. This is how I answered my own question when I asked myself if I was doing the right thing in this matter.

Again, there was another occasion where we had to let a group of people go because the economy, market and business were bad. I felt really uncomfortable about this decision and asked myself, “Am I doing the right thing?” I knew that this would cause the people difficulties, as it would likely be hard for them to find jobs. But at the same time I had a responsibility to protect the company and the shareholders. I knew that I could not continue to pay salaries to these people and not get the economic benefit from it. As a responsible executive I knew that I needed to reduce the cost of our salaries in order to protect the company.

I agonised over this decision for several weeks and finally I decided to let this group go. I have never been that comfortable with the decision and I still do not know what the right answer is. We gave them some extra weeks of pay and assured them that when we were able to hire again, we would take them back. In fact, we did hire most of them back in the following year.

Sinclair, James E. – USA

“Chairman and CEO of Tan Range Exploration, Ltd. in the USA and Tanzania”

Spiritual Theme

My theme for spirituality would be “Live it.”

Following intuition

I have come to the conclusion that the use of the intuition is “asking yourself the question, fully knowing that you have a right to the answer.” It’s the same way a name comes into your mind when you are trying to remember the name of a person you’ve forgotten. What are you doing? You ask yourself the question and then you put it out of your mind and go on to something else. Every one of us has had that experience.

But I’m going to tell you that the answers to your most serious business problems – whether your markets need to change, or your environment needs to change, or whether you should sell your business – will come to you exactly the same way. The truth of the matter is, you’ll have your answer given to you. And it won’t be you speaking and you won’t be schizophrenic. And the answer will be sent to you and it is constantly sent to you. In other words, it will come up as your own mind speaking to you, but it will be so different and so unique that you can actually ignore it and be wrong.

Now you don’t want to listen to voices or things that come to you from your intellectual mind because this will lead you to doing many incorrect things. But, on the decision tree of possibility, what comes to you without intellectual input is in all probability intuition, that universal mind telling you exactly what to do.

The first level of discernment is to see if the answer is without intellectual argumentation. Secondly, to see if it comes to you out of nowhere. Thirdly, to see if it tends to come to you when your emotions or environmental emotions are not running high. If you’re sitting in a large trading room with a thousand traders, the environment is extremely emotional. So, you don’t make the jump because you have to have discipline. But what you do is take the “possibility” that your intuition has given you as the one you’ll now most put your attention on to determine what you should do.

To have the glimpse of insight is preparation. And preparation means a willingness to remain outside of the fervour of what's taking place. This is where your "extra sensory" intuitional input is, which is the difference between success and failure. But don't act on that alone; be scientific, be disciplined, but be in the direction of your intuition.

My decision to liquidate our gold market when it was at a high of US\$887.50 per ounce was made in an environment with a huge room of traders running some of the largest positions in the history of the marketplace. They were enjoying, in the egotistical sense, the adulation of all of the people who were making money and they were getting more public relations than the Secretary of the US Treasury. They were on the front page of the New York Times business section and had their pictures in the Wall Street Journal and were on talk shows like Ted Koppel, Nightline, and Wall Street Week.

In the midst of all of this, I heard inside "it's over; this market is over." I sat in shock. Then I went to all of our technical expertise and saw that everything was yelling and screaming that the market was over. "How could I have not seen this?" is what came to me. Then I said, "We have to get out, this is over." In one night, we kept every trader busy, and spent the whole night selling all of our positions all over the world. We sold a huge amount, 900,000 ounces at over US\$800 per ounce, close to US\$1 billion. When the market opened the next morning in the USA, the price of gold had dropped US\$150 an ounce and never stopped falling until it hit a low of US\$400.

Even in doing what we did, we faced the possibility that the market might have continued to rise to US\$2,000 per ounce as it was predicted to do. But my intuition perceived that the rise was not substantiated by underlying demand and could not continue.

Yes, people were hurt financially by this move we made; this is the nature of this environment. All markets rise and fall short term as they progress higher or lower in their trend longer term, be it positive or negative. People will always gain or lose in a marketplace, which is totally impersonal. I cause no one to gain, nor anyone to lose. They enter positions and are rewarded or punished for their decision in the normal course of order. Markets therefore are pure mechanisms that operate like the universe operates. The market that is the freest of manipulation is the market for commodities, as they have no people to fudge the figures or lie about them.

Hurting is intention. If I go out and intend to bust the market, then I will face the consequences of that, especially if I lie and cheat to do it. This is a game of open competition where the rules of the game say "do what you have the courage to do, don't lie about it, don't go out there and try to hurt the market by making bad statements, just do what you've got to do." This is what we did. I'm sure that many traders heard the same intuition that I heard that night, but only a few listened. Maybe I listened and acted faster because in my office we take the time to meditate and to listen to our intuition.

Welling, S. K. – India

"Former Executive Director of HMT International, Ltd. (Hindustan Machine Tools) in India"

Spiritual Theme

Purity of character through faith, bhakti (devotion), trust and love

Developing a turnaround plan for the company

In 1998 when I was shifted from watch product-marketing to corporate planning, my old colleagues were telling me, "What is this Mr. Welling? You were a monarch. You were managing the watch marketing in the entire country, all the trade, everybody. You had a great reputation in the market place. Everybody was so happy. Now it is a big climb down for you. You had thousands of people with you. Now you have come back as General Manager of corporate planning where only a handful of people are working under you." I said, "Look, that phase it is over. Another phase has started."

The whole company was in extremely bad shape. Losses were mounting. Net worth had eroded. There was absolutely no money in the company. The whole thing was in shambles. Basically I am a corporate planner and my flair is corporate and business planning; conceptualising is my style. I had a team of about 4 or 5 corporate planners. In one of the management committee meetings, I said to myself, "The only thing to do now is to again rise from the dust and make a turnaround plan for the whole company." I made a concerted proposal and got the permission of the government also.

Since my spiritual basis is seeking "purity of character" for myself and others, in the turnaround plan I was looking to "purify" every area that I addressed. This purification was required in the company because of the complacency of operating in a closed economy and the refusal of the top people to change their mindsets. I picked up the threads of the 1991 study by the World Bank, and then formulated a plan. To be very brief, there were 3 major aspects of the whole turnaround plan: organisation restructuring; manpower rationalisation; and financial restructuring. Normally corporate people tackle one at a time; I said we need to tackle all these three comprehensively together to get success.

The first purification I looked at was to reorganise the structure. The structure needed to be purified so that it could become vibrant to address the needs of the new market today. I recommended that we form separate subsidiary companies out of this conglomerate of capital goods, consumer goods, and agricultural machinery businesses. I recommended that HMT create independent companies, each with their own structures, policies, and procedures akin to the industry sector in which they were operating. I said, "If you have to operate in a market, we have to have these separate. Let them be on their own. What is true for capital goods is not true for consumer goods. Consumer goods should have their own way of working. So let us make these subsidiary companies as a part of the organisation restructuring."

I also saw that there were two major elements in the profit-and-loss accounting that were really hurting the company: one was the high personnel cost; and the other was the high interest cost because of the heavy debt contracted by the company over the years.

So the second purification that needed to take place, which I did with a very heavy heart, was to reduce our manpower. Sending people home on voluntary retirement without a security net, in a country like India, is something that really touched my heart. I was not totally convinced about sending people home knowing fully well that they would be in trouble. Even today as a Director I still believe that we should create more jobs by doing something rather than sending people home. This downsizing I must admit caused a big conflict between my inner self and my outer self. After thinking on this long and hard I came to the conclusion that in order to keep the whole, I must accept that we will have to let a part of it go.

So for manpower rationalisation, we made a voluntary retirement scheme to reduce manpower. We identified 6,500 people to receive the golden handshake and leave the company.

The third purification was in the financial area. The debt that the company had incurred when we were in the closed market system worked well as long as we were selling our products and making a profit. But since we had entered the open market, we were no longer competitive in our selling, and we did not have the profits that we had before. So now the debt was so huge that the interest burden would not allow us to be competitive in the global economy. It was really a job for me to convince them that they needed to make concessions.

To protect the interests of the company I negotiated with the government, saying: “The shareholder of this company is the government, because it is a public sector undertaking. If this company is to survive, the government has to put in money to make the net worth of this company positive.” We asked the government to put in about 350 crores of rupees (US\$75 million) into this company so that we could pay off the financial institutions, reduce the debt, clear out some of the liabilities, and reduce the interest costs. We saved the company a tremendous amount of money.

These three were the basic aspects of the restructuring plan. It took me 14 months to do a total turnaround plan for this company – to get the whole thing formulated and to get it through the management, the board and the government. I campaigned to get the plan through the various agencies, and everybody had some queries, as you might expect. It is easy to ask more and more questions and to keep on answering them.

When the turnaround plan was implemented, even though I was the architect and author I didn't project myself as the main person. I never said that I did it. I always do things and withdraw to the back. This is what has happened throughout my 31-year career in this company.

BUSINESS – FAILURE OF A BUSINESS (4 STORIES)

Chand, Amber – USA

“Founder of the Amber Chand Collection: Global Gifts for Peace and Understanding, an internet-based company in the USA that markets the products of artisans from around the world”

Spiritual Theme

Compassion, balance, grace, and friendliness are words that ring as a spiritual theme for me. Yes, this is a “God-being tapestry.”

Facing the demise of an organisation

Eziba’s collapse in January 2005 was breath taking! I remember leaving the company offices, with two cardboard boxes of belongings in my hands, numbed by the certain reality that the company had imploded and closed its doors to the world and equally frightened by what the future held for me and my family! Without my spiritual core, I would not have been able to navigate through this tumultuous time.

There is a particular story that each of us will tell about the collapse of the company – each bringing our own nuances and perspectives to the tale. My story ultimately rests on the importance of balance, sobriety, sufficiency, and patient and sustainable growth – as fundamentals in business practice, especially for a company that is founded on a strong mission to support impoverished people around the globe.

From the outset, and as one of Eziba’s co-founders, I had envisioned a company that would incorporate the values of service through enterprise. I believed that it was entirely possible to create a value based company that was inherently spiritual in its ideal, pioneering in its vision and responsible in its structure for growth. I termed it “compassionate commerce”.

My co-founder and partner was my brother-in-law, Dick Sabot a well-regarded development economist and more recently, a successful internet entrepreneur. Dick was ambitious, confident and hard driven, interested in creating a fast-growth multi-million dollar company that would rise to become a profitable leader in the global crafts arena. As Chairman, he quickly and skilfully raised \$40 million in private equity funds within the first year. I, on the other hand, was much more sober in my ambitions, seeking a model for business that would be inspired by spiritual values and grow organically over time. In my view, this was my life work, and so there were no exit strategies for me. Both of us shared a commitment to creating a socially responsible foundation for the business.

Admittedly, I had not received any significant business training prior to having arrived at Eziba from the non-profit museum world so my visionary ideals were still unproven and untested. Whilst Dick focused on structuring the company and putting together a powerful and influential Board of venture capitalists, I focused my attention on assembling a collection of distinctive artisan made products and to becoming the company spokesperson forging relationships with editors, customers, and artisan producers alike.

There was clearly a yin-yang quality to Dick’s and my relationship – one in which there was a distinctly feminine and masculine set of principles at work.

There was a tremendous sense of excitement and enthusiasm from all our stakeholders when we launched in 1999 - for what we all collectively experienced as an innovative, internet based, socially responsible model for business that sought to “change the world by hand”. But there was also an accompanying sense of intoxicated exuberance! By the time the company launched, it was surprisingly valued at \$100 million without having sold one object; Forrester Research, an influential research organisation, touted Eziba as one of the most influential internet companies to watch besides Amazon and Ebay. Forbes Magazine voted ours as one of the best websites around. The accolades were overwhelming and based on the promise for what we aspired to accomplish and not on any particular reality of accomplishment – we had as yet not even proven our business model.

During this era of heady dot-com exuberance, money, especially from venture capitalists, was often recklessly poured into new start-up internet companies which held great promise. Armed with a profusion of cash, Eziba was quickly able to build itself into a marketing phenomenon, with billboards on buses in San Francisco and New York, ads in major national publications and a management team of heavyweights from companies such as FAO Schwartz, L.L. Bean, etc. Money flowed from the company’s coffers. And the promise to grow into the world’s leading retailer of global crafts supporting millions of artisans continued to be projected. But therein lay the seeds of the company’s ultimate demise.

I have come to believe that an overcapitalised company can be just as vulnerable as an undercapitalised company – for unless an organisation is already firmly rooted in its unique mission, confident in its innovative and visionary leadership and willing to grow through its own merits and performance it will not be able to create an enterprise of lasting change. No matter how much money it has! And just as you cannot force a plant to grow quicker than it can no matter how much fertilizer you throw on it, you cannot force a business to grow quickly, no matter how much cash you throw its way. There is an implicit impatience and unsustainability in models of business that set out to grow exponentially within a short period of time.

Excessive money can breed arrogance and a false illusion of stability. And unless it is managed carefully and responsibly and there to support the company in taking its next steps, it can easily turn into a devouring monster. Because Eziba already had \$40 million in investments in its early days, it felt compelled to spend it, and to build a large operational infrastructure to support it. Big is Beautiful became the aspirational vision.

Even though Eziba’s socially responsible mission supported responsible and reasonable growth, its financial infrastructure necessitated a different model – one based on fast growth supported by venture capitalists seeking sizeable returns and an exit strategy. This is the inherent nature of venture capital but for Eziba, it created a dilemma. The internal pressure to grow the business into a profitable venture within a few years informed all of the decisions the company made. And invariably, important decisions were often made in relative haste to ensure that the company’s zealous financial projections were met, quarter after quarter, often to the detriment of its underlying mission.

I remember the first time this happened. It was within a year from its launch, and Eziba sent out a small test catalogue during the holiday season of some of its core products. It was an attractive catalogue, maybe 14-15 pages, and it did fairly well. Based on that one time experience, our CEO and management team shifted the business model entirely – now actively pursuing the inherently expensive and capital intensive path of direct marketing through print catalogues. This shook up the roots of our entrepreneurial, internet based foundation. Suddenly, expensive mailing lists were purchased, a slew of catalogue experts and consultants hired, a new office in a major metropolitan city established, a large call centre and warehouse created. The shift was radical

and ultimately hurt us. There was now extraordinary pressure to compete with larger catalogue companies, at a time when we were still in our infancy experiencing the fragile pangs of early growth.

Like many businesses, Eziba had numerous ups and downs in the course of its six years. And some of these challenges proved ultimately fatal. From once being a company of great promise and vision, with \$7 million in net sales in its last holiday season, a strong, exciting brand, stores in Boston, Chicago, New York, 60 employees, thousands of artisans supported, it was now required to close its doors in January 2005, at the instigation of its Board. Soon after, the company was put into bankruptcy and by April 2005, the company was acquired by Overstock, the online retailer of clearance goods. A visionary dream had come to an end!

In July 2005, barely six months after the company closed, Dick's "heart literally gave out", through a massive heart attack. He was barely 61 years old. In many ways, through Dick's painful and early death, I saw a certain tragic symbolism for what had happened to this company that had set out with such great promise. Perhaps its focus on rapid and frenzied growth, its abandonment of its core mission early on, and its culture of careless and frivolous expenditure, coupled with a lack of visionary and confident leadership finally drove the company into its death.

The struggles of a dual culture

Eziba offered a remarkable platform to test out new innovative models of business. It also became somewhat schizophrenic as it tried to navigate and make sense of two distinct sets of values.

On one hand there was a culture of innovative entrepreneurship founded on socially responsible practices that highlighted performance and success from the perspective of the "triple bottom line" – its impact on people, planet and profits. Here there was a sense of creating a community rather than a company highlighting the connections that were happening around us – especially between our customers (who were 80% women) and artisan producers (who were similarly 80% women). I was intrigued by this "feminine" conversation happening between people on either side of the world – through stories and handmade products.

On the other hand, there was another structure of thought that we had to deal with. This followed a more traditional, patriarchal form of business culture where investor returns, fast "testosterone driven" growth and heightened profitability were the company's priority and drove the company's decisions. In the end, we were not skilful enough as an organisation to bring together these two distinctive cultures. Had we been able to find that necessary balance, weighing the costs of every decision in terms of our mission in the world as well as our financial health, I have no doubt that we would still exist!

Dealing with the pain of a failed organisation

Months before Eziba's demise, I had a dream in which I was cautioned about the impending tumult of future events and advised to remain very, very calm as the storm whirled around me. The collapse of Eziba was catastrophic – to all its stakeholders! I do not pretend to understand all the minutiae of details that complicated the process, from vendor workouts, banks being paid out before the poorest artisans, legal haranguing, bankruptcy proceedings, acquisitions. But what I remember most was the shock and pain of seeing my colleagues at the company leave – one by one! Desks abandoned, products from all over the world left behind sitting tidily on shelves; offices emptied. We were exhausted and devastated. I was one of the last to leave the building!

It was painful, terrifying and confusing to watch the company collapse at such a startling pace. I felt completely powerless to influence its course during this time - surrounded by legal experts, a disappointed but resolute Board, devastated staff members, vendors clamouring to be paid, customers asking for their products, and the media ready to pounce. Without the anchor of my spiritual practice, I could not have weathered this personal tsunami. For at some level, I knew that Eziba's meteoric rise and fall were part of a larger archetypal story. That there were to be many lessons learned and that somehow I would find my way, guided by a sense of profound trust in Life and the truth of who I am and what I believe in.

Once before, I had experienced the solid structures of my life implode around me – as a young woman of 22 years old, my family was expelled from Uganda as refugees during Idi Amin's presidency. We lost everything – our financial assets, our beautiful home on the hill, our possessions, and our country. Through that devastation I had to pick myself up and find my way, trusting that within that experience was also a greater gift. My task was to discover it.

Narendran, Parantha – Czech Republic

“Former Strategy Director for Eurotel in the Czech Republic”
“Private Equity Consultant and Investor”

Spiritual Theme

If I think here of how spirituality affects me at work, it would be that spirituality challenges me and makes me grow.

Perspectives on “failure”

My experience with my own consulting firm back in 2001, when we attempted to raise US\$60 million to put into place the ideas we had developed, provided me with a deep learning experience. We were just on the verge of successfully raising that huge amount of money when the market collapsed. For the first month after the market crashed, it was incredibly depressing. This disappointment of what looked like a huge business success did have some immediate effect on me, even though I myself was well aware that money comes and goes.

However, in the larger perspective, I didn't actually see it as a failure. I saw it as a failure only in the sense that I didn't succeed in helping others who had hopes and dreams; I felt that I had failed them. But I also felt like I had succeeded in that I pushed myself to the limit and even beyond my limits in some ways. To get that far I had to have faith and do the right thing. I had to listen to myself and not be worried about anything else.

And at the same time I had an awareness that it was all kind of a game. But as I look back on it now, a year later, I really realise how much it was a game – sort of a joke in some way. I have learned as much from it as I possibly could. Succeeding wouldn't have made the things I've learned any more beneficial.

Even though this was one major example, I still feel that I have the same kind of challenges on a day-to-day level when I am working with individuals. As I have been pushed into such situations constantly, it has made me grow.

BUSINESS – MISSION, VISION AND PURPOSE (4 STORIES)

Chand, Amber – USA

“Founder of the Amber Chand Collection: Global Gifts for Peace and Understanding, an internet-based company in the USA that markets the products of artisans from around the world”

Spiritual Theme

Compassion, balance, grace, and friendliness are words that ring as a spiritual theme for me. Yes, this is a “God-being tapestry.”

Developing and energising a vision for the company

My original vision for this company was that it would be an antidote to what I believed was happening on the planet. I noticed that there was a lot of information about the negative aspects of life in many cultures, especially the sufferings of many people. I kept thinking, “Why not create a company that celebrates the most beautiful things that people make?” I felt that the artisans and craftspeople would be the best place to start. I also felt that because these people create from their hands that they would be conduits of spirituality. They have a connection to the earth and through their hands they are able to create and manifest.

I wanted this company to honour and celebrate the creative spirit and to applaud cultural diversity through the crafts we sell. I wanted us to find the best craftspeople all over the world and showcase their beautiful objects to the consumer who appreciates this type of cultural expression. As a result, we are now in over 70 countries throughout the world and have an extensive network through which we source our products. We go directly to some of the countries and get directly involved in some of the villages and cooperatives. We meet with the artisans and create objects that are relevant to the global marketplace while at the same time are authentic to the techniques of their tradition. We have also aligned ourselves with lots of non-profit organisations who help us to find and identify the artisans communities that we want to work with.

In a quiet way it seems as if Eziba is becoming a celebrity company. People are beginning to look at us as a case model of what business can look like if it is truly steeped in a mission that looks at its impact on the people and the planet, as well as profits.

I have actually talked with our CEO about bringing some of this spiritual essence into the lives of our employees. I feel that our employees have all bought into our mission and our business model, but I do not feel that they take pleasure in the daily practice of work in this way. So that is why I have decided to bring someone in to do some ‘visioning’ sessions with our employees. Now that we, the leadership of Eziba, have clearly unveiled our values, I would like for people to see and speak about how they would like for it to be and how they can feel personally empowered and accountable.

I am putting together a small hour-long program for our employees, where we can sit together in conversation and dialogue about the vision of the company... to give our employees a blank canvas and have them create what they would like Eziba to look like. This is very much like the process I have recently been through: “If you wake up in ten years what would you like for the company to look like?” So we are looking at a structured process for this.

Personally, this year, I have invested a great deal of time and energy in supporting the basket weavers of Rwanda, many of whom are widows from the genocide, by bringing their baskets – which I termed Peace Baskets because they were made by both Hutu and Tutsi women in a spirit of reconciliation after the genocide – to market. This was an initiative I led both as a co founder of Eziba and as a founding member of the Business Council for Peace, a newly formed coalition of business women who are supporting women’s enterprises in areas of conflict and post conflict. We have partnered with The United Nations Development Fund for Women in order to do this work. Seeing myself as a peacemaker, committed to building bridges between people who are living in conflict areas of the world has become a new focus for me, and one that I find deeply empowering. Next year I will head to the Middle East and potentially Afghanistan – identifying talented craftspeople and finding ways to not only bring their craft to the international marketplace through Eziba, but also to strengthen their communities. All of this work is part of my sense of engaged, spiritual practice.

Covey, Stephen R. – USA

“Vice Chairman of FranklinCovey, a global professional services firm based in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

One of my mottoes serves as a powerful spiritual theme for me: “Live life in crescendo.” In other words, the most important work you’ll ever do is still ahead of you.

Another such spiritual theme for me would be: “Educate and obey your conscience.” Educating as I speak of it here involves getting into the sacred literature of all the great traditions that have had enduring value and then consciously living true to what you have learned. The more you live true to it, the stronger your conscience becomes. A constant effort is required to stay on track with such stewardship.

Creating a long-term vision

I worked with two heads of state; one was Fox, President of Mexico. I worked with him when he was governor, and when he became president he asked me to come and spend two full days with him and with all of his people, all of his advisors, and with his entire cabinet, only a couple of days before his inauguration. They had had 72 years of one party in control, and corruption was just the name of the game, so integrated in everything. I remember the first morning he said, “What do you think is the best approach to start with?” I said, “Start with the vision for the year 2025 before you even begin to look at your mission statement for the next six years.” That got him so excited that literally we spent at least one of those two days working on a mission statement for the year 2025 for Mexico, and then inside that context, which obviously is a spiritual context, they began to work on the mission statement. They all went to different locations around Mexico to put their arm to the square and declare their assets now so that after six years they would be able to declare them again to show that they did not benefit from governmental service.

I remember once when I was working with the President of Colombia and his cabinet. I asked the president, “What’s your goal?” and he said, “To make the country safe.” I replied, “That’s too small a goal, you’ve got to institutionalise yourself, and you can do so because you are popular.” I said, “What you’ve got to do is to institutionalise your principles so that the mores and norms of the culture can last and take your place when you step down. Even though you are popular, it’s not your charismatic quality that you want to institutionalise, it’s the culture.” And he did that. As soon

as you talk this way to people, immediately it taps into their spiritual nature. They even gave him another four years in office and changed the constitution to enable this.

Kolind, Lars – Denmark

“Former CEO of Oticon in Denmark, one of the world’s premier suppliers of products for the hearing impaired”

“Chairman of Grundfos in Denmark”

Spiritual Theme

I believe that the theme of my spirituality would be: “love God and love your neighbour.”

Discovering and living our purpose

After the downsizing of Oticon, it took us two years to find out what the essence of the company actually was. We came out of a tradition where our tag line was “Leaders in hearing technology.” We were so oriented to hearing technology, that we forgot almost everything else. I could see that this was not right, that we were far more than a technology company. I worked day and night to find out who we really were and what our fundamental purpose should be.

What inspired me was the fact that we were dealing with people who had enormous personal problems due to lack of hearing. I was so conscious that we were making money serving these people who were in such a bad condition, so I asked myself, “What is our role?” This was what led me to see that fundamentally our job was not to align two theoretical curves, which is the way you normally assess whether hearing care has been successful or not. Our job was to add to the quality of life of those we served and to help them to live a decent life. So this is what led us to phrase the essence, the vision of the company to be: “Help people with impaired hearing to live as they wish with the hearing they have.”

This all had a tremendous effect on our employees, customers and dealers. We were not only saying all of this; we were living it. We went through the process where we examined every corner of the company. I asked the question a hundred times, “Does this help people with impaired hearing to live better with the hearing they have or does it not?” We were closing departments and initiating projects in order to actually live this.

What struck me was that if you phrase your purpose that way, and if you demonstrate that you mean it, then you earn a tremendous respect from everybody, not just the employees. This included researchers and knowledge partners at universities and clinics. The public clinics loved our vision and were so enthused about it. The private dealers said, “Okay, here’s a company that has a purpose, and this is the first company that has really understood what this is all about.”

I later realised that this came out of my desire to involve myself in doing something for these people, to improve their situation. It turned out to be a fabulous expression of what we stood for. It was so powerful, even though it was not developed by any marketing people; there were no consultants or advertising agencies involved. It was from working and working on the question of “What can we do? What should we do?” I am sure this was highly inspired by my fundamental beliefs about what’s truly important in life.

Moitra, Deependra – India

“Formerly the youngest General Manager within Lucent Technologies, who at the time had 70,000 employees worldwide”

“Associate Vice President with Infosys Technologies, Ltd. in India”

Spiritual Theme

“Living with a purpose” would be my theme. True fulfilment is then the outcome of this journey.

Relationship with results

To me it is the journey, the process, that gives me joy – not the results. When I say “results,” that is something that you can easily quantify. In business, we talk about financial or productivity results. In daily life, most people have materialistic goals. Once you achieve the results that you want, then you set your eye on something more or different.

When I say that my eye is not on the result, I am not saying that the results are not important. But when my exclusive focus is on achieving the results, I think it takes me away from what I call my intended path. That is, it may take me away from my values because my exclusive focus is on achieving the results. I discourage people from having an exclusive focus on results, especially in business. I have seen that in order to achieve results and become prominent, people tend to adopt ways and means that are not in alignment with my own spiritual way of thinking.

I like to think of goals like setting a direction or a milestone in my journey, not just something I want to achieve and be done with. I want to create a wider impact, but if I try to define what “wider” means, then I will only limit it by my own self-imposed goals. I have a direction, I have a vision, but I do not have these types of quantifiable goals. I don’t mean to say that clarity and results are not important, because ultimately life is nothing but a series of events and results are associated with these events.

I think the purity of my vision is most important. It’s also important that my intention is strong, my efforts are relentless and I am progressing on the path that I have committed to. There is no way to measure when I have made two people happy, but I can feel it. Whether I am able to create joy around me, whether I am able to impact the way people think and do business around me – that is the direction that I am taking. It is my vision, but I don’t have crisp, defined goals other than that.

There are people who need quantifiable directions and goals and I don’t see anything wrong with giving them that. I do have flexibility and openness to the extent that it helps others be successful. At the same time I will stick to my own framework personally, because I know how I want to operate.

An important quality that I feel that I have also developed is that I am completely immune to peer pressure. I do not want to measure myself, so I don’t. I do not evaluate others in the traditional sense. This helps me a lot. I believe there is a direct linkage between peer pressure and fear of failure. More often our thoughts and actions are governed by what others will think and imagine about us. But I have overcome this and I do not think this way.

Aguenza, Floy – The Philippines

“President and COO of Planters Development Bank in The Philippines”

Spiritual Theme

“What would Jesus do?” “What would the Lord do?”

Exposing employees to spirituality

I believe that people who are well-balanced and spiritual make better employees. I spent a lot of time thinking about how to help nurture the spiritual growth of our people. So I decided I wanted to see how I could expose the employees of the bank to spirituality. Traffic here in Manila is quite difficult, so many of our employees leave their homes very early in the morning, sometimes 5:30 or 6:00 am, and they get back home to their families at 7:00 or 8:00 pm or some even 9:00 pm. So since they spend most of their waking hours in the bank, we must try to help them without sacrificing the objectives of the bank.

We started with letting our people attend retreats as part of our training activities. I send the bank’s branch managers and male officers personal letters of invitation to spiritual retreats, and the turnouts have been quite good with very positive feedback.

Instituting Prayer. I was the only woman in the management committee. Typically, Filipino men are not very comfortable about spirituality, as this goes against the Filipino macho culture. But knowing that our Chairman was himself quite open, I suggested we start our meetings with prayers to which he readily agreed. That was the start of our practice of starting all meetings with a prayer and all important initiatives and occasions with the Holy Mass. This is also how the ecumenical Plantersbank family prayer has developed. We also created a prayer and meditation room where the staff can go if they need some time alone or to pray.

Our Plantersbank family prayer is:

*Lord God, Heavenly King and Father
We thank You for Your continued presence among Your people.
Grant that we may learn
To exercise responsible stewardship
Over all the resources You entrust to us,

That we may consciously use our talents and skills
For the glory of Your name
And the betterment of our fellowmen,
And that our day-to-day decisions
May be in accordance with Your Most Holy Will
Lord, help us to see in every client
An opportunity to be of service
And to be a blessing to the life of another;
To find in our fellow workers
A greater inspiration to give our best
In everything we do.
Teach us always to be Your disciples*

*That we may establish Your kingdom in the marketplace
So that at the end of the day
We may humbly present to You
A Bank that is worthy of Your presence
A Bank with a heart...
A Bank with conscience and compassion
Planters Development Bank.
All these, we pray
In Jesus name. Amen.*

Conducting worship services. Later on, we began the Wednesday and Friday masses. We asked Fr. Armand Robleza, who conducts our retreats, to be our official Chaplain and to guide our spiritual programme. He has been doing this for the last 13 years. We also conduct worship services for those belonging to other denominations which I also try to attend. To this day, I get letters from some of our staff thanking us for these opportunities for spiritual development.

Each year also begins with a grand celebration of thanksgiving to God where officers from our head office and the more than 65 branches all over the country come together to praise and thank God for the blessings, pray, review the past year, recognise people and events, and offer our plans for the coming year.

Since there is a small minority of our employees who are not Catholic, we have worship services for them. I myself also attend worship services of faiths other than mine because I want the employees to feel that they are not marginalised because they are of a different faith. Any time something happens, such as a death in the family, I consciously go out of my way to show that I am concerned about what has happened. We want our employees to be happy and fulfilled working for us and we want our customers to be happy. We really do mean this.

Budin, Philip – USA

“CEO of Royaltions, Ltd. in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

For me spirituality is equanimity.

The role of spirituality and trust in business

When it comes to talking about spirituality in a business setting, I just relax and be myself without an ulterior motive and most of the time it just flows exactly the way it is suppose to. I find that I just talk about what I want to talk about. If I want to speak about meditation or my spiritual teacher, Sathya Sai Baba, or some of the Tibetan Buddhists I know very well, I do so. For some reason my spiritual teacher sent the head of one of Tibetan Buddhism’s major lineages to me in New York City and for years thereafter he used to call me Buddha.

An example is a meeting I had with Eurosport. This is a company that is now owned by a French company that owns some television stations in France. We were sitting there with the head of the President of the TV division and I’m talking about meditation. I’m talking about how the 16th Karmapa stayed in my apartment with 14 of his monks for seven weeks and how that was my introduction to Tibetan Buddhism. This man was sitting there with his mouth open listening. I was

watching him and said to myself, "I don't know if I just blew this deal or what is going to happen." But it just felt natural to talk about it and so I talked about it.

At the end of my story, he said, "I was in Thailand and I did a Buddhist meditation. It was so great that I went back and spent two more weeks there just doing a Zen meditation. So wow, how is Tibetan different from Zen?" From this we started a whole new conversion. Not only on Zen, but also on meditation and consciousness and from that point forward there was never a doubt that we were going to work together in business. When we can work together spiritually and we're on the same wavelength, I know that everything else will open up; and if we can't work together spiritually, then usually it's not for me anyway.

Our business together is still our business together. Our spiritual connection was the basis for us to move forward on. They are going to do what they do and we're going to do what we do, and the bottom line is if we don't provide them with what they want, then they won't provide us with what we want and our deal is off.

In this case spirituality was the easiest way to open the door to do business together. In the olden days the easiest way to open the door was to go out drinking with someone, but I don't do that anymore.

From this, an open communication was formed. Trust, however, is another thing; it takes a history. We got into Eurosport because the Chairman of the parent company is a dear friend of a good friend of mine from Milan, who happens to be the Chairman of Media Partners, a company I've done business with for a long, long time. There, we have a trust based on experience. So he opened the door for me and told his friend that I was someone he could trust; if I said something, he could take my word for it. So that really had nothing to do with spirituality. The fact that we hit it off on a spiritual nature was great and was just another supporting factor.

I have pretty much always been trustworthy, I would say. When I owned a brokerage firm that did stock trading during the 1960's, it was before the NASDAQ Stock Exchange and before we had all of these machines. There was no recording device at that time, so if Merrill Lynch called me and put in buy or sell orders, the confirmations were written by hand. That evening our confirmations were put in the mail, the mail was picked up the next day and it was probably four days from the date of the trade before the confirmation was received by the other party, both ways, theirs by me and mine by them.

Now if you're any big firm, you're not going to trade with someone where there is one iota of a question mark. So if you reneged on one trade with one firm, you were history. Wall Street was a very small place then and no one would trade with you and so you were out of business. So your word was your bond because you were buying and selling millions of dollars worth of stock every day and the other party was not getting a confirmation on it until four days later. Now in four days the price of that stock could go up or down. There was no tape recording going on of conversations in those days; there was just your word against theirs.

So once we had the history of being trustworthy, we could do business together, and there was lots of business going on every day, thousands of tickets were being written by hand everyday; then we could work through the ups and downs. This was in the 1960's before there were any of these computers. So your word was your bond.

Canada, Francisco Roberto – Argentina

“Director and Partner of Errepar S.A., a major publishing firm in Argentina”

Spiritual Theme

Loving God.

Surrendering the company to the spiritual teacher

The company has been through difficult periods, where our spiritual point of view has guided us. Not only during the recent times when Argentina suffered a major economic crisis, but also before then, about 15 years ago, when the company went through a difficult period. What happened was, that we sold much more, than we were able to produce.

All the three owners, who are also the three board members, have the same spiritual teacher. In fact, I took Sathya Sai Baba as my spiritual teacher when the partner who is the major owner of our companies introduced me to his teachings. At that time this partner went to visit him in India, and in a letter from the three of us, symbolically turned over the company to him. After that, we realised which direction to take.

Chand, Amber – USA

“Founder of the Amber Chand Collection: Global Gifts for Peace and Understanding, an internet-based company in the USA that markets the products of artisans from around the world”

Spiritual Theme

Compassion, balance, grace, and friendliness are words that ring as a spiritual theme for me. Yes, this is a “God-being tapestry.”

Finding a new vocabulary for business

When we take two seemingly paradoxical worlds such as business and spirituality and try to marry them together, we must find language that people can feel safe with. So to me language is very important. For example, we have a cost-cutting committee at Eziba and I have been thinking about what this is really saying, it is actually quite negative. What if we were to call it the committee of abundance and part of its strategy in creating abundance is to cut costs. So to me language allows us to have a very different relationship with reality and we must be careful in how we use it. We must find the words that allow us to create the kind of reality that we really want. If the basis of all of this is love, which is the antidote to fear, then we must find the language that will literally reflect love in the most pragmatic ways. I also feel that we must not feel afraid to use this kind of language either.

I believe that businesses can play a role in finding the new vocabulary for this spiritual dimension and can incorporate it into the very foundations of their organisations. I think it is time to embrace our shadows and to face the dichotomies of “them versus us.” I think that this notion that we are competing against each other has to be profoundly shifted. I do not know how this will happen,

but just the fact that we are speaking and opening ourselves up to this possibility is huge at this point. I am just open-eyed and open-hearted at this time.

Covey, Stephen R. – USA

“Vice Chairman of FranklinCovey, a global professional services firm based in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

One of my mottoes serves as a powerful spiritual theme for me: “Live life in crescendo.” In other words, the most important work you’ll ever do is still ahead of you.

Another such spiritual theme for me would be: “Educate and obey your conscience.” Educating as I speak of it here involves getting into the sacred literature of all the great traditions that have had enduring value and then consciously living true to what you have learned. The more you live true to it, the stronger your conscience becomes. A constant effort is required to stay on track with such stewardship.

Spiritual intention in leadership

I find that spiritual intention drives perception, which drives behaviour, which then drives results. If you actually get a person to think in terms of their legacy, what they are trying to really do in the long run to bless people’s lives, it gets them immediately into a spiritual frame of mind. I use this approach all the time in my leadership – and in training people to think in terms of supra-ordinate goals.

Let me give you an example. I was working with a large college in Ontario, Canada. They really had a terrible culture; it was characterised by turfism and fighting and interdepartmental resistances, with everyone looking out for themselves, protecting their own situation, silo thinking, and all that kind of stuff. I worked with them over a period of a year to develop a mission statement that would be supra-ordinate. By this I mean larger than one’s self, larger than one’s own institution. It took them about two years before there was broad agreement, and eventually what happened was that they developed a mission statement to become the yardstick educational institution for all of the state of Ontario – the institution others could measure themselves against. When they really bought into that intention to leave a legacy, the littleness of their souls completely submerged, and the magnanimity of soul exploded inside them.

I have these eye-opening experiences almost on a daily basis, both in my own leadership work at FranklinCovey and in my work helping leaders of other organisations.

Cuneo, Federico – Peru

“Senior Partner with Ernst & Young in Peru”

“Chair of Peru 2021, an NGO comprised of business executives working on sustainable development and corporate social responsibility for the country”

Spiritual Theme

Unity with the rest of the world, love, eternal life and light – those would be words I would use as a theme.

Sharing spirituality in business

Around 1996/97, I was in a business meeting where a consultant mentioned something and I responded by saying, “I really don’t want to get into this, because if I start talking about spirituality it could take another hour to discuss.” She thought that was interesting and wanted to talk further in another meeting.

At that subsequent meeting I told her how I felt about spirituality. She then told me about the man who wrote the book *Reengineering Yourself* and asked me if I would come and give a presentation at the same meeting where he would be talking to businessmen. I told her no that I didn’t want to do that because many of those businessmen would know me and they would think that I had started living a hippie life. She said, “No, you need to come and break the ice. There are so many people who are lost and things like this are so important.” So I told her I would do it.

I attended this meeting and I told them what had happened to me. I told them about the crisis in my life that brought me to spirituality. I told them about reading spiritual books and the comfort I had found in meditation. During the hour that I spoke I noticed that the audience kept intense attention on what I was saying. The day after the meeting, the consultant called me and told me that she had reviewed the written feedback and that the favourite topic from the whole meeting was my presentation, even more than the doctor who spoke from a university and the author of the book.

After this I became good friends with this consultant and now we have a group that focuses on the expansion of the brain. We meet every month and people talk about different things. I am always the one who is talking about spirituality.

I think that my role is to convince others that spirituality is an important way to be, not only for themselves, but for the collective. Where I am right now is to expand this message beyond the company that I lead and share it with a larger audience. I was asked by a mining company to go and speak at their annual meeting. This was still quite uncomfortable because they were not up to the topic of spirituality. So I am well aware that for companies to include spirituality into their success pattern is a new thing. But I think we need to jump to that stage; I think we need to go straight to that stage.

After attending this *Spirit in Business* conference (in New York City in 2002), now I can go back to Peru and tell people what it was like. I can tell them that 500 people were there to talk about spirituality in their business. I can tell them that the large corporations were there. So this will help the sceptical people to accept it easier.

Sinclair, James E. – USA

“Chairman and CEO of Tan Range Exploration, Ltd. in the USA and Tanzania”

Spiritual Theme

My theme for spirituality would be “Live it.”

Measuring the spiritual progress of an organisation

One measurement for me is “harmony within difficulty”; that would be a sign of spiritual progress in an organisation. This would be seen as a cohesive ability to draw conclusions and recommendations in periods of stress. An outcome of this ability would be contentment. Contentment is a “knowing-ness”. It’s not a feeling that no one can unseat me; it’s a knowing-ness that I have the power to survive. Other measures I see that make an entity endure are: transparency, honest communication, and respect for your staff.

How would I measure this quality of “harmony within difficulty”? I would look at the long-term industries and not the hype industries that fly in and out. I would take a look at the competitive strength of an organisation and the duration of the industry and I would apply the measure of growth over time to find the company that has positioned itself at 70% or better within the industry over the longest period of time.

In other words, you take a look at a competitive, long-term industry and look for the ones who have been there the longest. You look for durability, which might be in earnings, or it could be in years of corporate presence. You start with the fact that they have existed for this enormous length of time and you look for the contributions they’ve made over the years. Here is where you’ll find the measures.

I think the statistics are there and it may be as simple as position of sales within the industry over the longest period of time. Nature is not going to support anything that isn’t good, except for a very short period of time. Hitler only existed for a short period of time. Jesus has now lasted for over 2,000 years. Mother Teresa will be talked about for centuries from now. What we’re talking about is not a short-term phenomenon.

I would first use these types of statistics to find the company. Then I would question the company to see if I could find the characteristic of “harmony within difficulty” within the ethic of the company, which would be embedded in its policies and procedures. I would also look to see if there are policies and procedures within the company which give a greater visibility to understanding what the company is about: what its corporate being is and to see whether or not there are in fact policies and procedures that supported this ethic.

So if we assume we are right, then we should be able to go back in time and find some piece of the characteristic of “harmony within difficulty” within the individual corporate leader, corporate leader family, policies the corporation instituted by an enlightened individual, or something in there that we can now say: “Look, here’s our studies, here’s our statistics, now we’re going to tell you how this happens.”

I would be the detective that would go from the “effect” to the “cause”, rather than following the “cause” to the “effect”. If what we’re saying is correct about spirituality, then we’ll find that the companies in the lower echelon, or the ones that came and went, did not have this capacity for harmony within difficulty, while the ones who have endured were the ones who had cohesiveness during crisis.

This is basically the same type of study I did when I wanted to learn what made people succeed. I studied the lives of people who had done well to see if there was any commonality amongst those who had endured in their success. What I found in these people was a deep introspective nature where they had periods of quietude and study. You will actually find this in a lot of extremely creative people who have been accused of being depressed individuals. Now I wonder whether these periods of depression were really the quiet times when they weren’t speaking to anyone.

Was it a real depression or is it a characteristic of non-communication during set periods of quiet time?

I do think you can measure “return on harmony” because that’s exactly what I call it. This harmonious working together can be compared to a musical note. When you experience kundalini¹, you only experience a “hum.” It’s as if you are being played like an instrument. You feel something that went up your back that you can’t explain to anyone, because it was a note. How do you explain B flat going up your back? Or C major? Initially, you can’t explain it because you’re not used to being played like an instrument.

What we’re dealing with here is living a content-full, meaningful, evolutionary, full, fruitful life. Not a protection from adversity; not a protection from losing assets. How do we do that? The answer has been given to us by every saint and sage everywhere – stop trying, sit back, because it’s ripeness. All you’ve got to do is really want such a life and everything will be given to you.

Vrethammar, Magnus – Sweden

“Former President for Europe of Pergo Flooring in the UK”

“President of an executive coaching and business development firm Creability AB in Sweden”

Spiritual Theme

Spirituality is an opening process. And then the question is, “What are you opening up to?” I would say love, as long as I am very careful in how I define love. Love can be, on an energy level, a very encompassing and still impersonal energy. So, if one considers this type of love, I would say that my theme is “opening up to love.”

Creating a new definition of man as a spiritual being

Economic science has the economic man as the basic definition. And now you are talking about spirituality, which means there is a new definition of man – and that you have something else other than your self-interest that motivates you or that this self-interest is expressed in a way that is completely different than that associated with the economic man. I only know scientifically of the Maslow ladder that says that only if you are fulfilled at lower levels, then you can be fulfilled at higher levels, and I think that is wrong too. Because I have seen so many examples where people are not fulfilled in any of the lower steps of the ladder and yet there is fulfilment in the upper ones.

So what we need here is a different definition even of this. We need to say that man is essentially a spiritual being opening up to spirituality. Then, from that perspective, I can describe my organisation as supporting that worldview, that paradigm. Right now we only have one paradigm, the economic paradigm, which I refer to as *house-holding*.² And I agree that even if we have only one paradigm, we can still do both, the house-holding and the opening up to spirituality within that paradigm, because that is the only paradigm that we currently have.

¹ From Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary: Kundalini is the yogic life force that is held to lie coiled at the base of the spine until it is aroused and sent to the head to trigger enlightenment.

² The English words “economy” and “economic” are derived from the Greek word *oikonomos*, which literally means a “household manager.”

From a philosophical standpoint, I am not a development optimist; I am not saying that material progress is necessarily good. But, on the other hand, I cannot say that competition is anything else than the normal innate nature of the development game and of people. Today we've gone down a route where we are feeding ourselves and maintaining our standard of living almost exclusively by focusing on the outer world – to the extent that, by contrast, we have come to have this conversation on spirituality in business today.

I am quite convinced that there is an alternative world culture that is able to feed as many people as we do today with the present world culture. However, what we are seeing practised in the world of business today is very far from my own personal view, which is that there is another way of making progress, which is totally inward. And that view includes that the universe will support me if I take the inner road – that is, without focusing on the outer world. If I open up, the universe will support me. If the employees open up, the universe will support all of them individually.

Explicit and implicit spirituality in the organisation

I used to be more explicit in how I led by my spirituality. I did that through company values and mission statements and through education and development programmes. However, looking back, I gradually became more implicit: less programme-oriented and more doing-oriented. This is how I lead now.

I now definitely believe that the explicit and outward motive for house-holding an operation is simply house-holding an operation, nothing else. It is economics. To me, this makes life very simple and what you have to do as a spiritual-based leader is very clear too. You don't fire 'spirits,' you fire 'employees.' Your personal quest is also clear: it is house-holding.

Now the implicit part is: "How do I live my life while doing this? How does this way of living affect my professional situation and the organisation?"

As an example, Pergo was the most implicitly value-oriented company I managed. At Pergo, I was faced with a severe decline in turnover. We were compelled to reduce the workforce by 30%. Circumstances were such that Pergo had not put out new products and had not changed technology for the last five to eight years. So the first thing that I did was to convince the board of the strategy of how to change the whole thing. I came with plans for a wave of new investments and provided a lot of positive thinking. Then, in the next meeting I had to announce that there must be a reduction in workforce by 30% in order for the rest to survive. First the strategy came, then came the tough news.

In order to not have a bad conscience in all of this, I believe you can only be honest. But in this case, I didn't really know the magnitude of the changes that were required. People don't always remember what you said. If you are sharing both good news and bad news, they don't necessarily listen to the negative things that were said, so I had to remind the board of these things too. I did talk about the hardships that were coming and that some people would have to go, but they didn't hear these types of statements. If I had been explicit about spirituality prior to this I would have been looked upon as a 'smiling Boston strangler.' Nobody would have believed me, and I feel that credibility is important.

If I turn this around and say that the spiritual part is the explicit and the house-holding is the implicit, I know that I am killing the spirituality. Let me tell you why. The minute I put spirituality as the explicit part, people will look at me as an organisational priest and they will focus on the deviation of what I do as compared to the "textbook," rather than looking at my good deeds as a

business leader. This will kill spirituality. This will crystallise spirituality and make it a religion. Then you will have to start defending spirituality.

After many hours of thoughts on this, I have to say that my conclusion is that the explicit part of business is the house-holding operation. But this can be done by good people, and the implicit part of business is to support their spiritual quest in opening up. While I now take a more cynical approach to having explicit rules, to having explicit systems of values-based leadership and to auditing corporate responsibility – since my experience tells me these will crystallise the values and will have a diminishing potential – they are better than other kinds of rules. And while people do not become spiritual because of these types of rules, since spirituality is not rules, on the whole, it may be better to have such rules than not to have them.

For example, the most explicitly values-oriented organisation I managed was Finess. At Finess we had a lot of written policies and we also explained the policies and their relationship to the golden rule and other things like that. This helps people to reflect on things like “me and them,” “me and my work” and so on. It was very interesting that when the company was sold, all of this *apparently* went out the window. Later when I came back to work with them as a consultant, I wanted to see if any of it had been left. To my surprise, a lot of these values stayed within the individuals, more than I could have expected. They *internalised* these values and now relate to this as a successful part of their life.

Dilemmas in developing a spiritually-oriented organisation

(1) What happened quite a number of times, while I was the Vice President of Business Development at Swedish Match, is that I had the opportunity to form new ventures and to develop the direction to be followed by these new ventures. The Finess Group was a new group, and we had to form all of their policies and culture. This was interesting because it had me reflect on how I viewed the collective consciousness. Since I had been into Carl Jung and things like that, it also included being aware of the ‘unconscious drives,’ which are reflected in the collective consciousness.

So I was questioning: how much of an organisation can be shared and at what level? For example, over and above the normal salary contract, what contracts can be made between the organisation and the employees, especially when you consider that the organisation is created for the purpose of effectively and efficiently utilising resources so as to create economic value. The organisation is there for creating economic value, what I refer to as “house-holding”. Social framework yes, governmental framework yes, ownership framework yes, but in its essence it is a house-holding operation. So what can you expect from people under these conditions? What type of engagement can you expect and what types of agreements can you realise? What demands can you put to the employees?

If you have developed a shared expectation in the organisation that it is a spiritually oriented organisation, that can lead to rules and expectations. Then new members, who have not participated in the creation of this spiritual orientation, only have the choice of acceptance or defiance. It is very complicated to keep spirituality alive in such an organisation because it can very quickly be turned into a survival game for the spirituality and things crystallise. Then the underlying spirituality becomes materialised into content, with rules, like a religion. It is no longer a quest.

(2) I think there are a number of performance indicators that use the word ‘sustainable’ in front of them: sustainable success, sustainable production, sustainable profitability and so on. In these, you can probably find support for a spiritual approach to management.

But, organisations also go through periods, where they may have to flip-flop values completely, like at war. This is due to the creative process. It is creativity that creates more business, creates the advances in the culture; and sometimes, different creative forces are at odds with each other – leading to “success” at one company and “failure” at another. At other times there can develop intense wars with various stakeholders – for example with unions, competitors or owners, and in such situations, values can flip-flop.

What I mean is that to be sustainable – and to live up to being spiritually based in your leadership - you have to maintain your values through all of these shifting climates, and this may not be possible. When you are explicit and you say that this organisation has a spiritual purpose, or that you have policies that are specifically spiritual, what you do then is that you throw spirituality out the window when you have to flip-flop the preferences. This is why I want to stay implicit, because this is how spirituality will survive.

BUSINESS – START-UP, GROWTH, MERGER, ACQUISITION AND TURNAROUND (9 STORIES)

Behner, John R. – El Salvador

“Former Country Manager for Nabisco in El Salvador”

Spiritual Theme

“Realising God by serving others.”

Only saying “serving everyone” does not include that, which is the most important to me, which is to realise my oneness with God.

Being creative and innovative

I kept adding new products and doing more and more different things. One was making prepared gelatine. Our company had one of the leading brands of gelatine in the world, but it didn't have any prepared gelatine anywhere in the system. I bought a couple of machines and started making it, and pretty soon I was selling 5 million bubbles of gelatine just like that. Each one of these frozen bubbles cost 3 cents to produce, and we sold them for 10 cents. As it was the cheapest product in the market, it was a good service for the public.

The school kids would suck on the frozen gelatine. I bought a hundred box-freezers from Miami, Florida in the USA, had them shipped to El Salvador, and took them out to the schools where they were filled with gelatine. All the schools would buy from us. It was a beautiful business, a tremendous thing. We paid for the machinery in two months. The home office was interested, but they didn't know what to do about it and never copied it in any of their other locations. It didn't fit into their scheme of things since nobody else was doing this.

I would do crazy things like suggesting, “Oh, let's sell raisins”. The bakeries would buy raisins from us, and when we put them in packages, we could sell it to the public, too. We found out that there was a big demand for raisins. We started bringing two-three containers of raisins to the country. The people who sold the raisins also sold peaches. Then we would buy 20 containers of canned peaches. We continually found these different little niches.

In a lot of the rural areas, they didn't have any electricity, so we sold trailer loads of corn mills, which is a hand mill for grinding corn. A corn mill was an expensive item that we sold to the farmers, and we had the best corn mill in the whole country. But Nabisco had never heard of a corn mill, it wasn't even a food product. They would say, what is this guy doing? We made wonderful money on corn mills. The farmers would buy our brand, because it was the strongest brand. We didn't have a piece in that thing that would break; but we also carried parts in case one of them broke, and we would give the people free parts if something broke in their corn mill.

We were selling soymilk to bakeries when all of a sudden skim milk became cheaper than soymilk, and the bakeries stopped buying soymilk. We had a container load of soymilk and didn't have any place to sell it, so we had to do something. I suggested that we make an attractive box and sell it to the public. We called it “Soya Lac” in Spanish. It sold very well, and then we decided to add five or six flavours so we could get some nice shelf space in the stores. What a beautiful product we had! It was selling like crazy. It was the poor man's soymilk. The only competition we

had was a product that came in a can that cost ten times what we were selling ours for. “Soya Lac”? They didn’t even know what it was in the home office, and yet, it was producing a lot of money for them.

We had about 300 employees; they were all so good. They were happy, because we kept everybody working. A lady was in charge of re-packing and re-processing damaged products. I noticed there were some questions about doing this, so I told her, “You are in charge of this, and your guide should be: Don’t repack anything, which you wouldn’t eat personally.” We would get stuff back with a date, which had expired, but apparently it was still a good product. If it was gelatine, she would send it back to the factory and jazz it up having sugar and flavour added to it and then repack it.

When it came down to the emergencies, when we sent all the salesmen out to one area of the city to try to help during the guerrilla conflict, one of the salesmen had a brilliant idea. “Why don’t we call on the companies and suggest that they buy staples for their employees like milk and things like that.” So we sent all the salesmen to visit the companies. It was a tremendous idea. I think we sold more during the guerrilla war than we did at any other time because everybody tends to stock up at such times. When they are insecure, people buy more, especially food products.

All the things we got involved in weren’t necessarily 100% successful. Sometimes we would come up with good ideas but they weren’t workable. For example, there is a tradition in Latin America to sell baskets full of food products at Christmas-time. At one point, we thought, “Wouldn’t it be wonderful to put all our products in a Christmas basket and sell it to the supermarkets already prepared?” So we went out to some of the rural areas and bought 5,000 baskets. When it came time to load the truck, we found out that we could only put 50 on the truck and it was full. But then when the order was for 500 baskets, the truck had to make ten trips to deliver them. It took a very long time just to deliver, and we had 5,000 of these things. Even if basically it was a good idea, we had no way of getting them to the market. To be practical, we wound up selling the empty baskets.

Somebody who has a big ego and says, “This is a good idea, it’s a good product, and it is going to make money” would continue on, unwilling to admit that he was wrong. So, from a spiritual standpoint, I think if somebody is willing to step down very quickly and take it on the chin when they see they are mistaken, they do not put an ego-sense to it.

Chand, Amber – USA

“Founder of the Amber Chand Collection: Global Gifts for Peace and Understanding, an internet-based company in the USA that markets the products of artisans from around the world”

Spiritual Theme

Compassion, balance, grace, and friendliness are words that ring as a spiritual theme for me. Yes, this is a “God-being tapestry.”

Starting a new enterprise

It took me many months to recuperate and heal from the company’s accelerated demise. After many months of prayer and reflection, I felt my spiritual teacher’s encouragement for me to go back into the world and to continue this work. Beckoning me was the pleading gaze of the

artisans I had met on my past travels around the world, who echoed a similar request “Please do not forget us”. Even though the structure of Eziba had collapsed, I believed that its mission in the world was still intact. It was with this mind that I launched my own company, The Amber Chand Collection: Global Gifts for Peace and Understanding, an online company that was setting out to create a different model from Eziba’s – one more truthfully and authentically in alignment with who I am in the world

Today I sit here, at my home office, delighted in the enterprise I have now launched. Barely, nine months old, The Amber Chand Collection: Global Gifts for Peace and Understanding is a mission-based social enterprise that supports talented craftswomen in regions of conflict and post conflict. I work explicitly with women who are the inadvertent victims of war, genocide, civil strife, pandemics and natural disasters. Currently, I am working on projects in Israel/Palestine, Darfur/Sudan, Cambodia, Afghanistan, Iraq and Guatemala. The foundation of the company is built on the successful Gifts That Give Back initiative I spearheaded at Eziba and informed by the lessons I learned at Eziba.

In many ways, I am carrying on the vision that Dick and I had created for Eziba in the very beginning: to serve artisan communities around the world by offering them access to a sophisticated international market. But I choose a different business model for growth – and ultimately one that I hope will be sustainable and successful, over time. The Collection is focused, offering lovely handmade gifts whose design aesthetic is guided by me. In this paradigm, Small is Beautiful! I work closely with non- profit organisations who have field operations in these vulnerable regions of the world and are able to offer me both operational and marketing support. All products are shipped from around the world to my warehouse in central Massachusetts, a facility which exclusively hires developmentally disabled adults (most with Downs Syndrome) to package and ship my products. At this time, I am choosing to finance the company solely through family/friends and angel investors who offer loans with a reasonable return. All decisions I make require thoughtful reflection based on the principles of sobriety (vs. intoxication), balance, truthfulness and sufficiency (vs. excess).

The Amber Chand Foundation has been created as a non-profit entity that will be able to support artisan communities more widely through grants and investments in the future, once the company has met certain financial benchmarks. Referring to itself as a *social enterprise*, the company will measure its success in terms of both its financial and social impact on the artisan communities it serves. For instance, in Guatemala, The Amber Chand Scholarship Fund supports primary school children and is funded through purchases of the Mayan Harmony Necklace and Bracelet. In Cambodia, net proceeds from purchase of the Silk Bag of Smiles is donated to the House of Smiles, an orphanage of disabled children set up in the cooperative that supports children who are victims of landmine accidents. In the Middle East, net proceeds from the sale of the Jerusalem Candle of Hope supports the work of the Parents Circle, an organisation of bereaved family members on either side of the conflict who have lost a family member in the intifada and seek reconciliation and healing.

Each of the gifts in the Amber Chand collection at this time – the Jerusalem Candle of Hope, the Cambodian Silk Bag of Smiles, the Mayan Harmony Necklace and the Mayan Harmony Bracelet, Darfur Basket of Strength, Kabul Necklace of Courage – are made by mothers, who through these lovely creative expressions offer us their gift of hope, strength and courage. The gifts are wrapped simply but tastefully, each tied with a ribbon that comes with a special Cambodian Peace Bell – once part of a landmine shell and now melted down in foundries by villagers to adorn their cows and oxen. A simple, but powerful expression of peace emerging from the context of war.

At every juncture, I seek to be in alignment with my mission. I am more than ever convinced that if we are to create businesses with healthy foundations at this urgent time in our planetary evolution, we need to create systems based on balance, wisdom and humility. As a social entrepreneur, my task is to create an enterprise that is fiscally responsible, grows thoughtfully, and impacts thousands of craftspeople in creating a dignified livelihood for themselves. At the heart of this work, are the spiritual principles of “service” and “love in action”. I have no doubt that armed with patience, trust, focused clear effort and humility, the Amber Chand Collection will grow successfully.

I am grateful to Eziba for teaching me important lessons and in illuminating for me that one can indeed create successful businesses that are spiritually inspired – only when this becomes ones singular mission and clear intent.

Chattopadhyay, A. K. – India

“Former Senior Vice President of ACC Limited Refractories Division in India”

“Executive Director of Tata Refractories, Ltd. in India”

Spiritual Theme

My spiritual theme is a combination of the four goals found in my spiritual view of life:

- To align oneself with a super power
- To find out the reasons within oneself
- To have faith in others
- To have a caring nature

Turning around a failing organisation

When I initially came in to head the operations of ACC Refractories in 1991, I saw right away that there was a big distance between the management and the workers. There was also not enough information being shared between them, so the workers felt totally disillusioned about what was going on. They had totally lost faith in management. To me, the workers are a part of the whole game and you cannot win the game without taking them into proper consideration.

So I started by working with the people. As a management team, we started working closely together with the factory workers and started sharing information with them. We shared what was happening and what was good or what was bad. Slowly the workers responded to this very nicely. I regained the faith of those people. After two years or so, they began to listen more to us than to their union leaders. So naturally the senior management people became their leaders and this was a big transformation.

The first thing I did was to introduce a monthly meeting, which we called a safety meeting. The idea was to address what had happened in the last month, what our market share was, how we performed, where we went wrong, where we went right, and how to learn from the things we did right. It used to be a one-hour meeting at the gate itself. When the workers came in the morning we were there and we would do some formalities and hold the meeting. We started by hoisting the safety flag. We talked about safety practises, including the accidents that took place in the plants and how they could have been avoided. Then we called a worker to talk about all different kinds of safety. Then we asked the engineers to talk about safety. Finally I would talk about the

other things in the company. This became a fantastic thing. After a few months, people were eagerly coming to this meeting to listen.

Then we started a quality circle and brought people together to have interactions. We would visit one operation for the whole day and talk about things. Our people are good people; a few people have simply misguided them. So we tried to bring them into the right kind of attitude. As a management philosophy, we said that we are 80-85% responsible for difficulties with the business, and the workers are 15-20% responsible. That is, if we don't get a good price from the customer, that is management's fault. If we don't buy the raw material at a good price, that is management's fault. If inventory is lying in our yard, that is management's fault. When the material has been given to the worker, then it is their job to process it properly.

As a result of all of this, I also saw how we were doing things that were not getting us anywhere in our business, things that were losing money. So a lot of our business processes and strategies were changed. We looked at our product profile, we looked at our customer profile, and we looked to see if we could do the business in a different way. We phased out a lot of products that were not aiding the bottom line and it was a good transformation. We also got a lot of good support from the corporate office and that was what was needed.

We revived the business, and today I can tell you very proudly that we have grown from a 180 million rupee business (US\$3.8 million at the mid-2002 exchange rate) to 1,950 million rupee business (US\$41.5 million at the mid-2002 exchange rate) last year. The ten times growth occurred just by using a proper strategy to run the business and giving value to the people. In 1991 we were almost a non-entity and today we are a force to be reckoned with in the country.

Our products are good, our services are good, and our quality is good. During this same period the refractory industry overall was in very bad shape. However, we still managed to grow and grow.

My spiritual philosophy behind all of this was that I was trying to do good for our employees. They were not aware of the things that they were doing that were actually harmful to them. So I wanted to do good and show them how to do good.

Jiang, Niran – Australia

“Formerly Senior Trends Manager for Coca Cola and Marketing Manager for S. C. Johnson in the USA”

“CEO for the Institute of Human Excellence in Australia”

Spiritual Theme

My spiritual theme would be interconnectedness, wonderment, and compassion.

Shifting the thinking of the company

I used the same approach at S.C. Johnson as I did later on at Coca Cola with regard to creating an opening for a large acquisition. The company was experiencing stagnant growth, as most established businesses do. But unfortunately, in general we operate on a growth paradigm where zero growth is not acceptable. I feel resigned to accept that paradigm. In that paradigm, you scare business by showing that they go down hill if they don't innovate, which is true. We invited the

Boston Consulting Group, BCG, to do a major study of where growth could come from. Based on that study we were ready to look for radical changes for the business.

What stimulates wonderment is when you truly connect the inner life forces. Three of us, who connected really well, said, "Let's take this project." We went into hiding and identified the target for a new acquisition. It was Ziploc – a small plastic storage bag. Everybody said "no", as it was not in our traditional category of household cleaning products; we didn't have the manufacturing capability, and we didn't have any knowledge about making bags. Looking at acquisition criteria, everything said "no, no, no!" But intuitively this was really right for the three of us, and we were amazed at the power of the brand, as a USA brand magazine had listed Ziploc as number 17 on a list of 100 top brands together with names like Disney and Harley Davidson. We knew all the "no's", but we felt a lot of wonderment about this, almost a passion; it was not just about valuation, but about future potentials.

After doing the traditional marketing research, we kept on brainstorming ideas, though not in a way according to the manual of S.C. Johnson. This was pure idea-flow because of the passion and the life force, the wonderment and the mystery of why we were so attracted to this brand. We talked it over in a restaurant where we were joking, having fun, a lot of humour, and all the ideas became very visual and graphic. We opened up to tremendous creativity and were able to catch all those ideas later on. We put everything beautifully on the board for the CEO and said, "This is your future business". After ten minutes he said, "I got it, we're buying it!" The whole senior management committees' jaws dropped. They said, "But what about manufacturing, we don't know how to..." "We'll learn," the CEO said. The company paid US\$ 1.1 billion in 1996-7, and that became their largest acquisition. Today that business has provided the largest growth of the company. I got headhunted away, but I still got the credit for what had happened and I was told that it was amazing how I had been able to shift the thinking of the company.

My spirituality brought to this exciting project a true respect for and feeling of equality on the soul level with everybody in the small team; nobody was afraid of opening up. We were passionate. We had a strong curiosity, which I see as spirituality, as a life force. We got connected to a universal power, and we all felt a great commitment. This is why we succeeded.

Maitra, Ashoke – India

"Former Director of Human Resources for the Times of India"

"Founder of the Centre for Human Resource Development and the Sri Ramakrishna International Institute of Management in India"

Spiritual Theme

I think my spiritual theme is "Manifestation of latent Divinity."

Reducing grief during the merger of two competitive companies

The first story I have to share is when we were merging NOCIL and another petrochemical company. The two companies were very culturally different and were organised very differently; one had only seven levels of management and the other had 19 levels of management. There was a lot of hatred between these two companies because for years they had fought each other to prove who was better. Now one of the companies was merging into the other and would be

losing their identity. I was the HR person for NOCIL, which was the surviving company, and I had to lead this merger.

To make things worse, the owner of NOCIL named the managing director of the other company as the managing director of the combined companies. This managing director was a totally unprofessional man. As a result the original managing director of NOCIL, who had a tremendous amount of credibility and was well liked by the workers, resigned in disgust.

The owner of NOCIL, Mr. Mafatlal, decided that the merger had to be done seamlessly, but did not give any direction. So I thought that the best way to merge would be to integrate people at the spiritual level and therefore I experimented. No one stopped me since from the initial stage the shareholders got good feedback.

The first thing I realised was that I must not identify myself with either company, while at the same time taking full ownership of my HR position and responsibilities. I knew that I had to be clear and often thought of Vivekananda's talk that we should be able to attach and detach with equal ease. I became detached so I could properly facilitate the process.

You see, I knew my job, even back then, was to take people out of grief. I knew I had to be involved in it, but out of it; I had to be like a lotus in the water, but not of it. I began to read the spiritual texts as much as possible – Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Sathya Sai Baba, Rajnish – in order to school myself on being detached with equipoise.

I realised we had to create one HRD department and one marketing department, both of which would have equal representation from each company. I knew that the first step was to have them learn to sit with each other, nothing else. I called all the top management from both sides and told them, "We have to create a new vision for this company. Your purpose cannot be to hate each other, let us go beneath all of this and see what our purpose is. The fact is we have been legally merged, so what do we do?" They needed to connect spiritually.

At first there were a lot of grievances that surfaced. By the afternoon, we said okay, it is the worst thing to happen in life, but it has happened. Now what do we do? We started examining the question of purpose and in three days time we came to a top management integration of the purpose of the combined companies.

I then conducted 44 workshops of two days each to help employees understand this new vision for the company and what we were out to do together. It was a residential workshop and the first day people sat separately, even during the lunch they remained separate. By the end of the two days there was some amount of mutual respect where they could at least look at each other and sit next to each other. That was followed by a large number of sensitivity training workshops, which I conducted. These workshops taught them how to be sensitive to others and to find their own space and their own theory in life.

I got people together, through a participatory process, to develop respect and positive feelings for each other. I believe that if I had not been detached and acted with equipoise that I could have never achieved this. I was not an external facilitator; I was the HR head of the surviving company. As such, they had every right to turn on me and think that I had betrayed them. My transparency and credibility had to be grounded on my spiritual foundation because people knew I was a spiritual person

In the sensitivity training and workshops we did, we first asked them to define their purpose in life. We didn't ask them to define the purpose of the company; we asked them to define their purpose,

to define what they are here to do in life and what they want from life. Most of the people said they wanted happiness and satisfaction from life. We asked them, “How do you get satisfaction?” We pointed out that you get satisfaction by not hating anyone; you get satisfaction when you are not greedy, and when you do not have anger. When they pointed out that they were angry because of the merger, I reminded them that the merger has nothing to do with them personally; it is a legal merger and they should not get so attached to it.

This is the first stage where we had them begin their introspection. Spirituality is all about introspection. When you put people in an introspective mode in an exercise, then they start to question their own life and their own reason for existence, such as what they are here to do and how they will achieve it. Then, many times they see the futility of getting angry and see that they are doing exactly the opposite of what they want to achieve.

If my goal is to be the best HRD Director, then I need to examine whether anger is going to help me, or whether it will be an obstacle. If I realise that it is going to be an obstacle then I need to examine why I am getting angry in the first place.

My overriding mission during the entire process was to reduce grief and not increase grief. I was able to spiritually detach myself while being part of it, and I wanted to transfer this knowledge to them. This detachment comes naturally for me because I have stayed with so many saints. However, this level of detachment was not happening for them and as a result they were suffering from grief.

My call as the head of HR was more of a compassionate call to them. It was out of compassion that I wanted the employees to forget what was happening in the company and to just look after themselves. I think the reason they accepted what I said is because they saw I was not concerned about the company; I was concerned about them and their grief.

I reminded them that this was actually a great opportunity. I told them to treat life as if it were a play and to know that things are going to happen with or without their will many times. If you learn to detach yourself and look at what is going on as a spectator, you can have a much better life.

We had one of the smoothest mergers in the history of India of two competitive petrochemical companies. We had no press reference, even though we could have been the centre of attention in the news at that time.

Narayana, G. – India

“Chairman Emeritus for Excel Industries, Ltd. in India”

Spiritual Theme

My spiritual theme is: Noble actions, noble feelings, noble thoughts, noble responsibility.

Giving love

Last year, 2001, was our worst performance and was a challenging year. After a lot of growth, we – and all other companies in the industry – did badly. It was our worst profitability. We have recovered now. How?

First of all, when trouble came, I took the responsibility. I went into introspection and then created new leadership. I respected the old group of leaders, and without disturbing them we created all new leadership: not bringing in new people, but rearranging the people we already had. We recognised the people and put them in new positions of leadership to challenge them.

We gave continuous love to every person, and made sure that each one was successful. I know we cannot succeed as a group until each and every person has succeeded.

In giving continuous love, I do not get tired, even though I travel all the time. My wife thinks that I will be coming home tired and she gets tired waiting for me. But I come running and she wants to know how that can be. But then everyone gives me love back, so I receive more than I give. Love energizes. No matter where I go, I give love, even more than information.

I also give love by speaking often to people outside of the company. For the last four years, I have not slept in the same place more than 3 days. Yesterday I came from Baroda, day before yesterday I was in Delhi. This morning I came here to Mumbai, tomorrow I will go to Lucknow to speak. One day after tomorrow, I will be in Hyderabad. Whoever calls me I will go, I never say no. So I advise people to give continuous love.

Ranganathan, V. V. – India

“Formerly a Senior Partner with Ernst & Young India”

“Co-founder of Pinnacle Opportunities, a non-profit and Compassites, a product incubation company in Bangalore, India”

Spiritual Theme

“Seeing God in everyone”

Merging two major firms

I personally went through trying times when we acquired the Indian practice of a very large global firm. We suddenly became a huge firm of gigantic proportions and had to resize. Resizing involved selecting the best out of the best and putting people through competency centres. Suddenly some of the best people who hitherto were champions became second grade by comparison. The simplest way to dispense with surplus people was to retrench them mercilessly which was then a serious suggestion.

But the older firm had a conscience largely reflected by the then-Chairman’s personal attributes. He would often discuss with me the situation and would personally ensure that he found placements for many of the redundant staff elsewhere. He walked his talk and gained tremendous respect. My relationship with him has been one on a spiritual platform. First of all I always found him to be a conscientious and a good and honest human being who cared for others. All his other attributes for which different people have different reasons to get attracted to him (for a variety of reasons) were absolutely secondary to me.

After this mega-merger of Ernst & Young with another firm, I was put in charge of developing a new charter of governance for the combined firm, along with a senior partner of the firm that we took over. The two of us were called legacy partners for developing a new charter of governance. We had several meetings and sessions to draft this difficult document which would become the

edifice on which the whole leadership positions of the combined firm would be determined. It was initially very tough. My colleague partner from the other side was a tough negotiator and he demonstrated deep seated tendencies (which in India we call *vasanas*) in no uncertain terms. Slowly I could appeal to his inner-conscience and he responded. He gradually became reasonable and more reasonable and we both started to see the big picture. We were honest to ourselves and so in perfect harmony we produced a balanced and reasonable charter given the peculiarities and the circumstances. He is no more with the combined firm but we are still very good friends and relate on a different plane altogether with mutual respect.

Sinclair, James E. – USA

“Chairman and CEO of Tan Range Exploration, Ltd. in the USA and Tanzania”

Spiritual Theme

My theme for spirituality would be “Live it.”

Doing the right thing

I am a risk taker; I take risks that are beyond reason. Statistics would say that there is no reason for me to be sitting here talking to you today, because I should have been history a long time ago. And I know that I should have been history, because I’ve almost become history so many times I wouldn’t even want my wife to know.

I look back and wonder how in the world, on the last day, on the last month, did I make it until I got a deal. And how in the world did a company come in and buy 13 pieces of my land, the most they’ve bought from anyone, anywhere, anytime? I couldn’t make them do that. So every month I knew the next month would be fine, or if it wasn’t, then it wasn’t. Now I’ve taken all that I’ve made over the years and invested it into this Africa venture because my spiritual teacher told me to. And if it is a failure, so what?

I will be the first to admit, I never wanted to go back to Africa to do business after the horrendous experience I had in the mid-90’s. But my spiritual teacher told me to go back to Africa. I told him I didn’t want to go back. I travelled to see him numerous times to ask him to reconsider and let me out of it. He finally had enough of it, and so I went back even though my previous experience was a disaster. Right now it’s taking all of the money I have and the strangest things in the world are happening. I am the first guy in this type of business (gold mining) to do this without any investors. But even then I am standing strong to only do what works.

For example, an African local lost his concession (piece of land) because he didn’t pay the money required and so the license went back to the state. Here is this very desirable piece of land with a mine already on it. I wanted that piece of land and the government was ready to give it to me. But I said, “No, give it back to the man who owned it. I’m going to make a deal with him because he wasn’t sophisticated enough to keep it.” I got him back into the loop and now he owns 30% of the option and we’re paying him US\$50,000 for the privilege and we’ll buy the rest of it as his participation in the joint venture.

I did this because it seemed like the right thing to do. As a result, the word has gotten around that I’m a straight-shooter who is going to treat these African locals like human beings with respect. I paid them the same amount of money that I would pay someone in the USA. As a result, my

company ended up with 52 pieces of land for mining, about half the size of the state of Connecticut. These are all some of the finest pieces of land in the world. We gave all of the landowners the respect of being real partners; we paid them and didn't even take the land out of their name. I was only willing to treat these people with the same respect that I would treat someone in the USA.

The word got around and now I can't keep people out of our offices who want to do business with us. I have made a lot of Tanzanians wealthy. Am I helping them or hurting them? I don't know. But I do know that to hurt someone requires an intention. If I set up a business with the intent to hurt another person or business, then this is hurting and you know you are doing it. There is something in the environment that will control the stability of the world and eventually those businesses that do intentionally hurt others cannot survive. If your intention as a human is to hurt, you are looking for disaster. I don't care if you've got the oracle of Delphi giving you insight.

Welling, S. K. – India

“Former Executive Director of HMT International, Ltd. (Hindustan Machine Tools) in India”

Spiritual Theme

Purity of character through faith, bhakti (devotion), trust and love

Developing a turnaround plan for the company

In 1998 when I was shifted from watch product-marketing to corporate planning, my old colleagues were telling me, “What is this Mr. Welling? You were a monarch. You were managing the watch marketing in the entire country, all the trade, everybody. You had a great reputation in the market place. Everybody was so happy. Now it is a big climb down for you. You had thousands of people with you. Now you have come back as General Manager of corporate planning where only a handful of people are working under you.” I said, “Look, that phase it is over. Another phase has started.”

The whole company was in extremely bad shape. Losses were mounting. Net worth had eroded. There was absolutely no money in the company. The whole thing was in shambles. Basically I am a corporate planner and my flair is corporate and business planning; conceptualising is my style. I had a team of about 4 or 5 corporate planners. In one of the management committee meetings, I said to myself, “The only thing to do now is to again rise from the dust and make a turnaround plan for the whole company.” I made a concerted proposal and got the permission of the government also.

Since my spiritual basis is seeking “purity of character” for myself and others, in the turnaround plan I was looking to “purify” every area that I addressed. This purification was required in the company because of the complacency of operating in a closed economy and the refusal of the top people to change their mindsets. I picked up the threads of the 1991 study by the World Bank, and then formulated a plan. To be very brief, there were 3 major aspects of the whole turnaround plan: organisation restructuring; manpower rationalisation; and financial restructuring. Normally corporate people tackle one at a time; I said we need to tackle all these three comprehensively together to get success.

The first purification I looked at was to reorganise the structure. The structure needed to be purified so that it could become vibrant to address the needs of the new market today. I recommended that we form separate subsidiary companies out of this conglomerate of capital goods, consumer goods, and agricultural machinery businesses. I recommended that HMT create independent companies, each with their own structures, policies, and procedures akin to the industry sector in which they were operating. I said, "If you have to operate in a market, we have to have these separate. Let them be on their own. What is true for capital goods is not true for consumer goods. Consumer goods should have their own way of working. So let us make these subsidiary companies as a part of the organisation restructuring."

I also saw that there were two major elements in the profit-and-loss accounting that were really hurting the company: one was the high personnel cost; and the other was the high interest cost because of the heavy debt contracted by the company over the years.

So the second purification that needed to take place, which I did with a very heavy heart, was to reduce our manpower. Sending people home on voluntary retirement without a security net, in a country like India, is something that really touched my heart. I was not totally convinced about sending people home knowing fully well that they would be in trouble. Even today as a Director I still believe that we should create more jobs by doing something rather than sending people home. This downsizing I must admit caused a big conflict between my inner self and my outer self. After thinking on this long and hard I came to the conclusion that in order to keep the whole, I must accept that we will have to let a part of it go.

So for manpower rationalisation, we made a voluntary retirement scheme to reduce manpower. We identified 6,500 people to receive the golden handshake and leave the company.

The third purification was in the financial area. The debt that the company had incurred when we were in the closed market system worked well as long as we were selling our products and making a profit. But since we had entered the open market, we were no longer competitive in our selling, and we did not have the profits that we had before. So now the debt was so huge that the interest burden would not allow us to be competitive in the global economy. It was really a job for me to convince them that they needed to make concessions.

To protect the interests of the company I negotiated with the government, saying: "The shareholder of this company is the government, because it is a public sector undertaking. If this company is to survive, the government has to put in money to make the net worth of this company positive." We asked the government to put in about 350 crores of rupees (US\$75 million) into this company so that we could pay off the financial institutions, reduce the debt, clear out some of the liabilities, and reduce the interest costs. We saved the company a tremendous amount of money.

These three were the basic aspects of the restructuring plan. It took me 14 months to do a total turnaround plan for this company – to get the whole thing formulated and to get it through the management, the board and the government. I campaigned to get the plan through the various agencies, and everybody had some queries, as you might expect. It is easy to ask more and more questions and to keep on answering them.

When the turnaround plan was implemented, even though I was the architect and author I didn't project myself as the main person. I never said that I did it. I always do things and withdraw to the back. This is what has happened throughout my 31-year career in this company.



An inquiry into the nature, activities and results of leading from a spiritual basis

SECTION II

Character

During our 1½ – 2 hour interviews with leaders who participated in our international research programme, we asked each one to share specific stories that exemplified how they drew from their spiritual view of life to respond to a challenging situation.

In this section you will find 29 stories related to the broad topic of “Character”. These stories are organised according to the following categories:

- **Character building (4 stories)**
- **Crisis intervention (9 stories)**
- **Ethics (7 stories)**
- **Integrity and conscience (6 stories)**
- **Miracles (3 stories)**

This section contains only the stories excerpted from the full interviews. To review the career history, current responsibilities, spiritual views, and other aspects of leading from a spiritual basis, please refer to the complete transcript of each leader, which can be found in either Volume 1 or 2 or the on-line knowledge-base at www.globaldharma.org/sbl-research.htm.

THE FOLLOWING STORIES ARE CONTAINED IN THIS SECTION:

Character – Character Building

- Teaching human values to the managers and to young people – John Behner
- Practicing empathetic listening – Stephen R. Covey
- Leading with character and leaving a legacy – Stephen Covey
- Implementing human values in education – Alvaro Cruz

Character – Crisis Intervention

- Dealing with an organisation-wide crisis – Floy Aguenza
- Serving in a crisis condition – John Behner
- Getting customers and employees on their feet again after an earthquake – John Behner
- Responding to an employee tragedy – A. K. Chattopadhyay
- Facing critical challenges – G. Narayana
- Responding to a large mistake made by an employee – Anand Pillai
- Understanding inner control during an extremely difficult situation – Anand Pillai
- Responding to the press and to an employee, due to a major mistake – V. V. Ranganathan
- Maintaining confidence in difficult times – S. K. Welling

Character – Ethics

- Being honest and ethical – Rajan Govindan
- The capital market is not always correct – H  l  ne Ploix
- Promoting ethics and corporate governance: a matter of balance – H  l  ne Ploix
- Ethical values are spiritual values – Ananth Raman
- Being a warrior in a battle of ethics – James Sinclair
- Building trust through integrity – Janiece Webb
- Standing firm – Janiece Webb

Character – Integrity and conscience

- Peace of conscience – Stephen R. Covey
- Recognising the integrity of leaders – Andr   Delbecq
- Supporting the integrity of paying taxes – N. S. Raghavan
- Repaying debts with integrity – Ananth Raman
- Following conscience – Magnus Vrethammar
- Building trust through integrity – Janiece Webb

Character – Miracles

- Experiencing God's little miracles – John Behner
- Intuition and safety – Alvaro Cruz
- Creating a "Miracle School" – Victor-Krishna Kanu

CHARACTER – CHARACTER BUILDING (4 STORIES)

Behner, John R. – El Salvador

“Former Country Manager for Nabisco in El Salvador”

Spiritual Theme

“Realising God by serving others.”

Only saying “serving everyone” does not include that, which is the most important to me, which is to realise my oneness with God.

Teaching human values to the managers and to young people

At a certain time, we decided to do some combined publicity for the company and human values training. We went to local high schools and offered them an opportunity for the students to come to the plant. We had an auditorium, and I had each of my managers talk about one of the five human values, truth, right conduct, peace, love and non-violence, and how it affected his area.

The Controller would talk about *truth*, how truth is important in doing the bookkeeping, the accounting, paying the taxes, etc. The Sales Manager would talk about *right conduct*, how you have to treat the customers correctly. The Plant Manager talked about *love*, because he had to keep everybody in harmony, so the production would be good. The Quality Control Manager would talk about *peace*, that if you do your work right, you will be tranquil, because you'll know that the quality of all the products is fine. The Maintenance Manager would talk about *non-violence*, that if you weren't polluting and contaminating, then you would have non-violence.

The amazing thing was that the students would come in batches of a hundred, filling the auditorium. The managers were the ones who benefited the most, because they had to learn about these values to talk about them. Then they started seeing how the values worked in their job. The students would also understand the values in relation to a work ethic.

After the talks we would take them on a tour of the plant and give them free cookies and so on. We did it frequently to have an outreach to the high schools, and as a result, the young people would apply to work with us, because they liked what they saw, so we had a good pool of resources.

Covey, Stephen R. – USA

“Vice Chairman of FranklinCovey, a global professional services firm based in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

One of my mottoes serves as a powerful spiritual theme for me: “Live life in crescendo.” In other words, the most important work you'll ever do is still ahead of you.

Another such spiritual theme for me would be: “Educate and obey your conscience.” Educating as I speak of it here involves getting into the sacred literature of all the great traditions that have had enduring value and then consciously living true to what you have learned. The more you live true to it, the stronger your conscience becomes. A constant effort is required to stay on track with such stewardship.

Practicing empathetic listening

I had an interesting experience recently in India. I had just read the book, *The Argumentative Indian*. Essentially it's a very well written cultural history of India and how the argumentative tendency is part of their cultural DNA. When I got into that, I could see how under developed their country was with respect to teamwork and how over developed their democracy was. They have so many parties and so much fighting and contention. I spoke to an audience of a thousand people about the spiritual principle of *seeking first to understand before seeking to be understood*. I then opened things up to the audience and said, “Let us see if we right now can listen to each other and re-make the other person's point before we make our own.” They were unable to do it. So I said, “Let me see if you could ask a question on what we have covered to this point without making an oratorical statement.” They were unable to do it. So I had one half of the audience just observe to see if the other half could practice this principle. They could not do it. And they could see that they could not do it.

Then I said, “Look at what has happened to your infrastructure here in India, look at the bureaucracy, the extent of rules and regulations that have taken the place of human creativity – which is really interesting when you consider that you have more knowledge workers in this country than any other country in the world.” I said, “Just look at this! You are capable of transcending your cultural DNA, because deeper than that is your spiritual DNA, it is deep in your natures, you really are capable of doing it.” They were so intrigued with this approach, and I became intrigued with their awareness. Awareness, the space between stimulus and response, is a huge thing to me. They were aware of their cultural DNA. Rather than looking at life *through* it, they now chose to look *at* it. They could then see that true leaders don't work through systems rather that they work on the systems, and they do this through a principle-centred approach that rests on universal spiritual principles. This was a fascinating learning experience for all of us.

The more I get to know the Indian culture, the more I use this approach, and my audiences and the leaders I speak to know that it is authentic. That it is real. They know I am not some American over there trying to Americanise them. They know that I respect the development over more than 5,000 years of their magnificent spiritual and cultural tradition. I ask them to look at what has happened to this cultural DNA, and I ask them if they can practice a couple of principles. They become amazed and then they become very humble and open to learn empathetic listening – and how to re-make the other person's point before making your own point, which is a spiritual principle.

Leading with character and leaving a legacy

The other day I was in Kenya. In my recent book on *The 8th Habit*, I told the story of a man from Uganda named Stone, who was a professional soccer-player. He was well on his way to a career as a professional in Europe, where the big money is, the dream of all the youth there. During a game, someone hit him, on purpose, in a way that severely damaged his knee and ended his career dreams. Instead of becoming bitter or vindictive or losing himself in self-pity, he has used himself to empower underprivileged young Ugandan boys who would otherwise be lost in life, without marketable skills and with no role-models to follow.

Stone came over from Uganda to Kenya for my presentation. It was a very interesting venue. There was a big building with five different balconies, like a theatre in the round, and he was in the fifth one. In my presentation I tried to get people to see themselves as trim-tabbers, (a trim-tab on a boat is the small rudder that turns the big rudder that turns the entire ship), so they can be change agents no matter what their formal or moral authority is, and take the responsibility to leave a legacy. So during my presentation I showed the film on Stone which is included in the companion DVD to my book, and the audience became totally caught up in that film. They have the kind of poverty and the kind of problems that Stone had. The earlier regimes had literally devastated the institutions of the whole country, and children were often growing up without parents because of the AIDS-epidemics. There were so many orphans, and their living conditions and dreams were not very positive, to put it mildly. As a result, many in the audience were able to identify with Stone.

At the end of the film I said, “Stone, come on down here,” and they were blown away. He came down, and then I interviewed him in front of the whole audience about what he has been doing to leave a legacy and how he has influenced tens of thousands of young men. One feminist woke up and said “Why don’t you work with the young women?” and Stone just gave a sharp answer: “They don’t have the problems that men have.” He immediately made sense to her.

This guy is like a Mother Teresa in Uganda, and he is totally dedicated to helping these young men, not just with soccer, but as a life-coach so they can be responsible parents. And now they are coming back to him, showing him their families and the contributions they are making. He is immersed in his spiritual endeavour – serving the people and their communities. What a handsome guy, what a wonderful guy, what character and competence and quality.

Even there, on a stage and not on a soccer field, he was very, very pithy and very to the point in his communication. He said, “I am trying to get these kids to realise that they may lose a match, but they don’t need to lose in life.” He told the audience how he demonstrates for the young men in Uganda how they can follow their conscience and govern their lives – how they can start by learning to become good soccer players, then how important it is for them to become economically self-reliant, then responsible fathers and citizens. Stone explained how he is helping them transform themselves into trim-tabbers, into young men who have the will and discipline and character necessary to transform their society and to win in life.

Cruz, Alvaro – Colombia

“Former Minister of the Government of Colombia and Governor of Cundinamarca, Colombia”
“CEO of an engineering/building company in Colombia, I.C.M. Ingenieros Ltda.”

Spiritual Theme

Love and respect others.

Implementing human values in education

During my governorship I implemented the application of human values in public education with excellent results. It is included in the ten years program for public education, which includes parents, teachers, and the children. The teaching of values has been added to the regular curriculum. We also include the participation of the parents, because 60 percent of the learning takes place in the home.

I motivated the teachers to take the special training courses in human values, and we provided the new technology, which would make the teachers able to teach this. The teachers are trained at the universities. Several universities were competing for the contract for producing the texts for the teaching in human values. The one requirement we gave them was that it should include ethical and moral values such as respect, human solidarity, happiness, tolerance, love and forgiveness. We said, take these values and include them in your texts and in your techniques for teaching. I was able to have this model program for education approved, and it was chosen by the World Bank to be a model for Latin America. The World Bank credit used for this is still continuing and will do so for two more years.

Simultaneously I was able to initiate a type of training for the college graduates. In the year 2000 only 43 percent of the students in our State were able to pass the medium examination, which would allow them to enter higher education. In the year 2002 the number passing the national medium was raised to 67 percent. This happened not necessarily because of the teaching of values, but because of the improvement of the education in general. The rank in the national level of education in 32 states, from 1st to 9th grade in my state went from the 16 place to the 3rd place as to the quality of education.

CHARACTER – CRISIS INTERVENTION (9 STORIES)

Aguenza, Floy – The Philippines

“President and COO of Planters Development Bank in The Philippines”

Spiritual Theme

“What would Jesus do?” “What would the Lord do?”

Dealing with an organisation-wide crisis

Early on in my presidency, the bank’s Treasury Department was unwittingly dragged into a government security controversy. As you know, by the very nature of our business, it is a no-no to be involved in any controversy, much more with anything that tends to put doubt on the capability and stability of the bank. We thought it was unfair to drag the name of the bank into the issue when it was not clear how things happened or who was accountable for it. But we can not do anything as the publicity that accompanied the controversy got out of hand. I had to deal with it head-on.

When it happened, it felt like the heavens had fallen on my head. I was on my way home when our Controller called me on my cell phone and told me there was a problem and that I should come back to the office. Then he gave me the news. I prayed to the Lord to be with me during those difficult times. I feared that because of the bad publicity, the bank might suffer a run, and no bank, no matter how strong, can survive a run.

The first thing I did was to find out exactly what happened, the extent of the problem, and the consequences. I ordered a full-scale audit and had everything accounted for. We have a very good back-room operation (the area of the bank where they do electronic and paper processing), so within a short time I knew exactly what the problem was.

My Chair was in the U.K. at the time and I felt that I needed to first let him know what had happened since he is the largest shareholder of this bank and would be the one most hurt by this. So I called him and gave him the difficult news. The good thing about him is that he is a very grounded person; he did not show any sign of weakness or anger. I think in many ways he and I are like the yin and yang. He was really a rock in this situation. I was starting to panic, but seeing that he was steadfast really made a difference for me.

That was one of the worst crises of my life. The controversy dragged on for weeks. I woke up each day dreading to go to the office. I said to the Lord, “If I knew this would happen, I wouldn’t have accepted this position.” But I had to be strong for all the stakeholders of the bank. Every morning I prayed and intentionally put on a smile because I knew that everyone was watching me. I knew it was important to put on a strong front. I even deliberately chose to wear bright coloured dresses during this period!

It was a tremendous responsibility. I was consoled by our people in the organisation who held together and stood strong. From the beginning, we kept our people informed of our actions and decisions, especially the branch managers who were at the forefront, they having direct client contact. They worked very hard to convince our customers that there was nothing to be worried about. Some of them were even willing to pledge their own personal assets to show their

customers the confidence they had in the bank. Fortunately, they never had to put their assets at risk because the customers were convinced that there was indeed nothing to be concerned about.

And then there were prayers. Everyone was praying. We knew we could not get out of these troubles without the Lord's help.

The crisis lasted for about a month. Public confidence was soon restored and we emerged as a much stronger organisation. In hindsight, I knew there was a purpose for this happening. Without it, we could have been susceptible to even larger disasters. It opened our eyes to the weaknesses of our systems and processes and the need to strengthen further our controls. When the financial crisis hit the Asian region and the Philippine banking industry in 1997, the bank was prepared. The controversy prepared us for tougher times and strengthened our faith in God.

Behner, John R. – El Salvador

“Former Country Manager for Nabisco in El Salvador”

Spiritual Theme

“Realising God by serving others.”

Only saying “serving everyone” does not include that, which is the most important to me, which is to realise my oneness with God.

Serving in a crisis condition

A guerrilla war was going on in El Salvador for about 12 years. At one time there was a major invasion of the capital, San Salvador, by the guerrilla forces. A lot of mercenaries, young kids who were sort of idealists, coming from Cuba and the USA, had joined the mercenary forces and were going to “liberate the poor and suppressed peasants in El Salvador”.

The war was going on all over the city, which had about 1½ million inhabitants at the time. As we were in the food-business, we looked at how we were able to feed the people. Our employees would call us every morning. Since they lived all over the city, we would know where the fighting was going on and where it was calm. So we set up a whole system in which all the salesmen would go to one area of the city where there was no fighting going on that day, and start taking orders as fast as they could. The next day there might be fighting in that neighbourhood, and we couldn't deliver the orders they had taken until later, but then all the salesmen would go to another neighbourhood where there wasn't any fighting. In that way we were covering the whole city little by little.

We also set up a system of transportation for the employees. For those who could get to the downtown area, we sent vehicles. Then they went up about half way to where the plant and the offices were, stopping at a supervisor's home. From there they would call the office – this was before the cell phones – and find out if the coast was clear, because sometimes there would be fighting near the plant or the offices, but most of the time they could come and go to work. We usually had a few employees who couldn't come, but we paid everybody while this war was going on. People were taking risks to get to work, but they all saw their mission as feeding the people.

Getting customers and employees on their feet again after an earthquake

In 1986, there was a big earthquake in San Salvador, so we got a little experience in dealing with a crisis. One of the first things we saw was that all the supermarkets, which were our biggest clients, were affected; all their merchandise was all over the floor. They had a tremendous job of trying to clean what was saveable and to throw out what was broken and maybe take some kind of inventory of it. We also saw that our production lines were useless, because if the supermarkets could not put our products on their shelves, what good was it to produce it? So we shut down our production lines and sent the salesmen to all the major supermarkets. They offered them a team of our production people to help them clean up. We did this very successfully, and we were the only company that did it. All the supermarkets were happy to get this kind of service, which didn't cost them anything. It only took about a week of very concentrated effort. It got them on their feet faster, and so we could start selling faster.

We took stock of our employees, and we had nine employees who had lost their homes. Since we had shut down the production, our maintenance department wasn't doing anything. So we asked these guys to go and rebuild the homes of these nine employees on a temporary basis. In an earthquake, what happens is that the floor is still there, and the toilet is still there, but the roof and the walls may have fallen down. Temporary structures were put up in the nine homes, and the employees were very grateful. El Salvador gets earthquakes periodically. In 1994 when we had another earthquake, we were all prepared, because we had already gone through the big one in 1986.

Chattopadhyay, A. K. – India

“Former Senior Vice President of ACC Limited Refractories Division in India”

“Executive Director of Tata Refractories, Ltd. in India”

Spiritual Theme

My spiritual theme is a combination of the four goals found in my spiritual view of life:

- To align oneself with a super power
- To find out the reasons within oneself
- To have faith in others
- To have a caring nature

Responding to an employee tragedy

One time an employee in our factory got caught in the conveyer belt and his hand was chopped off. This happened during the night and he was taken to the hospital. You can imagine that his family was in total distress. The newspaper came to write stories against me since I was head of the plant, saying that not enough safety measures were being applied.

Personally, I reacted in a totally different manner altogether. I stayed in the operation theatre the whole night that he was being operated on, in order to give moral courage to his family members. I am not a doctor and this was the first time I had ever been in an operation theatre, so you can imagine that with so much blood and all it was a terrific scene; I was not able to eat for two or three days after that.

There were some local union leaders who wanted to influence the head of the local police to arrest me. All of these things happened while I was sitting inside the hospital. I felt a strength inside of me that I could stand up to all of these people who wanted to abuse me, due to no fault of my own. I continued to feel this strength inside me because I knew that I was doing what was good for this man and for his family.

The proper safety measures were there, but unfortunately this fellow had not followed them. He tried to do something in a way that he should not have done, and that is how his hand got stuck in the conveyer belt. But I did not tell any of this to the press or to his family members. I called his family all together and I explained that I would take full responsibility to take care of this man and them. I explained that, “No, we cannot get back his hand, this is most unfortunate. However, we can give the monetary compensation that needs to be given and we can give him a job where he can still work peacefully without his hand.”

I called groups in our company together and explained what had happened and how we handled it. Later, after all of this was over, I reflected back on this strength that I felt and realised it came from my connection with this super power.

Narayana, G. – India

“Chairman Emeritus for Excel Industries, Ltd. in India”

Spiritual Theme

My spiritual theme is: Noble actions, noble feelings, noble thoughts, noble responsibility.

Facing critical challenges

The most critical challenges I have faced here at Excel were in 1987 and in 2001. When I first came here in 1987, the company was losing money. There was no direction. The founders of the company were spiritual, so the culture here already had a spiritual base; they did a lot of service and all was going well.

But, a booster dose was required for the business. So I joined them to advise and they called me “Guru-ji” (“beloved teacher”). That first year was critical. The most important thing was the formation of the group, organisation, and direction (GOD).

Then also, rewards were required. There was no systematic salary structure, so we made the first salary and reward structure. We offered well and received the work, we offered and received. This is my spirit. We did not take and give, or give and take. We offered and received. Position people and give them challenges. Offer and receive. Share the success. When you practice it, it is fantastic.

Four levels of offering and receiving must occur. First, we *offer love* and *receive dedication*. Then we *offer value* and *receive work*. And then, we *offer knowledge* and *receive learning*. Finally, we *offer trust* and *receive responsibility*. For example, as a manager, if you offer love, you receive dedication; in addition, if you offer dedication, you receive love. As a leader, if you offer value, you receive work; in addition, if you offer work, you receive value. These four levels of offering and receiving are interwoven in everything.

We created systems for all of this. We made nurturing and learning systems. Through lots of training, we built trust and empowered people to achieve excellence. Achieving excellence only once is not enough; there must be continuous excellence. When work is done well, you become better. When the work is done excellently, the people become excellent. Even if I do not get a larger salary for doing excellent work, I become excellent.

Pillai, Anand – India

“Head of the Learning and Development Department for HCL Technologies in India”

Spiritual Theme

Connecting with God, the source of “being.”

Responding to a large mistake made by an employee

At HCL, we had a situation in Calcutta where we were submitting a bid that was due the next morning at 10:00. This was a World Bank tender for 4-1/2 million US dollars. We worked all through the night to prepare the documents. We had to prepare three sets of the commercial bid and three sets of the technical bid. Everything was done, and we split up to check that all of the documents were correct. We gave the bid at 10:00, just at the time it was due. That day the bid was opened at 4:00 and it was discovered that our supporting document for the annual maintenance contract was not there. As a result we were disqualified.

The first reaction everyone had was to find the guy who made the mistake and sack him. However, I said, “No, there is no point in doing that. It was a mistake. If he did it intentionally, then yes, there is no reason for him to continue with the company. But if he did it unintentionally, that is a different matter. We all worked through the night, and who knows what happened at 4:30 in the morning?”

So, instead of getting angry and upset and sending nasty e-mails, I said, “Let’s take control of this situation and let’s see what we can do to salvage this situation. Let us focus our creative energy on supporting him, so that he has the initiative to stay on through the night when we have the next bid.”

This is what motivates people to go beyond the call of duty, to do what they are supposed to do. I took the lead and told them, “I am not getting angry, and so I am asking you not to get angry either.” I started to give them direction and ideas and told them to go to the evaluation committee and explain what happened and give the document to them in writing. I also asked them to tell the committee in writing that due to our inadvertent error the supporting document had been left out and request them to consider our secondary bid as our primary bid. The written law did not prevent the evaluation committee from considering this secondary bid.

After we submitted this written request, the committee said they would not honour our second bid. They said that they instead would follow another law which says that if you have not submitted a bid for a component, it will be assumed that your quote is the highest quoted figure from among the other competitors. As a result, our quotation became costlier and we became out priced and were out of the race.

We received this information and again kept our focus on trying to find a solution. After some further research, we found out that the other competitor had also violated one of the specifications. They had quoted their bid in Indian rupees, whereas this was a World Bank tender that needed to be quoted in US dollars. We pointed this out to the committee and as a result they applied the rule that said a bidder must then use the highest exchange rate, plus a deemed export rate. So this premium was added and ultimately this vendor was disqualified. We won the bid and for that year it was the largest contract we received.

The moral of this story is simply this: we focused our creative energy not on the person who made the mistake, but on the process. The question that we asked ourselves was “what” went wrong, not “who” made this mistake. The customer also had a lot of respect for us because they watched us go through this process. We took the person who had made the mistake with us and admitted the mistake, and we all worked together to find a solution. The person who made the mistake and everyone else on the team was left motivated to work for the company, because now they know that if they do make a mistake their neck is not on the line.

The spiritual basis that I came from in this situation is that I knew that this person had not made this mistake intentionally. If I had berated him for being irresponsible, then I would be telling him that he is an irresponsible person. That would have demeaned my faith in him. So instead I focused on the process and showed him respect. I also gave him the liberty to do wrong.

Understanding inner control during an extremely difficult situation

I must give you a personal example of how I responded in an extremely difficult situation by connecting with my spirituality – an example which can also be applied to work situations. A little more than two years ago, my son met with an accident: a fully loaded car drove over his right foot. It caused a lot of damage to his foot. My wife rushed home from work in order to take him to the hospital. I was travelling in Bangalore and received a call that this had happened, so I had to catch a flight back to Delhi.

Everyone who knew what had happened wanted to stone the driver; they wanted to beat him. My wife took control of the situation and said, “Listen, this is our child. Please let us take care of it.” This driver was pleading with my wife not to make a police case because then he would lose his job and would not be employable again.

When I arrived in Delhi I went to the operation theatre and there was my wife, along with the head of HR and vice president of operations from our company who had also come. One person had paid the bill and one person had arranged the doctor. My entire company was involved, even though it happened after office hours and outside of the company business. The vice president of customer support and his wife had also come to be of support to my wife, and his elder daughter went to be with our daughter at home.

When I came, everyone was there and their immediate reaction was one of anger and wanting to know what had happened. For me, I simply asked the doctor two questions: “Will there be any irreparable damage? How long will he take to recover?” That was all I asked. In all of this, I had also called the pastor and he had come. After talking to the doctor, I looked into my wife’s eyes and without words I just said “Thank you” to God. Then I looked at the pastor and said, “Let us thank God for this situation.” My colleagues said, “What is wrong with this guy? Here is his boy who has suffered and by that time had had two operations, and he wants to thank God. For what?” So I went on and prayed, “Lord, thank you for this situation. We want to thank you for preventing a greater damage.”

In all of this, my wife was not crying or throwing a tantrum. She had the presence of mind to keep her focus on and take care of our son, even though it was a very emotionally draining situation. Instead she took control of the situation as a practical person. When I came we were both in complete control. We kept focusing on our son, to support him. Everyone else wanted to focus on what happened, on the driver, on everything else except our son.

Delhi is a very vindictive society, if you do something people want to make sure that you pay for it. Afterwards, my neighbours all got together and said, “Forget the driver, you must go after the owner.” We told them that we would take care of it. The owner of the car came and apologised and offered to pay for the damages. I told him, “Take your money and go back; we don’t need your money. Whatever you do, will not be able to pay back the flesh that my son lost, or the two inches of tendon that my son lost. Recognise that this situation was not in your control or in my control. It was in someone else’s control. However, I want you to recognise that you have a role in maintaining order and discipline. I want you to incur a cost, and the cost I want you to incur is to first go to the community association and apologise to them, that you have been irresponsible in this community and you have let your car driver run over a small boy’s foot. I want you to put that apology in writing and to feel the pain. Then I want you to put boards all over the streets in the community that say ‘Children at Play. Drive Carefully.’ You write these boards yourself and put them up.” Our neighbours had never heard of anything like this being imposed. They were used to using this as an opportunity to receive large amounts of money for damages.

The doctors warned us that this accident could cause our son psychological problems, because at the age of 6 he had gone through such a traumatic experience. We prayed, and we knew that we were maintaining an inner control of ourselves in this situation. He was in the hospital for three months, and one day we opened his diary – a small spiral book that he used to scribble things in. He had written four diagrams. One was a car and a boy with the words “no hurt.” Then there was one with the car close to the boy and he wrote, “hurt, car over leg, blood and flesh comes out.” He wrote this in a positive manner and was able to relate to his own experience without going through the emotions. You should see him today. He is a very jovial boy.

This has become an example in our office. That situation was an uncontrollable situation, but we were in control. By being in control I mean: there is a sphere in which you have control and there is a sphere in which you do not have control. I am in control of my emotions, I am in control of my actions, I am in control of my intentions, and so on. I am not in control of others’ emotions, others’ actions, or others’ intentions. If I try to control that which I cannot control, then I lose control. So if I operate in this zone of control and expand this, it is what I call the sphere of influence. If I stay in this zone that I can control, then I can increase my sphere of influence. In my office, this has become an operating principle for responding to situations.

Ranganathan, V. V. – India

“Formerly a Senior Partner with Ernst & Young India”

“Co-founder of Pinnacle Opportunities, a non-profit and Compassites, a product incubation company in Bangalore, India”

Spiritual Theme

“Seeing God in everyone”

Responding to the press and to an employee, due to a major mistake

We have a world-wide practise within Ernst & Young called Environment Management Services. These are all great professionals who care for the environment and who are doing wonderful jobs in terms of helping the government and industries within the different countries to address pollution and other environmental problems. These are all dedicated and socially responsible individuals who have chosen a profession like this.

In one of the projects, there was a preliminary environmental impact report that was submitted to the local authorities in order to clear a project that involved the construction of a dam. In a study like this, you must study the flora and fauna to determine what would happen to the environment if the dam were built in this area. You must also study the local communities to determine the social consequences of building this dam. This is a study that is done within the confines of the country's environmental protection laws. Based on the report that we submitted, it then had to go on to a national board before permission could be given to start the project.

Unfortunately, an over enthusiastic young man, who had only been in our firm for about six months, was working in this area. He had been trained as an environmental engineer in the USA. He cleared an environmental report in less than a week; this was something impossible to do within our firm's normal review process. What he actually did was to use a draft from another report without going through our review process. Then he sent the report to the state board on our letterhead, and they adopted it.

There were a lot of environmental activists who wanted the building of the dam to be stopped and they suspected that this clearance had been done to please the company who was going to build the dam there. So the press picked it up and said that Ernst & Young was a big fraud in how they cleared this large environmental project report.

This young man had committed a big mistake by not following the review process of the firm. I got a lot of calls from the press because they saw this as a very juicy story. I would tell them that I wanted to know the person with whom I was talking – that I was happy to sit and talk with them in person, to have a person-to-person conversation about the issue, but I would not answer their questions over the phone.

When a journalist came to my office, we had a totally different conversation. I asked him, "If someone brought you a story and you published it in good faith, and then you found out it was completely wrong, what would you do? You would come with an apology the next day. This is exactly what has happened here. The firm has not done anything wrong. It is unfortunate that a very immature person did this who was in his position for less than six months. We are very sorry that this has happened. We have officially withdrawn the report and we have agreed to not handle this assignment for our client."

Another reason we did not want to handle this account further with the client is that at the time we were not completely sure whether the client might have influenced this young man to do what he did in such a short span of time.

Some of the larger newspapers came to me and spoke with me for an hour or so and decided it was not a story to be published. Others who did not come and talk with me did publish the story according to what the environmentalists had told them. So we also had a lot of international press. Even though this was actually a small incident, it was really blown out of proportion.

We got many e-mails from environmental groups in the USA, UK and Europe. I would patiently take each one of them and reply. My spiritual context of “seeing God in everyone” helped me in this situation a lot. It allowed me to come out with the truth, nothing but the truth and to put it into perspective. It helped me to speak from a conscious mind with no ulterior motives whatsoever. It helped me to not get mentally agitated at all. I believe that it is only because of this spiritual basis that I could be so tranquil inside. Because there was so much excitement around this situation, it would have been easy to have become a slave to my sensory perceptions.

Management decided to have this fellow leave the firm. Since we have an exit interview process, I was asked to do this interview with him. I took care of him and treated him with respect. I had him come here to Delhi and stay in a comfortable place. When we sat down for the interview, I used the following Sanskrit verse to drive home the point to this young man who was preparing for another career in his life:

“Ayusha Ghandamaadaaya Ravi-rasthamayam Gatha:Ahanyahani Bodhavyam Kimateth Sukrutam Kritham.”

This means: “The Sun as it sets everyday, takes away with it a part of the ‘ayusha’, meaning life – age of people. Therefore, as you engage in every action during the day, you should weigh every one of them to ensure that it is in fact a ‘Sukrutam Kritham’ – meaning a ‘good deed indeed.’”

I also told him that I wanted to hear from him an honest account of what had happened. I assured him that I was not there to reprimand him or to even take a confession from him. I told him that I just wanted to understand what had happened so the firm could prevent it from happening in the future. I told him this was a lesson for me as well.

He was very forthcoming and honest. He told me that he was under tremendous pressure from one of the officials of the local authority. This man told him that a report had already been done recently in an environment that was similar to the one he was working on, and that there was no need to spend so much time. So he was actually foolishly lured into believing that this report was just a small piece of paper that needed to be submitted, that it was just a formality. He didn’t understand the ramifications of this report going out of an office like ours. So he followed what this man said and gave it to that man.

After he told me all of this, I told him there was no point in crying over spilled milk. Here was a young man who committed a grave mistake. He paid for it, and now there was nothing more that he could do. So I told him that he was atoned of the sin that he had committed – he was already receiving the consequences for what he had done. But I also wanted to be sure that he had learned the lesson he needed to learn. I asked him to focus on that lesson, since he had the potential of a very good career ahead of him. His wife was pregnant at that time also.

We cannot blame the entire firm for what he did. There are actually only a few individuals who would have played into what he did. I believe it was a conspiracy of unintentional accidents. I do not believe it was done with the intent to collapse a large organisation and hurt the employees and shareholders.

Welling, S. K. – India

“Former Executive Director of HMT International, Ltd. (Hindustan Machine Tools) in India”

Spiritual Theme

Purity of character through faith, bhakti (devotion), trust and love

Maintaining confidence in difficult times

As of today in mid-2002, things are very bad in this company. The restructuring plan of 1998 was based on revenue projections for the next five years. These projections were not too aggressive, as they were based on what the company had already achieved in the past. But even though everything in the turnaround plan was implemented, the revenue projections were only achieved about 50%-60% due to two things: (1) the market itself took a downturn; and (2) the inability of the internal organisation to rise up and restructure the physical operations (which included product-market strategies, systems and information technology, and other cost-related areas of the company).

As a result, the company has again slipped into cash losses. People from various parts of the company have come to me and asked, "Sir, our families, our children – what is going to happen? What is the future for us? We have been seeing darkness all around."

I've replied to them, "Do not get disheartened. This company has immense potential to grow. This company can rise to the past glory within a period of 12-14 months if we get the act done together. The whole thing will be all right. Look, with all the problems that we have in this company, in a recent market survey, the brand equity of this company is #1 in the whole country. While our competitors are far below, we are #1. With that brand equity, all that we need to do is set the priorities correctly, have the right objectives, set goals for the short term and long term, and see that we achieve things properly in a time frame. It is not difficult."

And during this situation, there is going to be a change of guard at the top level. People have asked, "Sir, if you become the Chairman, will you turn around this company in 12-14 months?" And I said, "If I become Chairman, I will bring back this company on the rails and every thing will be all right. I feel confident I can lead the changes that didn't happen earlier. When I can do it with the International business, why not do it for the whole company?"

How do I have the confidence that this can happen if I were to take on such a task as running the entire company? Yes, I have professional confidence because I am a hardworking person, I am a committed person, I am a professionally qualified person. But most importantly, that deep meditation and deep concentration gets into my system when I shift positions in the company. It just takes me a month or so to get myself adjusted to a new change. I get into a lot of details initially so I can understand things. Happily I go and sit where I am placed whether I know or I do not know the field. I do my work like a yagnam (worship). I keep myself deeply involved in everything I do.

(Interviewers' note: Another person was named Chairman nine months after this interview.)

CHARACTER – ETHICS (7 STORIES)

Govindan, Rajan – USA

“Former Senior Managing Director with Bankers Trust in the USA”

“Chief Operating Officer of Bear Stearns Asset Management in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

To me this would be “happiness and contentment” and “to act with right conduct.”

Being honest and ethical

I think that in all of my work, I have had to make ethical choices all the time. In the banking business, the rule is that if the bank made a mistake, then the bank had to pay for it. However, sometimes when an error was made, it was in the bank’s favour. For example, maybe you were supposed to sell 500 shares of stock and you sold 5,000 shares instead. If the market was moving down, then the sell of 5,000 shares could mean that the customer made money. Most of the time the customer wasn’t even aware that something like this had happened. So how we handled something like this was always an ethical dilemma.

My feeling, however, is that once you go down the path to try to cover up your mistake, even if it was in the customers’ favour, you cannot gain the true respect of your customer. You may be able to rationalise all of this in your own mind, but in reality you cannot ever expect to have the customer’s respect and trust. So to me, you must set clear rules and they must be followed. The moment you are wishy-washy you set a trend.

I have also always told the people who worked for me to be honest when they filled out their expense report. I told them, “Don’t try to add a \$5.00 tip just because you can get away with it.” To me even these little things will always haunt you. I always taught the people to be clean in everything they did. This way you don’t have to look over your shoulder and worry about what might happen to you.

In the last one and a half years I worked for Bankers Trust, I was working with someone where we made presentations to the board on projections we felt we could meet. But then when we got into the actual work, he instead wanted to manipulate the financial numbers in order to show that we achieved the projected results, rather than working toward actually obtaining the results themselves. He would continually approve projects, but then put pressure on us to eliminate costs. One way he wanted to deal with this was to capitalise the costs, so they wouldn’t show up as current expenses. I felt this was not correct and so I had to end the relationship.

Ploix, Hélène – France

“Chairman and Managing Director of Pechel Industries and Pechel Industries Partenaires in Paris, France”

Spiritual Theme

I think I can express this as: “To contribute to society”. And to try to be attentive to others and have a better understanding of them.

The capital market is not always correct

In 1992 when I was at Caisse des Dépôts, one of the people who was working with me had the good idea to start some research on ethics and finance. Although I was very, very, very busy I wanted to keep some time for that programme. I started thinking more about ethics and finance; what did ethics mean? What did finance mean? Was ethics and finance an oxymoron or was it possible to meaningfully speak of ethics and finance? I started thinking that ethics was balance, not going beyond limits. There were many reasons why finance could go out of balance – just think of what computers allow people to do; in some cases they don't think any more, computers tell them what to do and they don't always realise what they are doing. That became clearer and clearer to me, and I started discussing it with research people in order to clarify my thoughts. We had no code of conduct at Caisse des Dépôts, so I created one. This was at the very beginning when different markets were trying to organise themselves in that respect and it was very difficult to have people share it. It was difficult to convince them that they had to think about these issues, but we had some seminars to help.

At a certain point in 1995, someone in my team organised a seminar with, among the speakers, two famous economists. One of them was Merton Miller, who had received the Nobel Prize in Economics in 1990. The other was Myron Scholes, who two years later, in 1997, received the Nobel Prize in Economics and who at the time of the conference was working on the Board of the firm LTC Management that specialised in hedge funds. Both of them together with Robert C. Merton, and Fischer Black had contributed to the development of options, derivative products, structured products and consequently hedged funds.

I made what I considered at that time to be my “usual speech” about ethics and finance, balance, about stepping back and thinking about what the financiers were doing, about the risks and what ethics was all about. In that speech I spoke about systemic risks, because in economics you can really create big problems, big disruptions, because the money is all over the world and one country's actions can have big repercussions on other countries, hence the necessity for financiers to behave ethically. Then one of these Nobel Laureates (now I do not remember which one) stood up after my little speech and said, “You don't understand anything – the capital markets always correct imbalances!” The speeches were put together in a book “Risques et enjeux des marchés dérivés” which, in a footnote, mentions the debate which followed my speech: “diverging viewpoints were expressed on the role of regulation and on protection of the collectivity, and on the proportion of risk that it would bear in the last resort”.

Some years later LTC Management became unable to cover all the risks they had taken.³ They had to be rescued; otherwise there would have been a systemic crisis that would have threatened the whole world's financial systems. At the same time several investment banks made big losses.

Promoting ethics and corporate governance: a matter of balance

³ The hedge fund Long Term Capital Management, formed in 1994 and staffed with some of the greatest financial and mathematical minds in the world (including two Nobel Prize winners in economics), helped write one of the most unique chapters in Wall Street history. After huge initial successes, only four years after its start, it brought the world's financial markets to the brink of chaos when it ‘collapsed’ and couldn't cover its huge, leveraged positions; LTC had to be bailed out by major financial institutions to avoid the catastrophic effects of its failure on the international financial systems. The culture of this company was known for the arrogance of its leaders, as well as for its almost complete lack of transparency.

In the late 90s, I was asked to give a class on Business Ethics to 2nd year students at a university located east of Paris. Even though I was very busy, I accepted, because I thought it was very important to give them this mindset with which to work. It was to be a contribution to them. I did this for two terms, but then I stopped. I was disappointed because the students, even if they did their best, were unable to concentrate on the thoughts I presented. They had great difficulties in listening. I was not patient enough. Nevertheless I think it was useful to them and hope they got something out of it. I gave them as many small cases as possible in order for them to understand in practice what I meant. I tried to teach my students that you have legal and ethical frameworks to work in. What is most difficult is when you face something that is legal but unethical – or ethical but illegal.

Earlier, when I tried to find support for more research on ethics and finance, I became interested in corporate governance. I gave classes on corporate governance to managers, because I thought it was important for them to understand what it meant for a company and for themselves as managers. Good corporate governance really helps leaders to manage their companies because of increased transparency. When I was asked to write a book about it, I did so, because I felt it could be a good contribution and it would force me to study in depth all the aspects of this issue. I wanted more managers to see the benefits they, and the stakeholders, could get from improved governance.

A few years ago, together with the Ethics committee of MEDEF, I developed and wrote about principles for the remuneration of top managers, because we felt that, in some cases, the salaries and bonuses and the total remuneration packages were going beyond reasonable bounds and were not socially acceptable in a country like France, but nobody listened to that. The media mentioned that the Chief Financial Officer of Enron had a house with 80 rooms. What is the use of a house of 80 rooms?

Today because of lack of time I seldom accept invitations to give lectures at conferences. Nevertheless, I have accepted to give one in September on “How to Lead an Audit Committee”, because I feel a responsibility for doing so since I am the chairman of two audit committees. I think that through the good leadership of audit committees we can really improve the attitude of the people vis-à-vis the management of the company, vis-à-vis money, vis-à-vis transparency.

I am not alone in my thinking and convictions. There are other people in business like me in France. I know quite a few chairmen and CEOs who think about the same as I do.

Raman, Ananth – USA

“Chairman of Graphtex, Inc. a manufacturing company in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

“Awareness” and “Realising Divinity”

Ethical values are spiritual values

In a business sense, I like to talk about spirituality as ethical values. Initially the ethical guidelines that my corporation set up guided me in the right direction. When I was in one of the West African countries, the country was full of corruption, and you couldn't do anything without bribing someone. Sometimes I tried to rationalise this, because we were losing contracts and losing

business. But the policy in my corporation was that you could not give bribes. At first, I wondered how I was going to get along without giving bribes. Ultimately, I chose to stick with the company policy – I chose to stay with the ethical values that the company ascribed to. Initially, I followed these ethical values because this was what I was taught. When I began thinking more spiritually, it gave me the reasons for why to behave this way.

Values such as justice, truth, respect for others, equanimity, ability to take decisions, honesty and integrity are the core values that became very strong for me when I went into business. These are more on the ethical side, rather than on the spiritual side. Somewhere along the line however, these two kinds of values began to link.

Now I think of ethical values as nothing but a reflection of my spiritual values. For instance, in business you must respect yourself, your feelings, your customers, your employees. But then when you go deeper into spirituality, your self-respect begins to include respecting the inner Self. Then you try to understand: “What is meant by Self?” Self means ‘I’, it means awareness.

From this perspective then, self-respect takes on a new kind of meaning. When we talk about self-respect in an ethical sense, we are talking about being respectful to your colleagues, shareholders and customers because it is a good business practice. But when you go a little deeper and look at it from a spiritual point of view, you realise that it is really about respecting the inner Self. You need to think about this, but when you do think about it you realise there is a linkage between the two. Then I think it brings about a whole new dimension. While ethics originally became something to maintain order in society, order in business, now it also gives you a level of equality with your self and everything else. This is how I like to link spirituality with ethics and values in business.

Sinclair, James E. – USA

“Chairman and CEO of Tan Range Exploration, Ltd. in the USA and Tanzania”

Spiritual Theme

My theme for spirituality would be “Live it.”

Being a warrior in a battle of ethics

When I was the Chairman of the Board for Sutton Resources in the late 80’s/early 90’s, their stock price grew from US19 cents to US\$56 and was then bought by a major corporation. How did we do this? We raised our corporate profile by our personal behaviour. I went to Tanzania, Africa and lived with the people and we acted as responsible citizens, undertaking the needs of an area of a developing country that was within the scope of our economic impact and environment. We saw to the needs of the people and their health; we built a hospital. My influence with this company was from 1989-1995. The last book that I wrote dealt with this subject – how you do business in a developing world.

But then after this level of success, the management began to act in extremely unethical, bad ways. They were doing some very bad things like stealing money from the stockholders for themselves and hurting people. I knew they had never done these types of acts before and therefore they shouldn’t do them now. I first went to my management and said, “Can I convince you not to act in this way?” No. “Can I plead with you not to act in this way?” No. “Can I pay you

not to act in this way?" No. So I fired the management. The problem with this was, the management was also on the board, so they turned around and fired me. Then I called a special meeting of the shareholders to determine what to do with all of this, and that is called a proxy.

In all of this, I became a warrior and fought against them. I asked them to cease and desist and change their policies and asked them to liquidate their major asset, which was a piece of land that they were going to build a mine on to extract gold. When they refused I executed the public proxy against them, which cost me personally US\$5 million. Even though this was a modest company, the legal battle reached the level as if it were between two of the largest corporations in America. I went so far as to hire the people who did the Nabisco take-over proxy to represent me.

The management immediately began to throw dirt at me, but through all of it, I never deviated from the high road. The way I handled this publicly was to say that they weren't capable of building a mine and therefore the asset should be sold. I knew if you put US\$300 million in these guys' hands, it would have been a disaster. So that's why I executed a proxy to force the sale of the company.

I knew these fellows had shown their true colours and were not ethical people. Even though I made them very rich initially, I threw the whole company into a major turmoil with this proxy. In all of this I became a warrior. What I did every morning was to say to myself, "Was Napoleon angry because he had a battle. No, he was happy. So let's go today and fight successfully." I was a warrior that never left the high road. I never attacked them as individuals for their ethics, even though that was the whole fight.

I was drinking 16 double espressos every day just to stay awake with all of the tension and fatigue, and eventually I went blind in one eye. At this point I said, "Okay, if you want both eyes, take them. I'm still going to continue my battle." I am now blind in one eye as a result, and could have died if I had remained there because the tension was so great. They attempted to ruin my reputation. They took my money on three different occasions using legal manoeuvres, but even after all of that I ended up beating them.

What won in the end was nature. Nature was on my side. This property was so valuable that a company came in and bought it. But I had to fight for over a year and a half. I had to take many punches: they sued my wife, they had detectives trailing my children, they said I was part of the mafia. It's hard to believe what they did to try to stop me.

I never stopped my fight against them and they couldn't understand why. I had 21 lawyers and took this fight of ethics to the level of the Fortune 500, as if it were between two of the largest corporations in America. Do you know what hell is like? Hell is having 21 lawyers working for you. I put every cent I had in the world into it. No one paid me anything to do this. I did this because following God through my spiritual teacher, and my sense of ethics had made me a warrior.

Initially I lost the proxy because they paid one of the stockholders to get his votes, but even then I still got 47.3% of the total vote. But that didn't stop me. After that they had so many lawsuits that they couldn't get financing to build the mine; I wouldn't let them off the hook. So here they won, but they couldn't get financing. Nothing could make me stop. Why? Because I knew I was to be a warrior and I was to fight.

During all of this I felt like I was dying. I hurt from the bottom of my feet to the top of my head and every day I felt like I was going to my execution. At one point one of the executives came up to me and said, "Look, it's nothing personal; it's only business." And I said, "You better get out of my physical presence so I can control myself."

What could I do? I couldn't change what was happening; this was what was on the plate. Was I going to run? If I had run they would have killed me. So I fought to the end. Even during this extreme tension, I took the time to be quiet. I wouldn't miss that time for anything in the world. When I couldn't sleep at night, I went to my meditation room. Why waste your life if you can't sleep? Even if you can't meditate, you can pray. Prayer for me is not "God help me." Prayer for me is "give me courage, give me strength."

Webb, Janiece – USA

"Former Senior Vice President with Motorola Corporation in the USA"

Spiritual Theme

I think my spiritual theme would be "God in everyone."

Building trust through integrity

I have had numerous times when people outside of the company asked me to cheat in the name of business. I have run into this all over the world. Within myself I knew I didn't have to cheat; I knew that I didn't have to pay bribes or go behind the law. Somehow, I have always known that. In my mind, if I am not attracted to money and material things, then I do not radiate that essence to people.

I have had people that worked for me in the past come and tell me that I have the highest ethics of anyone they have worked for. This is always a surprise to me when people say these things because to me this way of operating in business is so natural.

I have stood firm many times to not paying bribes and as a result people realise that they can trust me. A wealthy man in an Asian country once attempted to get me to hire a person so that he could buy some property for his personal use through Motorola. I stood firm that I would not do that. He reminded me that he was one of our largest customers in that country and I told him I didn't care. To this day my contacts in that country tell me that they want to deal with me because they know they can trust me.

In another Asian country we had worked very hard to put together a huge partnership and contract. At the very end of the deal, the partner told us we would have to make a payoff in order for them to sign the contract. They thought they had our soul and that we wouldn't back out. My higher-ups had told me earlier not to go and do this deal, but I believed in my heart and soul that I could pull it off without a compromise. I refused to make the payoff, so I came back with my hat in my hand and admitted that I had made a mistake. Yes, it was very embarrassing and I admit that those above me were very right in many ways. There were also ways in which they were not right and we all learned a lot together from this experience.

Standing firm

I have always stood firm that we did not have to cheat in order to get business. I have told people over and over that we never, ever have to be unethical and we will still be around. Often times that meant I had to stand against the crowd, but I didn't care, I stayed firm in my convictions.

I had a situation where I had negotiated a very, very large contract with the U.S. Navy. When it was time for me to go pick up the contract I was traveling, so I had to stay in a hotel. The evening before signing the contract, the admiral called my room and told me that he was coming up to my room. I asked whom he was calling and told him that the person he was calling was not there. He clearly knew that I was the one speaking on the phone and I knew that he was aware of that fact. Because I knew that I would not allow him to come up to my room, this was how I allowed him to save face. He said, "If you want that contract tomorrow, I am coming up to your room." I continued to tell him that the person he was calling was not there.

The next day I saw him in the elevator and he said, "I thought you had left town." I again told him I was unaware of who he was talking about. Once again, he said directly to me, "If you want this contract, I am coming to your room." I told him, "No you are not." He then said, "I don't know how you are going to explain this to your corporation when you come home empty handed." I clearly said, "They will support me." He said, "I bet they don't." I replied with, "I bet they will and if they don't that's okay too."

I stood firm and said, "I am not going to be put in that position. And if you are going to try to put me in that position, I am willing to walk away." He signed the contract and I flew home with it that day.

CHARACTER – INTEGRITY AND CONSCIENCE (6 STORIES)

Covey, Stephen R. – USA

“Vice Chairman of FranklinCovey, a global professional services firm based in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

One of my mottoes serves as a powerful spiritual theme for me: “Live life in crescendo.” In other words, the most important work you’ll ever do is still ahead of you.

Another such spiritual theme for me would be: “Educate and obey your conscience.” Educating as I speak of it here involves getting into the sacred literature of all the great traditions that have had enduring value and then consciously living true to what you have learned. The more you live true to it, the stronger your conscience becomes. A constant effort is required to stay on track with such stewardship.

Peace of conscience

Peace of conscience is much greater than peace of mind. Peace of mind is wonderful, too, but that’s more a function of events, like you’ve paid your bills, you made the plane on time, and so forth. Conscience means that you are truly true to that which you have internalised as being right and that gives you tremendous courage. Because then you can be strong with a loving spirit. You don’t have the ability to be courageous without deep respect and compassion for others. Neither do you experience the opposite – feeling compassionate and kind, and then capitulate on being courageous. Following your conscience is a long term approach to win-win; even though all your decisions may not be popular, you don’t ever violate the relationship of win-win towards people.

I think peace of conscience also recognises such a thing as evil. You would go for “no deal” with evil; you would have no real partnership with it. On the other hand, I find that most people see evil in others because they have not truly listened to them. I recently had the opportunity to have a good visit with Nelson Mandela. He was talking about how he saw the goodness in his guards when he was in the Robben Island Prison for six years. He had glimpses of this goodness, and he kept that awareness with him all the time he was in prison. It added to his moral authority which enabled him eventually to leverage towards formal authority as the first president of the new South Africa.

Delbecq, André, D.B.A. – USA

“Former Dean of the Santa Clara University School of Business in the USA”

“Professor and Director of the Institute for Spirituality and Organizational Leadership at the Santa Clara University School of Business in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

Wonder is the theme that naturally comes to me. I have always loved innovation because I am continuously thrilled to see what was once only imagined (and partially imagined at that) emerge as an institutionalised reality. Innovation scholarship plumbs the mystery of creativity from

concept to actualisation within large-scale systems. I have always had and continue to retain a great excitement associated with building collaboration between bright minds seeking to understand a complex problem and engaged in the discovery of a creative solution.

But now my sense of wonder is even enlarged. My eyes are opened to how the unimaginable emerges in all of creation; e.g. in nature in a blossoming flower, in the movements of the tides and the mysteries of the sea. I am increasingly appreciative of the insights from each of my colleagues when they join together for innovation. So the world is filled with wonder, echoing the limitlessness of the transcendent.

I have always had a good sense of adventure: I love boating, motorcycling, and travel and I am willing to take risks. But in the past these activities have been something that I felt I had to work hard at, something I mistakenly thought depended primarily on me. Now I see such efforts as tapping into a mysterious abundance. I don't do much of anything actually; I realise how little I do. This is not to diminish the importance of what each person does, but rather to increasingly see how God (the transcendent mystery that bears a thousand names), is at work in people and in nature. This allows for increased inner joy even in the midst of the greatest difficulties.

Of course I still have days of great unknowing; I still sometimes experience desolation and anguish. Yet even these experiences don't disturb a deep core sense of peace and wonder as my spiritual journey unfolds. It's as if the fire just gets brighter and brighter as my life unfolds.

Recognising the integrity of leaders

In a seminar I taught at the Santa Clara University, in the Leavey School of Business, entitled "The Management of High Technology" for MBA students, I used to invite prominent business leaders from Silicon Valley's technology complex to come and talk about their most difficult problems. The difficulty might be a lawsuit, a product launch problem, the complexities of integration of businesses following a merger or acquisition, or ramping up for large-scale manufacturing. The particular challenges varied greatly. The purpose was to share the generic nature of strategic struggles where both means and ends are unclear as the leader embraces the problem.

Throughout the years, MBA students offered two major observations or leanings from their experience. The first lesson was how difficult such challenges were in a fast moving, contemporary, and complex organisation. No matter how tough they thought leading an organisation through such difficulties might be, their prior imaginings didn't begin to capture the reality of the complexity these leaders were facing. These problems involved long lines of causation, required linking loosely coupled stakeholders in difficult alliances, and involved sustaining others through long periods of effort.

The second lesson was the enormous moral integrity of these men and women leading these corporations. The students came to see that what allowed these leaders to succeed was the fact that they were operating from a deep inner compass. These were leaders who were not opportunistic or exploitive. The focus of these leaders was serving society well through all the difficulties of evolving an efficient and effective organisation to provide their product or service in fast moving, competitive settings.

Still, these working professional MBAs would always spend more time in their reports discussing their impression of the courage, integrity and ethics of the leader than they would spend on the analysis of the exemplified business strategy. Note that these leaders were not invited to talk about ethics, or integrity. The focus was on business strategy. However their ethical and moral

courage just flowed transparently through their discussion of whatever business problems they described.

In this seminar, on one occasion we had a leader make a presentation who was not particularly ethical. Rather, he was quite brutal and opportunistic. After he departed I asked the students for their impression of this particular presentation. It was summarised best by the statement of one young woman who said, “The Board of Directors will let him finish this particular task and then they will see that he is history.” She was right. He was removed as CEO shortly after speaking to our seminar.

The point is simply this: the majority of successful organisational leaders I have encountered in Silicon Valley are individuals of high moral and ethical functioning. The broken and twisted are usually found out and removed before rising to top leadership posts. Contrary to the impression one might form from media coverage of business scandals, we found the majority of leaders to be individuals of great inner depth and goodness. It was their personal integration that allowed them to rise to positions of leadership.

Later a few of these same executives who had spoken in the “Management of High Technology” seminar joined the first “Spirituality of Organisational Leadership” seminar. I remember one of the MBAs who was also a participant saying: “I am glad that I listened to these leaders first speak as very skilled business strategists. I would have been very intimidated going ‘back stage’ with them to explore the intimacy of our spiritual lives as the first step. I also now understand the spiritual depth required of senior leaders who perform well.”

Robert J. House at the Wharton Business School, University of Pennsylvania, reports that integrity is one of the defining variables that distinguish a leader. This variable holds true across nationalities and different cultures whether Chinese, Scandinavian, Latin, Anglo-Saxon, and so on. My MBA students understand the need for integrity very quickly. They can be with a leader speaking about a strategic challenge for just a few minutes and they quickly discern whether they are dealing with an integrated person (a person of high integrity) or by contrast with a narcissistic manipulator.

Still the question of how one arrives at such self-integration – the life development story and the spiritual journey of becoming the integrated leader – remains for many MBAs a mystery. So this provides one of the important motivations for our dialog in the spirituality seminar. We look at biography to discover the life development stories of great leaders.

I believe we need “lives of saints” to inspire us. Thus we need to study the lives of noble and good business leaders to inspire the next generation of business leaders. One of the gifts I can offer is an intimate acquaintance with many highly integrated business leaders in Silicon Valley. So relative to any topic, I am able to provide exemplification regarding lessons that I have learned through friendship with these leaders over the years. The lives of these leaders affirm that the “vocation” (calling) to business leadership can be a noble calling and a spiritual path.

Raghavan, N. S. – India

“Founding Director and former Joint Managing Director of Infosys in India”

Spiritual Theme

“Love and trust” automatically came to my mind as my theme.

Supporting the integrity of paying taxes

We used to have perpetual complaints from our employees about the salary structure and how much they had to pay in taxes. They would compare with their friends in other companies and tell me that other companies were giving their employees a lot of cash payments, which allowed them to avoid paying taxes. However I knew that this was not legal and told them that they must pay the taxes that they are supposed to pay.

To make the employees appreciate our stand, I requested a senior income tax official to come and give a presentation to our people. One of the employees told the official that he knew of a company that was giving cash payments so that the employees could pay less tax. The IT official was quick to say that if he could get the details, he will check it out and if necessary take immediate action on the company. He assured us that we at Infosys were doing the right thing. He also told them that they were earning top wages, and therefore they should rightfully pay their taxes as their duty.

The employees continued to come to me and complain that if they paid so much in taxes it was just going to support a corrupt government. I continued to tell them that they must pay their proper taxes and if they had complaints about the governance issues or how the taxpayers’ money is being used, they must go to those forums and see if they can help to correct that situation. I told them that they must not shy away from upholding their responsibility to pay their taxes. I told them not to mix up the two. I believe in integrity and openness, and this is how I handled this situation.

Raman, Ananth – USA

“Chairman of Graphtex, Inc. a manufacturing company in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

“Awareness” and “Realising Divinity”

Repaying debts with integrity

There was an instance where I was not the decision maker; my boss was the one who had to make a very important decision. However, I was able to see the basis of this decision from a spiritual perspective only after it had happened. We had borrowed a large sum of money from a banker who wanted to pull out of their operations in the USA, and we had a large multi-million dollar loan due to them.

I went to the lender and told them that since they were the ones who were leaving, we would like to pay them less than the total amount. I proposed a certain reduction in what we owed them, and we had an extensive discussion about this. With hesitation, they agreed to a reduction, but it was a smaller reduction than what I had proposed. Since we couldn’t finalise the actual amount of the reduction, they had the head person from their London organisation come to the USA to meet with our principle shareholder from Switzerland; and we decided to let those two people work it out.

I had briefed our principle shareholder, who was actually my immediate boss, on what had taken place up to that point. I suggested that he offer an amount for the reduction that was a little more than they had agreed to. I went into the discussions feeling very proud that I had negotiated this loan reduction, and had gained this extra income for the company.

As we moved toward this critical point during the talks, my boss suddenly said, “I have not come here to ask for this reduction, I will not do it.” We had negotiated so hard for this reduction, and now this man was saying that he would not ask for this! He told them that we would in due time pay back the entire amount of the loan.

I was totally shocked. Here we had a huge gift of money available, and my boss was giving it away. Afterwards I asked him why he had done this, and he said, “As a businessman we have a responsibility. We are responsible not only to our shareholders, but also to our bankers. We have borrowed this money from them; we must repay it to them. This company is not bankrupt – we are able to pay this money to them. So there is absolutely no reason why we should take advantage of this situation just because they want to pull their operations out of the USA. This is no way to do business.”

I was really struck by all of this. He was not a religious person or anything like that. He was just a gentleman with a deep sense of values. He considered this loan not as something that we simply wrote down and now we can debate about whether to pay or not pay. Rather, he took it as an obligation to society.

I felt this was a deep spiritual lesson for me. The lesson was that all *obligations must be honoured*. They must be paid back in the right way, not by arguing like this. I saw that all obligations, whether they are in cash, such as this, or in some other form, must be repaid in some way or another. This is my duty and I must honour that duty. I saw that this was the only way to do business in this world.

If I had not looked at this from a spiritual perspective, I would have thought, “I did all of this hard work for this man, and he is not even appreciating it.” My financial controller was with me, and he is still not convinced today that what my boss did was right. He still calls it a stupid decision, and I continue to tell him why it was not a stupid decision.

Vrethammar, Magnus – Sweden

“Former President for Europe of Pergo Flooring in the UK”

“President of an executive coaching and business development firm Creability AB in Sweden”

Spiritual Theme

Spirituality is an opening process. And then the question is, “What are you opening up to?” I would say love, as long as I am very careful in how I define love. Love can be, on an energy level, a very encompassing and still impersonal energy. So, if one considers this type of love, I would say that my theme is “opening up to love.”

Following conscience

I do feel that I have a balance between my professional life and my private life. Do I face questions or situations in my professional life that challenge my ethical and moral stance? Yes,

definitely I do. I do face situations where information needs to be communicated to the government or to auditors that could be detrimental to the company, and I have to determine how I can perform in these circumstances and maintain my moral, ethical stance. I feel that the only way I can do this is to stay very firm on my own personal borderlines. This also happens during power struggles on boards.

One example of this was when I was supposed to sign an important document dealing with a new investment in the Logistics Centre that was financed by the local community together with a number of large companies. I was sitting together with both the press and the head of the local community, while I had the union waiting for me in the next room. After signing the document, I had to make my exit and discuss firing a number of employees with the union. Nobody at the table would have signed if they knew what the next action was going to be. Did I feel that I was doing something morally right? Yes, because it was legal and in the best interest of the company, it was important for its survival - which was important as well for the community.

Webb, Janiece – USA

“Former Senior Vice President with Motorola Corporation in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

I think my spiritual theme would be “God in everyone.”

Building trust through integrity

I have had numerous times when people outside of the company asked me to cheat in the name of business. I have run into this all over the world. Within myself I knew I didn't have to cheat; I knew that I didn't have to pay bribes or go behind the law. Somehow, I have always known that. In my mind, if I am not attracted to money and material things, then I do not radiate that essence to people.

I have had people that worked for me in the past come and tell me that I have the highest ethics of anyone they have worked for. This is always a surprise to me when people say these things because to me this way of operating in business is so natural.

I have stood firm many times to not paying bribes and as a result people realise that they can trust me. A wealthy man in an Asian country once attempted to get me to hire a person so that he could buy some property for his personal use through Motorola. I stood firm that I would not do that. He reminded me that he was one of our largest customers in that country and I told him I didn't care. To this day my contacts in that country tell me that they want to deal with me because they know they can trust me.

In another Asian country we had worked very hard to put together a huge partnership and contract. At the very end of the deal, the partner told us we would have to make a payoff in order for them to sign the contract. They thought they had our soul and that we wouldn't back out. My higher-ups had told me earlier not to go and do this deal, but I believed in my heart and soul that I could pull it off without a compromise. I refused to make the payoff, so I came back with my hat in my hand and admitted that I had made a mistake. Yes, it was very embarrassing and I admit that those above me were very right in many ways. There were also ways in which they were not right and we all learned a lot together from this experience.

CHARACTER – MIRACLES (3 STORIES)

Behner, John R. – El Salvador

“Former Country Manager for Nabisco in El Salvador”

Spiritual Theme

“Realising God by serving others.”

Only saying “serving everyone” does not include that, which is the most important to me, which is to realise my oneness with God.

Experiencing God’s little miracles

In 1989, I went to India for three weeks while my wife stayed home with the kids. I was travelling with KLM at the time, and when I tried to reconfirm my return flight, they said, “We don’t have your name; we’ll have to put you on a waiting list.” That day my spiritual teacher asked me when I was going back. I told him that I had just checked with the airline, and I didn’t have a reservation. “I know”, he said. “I will tell you when to go.” I thought this meant another weeks’ vacation, great! So I sent a message to the office, telling them that I would be delayed. One week passed, two weeks passed. Then I followed my spiritual teacher as he travelled to different beautiful places in South India, but I couldn’t explain to the people in the office back home what was happening. I could only say that as far as I knew, I was coming back, but I didn’t know when. One day I got a courier message from New York, saying, “Don’t come back. You don’t have a job any more.”

This was around the 1st of June, and I had come to India in February. I didn’t hardly have any more money left, my visa had expired, I had a 45 day ticket which was long gone, and I didn’t have any money with me to buy another ticket. This was long before the days of the credit cards. One day I got a sign from Sathya Sai Baba that I could leave on the 5th of June. The airline said they didn’t have any seats out of the country, but they put me on a waiting list in Delhi. I succeeded in getting to Delhi where at least 20 people were waiting, hoping to get on the overbooked flight. I had my expired ticket, which was also non-endorse-able. Well, a lady came, picked up all the tickets, and put all of us on an Air India flight to Amsterdam where we could get our ongoing flights. In Amsterdam I called my boss in New York, saying that I would come to my office in El Salvador on Monday to pick up my check.

Back home at the company, everybody was happy to see me. Nobody was sitting at my desk, and I called my boss again. After a silence at the end of the line, he said, “Well, we’ve been analysing your situation. We’ve decided to give you a 25 percent wage increase.” 25 percent wage increase? I almost fell off my chair. I had never got more than about a 5 percent increase in my whole life. He continued saying, “We have also decided to consider the time you just spent in India as a paid vacation, and we’ll give you a check for that. And we have been analysing the work you did last year and have decided to give you a bonus for last years’ results.” He gave me so much money... How can you get something like that for insubordination, unless it’s God’s work?

In another example, we would sell products, which nobody else had in the countries around us. At one time, God really helped me. Because of the exchange rate with Europe, milk powder became very cheap, and I ordered about 20 containers of milk powder. I didn’t borrow the money, I had

enough money to buy it, but I didn't know where to put the milk powder, because I didn't have that kind of warehouse space. I really could have gotten in trouble, because I couldn't have sold that much, even if I had 'given it away'.

Then I got a call from a guy working for the USA Procurement Agency, which was supplying the Contras; the Contras, supported by the USA government, were in Honduras, doing battle in Nicaragua. "We need ten containers of milk powder immediately." I said: "Yes, Sir! I have got it! As a matter of fact I can trans-border it without even getting it through the customs here, because we'll just re-dispatch it. In that way we won't have to pay any taxes in El Salvador, and we'll get it into Honduras immediately. All you have to do is send me a certified check and it's yours." We made a bundle. It just went like that. It was all so perfect. God must have done it.

Cruz, Alvaro – Colombia

"Former Minister of the Government of Colombia and Governor of Cundinamarca, Colombia"
"CEO of an engineering/building company in Colombia, I.C.M. Ingenieros Ltda."

Spiritual Theme

Love and respect others.

Intuition and safety

In my country terrorists want to destabilise the order, and I represented law and order. On one of several occasions of attempts on my life, terrorists had mined my armoured car. Ten minutes before I was supposed to use it, my intuition told me to move to another vehicle. Shortly after, the first vehicle blew up, and I was saved.

Another time I was going to visit one of the most impoverished districts in my state on a Sunday. The Friday before, a peasant came to my Governor-office. For some reason this peasant had been able to bypass the security people, and he insisted on talking to me. He begged me not to go to the section of his town as planned on the following Sunday, because he knew that an attempt to kill me was being prepared. I cancelled my visit and ordered a wide investigation in that area. A ground rocket was found, which would have shot down my helicopter, and other platforms had been prepared for attacks on me during the main meeting, in case they missed the helicopter.

Already in 1983 I listened to my intuition. At that time the company that I was working in as a consultant, was building a major hydroelectric dam. One evening I was talking to the engineering chief of the night shift; this man was an old college friend. I had asked him to come with me for ten minutes. Because of this, he arrived ten minutes late for work. Just as he was getting there, the engineer heard and saw an explosion at the entrance of a tunnel. More than 130 people were trapped and died. This friend felt that my calling him had saved his life.

Kanu, Victor-Krishna – Zambia

"Former High Commissioner (Ambassador) for Sierra Leone to the UK, Norway and Sweden"
"Director of The African Institute of Sathya Sai Education in Zambia"

Spiritual Theme

Divine love is the central theme. Oneness is a parallel. Because if you say you love all, you do that because all are one.

Creating a “miracle school”

Looking back some years to the time when we were building the Sathya Sai School in Ndola, Zambia, practically with our bare hands, I met difficulties of all kinds, financially and otherwise. My spirituality lifted me and enabled me to persist – and this has born fruit. How did this happen? I made references to the various scriptures. There is a lot of spirituality in the scriptures, and I drew examples from them, which sustained me.

The story of Hanuman is found in Ramayana, one of the great scriptures in Hinduism. Hanuman had absolute faith in his master, Lord Rama. His focus was on Rama, nobody else. His devotion and commitment to duty when facing many challenges were remarkable. He persevered and endured all kinds of hardships. There was not a single moment in his life when he doubted Lord Rama. He therefore had the courage of his conviction to such an extent that he did not denounce his Lord when in captivity. Asked by Ravana, who was Rama’s adversary, “Whose messenger are you?” “I am the messenger of Rama whose wife you have abducted”, he replied.

In Christianity, we find the story of Saint Paul. Saul of Tarsas persecuted the Christians until he was confronted by a vision on his way to Damascus, and he heard a voice saying, “Saul! Saul! Why persecutes thou me?”

“Who art thou?” replied Saul.

“I am Jesus of Nazareth whom thou persecutes,” replied the voice from the sky.

From that moment onwards, Saul became a completely transformed man. Now he was Paul the Evangelist. He travelled great distances fearlessly to proclaim the message of Jesus in the face of suspicion, ridicule and threats to his life. He worked hard to spread the new message. He never gave up until he was executed in Rome. He sacrificed his life for the good cause.

Hanuman’s and Saint Paul’s stories inspired me, coupled with my belief in Sathya Sai Baba, who had said; “Go out there and spread my message of love.” I knew that this was not going to be smooth sailing. Really, spirituality drawn from the lives of other devotees like Hanuman and Saint Paul - who practised love, who practised right conduct, perseverance, stick-to-it-iveness, who had the courage of their convictions - helped me a lot to move along.

The local population as well as the local government in Ndola was stunned at our work, they had never seen anything like it. I was with the workers from 7 AM to 5 PM each day; I was always with them, doing things. This was and still is uncommon in Ndola. People like us, who are thought to be “big men” and important people, are not expected to do that kind of menial work. But they really felt that the example set, not just by me, but also by my wife Genoveva and a few others, was such that they could not help but admire and emulate it.

The way the school unfolded was an example. Without knowing the language, as it was not our country, we started this school – and did so by starting both a primary wing and a secondary wing. This was because Sai Baba told us: “Finish the whole school.” So we built the school with 24 classrooms. There was a primary wing for the beginners, and a secondary wing. Filling the primary wing was easy, because in Zambia there are many children out there; families are very big, so you only have to blow a whistle, and 10 will come, 20 will come. But when it comes to the secondary school, it’s different.

To enter a secondary school, there is a national primary school examination, which all children from grade seven, the last class of primary school, must take. Following this, the children with the best grades are selected for the government schools. Those with poor grades are left out. They are failures, rejects, dropouts. Our problem was that the first year, we were not on the government list. We were not even known; only the immediate townships knew that there was such a school coming up close to their sites. So when the grade 7 candidates were given their forms to fill out and they were asked for preferences for schools, they would not put Sathya Sai School on their list.

We went to the minister of education and asked for the basket containing the list of failures, the rejects, and it was from this basket that we chose our students. That was a big challenge. Again we were moved by love. That was a spiritual principle that influenced us, because we believed that these children were capable of achieving higher things. So we took these rejects, brought them to school and showered them with all that Sai Baba had taught us. The whole atmosphere became a spiritual atmosphere where there was love, kindness, sharing, helping, persevering and discipline, with love as the most important “weapon”. And we found that the children responded so wonderfully positively. Their mental powers, which were once blocked, suddenly blossomed, and they were able to grasp academic concepts and do very well in their studies. Genoveva would always tell them, “You are not failures, you can make it!”

Today the Sathya Sai School in Ndola is known as “The Miracle School”. There are 560 students, boys and girls. We started with the boys’ school. When parents asked, “Why only boys?” it suddenly occurred to me, that the problems of the world are mainly caused by men, not women, and that the prisons are full of men, very few women. Therefore, especially in a continent like Africa where wars are fought by men maybe we should start with taming the boys. This was the explanation I used to give to the people, and they liked it very much.

The school is called The Miracle School not just because of the high academic results, but also because of the transformation of the children themselves. The whole atmosphere of that township is now lit up because of the presence of the school and the teachers’ quarters there. And now The African Institute of Sathya Sai Education is functioning there as well. The inhabitants of the township feel important and are proud of our presence. For example, my former substitute as a leader, who came from Malaysia and was of Chinese origin, and his wife, who was a teacher and came from India, lived in the township. It has never happened in Ndola that foreigners lived with the natives. But they did that, and were respected for so doing. So the school and the Institute have become a very important fact in community building, in peoples’ relations to each other. There is no vandalism. People like these institutions.

I led “The Miracle School” for ten years, and now I am leading the Institute. Together with others, I am training the future teachers, both teachers for the school system and the teachers for the UN-Habitat water project.



An inquiry into the nature, activities and results of leading from a spiritual basis

SECTION III

Employees

During our 1½ – 2 hour interviews with leaders who participated in our international research programme, we asked each one to share specific stories that exemplified how they drew from their spiritual view of life to respond to a challenging situation.

In this section you will find 40 stories related to the broad topic of “Employees”. These stories are organised according to the following categories:

- **Communications (12 stories)**
- **Compensation/reward systems (8 stories)**
- **Development (13 stories)**
- **Discipline (7 stories)**

This section contains only the stories excerpted from the full interviews. To review the career history, current responsibilities, spiritual views, and other aspects of leading from a spiritual basis, please refer to the complete transcript of each leader, which can be found in either Volume 1 or 2 or the on-line knowledge-base at www.globaldharma.org/sbl-research.htm.

THE FOLLOWING STORIES ARE CONTAINED IN THIS SECTION:

Employee – Communications

- Taking an interest in the employees – John Behner
- Two initiatives to cultivate spirit in the organisation – Amber Chand
- Taking responsibility in a downsizing – Amber Chand
- Turning around a failing organisation – Dr. A. K. Chattopadhyay
- Honesty and openness – Neils due Jensen
- Understanding and respecting emotions – Deependra Moitra
- Cultivating loyalty – Deependra Moitra
- The value of family – Ramón Ollé
- Correcting a mistake with employee compensation – N. S. Raghavan
- Building trust with employees – N. S. Raghavan
- Being open and honest with employees – N. S. Raghavan
- Current style of leading – Janiece Webb

Employee – Compensation/Reward systems

- Basing pay on productivity – John Behner
- Not working for money only – Carol Franklin
- Transparency as to salaries – Carol Franklin
- The difference between shares and stock options for employees – Lars Kolind
- Facing critical challenges – G. Narayana
- The human aspects of compensating employees – Ramón Ollé
- Correcting a mistake with employee compensation – N. S. Raghavan
- Measuring “quality of effort” rather than “success” – Ananth Raman

Employee – Development

- Bringing people up from within – John Behner
- Developing and energising a vision for the company – Amber Chand
- Integrating values in everyone’s day-to-day work – Thomas Daugherty
- Increasing the opportunities – Carol Franklin
- Social responsibility – Neils due Jensen
- The Scorpion and the Sage – Victor-Krishna Kanu
- Conducting trainings on joy and self-mastery – Ashoke Maitra
- Implementing quality programmes – Deependra Moitra
- Empowering people – Parantha Narendran
- Being open to new ideas and experiments -- N. S. Raghavan
- Unity of thought, word, and action – Ananth Raman
- Quietude and introspection – James Sinclair
- Opening up others to their potential, their self, and greater responsibility – Magnus Vrethammar

Employee - Discipline

- Ensuring discipline through strength and humility – John Behner
- Firing an employee – Philip Budin
- Exploring the issues of when to let employees go – Rajan Govindan
- Reprimanding employees – G. Narayana
- Dismissing people – Parantha Narendran
- Terminating employees and downsizing the organization – Ananth Raman
- Responding to the press and to an employee, due to a major mistake – V. V. Ranganathan

EMPLOYEES – COMMUNICATIONS (12 STORIES)

Behner, John R. – El Salvador

“Former Country Manager for Nabisco in El Salvador”

Spiritual Theme

“Realising God by serving others.”

Only saying “serving everyone” does not include that, which is the most important to me, which is to realise my oneness with God.

Taking an interest in the employees

You have to have discipline, but at the same time I always tried to protect my employees, and I was a good friend with everybody. Even when I had 300 employees, I would find time to sit down with each one of them and talk to them for three or four minutes, “How are the kids? How far away do you live? Do you have troubles getting here?”

A lady told me she had a problem getting on the bus to go to work because of troubles with her legs. She only lived about six blocks from the company, so I said, “We’ll send a car for you in the morning, don’t worry about it.” Immediately I asked a salesman, who used to come early in the mornings, to go and pick up the lady, who worked in the accounting department.

The people working for me were very appreciative of the love and the way they were treated, and the personal interest that I showed in them and their welfare. There was an instance when one of the girls in the reception who was pregnant had a miscarriage. One of the accountants made a negative comment about an expense item I had had. She got very, very upset and said, “How can you think of accusing Mr. Behner of anything like that?” She got so upset that she had a miscarriage as a result of it.

She wasn’t a spiritual person at all, but afterwards I told her that children who die in that circumstance are very advanced souls, they don’t have hardly anything that they need to do in life in order to become united with God. “Your child has had that experience,” I said. “Instead of feeling sad, you should feel very happy that you had a child that has been able to unite with God.” She was really depressed, but when I told her that, her whole attitude changed.

At the same time, I went up to the accountant, who had said this thing about me and my expense report, and I told him, “I really appreciate your attentiveness, that you catch little things and bring it to the attention of the controller when you have a doubt.” I explained to him what the expense was. My expense reports were a joke, because I was a vegetarian and only ate one main meal a day. I would go to New York for a meeting and stay in a cheap place instead of the hotel where the meeting was, to save money for the company.

But sometimes I think I took this looking after the people to an extreme. At one time the police came and arrested one of the workers in the factory. I went to the police station to find out what was going on. I was told that the guy was an armed robber, a member of a gang of robbers, and they had been looking for him. “How can he be working for you?” they asked. “He is one of my

best employees in the factory,” I said. “No, he’s the head of a band of robbers!” They assured me that this was the truth.

I went back to the company and started asking some of the employees about this. They told me they had seen this guy with a gun in his locker. Nobody had ever told me. Somebody else had seen him in a gang when there was an assault in the outlying areas, so apparently he really was a robber.

A few years later I visited a rehabilitation centre, and here was this guy in a wheelchair. “Pedro?” I said, “What are you doing here?” “Oh,” he said, “When I got out of jail, I went to the States. I was coming out of a liquor store when there was a robbery, and I got shot. I’m paralysed now, I can’t get out of the chair.” That was the way he told me the story. Obviously he had been robbing a liquor store and got shot. He got his pay.

I tried to believe in the people, and I think that 99 percent were very, very good. But I had some problems, like right after the civil war, which was finished in 1991. There were a lot of armed robberies then. Whenever they would see a truck without a gun on it, ex-guerrillas and ex-soldiers would assault it. In each of the first three years, we had about 36 assaults on our delivery trucks and on the office itself. I was reluctant to put armed guards on the trucks and at the plant, because I didn’t like guns around. But then they were going to cancel my insurance, so I had to do it. That stopped the assaults. It only shows, sometimes you have to do something which you don’t want to do.

Chand, Amber – USA

“Founder of the Amber Chand Collection: Global Gifts for Peace and Understanding, an internet-based company in the USA that markets the products of artisans from around the world”

Spiritual Theme

Compassion, balance, grace, and friendliness are words that ring as a spiritual theme for me. Yes, this is a “God-being tapestry.”

Two initiatives to cultivate spirit in the organisation

As a co-founder of this company, I have a very interesting role. I have a tremendous amount of influence, but I have not been interested in seeing it as power. So in everything I do people see me as a co-founder and respect me for that role. It is a status and respect that I hold very humbly.

I know when I walk through this company that employees look to me sort of like a mother, a nurturing spirit. So I try to continually find ways to be that nurturing, reassuring, loving spirit for them. This allows me to authentically be my spirit-self. I am very grateful that I do not have to be any different than who I am. As a result I have been able to actually cultivate a great confidence in others by being more spiritual: they expect it of me, they see it in me, they laugh at me, they dismiss me, all of that.

There are two initiatives that I think my spiritual theme – this beautiful tapestry of compassion, balance, grace, and friendliness – has inspired. I created the first one about a year ago and called it “tea with Amber.” To me this is exactly the way I see that spirit should work in a company. I was inspired to do this when, one day, my heart sank when I realised that the company had grown to

such a degree that I no longer knew everybody. I could not see how I could be in the nurturer role if I didn't know everyone by name. I thought about this and began to search for a way that I could connect with everyone in the company.

So the idea came to me to just begin to have a cup of tea with every person. The first thing I noticed was that my office was not the nurturing atmosphere that I wanted, so I rearranged my office completely. I created a little sitting area where I have some lamps and plants, I got out my lovely Mexican tea set and then I began to invite people to tea.

One by one people began to come and sit with me for tea. Some people were very nervous because they were sitting with the co-founder. I would make them a cup of tea and what I noticed is that once they began to sip their tea, they would start to relax physically. Once we could both relax with each other, then we could actually open ourselves up to the "art of conversation."

This whole concept has continued to grow and now it is on the website as a column. Who would have ever thought that it would have blossomed so much? What is so wonderful about this is that it is definitely something that the employees look forward to. It has become seen as a very important part of my work in this company and as a way for us to continue to highlight Eziba as a company with a social conscience.

The second initiative I started early on was to speak to the customers who were unhappy with us. I remembered my childhood where my mother and father taught me to treat a guest who came to our house as God. You do everything you can to make their time with you happy and satisfying and comfortable. So during our first customer training, I told them this story. I told them that at Eziba, I like to feel that the customer is God. So when the customer calls, we drop everything and we listen. People actually listened to what I said and thought it was nice.

We have a fabulous customer service group and yet I still want to speak with all of the unhappy customers. It is actually helpful for our employees to see that the co-founder is working alongside them, supporting the larger work, which is to satisfy all our customers. I always pick up the phone and call the unhappy customers. I begin by apologising to them, "I am so sorry that we have dissatisfied you in some way." I must tell you that customers are amazed; they cannot believe that one of the founders is taking the time to call them. From this call, I always end up with a happy customer; we usually end up feeling a lot of joy and laugh together. I tell them to call me again if they ever have any problems and I give them my direct line. So it is another way of being thoughtful and it works.

Taking responsibility in a downsizing

One of the most painful periods for me as a leader in this company was the time just after the tragedy that happened in New York City on September 11th through Christmas, 2001. We were restructuring the company and looking seriously at our goal of being a profitable organisation.

As a result we had to look closely at areas of the company that were not cost-effective, which then required us to let some people go. This happened very quickly and it was very painful for me. Here was a company that had promoted itself to be a kind, thoughtful, compassionate company and people came to work here because they had a sense of alignment with our mission of doing good for the planet.

And yet, I had to be realistic about the early, start-up phase that we were in. There were no guarantees, we were not a solidly profitable company yet, we were still young and our roots were still not embedded. Once we had communicated to everyone about who would be laid off, we had

an open forum meeting with everyone in the company. We clearly expected people to express their distress, unhappiness, frustration and anger. I stood there in front of everyone along with the other members of our senior team.

Even though some people did become quite angry, I could feel my heart accepting all of this. I genuinely felt that there was a reason for all of this anger and frustration and that there was no harm in it. I knew that the last thing we needed to be was defensive. There was a moment when one of our senior members became defensive and it sparked a battle between two wills; it was awful. Everyone looked so sad and devastated. At the end of this, there was just this silence.

I then very quietly went and stood in the centre of the room and I looked around the room at everyone and said, "I am so sorry. I apologise for the way this has turned out." At that moment the faces of the people began to soften and a spaciousness was created that let them know that this was not about us versus them. It was simply all part of the journey of this company. The apology felt like a quiet, but powerful flame within me.

It was a moment when I stretched inside. I was accepting the responsibility for what had happened in the company and was also acknowledging that there was no right or wrong. It simply was what we needed to go through. I stepped into the circle, stood in my own space, and felt all of it. To me it made a great difference.

Humility would be the word I would use to describe that moment. It was in this humility that I found my greatest courage. Courage to me is not when I raise my voice and act aggressively and defensively against others; it is when I feel responsible and responsive to their needs. In that moment I literally re-defined what a leader was meant to be. We have become so consumed by the idea that leaders are strong and in charge, and that they are the captains of the ship. I am most interested in incorporating the great feminine principles into leadership: bringing in the art of grace and humility, dialogue, soft speech and deep listening, and eyes that may water, and allowing all of that to be there.

This is what it means to me to be a servant leader. This is very much how I see my leadership role in this company; I am founder-servant. I have always known that I was here to serve and anytime I forget this, I lose my way. Without this faith, this spiritual source, I do not feel it would be possible to be an exemplary leader.

Chattopadhyay, A. K. – India

"Former Senior Vice President of ACC Limited Refractories Division in India"

"Executive Director of Tata Refractories, Ltd. in India"

Spiritual Theme

My spiritual theme is a combination of the four goals found in my spiritual view of life:

- To align oneself with a super power
- To find out the reasons within oneself
- To have faith in others
- To have a caring nature

Turning around a failing organisation

When I initially came in to head the operations of ACC Refractories in 1991, I saw right away that there was a big distance between the management and the workers. There was also not enough information being shared between them, so the workers felt totally disillusioned about what was going on. They had totally lost faith in management. To me, the workers are a part of the whole game and you cannot win the game without taking them into proper consideration.

So I started by working with the people. As a management team, we started working closely together with the factory workers and started sharing information with them. We shared what was happening and what was good or what was bad. Slowly the workers responded to this very nicely. I regained the faith of those people. After two years or so, they began to listen more to us than to their union leaders. So naturally the senior management people became their leaders and this was a big transformation.

The first thing I did was to introduce a monthly meeting, which we called a safety meeting. The idea was to address what had happened in the last month, what our market share was, how we performed, where we went wrong, where we went right, and how to learn from the things we did right. It used to be a one-hour meeting at the gate itself. When the workers came in the morning we were there and we would do some formalities and hold the meeting. We started by hoisting the safety flag. We talked about safety practises, including the accidents that took place in the plants and how they could have been avoided. Then we called a worker to talk about all different kinds of safety. Then we asked the engineers to talk about safety. Finally I would talk about the other things in the company. This became a fantastic thing. After a few months, people were eagerly coming to this meeting to listen.

Then we started a quality circle and brought people together to have interactions. We would visit one operation for the whole day and talk about things. Our people are good people; a few people have simply misguided them. So we tried to bring them into the right kind of attitude. As a management philosophy, we said that we are 80-85% responsible for difficulties with the business, and the workers are 15-20% responsible. That is, if we don't get a good price from the customer, that is management's fault. If we don't buy the raw material at a good price, that is management's fault. If inventory is lying in our yard, that is management's fault. When the material has been given to the worker, then it is their job to process it properly.

As a result of all of this, I also saw how we were doing things that were not getting us anywhere in our business, things that were losing money. So a lot of our business processes and strategies were changed. We looked at our product profile, we looked at our customer profile, and we looked to see if we could do the business in a different way. We phased out a lot of products that were not aiding the bottom line and it was a good transformation. We also got a lot of good support from the corporate office and that was what was needed.

We revived the business, and today I can tell you very proudly that we have grown from a 180 million rupee business (US\$3.8 million at the mid-2002 exchange rate) to 1,950 million rupee business (US\$41.5 million at the mid-2002 exchange rate) last year. The ten times growth occurred just by using a proper strategy to run the business and giving value to the people. In 1991 we were almost a non-entity and today we are a force to be reckoned with in the country.

Our products are good, our services are good, and our quality is good. During this same period the refractory industry overall was in very bad shape. However, we still managed to grow and grow.

My spiritual philosophy behind all of this was that I was trying to do good for our employees. They were not aware of the things that they were doing that were actually harmful to them. So I wanted to do good and show them how to do good.

Jensen, Niels Due – Denmark

“Group Chairman for Grundfos Management A/S in Denmark”

Spiritual Theme

Empathy, compassion, and love for my neighbour.

Honesty and openness

Another story has something to do with my priority to honesty, and having an open and honest conduct towards our employees. About three years ago we had at Grundfos a situation where we had far too many “wild strikes”. People stopped working for a day or two or three, just to demonstrate what they would like to see, or even just to protest towards the way things were run. What I did then was to write an open letter to all employees, telling them in a really straightforward way, that Grundfos was not able to continue with this behaviour from some groups of employees, because it would simply ruin our company.

To begin with this openness and honesty with our people was taken very badly by quite a few, but as time has gone by, people realise that I was right in telling the truth about what our company needed from them. Today I believe that my openness and honesty to our employees at that time really has changed the agenda for our whole company, when it comes to working more in harmony and in dialogue with each other on a daily basis instead of confronting each other with problems.

My philosophy is clearly that it is important to inform in due time about the things which you as a top manager are aware of, as to what might happen in the company, and first of all to tell about unpleasant things before the more pleasant things. Be open in your dialogue, and be very honest. Discuss with your employees also those matters, which might not make them happy. In this way you will be able to create a dialogue and understanding, also for those unpopular decisions which now and then necessarily must be taken.

Moitra, Deependra – India

“Formerly the youngest General Manager within Lucent Technologies, who at the time had 70,000 employees worldwide”

“Associate Vice President with Infosys Technologies, Ltd. in India”

Spiritual Theme

“Living with a purpose” would be my theme. True fulfilment is then the outcome of this journey.

Understanding and respecting emotions

Associated with this path of spirituality is a set of values or traits that a person will demonstrate. In business, here are the ones that are important to me. First of all, it is very important to me that I deliver comfort to people around me, so I place a lot of emphasis on emotional values. If you look at some schools of spirituality, they will say that you should not be emotional. But the way I look at it, and what I practice in my work life, is that as human beings we all have sentiments and emotions. And therefore, we all have an emotional reservoir.

For me to be really successful in relationships and in doing productive work with others, I must tap into that emotional reservoir within myself and within others. When I tap into the emotional reservoirs of others, it basically makes people feel comfortable around me. I think that understanding and respecting people's emotions is very, very fundamental to both my work life and my private life, and I place a lot of emphasis on this.

Related to this principle of comfort, or showing empathy to another person, there is another principle that I follow which is how to communicate. I must communicate in a way that makes people feel good about what I have said.

Let me explain this by telling a story. There was a king, and one day he found out there was a palmist who had come to his kingdom. He got excited and asked the palmist to look at his palm and tell him what his future held. This palmist looked at his palm very carefully and said, "I have very bad news for you, I'm afraid that you will die in the next seven days." The king obviously got very agitated, angry and distressed. He sent the palmist to the prison saying that he had disappointed him. Three days later, he found out that there was another palmist visiting the kingdom and so he called him to come and read his palm. He held out his palm and asked the palmist to tell him what his future held. The palmist said, "I have very good news for you. Your son will soon be occupying this throne." Both of these palmists basically told him the same thing, but in different ways. The first way made the king angry, but the second way made him happy.

So, I consistently try to communicate to people in a way that their dignity and emotions are respected when I talk to them; this type of communication and the emotions of people are very important to me.

Being truthful does not always mean that you tell your people everything. I would rather not tell my employees anything, than tell them things that are not true, such as trying to paint a glorious picture of the company's future when I know that there is not a foundation to support it actually happening. I think this is also related to an organisation being more spiritual, that is to always be honest and truthful.

When I talk about spirituality in business, I think it really boils down to taking care of people's emotions and being truthful. I think these two would constitute a business being spiritual.

Emotions are also important in the context of change. Nobody really likes change, but given today's world, we have to face many changes that we are not prepared for. I recognise that no one likes change, therefore, when a change has to be made, I try to position myself to facilitate this change so that it is made in a more comfortable way.

Cultivating loyalty

Fundamentally, I do think that we all need to think about business in a radically different manner. In you look at most major corporations, you will find that basically they all react. What this indicates to me is that our footing is not solid. What good is strategy if it warrants you to react every alternate week? This means, that in actuality, we don't have a strategy. I think that as a

corporation we need to change this pattern. We need to be very clear as to whether we want to stay focused and create opportunities, or whether we want to be driven by the market and continuously react.

The reason I am talking about this is that it has a tremendous effect on employees. I personally do not like the word “loyalty” because in today’s world the employee cannot be loyal to the corporation, since the corporations are not loyal to the employees. If you look at most companies, the one thing they continue to do is lay off employees when the business takes a downturn. Now I see a fundamental conflict here. On one hand we want to increase the workforce, we want to do great things, we want to bring on new employees, and yet when we get hit financially, the first thing we want to do is get rid of employees. To be honest, we cannot really be financially sound or sustain our financial soundness by only eliminating our employees as a reaction.

If you think about this in family terms, if you have a sick child you do not just get rid of him or her. You have a commitment to your child, and so you do everything you can to help them get well. So I think we need to take a very different approach than what we are doing now. This would be an all-encompassing approach where we make sure that we utilise employee involvement in a manner that helps to make our position in the marketplace solid. We have to understand the emotional side of our employees and make sure that they feel part of the whole process, as opposed to being mere labourers in the process.

Employees are human beings, and they put their hearts and minds and emotions into the development of the business. We cannot play with their emotions, such as when you need them you pat them on the back, and when you don’t need them you ruthlessly get rid of them. We have to recognise that the company exists because of its people, and that does call for a spiritual approach. I think this should be the very first step that every business should take in order to progress toward a spiritual way of doing business.

When I think about a company being spiritual, I think that the first and foremost place where spirituality has to be demonstrated is with its stakeholders. We must create a system where we can, without talking about loyalty, have loyalty become ingrained. No one has to talk about loyalty, no one has to ask about loyalty, but the whole operating framework is such that loyalty becomes a second name for everyone. What this means is that loyalty takes on a spiritual meaning, as opposed to an attitude of “I will stick with you.” Loyalty must also work both ways. A business cannot seek the loyalty of their employees without being loyal to them.

Ollé, Ramón – The Netherlands

“President of Epson Europe in The Netherlands”

Spiritual Theme

“To know thyself.”

The value of family

It is vital for leaders to have a lot of contact with their employees. It requires them to walk around the organisation and to learn employees’ names. Before reaching my current position, I knew most of the employees in my organisation by name.

Today, what makes me the most happy is when people are friendly towards me, when we say hello to each other, and I ask them about their family and their lives. If you ask people what the most important thing is for them, they will immediately say it is their family. People think that this is more so in their particular culture, but it is not really the case. It is the same in all cultures. This becomes the first value in order for man to live in society. In my house in Spain we are a family that spans three generations: my father, my wife's mother, my wife and my four children.

I think that everyone is capable of sustaining the family unit if everyone in the family wants to do this. If my family wants to sustain itself, then we have a lot of strength and energy focused in that direction. But we must not consider the sustainability of the family as simply a matter of giving money to the family. The family needs many more things; your presence makes for a much richer family life. What I have observed is that most people who are younger than 30 years are beginning to give much more value to the family and are sticking with those values. I don't have a lot of time with my family; however, my family life is still very rich. All of my free time is devoted to my family and not to anything else. And I give time alone to every member because every person needs me in a different manner.

Raghavan, N. S. – India

“Founding Director and former Joint Managing Director of Infosys in India”

Spiritual Theme

“Love and trust” automatically came to my mind as my theme.

Correcting a mistake with employee compensation

At Infosys, we were very fortunate that everyone believed in a common value system. While I was head of HR at Infosys, which was most of the time, I was responsible for the salary and compensation structures. At one point, we felt that the computer graduates who focused on software should be given a token recognition by giving them a very small additional amount of money.

To our surprise, we had a very strong negative reaction from the other employees who were non-computer graduates. They pointed out that when we came to the educational campuses to recruit employees we told them that we treated all graduates the same. They pointed out that we had never discriminated in the past and it wasn't correct for us to do this now. I tried to explain to them that this was just a token recognition and that it was based on a study which had a lot of validity to it. They felt as if we had gone back on our word.

So I selected a random sampling of computer graduates and asked them, “This is what I have done and this is the reaction. What do you think? Do you think this token recognition is fair?” To my surprise they said, “While we like the recognition we think that what they have said is true; once you have gone to the campuses and made the commitment to treat all graduates alike, you shouldn't change the policy.”

Several advised me that I did not need to backtrack. But I felt that if I had made a mistake, I must correct it. So I called all the people and told them that we would give the token additional money for only the current year and will call it a special allowance, and that we would not continue it in the future.

I always had a standard statement, “If you find a certain HR policy needs to be changed in order for it to be correct for the employees or to meet current day requirements, we should change it. There is nothing like a minimum longevity for a policy.” And, I tried to help people see that when you do change a policy you have to keep in mind that it will affect some people adversely, even if it is the right thing to do.

Building trust with employees

People who work for me have a lot of freedom. I remember reading that during the Second World War, the War Secretary at that time, was asked, “Sir, how do you make people trustworthy?” His answer was cryptic and profound. “Simply by trusting them.” To me, this is such a strong way of building a trusting environment.

It reminds me of the story where there was a lawyer who had prepared a multi-million dollar contract for that client with whom he was also a close friend. He took it to the client and asked him to read it over carefully before he signed it. The client told him, “No need for that. I trust the work you have done and if you are OK with it I will just sign.” The lawyer immediately became worried and took back the contract to go over it once more before giving it to his client for his signature, as he could not let down his client who trusted him so much.

One time we had this tight-schedule short-term project and one of the key members wanted to go on leave for urgent work. It was a close-knit team and I told them that she, or anybody else for that matter, could go on leave as long the group decided how to manage during her absence. I did not feel that it was my place to tell her whether she could go on leave or not; I trusted her and her group members to decide this. I told them that as long as the customer was properly served, that is what counts. I told them that I had full trust in them to meet the project objectives and I didn't need to know the details of how they decided to manage issues like temporary absence or leave.

Being open and honest with employees

I believe that if you explain things honestly, even if it is negative, people will listen and will accept it. When you are genuine, people will accept it.

One year, we initiated a loan programme at Infosys where the employees could get loans for their homes or vehicles. It was a difficult exercise to determine how to allocate the limited funds effectively. I felt it was important for our employees to gradually build their assets starting from two wheelers then to cars and finally to homes over a period of time. So the loan distribution model was based on this.

Every year at the time of compensation revision, I personally used to go around the various facilities in India to explain the rationale of pay revisions and compensation policy decisions. On the loan model, all those people who did not get the benefits complained about various issues. After explaining the logic of the loan model, I let them know that if they had ideas about how the model could be fairer and more effective, I would be open to revising the model. Overall, people found that the model was very fair and accepted it.

My toughest year was when I had to effectively use our limited salary budget to go a longer distance to attract good people. I had to persuade the employees sitting on a large quantum of ESOP (employee stock options) and consequently on a good deal of share capital to allow me to give them a smaller salary increase in that year, so that this savings could be used to attract better people from the market into the organisation.

After lot of painstaking explanations, the affected employees told me that they were not altogether happy to forego salary increases that they were entitled to, but they understood and appreciated the spirit behind the exercise. I believe that their acceptance was the result of total openness with which the scheme was shared with them.

Webb, Janiece – USA

“Former Senior Vice President with Motorola Corporation in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

I think my spiritual theme would be “God in everyone.”

Current style of leading

When I first took this position as senior vice president of technology, they gave me this office; it used to be the office of the current president of the corporation, so it has a history to it. Because there are so many new players here now, sometimes being an old-timer with a 30-year history is not a good thing. Some people even think that if you’ve been here more than 2 years it’s not good. Also, because I worked for the former president for 10 years, people think that I have special privileges, which is just not true.

In truth, I believe that a position of power is a position of serving the people around you. I feel it is my job to serve people. No one gets anywhere by themselves. To me relationships are very much like making deposits into accounts. I cannot be constantly taking out from the account; I must continually make deposits. I must give energy to people and not be draining their energy all the time. I am only powerful when my energy is connected with other people’s energy and we do things as a team. While there are some sages who are powerful in and of themselves, I have not earned that level yet.

I have found that it’s okay to admit that you are spiritual and have certain beliefs at work. However, it’s important not to try to get someone else to believe the way you do. When I know that someone can handle the subject of spirituality, I talk and discuss it openly. When I know someone cannot handle it, then I just “be” my spirituality and I don’t talk about it openly. I can be it, I can show it, and I can exhibit it in my behaviour and attitudes, and I don’t have to label it.

I am aware of the fact that sometimes my level of joyfulness can bother people. Sometimes they get angry and attack me in unfair ways. So for the longest time I hid my inner joy and shied away from sharing it here at work. But now I am not afraid to share who I am and let it shine through.

I am only as good as the people around me. I can only achieve our organizational goals by nurturing the people. I encourage people to really believe in themselves and not let the system dictate who they are. I also encourage them to forget about the corporate hierarchy structure. I don’t identify myself with my title; that’s a label that someone decided to put on me, and I ask them to not let that get in the way.

Sometimes I lead them and sometimes they lead me, I have to be willing to let them do that too. Yes there are times when a command and control style is necessary in a crisis, but for me it must be needed and it must be short lived.

What I have done is make sure that I communicate in every meeting that anyone can speak up and say whatever they need to say to me. I tell them that I am just as fallible as they are and that I don't have any more grand ideas than they do. I feel that I am here to learn from them because they know much more about what we're doing than I do, and I tell them that. I encourage them to enlighten me if I say dumb things. I remind them that we are all trying to solve this problem together.

CHARACTER – COMPENSATION/REWARD SYSTEMS (8 STORIES)

Behner, John R. – El Salvador

“Former Country Manager for Nabisco in El Salvador”

Spiritual Theme

“Realising God by serving others.”

Only saying “serving everyone” does not include that, which is the most important to me, which is to realise my oneness with God.

Basing pay on productivity

Wage and salary administration is an area where there has got to be a tremendous amount of balance and care taken, so that there are not inequities. We did not have to say that everybody would get a 10 percent wage increase, because we did not have any unions. When there is a very paternal type of administration, there is really no way to have a union.

As to salary administration, I would say, “OK, this year there has been quite a bit of inflation, let us try to give wage increases of say between 5 to 15 percent.” But not even the 5 percent was necessarily guaranteed. If somebody wasn’t working very well, they wouldn’t get anything. It was a way of motivating and at the same time slapping their hands if they weren’t really doing a good job; but you have to be very, very just. We would ask the department head to grade and recommend, and then sit down with the personnel manager and talk about each individual case – and there were 300, so it took time. Then they would pass it to me, and I would look through it and occasionally recommend a little change. Surprisingly enough, over the years it worked very well. The people accepted it, and they tried to do better when they didn’t get as much as they thought they should have. But we had to be very equitable.

I think that from the spiritual angle, people appreciate it when you evaluate them for what they really do that is productive. Regarding paperwork, it is a necessary thing in most companies, but I was especially negative on any paperwork from salespeople. I told the sales manager that the philosophy was, that the orders that the person brought in every day would speak for what he was doing. Of course we knew who the clients were in the zone, and whom he should be visiting. To have him sit down and say that he went here and there, and that he visited 30 clients and 15 bought something, seemed like just an enormous amount of work for nothing. So we asked our salesmen to spend more time on the street and less time in the office, and to bring in the orders. According to the number of orders that they brought in, we could see if they were doing a good job or not. This worked really well.

I had a philosophy which said, that he who works can make good money, especially in sales, where we paid no salaries, only commissions. This was really a boon since occasionally some of my salespeople would even make more than I did. I would make an example of them, and tell people, “Look at what this person is doing. He makes more than the sales manager, and more than the supervisors.” I think this was a grand motivator, not to be tied to the limiting factor of a base salary and a little tiny commission. It’s true that sometimes it may have cost the company a little more, but I think that in the long run it didn’t.

What actually happens is that the salesmen are paid not on the basis of sales, but on the basis of collection. If a salesman were ill, we would put someone else on his route, not to sell, but to collect what he was supposed to be collecting. Then we would give the sick man probably 50 percent of what he was supposed to get, and the other person would get the rest of the commission. We had to send people out to collect the money for the goods they had been selling. It all had to be done personally - no checks-in-the mail type of thing. In Latin America, unfortunately you cannot just send out an invoice, even if it would be beautiful if it worked that way.

Franklin, Carol – Switzerland

“Former Head of Human Resources for Swiss Re Insurance in Switzerland”

“Former CEO of the World-Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) in Switzerland”

Spiritual Theme

Caring for and being responsible for the earth and its inhabitants. Be responsible. Be the change you want to see in the world. Help move the world forward.

Not working for money only

In 1996 everything was changing at Swiss Re. As the head of the Human Resources Department, I introduced training on a worldwide basis for developing our employees' potentials. I had to introduce many changes in the way things were run. I introduced a new remuneration system, which included a bonus. At the time, I thought this was a good idea.

However, after about two years I realised that we were giving the wrong people the wrong bonuses, and that the way it was being done was not really fair. I went more or less into opposition, as I felt it was going in the wrong direction. We said we would compensate teamwork, but we compensated individual performance – as if there is any such thing within such a large company. We were rewarding people to work against the interests of the company.

If you measure performance on the basis of figures in such a business as re-insurance, which is a long term business based on trust and confidence in your business partners and your employees, and you give them a bonus on an individual annual basis, it's going in the wrong direction. People used to feel – and Swiss Re was known for this – that “we like to work for the company, because we're part of the family,” “we're part of a good company,” “we help people who have lost their house,” or whatever. But now it was going in the direction of purely making money. One department would say “this is ours, not yours;” they didn't work together any more. The company was going in the wrong direction.

I started off believing that bonuses were good, but then I came to the conclusion that bonuses in general lead to corruption, because they assumes that people only work for money and not for intrinsic values or because of intrinsic motivations. If you assume that people do that, then they become like that, and then they will only work for money, and you lose the best part of the people. That's why I said, I can't agree with this any more, and I have to leave.

Some of my colleagues thought that leaving was over the target, but if they had been there for a long time, they agreed. My superiors, mostly new people who came in from banks and not from

insurance companies, were very much in favour of this bonus system. Greed was getting to them. And that is why I left.

Transparency as to salaries

While I was CEO at WWF, we changed the remuneration system. We decided that it was going to be totally transparent. A group, mainly consisting of employees, rated the positions and that was put on the Intranet. Then the individual employees were rated accordingly, and those ratings along with their salaries, was put on the Intranet. Also we made the decision that the highest salary could not be more than five times the lowest salary. This new system went well; out of 180 people only 4 people said that they were not in agreement. One said that he thought that his colleague at the next desk was not earning enough. One said that we had rated the positions incorrectly, and two said that they thought that they were actually earning enough, but when they saw how much their neighbours earned they thought they should earn more. We looked at these four, and we agreed to make corrections as to two of them.

We had to explain things; I think that is the attraction of this system. It's not that everybody is treated the same or everybody receive the same salary, it is that you have to think very carefully about the differences, which forces you to think and to be able to explain the differences. And there should be differences; I am all for differences, not everybody in the same position does the same job or does the job as well as others. But you have to be open and transparent about why one earns more than the other. It's taking people seriously; it's taking care of people.

Kolind, Lars – Denmark

“Former CEO of Oticon in Denmark, one of the world’s premier suppliers of products for the hearing impaired”

“Chairman of Grundfos in Denmark”

Spiritual Theme

I believe that the theme of my spirituality would be: “love God and love your neighbour.”

The difference between shares and stock options for employees

We work for a common purpose and this is a moral purpose. We need to make money, but the reason we exist, our *raison d'être*, is much more than that; there are things that are more important than making money. We are a team with a common purpose and we do everything we can to live up to that purpose. In that context it is totally natural to introduce shared ownership.

I have always argued that shared ownership means that you share responsibility; you make an investment. So I have worked against stock options, but I have worked strongly for shares that people pay for. To me there is a tremendous difference between the two. We give them a discount in the price, that's okay; but we are now taking joint responsibility to run the company by sharing ownership.

Narayana, G. – India

“Chairman Emeritus for Excel Industries, Ltd. in India”

Spiritual Theme

My spiritual theme is: Noble actions, noble feelings, noble thoughts, noble responsibility.

Facing critical challenges

The most critical challenges I have faced here at Excel were in 1987 and in 2001. When I first came here in 1987, the company was losing money. There was no direction. The founders of the company were spiritual, so the culture here already had a spiritual base; they did a lot of service and all was going well.

But, a booster dose was required for the business. So I joined them to advise and they called me “Guru-ji” (“beloved teacher”). That first year was critical. The most important thing was the formation of the group, organisation, and direction (GOD).

Then also, rewards were required. There was no systematic salary structure, so we made the first salary and reward structure. We offered well and received the work, we offered and received. This is my spirit. We did not take and give, or give and take. We offered and received. Position people and give them challenges. Offer and receive. Share the success. When you practice it, it is fantastic.

Four levels of offering and receiving must occur. First, we *offer love* and *receive dedication*. Then we *offer value* and *receive work*. And then, we *offer knowledge* and *receive learning*. Finally, we *offer trust* and *receive responsibility*. For example, as a manager, if you offer love, you receive dedication; in addition, if you offer dedication, you receive love. As a leader, if you offer value, you receive work; in addition, if you offer work, you receive value. These four levels of offering and receiving are interwoven in everything.

We created systems for all of this. We made nurturing and learning systems. Through lots of training, we built trust and empowered people to achieve excellence. Achieving excellence only once is not enough; there must be continuous excellence. When work is done well, you become better. When the work is done excellently, the people become excellent. Even if I do not get a larger salary for doing excellent work, I become excellent.

Ollé, Ramón – The Netherlands

“President of Epson Europe in The Netherlands”

Spiritual Theme

“To know thyself.”

The human aspects of compensating employees

Even when we are working on quantitative things such as salaries or grades, and we say we want to be fair, create justice, and align things in a proper manner, if we understand what is behind the desires of the people, it is easy to achieve these goals. If we just try to create mathematical precision, then it doesn't fit with our being human.

Sometimes a person's salary is not a matter of just rewarding someone. It is a matter of giving mental motivation. If we increase the salary of a person in order to satisfy or reward him, then one month after that increase he may again feel that his salary is not high enough; this can be never ending. But if that person is working happily, experiencing and expressing his creativity and his positive values, then even with a low salary that person will work well. These are the human aspects.

I consider that life is like a pendulum. Do you see any middle managers today who are happy with their stock options? Do you see any organisations that have senseless and unreasonable priorities with happy and satisfied employees? Once again, the pendulum is moving back and compelling us to re-consider certain basic concepts. It has been proven that when executives make short-term big money, it just creates more desire for the future. As a Japanese organisation, we do not have these big benefits; we are always looking ahead, even to future generations. As a result, we are much more committed to our sustainability when we face difficulties, because our commitment is long-term.

Raghavan, N. S. – India

“Founding Director and former Joint Managing Director of Infosys in India”

Spiritual Theme

“Love and trust” automatically came to my mind as my theme.

Correcting a mistake with employee compensation

At Infosys, we were very fortunate that everyone believed in a common value system. While I was head of HR at Infosys, which was most of the time, I was responsible for the salary and compensation structures. At one point, we felt that the computer graduates who focused on software should be given a token recognition by giving them a very small additional amount of money.

To our surprise, we had a very strong negative reaction from the other employees who were non-computer graduates. They pointed out that when we came to the educational campuses to recruit employees we told them that we treated all graduates the same. They pointed out that we had never discriminated in the past and it wasn't correct for us to do this now. I tried to explain to them that this was just a token recognition and that it was based on a study which had a lot of validity to it. They felt as if we had gone back on our word.

So I selected a random sampling of computer graduates and asked them, “This is what I have done and this is the reaction. What do you think? Do you think this token recognition is fair?” To my surprise they said, “While we like the recognition we think that what they have said is true; once you have gone to the campuses and made the commitment to treat all graduates alike, you shouldn't change the policy.”

Several advised me that I did not need to backtrack. But I felt that if I had made a mistake, I must correct it. So I called all the people and told them that we would give the token additional money for only the current year and will call it a special allowance, and that we would not continue it in the future.

I always had a standard statement, “If you find a certain HR policy needs to be changed in order for it to be correct for the employees or to meet current day requirements, we should change it. There is nothing like a minimum longevity for a policy.” And, I tried to help people see that when you do change a policy you have to keep in mind that it will affect some people adversely, even if it is the right thing to do.

Raman, Ananth – USA

“Chairman of Graphtex, Inc. a manufacturing company in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

“Awareness” and “Realising Divinity”

Measuring “quality of effort” rather than “success”

One time, there was a particular merger and acquisition proposal that I was working on where we arranged for a bank loan. However, at the last minute it fell through because the subordinate lender insisted on some conditions that the seller was not comfortable with. Then I went to a second banker and raised the money and again it fell through because of perceived environmental hazards at the seller’s business. This also happened a third time; it went on for about 18 months. It was as if it was absolutely futile to do anything to make this successful. I even prayed earnestly about whether to try again to make this happen.

By this time my spirit was completely broken and I didn’t know whether to continue with it or not. So then I decided to go back and see if there was anything that I had done wrong. I saw that the first time I tried I had done something wrong. While I had corrected that error the second time, still I did something wrong. And then the third time I corrected that error but it still didn’t work.

At that point I felt that I had succeeded because I had corrected my errors and had done everything correctly the third time. That is the only way that I see to evaluate this properly. Now that I have gone through this process three times and I understand the mistakes that I made, I know how to do it and the next time I need to do it I will be able to do it perfectly. So to that extent I have succeeded, even though I did not get the result.

From experiences like this I have come to realise that once the effort is made, the results are not in your hands. You are not the one to decide the result; thus, there is really no such thing as your “success” or “failure”. Ultimately, I think the only thing you should measure is the quality of your effort: I have consciously tried not to measure successes and failures at all. If I have given my best effort and I have done everything properly, then I have succeeded. Other than that, I should not bother about it.

My knowledge of the spiritual texts tells me that this is the best way to look at success. Have I followed my inner conscience? Have I given my best effort? Have I done what was right? Have I learned from my effort? Have I used all of my senses and values that I am conscious and aware of? This is what is most important.

CHARACTER – DEVELOPMENT (13 STORIES)

Behner, John R. – El Salvador

“Former Country Manager for Nabisco in El Salvador”

Spiritual Theme

“Realising God by serving others.”

Only saying “serving everyone” does not include that, which is the most important to me, which is to realise my oneness with God.

Bringing people up from within

As a General Manager, I wanted to help our employees to be satisfied with what they were doing. So I always tried to promote from within the organisation and not bring people from the outside to take over supervision or managerial positions. When the people know that they can move up in the company, and they see examples of others who have moved up, they think that this is a great place to work, that the future is bright here. So they'll do a better job.

One guy who was there when I came was the street guard at night and a student at the university during the day. He would look after the property, walking up and down at night, making sure that nobody was going to break in. When he graduated, we made him a salesman. Later he became a sales manager, and when I left the company he got his own distribution company.

Many of the salesmen worked themselves up to supervisory or sales manager positions. Other employees may have started in the factory bottling something, and then as we saw that they had possibilities, they might work themselves up to a supervisory position. Generally we moved people up. This kind of work ethic creates a lot of satisfaction.

As to the training in the organisation, it was very important that the people understand what they were supposed to do. I didn't like to send people outside; I liked to get them trained on the job. This was my own personal experience as a young man. Recently graduated from college, my first job was washing barrels at the Union Oil Company. In supervisory positions, they should get involved with the people that they have to supervise, doing what the people are doing, so that they learn that way.

We also had a study programme, where we would pay the tuition for studies that were relatively related to what they were doing in the company. A secretary could study English, for instance, and in the accounting department the boys could take computer courses, and it would be paid for. Even some of the production people who were doing a little bit of clerical work would be able to take computer courses, and the company would pay for it. So we actually had a very paternal and very good relationship from this standpoint. The people appreciated this. It goes back to the love I talked about, just taking care of the people.

Chand, Amber – USA

“Founder of the Amber Chand Collection: Global Gifts for Peace and Understanding, an internet-based company in the USA that markets the products of artisans from around the world”

Spiritual Theme

Compassion, balance, grace, and friendliness are words that ring as a spiritual theme for me. Yes, this is a “God-being tapestry.”

Developing and energising a vision for the company

My original vision for this company was that it would be an antidote to what I believed was happening on the planet. I noticed that there was a lot of information about the negative aspects of life in many cultures, especially the sufferings of many people. I kept thinking, “Why not create a company that celebrates the most beautiful things that people make?” I felt that the artisans and craftspeople would be the best place to start. I also felt that because these people create from their hands that they would be conduits of spirituality. They have a connection to the earth and through their hands they are able to create and manifest.

I wanted this company to honour and celebrate the creative spirit and to applaud cultural diversity through the crafts we sell. I wanted us to find the best craftspeople all over the world and showcase their beautiful objects to the consumer who appreciates this type of cultural expression. As a result, we are now in over 70 countries throughout the world and have an extensive network through which we source our products. We go directly to some of the countries and get directly involved in some of the villages and cooperatives. We meet with the artisans and create objects that are relevant to the global marketplace while at the same time are authentic to the techniques of their tradition. We have also aligned ourselves with lots of non-profit organisations who help us to find and identify the artisans communities that we want to work with.

In a quiet way it seems as if Eziba is becoming a celebrity company. People are beginning to look at us as a case model of what business can look like if it is truly steeped in a mission that looks at its impact on the people and the planet, as well as profits.

I have actually talked with our CEO about bringing some of this spiritual essence into the lives of our employees. I feel that our employees have all bought into our mission and our business model, but I do not feel that they take pleasure in the daily practice of work in this way. So that is why I have decided to bring someone in to do some ‘visioning’ sessions with our employees. Now that we, the leadership of Eziba, have clearly unveiled our values, I would like for people to see and speak about how they would like for it to be and how they can feel personally empowered and accountable.

I am putting together a small hour-long program for our employees, where we can sit together in conversation and dialogue about the vision of the company... to give our employees a blank canvas and have them create what they would like Eziba to look like. This is very much like the process I have recently been through: “If you wake up in ten years what would you like for the company to look like?” So we are looking at a structured process for this.

Personally, this year, I have invested a great deal of time and energy in supporting the basket weavers of Rwanda, many of whom are widows from the genocide, by bringing their baskets – which I termed Peace Baskets because they were made by both Hutu and Tutsi women in a spirit of reconciliation after the genocide – to market. This was an initiative I led both as a co founder of Eziba and as a founding member of the Business Council for Peace, a newly formed coalition of business women who are supporting women’s enterprises in areas of conflict and post conflict.

We have partnered with The United Nations Development Fund for Women in order to do this work. Seeing myself as a peacemaker, committed to building bridges between people who are living in conflict areas of the world has become a new focus for me, and one that I find deeply empowering. Next year I will head to the Middle East and potentially Afghanistan – identifying talented craftspeople and finding ways to not only bring their craft to the international marketplace through Eziba, but also to strengthen their communities. All of this work is part of my sense of engaged, spiritual practice.

Daugherty, Thomas – USA

“Former Vice President of Spiritual Care and Values Integration with the Methodist Health Care System in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

One theme for me would be caring and compassion. Another would be faithfulness. A part of that has to do with persistence and perseverance, courage and humility.

For me, the Christian cross itself evokes all of this for me because it is such a powerful symbol of the Divine-human encounter. It represents the very best and the very worst of human experience, and it also represents the ultimate in God’s love and compassion for all humankind.

The Divine-human encounter is certainly a theme that expresses all of this for me.

Integrating values in everyone’s day-to-day work

As we move forward with our values integration effort, one of the things we are trying to do is to integrate these values into every aspect of the employee’s life cycle: from the application process to the hiring interviews, all the way through the evaluation processes and exit interviews. We want to hire people who are the kind of people who will live these values and will fit with this environment. While we expect people to have the best clinical and technical competence, we feel that this alone is not enough – a person can be competent and capable; however, he or she may not fit into this culture. Living these values, which will in turn cultivate a spiritual environment, is just as important. The way our employees treat each other in their workgroup, the way they treat their internal customers, the way they treat people who come here to be served – the way they go about treating people is just as important as *what* they do in their job.

The training process we currently have in progress will continue from now on. It will take us twelve months just to train our current 8,000 employees. However, we plan to make it a part of our new employee orientation. We also plan to expand this training as well.

The next phase we will be introducing in the next couple of months is called the “workgroup commitment process.” This is a process in which we ask all executives, managers, directors, and supervisors to engage the people who report to them in a process of looking at and integrating the five core values. They will first ask “Who are our internal customers and who are our external customers?” and “How well are we doing with the services we provide them?” Next, they will take each of the five values and ask “in our particular workgroup what does it mean to...” For example, in our day-to-day working with each other, what does it mean to show respect? This is exploring group-specific behaviours. I, myself, will start this process with the CEO Council.

Franklin, Carol – Switzerland

“Former Head of Human Resources for Swiss Re Insurance in Switzerland”

“Former CEO of the World-Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) in Switzerland”

Spiritual Theme

Caring for and being responsible for the earth and its inhabitants. Be responsible. Be the change you want to see in the world. Help move the world forward.

Increasing the opportunities

In Swiss Re (which later on changed this policy) as well as in WWF, we made it our policy to employ handicapped people. For example, in WWF we had an apprentice who was very hard of hearing.

When I was head of Human Resources at Swiss Re, we increased the number of apprentice positions from 6 to 45 in three years. It's important to be able to educate and train young people.

What I also did in Swiss Re was increase the opportunities for women. That was easy. When I took over HR we had 15 women in middle management, and when I left 3 years later, we had 45. On the senior management level we had 2 when I took over, and when I left we had 12. This was all part of my established policies based on my spiritual orientation of caring for people. And I think it is good for the business, too. If you do business on an ethical basis, you'll make more profit and get better employees.

Jensen, Niels Due – Denmark

“Group Chairman for Grundfos Management A/S in Denmark”

Spiritual Theme

Empathy, compassion, and love for my neighbour.

Social responsibility

My principle of trying to ‘love your neighbour’ has guided me in the direction of also developing what we call ‘social responsibility’ at Grundfos. It wasn't something I started; it was in fact my father who already in the late 1960's began our tradition of practising social responsibility. Because of my spiritual background I have always had this activity within Grundfos high on my agenda. Over the years it has developed in such a way, that today we have a considerable number of employees who would probably not be able to be with us without a certain support and attention from our company. Out of about 4,500 employees in our Danish factories and companies, close to 3,000 being hourly paid, we have about 150 who are employed under, what we call ‘special conditions’.

Having employees with a mental or physical handicap working for Grundfos has become a natural part of the company's life and behaviour. We in the management have made it clear that this is

our responsibility; this is our policy, and these are conditions you have to accept as an employee, if you want to work for Grundfos. People have accepted that over the years and they are more and more proud of Grundfos having this tradition. They are also increasingly accepting that it is a natural and right thing for a company like Grundfos to acknowledge and act in accord with our responsibility towards the general society.

So today we do not hear any protests against employing these workers; it is simply accepted as a natural part of our responsibility. They work part time or full time, they might have eight hours of work, but in a very easy job, and they are helped to be able to perform as well as they can.

If I had not had my Christian background, including the desire to do something for such unfortunate people, we would not have had this tradition at Grundfos. You may call it the need to love your neighbour, and this means your neighbour in this local society, but first of all your employees in the company. It is my strong belief, that my example has been of importance to many business leaders in Denmark, and therefore I believe that I have inspired them to go in the same direction.

I have been able to spread this message out to many other Danish companies over the years, not only as an example through the way I have behaved, but also through the way I have spoken about social responsibility. We have a Danish National Network of Business Leaders working with Corporate Social Responsibility. This network was founded in 1997 by the then Minister for Social Affairs. I became a member of the board; later I became the chairman.

Through this network we have been able to spread into other companies the tradition of engaging themselves in social responsibility on a daily basis; first of all towards their own employees, but secondly, if they have the energy to do it, to helping in the local society. We now have about Danish 700 companies as members of this network through six regional networks. It has spread, and I think that Denmark is one of the nations in Europe that is at the very forefront in exercising social responsibility on a daily basis, first of all focused on the employees.

About a year ago we introduced a new policy for what we call Corporate Social Responsibility within Grundfos. We have laid down some major framework and policies as to how we could like to see the foreign Grundfos companies be active in living up to a social responsibility. We do not demand that they do exactly as we do in Denmark, as the cultural environments differ from country to country, and therefore the way you execute this corporate social responsibility on a daily basis is very different. We allow and encourage our local companies to lead the activities, which they feel are most helpful to them in being socially responsible towards their employees and their local community.

Kanu, Victor-Krishna – Zambia

“Former High Commissioner (Ambassador) for Sierra Leone to the UK, Norway and Sweden”
“Director of The African Institute of Sathya Sai Education in Zambia”

Spiritual Theme

Divine love is the central theme. Oneness is a parallel. Because if you say you love all, you do that because all are one.

The scorpion and the sage

The way we look after the teachers is special. The teachers' welfare is very, very important. We see them not as tools, but as human beings whose needs we must strive to meet. This includes housing, the solving of domestic problems and time to attend funerals (there are many funerals in Zambia where AIDS is widespread). So they see this caring attitude and take it as an example to be followed.

A big inspiration for us has been the story of The Scorpion and the Sage: A sage was seated on the bank of a small river when he noticed a scorpion being carried away by the current. Four times he jumped into the water to save it from drowning. The scorpion stung the sage each time he tried to save it. Observing all this was another man who was seated not far away from the sage. He asked him, "Why do you want to save the scorpion who keeps stinging you. You should have let it drown." "It is the nature of a scorpion to sting. It is my nature to love and help those who sting and hate me," replied the sage.

We have given the young people opportunities to go for further studies. A few years ago we sent 11 of our graduates to Teacher's Training College, and "bonded" them for four years. We said that when you come back, you must teach for four years before you decide to leave, if you want to leave. They all returned, but then three ran away, they broke the bond, and we dismissed two others. But that did not stop us from sending more. We have sent two young women to Teacher's Training College, and this year we have sent two students to work for University degrees. So our continuing to send students for further education, even though some of the recipients do not behave according to their promises, surprises people, they wonder how we can continue to do that.

Normally we would have said, "You are ungrateful; we don't trust you, so we are not going to send anybody anymore for further studies." We could have closed the door, but we did not. Up until now we lost fifty percent, fifty percent remained, and they are very good teachers. We are sending more for teacher's training.

Maitra, Ashoke – India

"Former Director of Human Resources for the Times of India"

"Chief Mentor and Advisor of Organisation Development for the Somaiya Trust and Group"

Spiritual Theme

I think my spiritual theme is "Manifestation of latent Divinity."

Conducting trainings on joy and self-mastery

In HRD we have only one mission and that is to "add intellectual capital" and "create happiness." My name is Ashoke, which means "one without grief," so I made my name the "core" value. We said that the only thing we will do is create "griefless-ness" or "increase bliss." To my mind if a person is joyful, happy and inspired, then only can that person reach the highest level of productivity and performance.

The old Western school of management that prescribed control as a major function has given way to leadership through mentoring, coaching, developing and counselling. You can only do your best when you are at equipoise (a state of equilibrium); when you are contained, happy, and willing to give to others.

In our company anyone who joins goes through a program for managing self, where we basically de-school them. We provide them inputs to manage themselves by teaching them: how to control their body and mind, how to be detached, and how to present themselves powerfully.

We tell them that the ego that you have, the degrees which you have received, are fine so long as you use them as an instrument to give you some level of comfort, which all of us need. But if you get married to them and think that is what life is all about, then that is the greatest foolishness you have done, because you are not that. Those are instruments that you need, just like you need food to survive; however you are not the food.

So our work is completely experiential; we do not give any lectures. We do exercise after exercise after exercise to help people analyse and understand the meaning of “true joy.” We are telling people that, “Yes you have joined an industry. Yes, you need your children, family, a certain amount of technology, and money to survive in life. Yes, you must have, but this is not all there is. Your true joy will come in your own spiritual realisation.”

So when we talk about joy, we also talk about being congruent to the dynamism of your innermost self. The real joy comes when you are in touch with your original self. We are telling our employees: “You cannot be happy by the reward the company gives. If we give a reward and you are happy, then there is something wrong. That means your original consciousness is not ripe. You are reacting to a situation. You are not centred in your own existence.”

Our first level of training is to be “super skilled” and “self reliant.” This is where we add knowledge and skill to the areas where they really excel. Today the average lifespan is around 75 years and most people will retire at 58 years. In those 20 years after retirement, people should come to you because of the skills you possess. You could be a skilled writer, or a skilled painter, or a skilled manager or a skilled recruiter, trainer, etc., but if you sit at home and people don’t come to you, then there is something wrong.

The first level of orientation we do is on “bliss” and “self-perfection.” The second level that we do is to control and integrate our body and mind. The third level of work we do is to examine the values and mental balance. All of this has to do with your original self. We tell them, do not bother about this industry; the Times of India will exist even without you. It has existed for 164 years; it may exist another 164 years with or without you. You look at yourself. If you are happy, not by the cars and houses you have, but by your own self, then anywhere you go you will be happy. We are not even telling them to stay in this company. We are saying that you be happy, not by material rewards, you be happy internally.

Not long ago I was doing a public program on Self-mastery for decision makers in industry. One person, who was the vice president of a bank, told me that he had not slept well for three years. He had taken sleeping pills every day. He said, “I do not know what you have done in these three days, but I am sleeping like a log without my pills. Now I am scared that when I go back I won’t be able to sleep.” All that we were doing was teaching him breathing exercises and pranayama (breath control). I was not doing any magic. He had simply not been breathing the way one should breathe and was not relaxing in life.

Moitra, Deependra – India

“Formerly the youngest General Manager within Lucent Technologies, who at the time had 70,000 employees worldwide”

“Associate Vice President with Infosys Technologies, Ltd. in India”

Spiritual Theme

“Living with a purpose” would be my theme. True fulfilment is then the outcome of this journey.

Implementing quality programmes

I have been responsible for the total quality programmes in both my current company and in the company I last worked for. Typically, this is all about change, and it is usually dictated from the top down. The orders are usually handed down from the top without really explaining the purpose and context for why it is they are wanting this change.

I think I have been very successful in running quality programmes, not in terms of merely achieving certifications, but also making sure there are results that impact the bottom line of the business. There are two things that I realised in all of this. I feel that most people who have to implement these quality programmes are not clear about their purpose or how the programmes help the business. The new graduates are hired and they want to lay their hands on writing software code. They do not have a real appreciation for what these quality programmes are all about and why are they needed.

I have found a way to address this. I use a principle called TCP-IP. TCP-IP is something that any electrical, electronics or computer science engineer can easily relate to. It is a protocol that is used in communications networks. So I knew that anyone who came from this background would immediately get interested because it sounds like a technology to them. In terms of a quality programme, to me it stands for “Technology, Customer, Process, Information and People.”

So one way that I have really helped them understand what these quality programmes are all about is to use this TCP-IP concept. It really helps to give them a purpose and create that missionary zeal in them. I tell them:

The ‘T’ is for technology. You are getting into the technology world and of course it is important for your success to understand technology, to develop new technology, and to continue to acquire new skills and knowledge. But this technology is no good if you don’t have ‘C’ – customers who will pay for the technology, or customers who are happy with the technology. So having a grasp of technology itself is important, but it is not sufficient in and of itself. You must understand what your customer wants and why they want it. Then you package your technology to do this. In order to understand what your customer wants and how to best give your customer what he wants, then comes the ‘P,’ the process.

So I help them understand the role of process in this whole chain of technology and customers. I help them understand the need for processes and how they play a meaningful role in translating your technological products into customer delight.

With respect to information and people, you have to realise that the high technology workforce is not like factory workers who easily follow your instructions. They are highly educated people and that is why we must take a different approach to all of this. It’s the distinction between a labour-intensive economy and an information-and-knowledge-intensive economy. Here, nothing will work by force. You have to influence people by creating a cause, by creating a mission, and helping them to identify their position in the whole process and how they can contribute. I help them to realise how all of this will contribute to their own growth first, before we talk about the growth of the organisation.

In terms of my senior management, I have had to take a different approach. I have had to help them identify the context, or the purpose, for why they want these quality initiatives. I am very frank and honest with my superiors, but not at the cost of their dignity. Within certain boundaries, I do not hesitate to confront them if it is needed. So, in terms of these quality programmes, I have had to confront some of my most senior managers and ask them these types of questions: “Do you know what you are getting into? Do you want a set of certificates to hang on your wall, or do you really want it to translate into business results?” I have even told them that if they were just looking to get some certificates to hang on the wall, that I was not interested in getting involved.

While I saw that senior management was committed to this quality process, I felt they were reluctant to get involved. There is a difference between commitment and involvement. So I told them that I wanted their involvement and that would come only when our context was very clear and our goals in that specific context were clear. So it was both a negotiation and education process with my management. And at the same time, I was helping everyone to identify the cause, the context, and make sure that all of our actions were aligned with that context.

I have led brainstorming exercises that helped the senior management identify the reasons for why they wanted to do these quality programmes and have these quality certificates. My fundamental focus there was to help them identify the context of what they wanted the quality team to do, so that we could make sure that we did everything within that specific context and not just in a mechanical manner.

At the workforce level, I also needed to show them what benefits they would get from this process and then link it to the benefits that the organisation would gain. Focus and purpose were very much present here – and that’s how it links to my way of defining spirituality as an approach to fulfilment.

As a result of all of this, when we engaged in a quality programme to be certified as a Bell Labs, we were able to become certified in just one year’s time, which is the only time this has happened in the history of Lucent Technologies. We not only received this quality certification, we also got a few other quality certifications in the same timeframe.

Narendran, Parantha – Czech Republic

“Strategy Director for Eurotel in the Czech Republic”

Spiritual Theme

If I think here of how spirituality affects me at work, it would be that spirituality challenges me and makes me grow.

Empowering people

Now that I am in this company as a leader and not as a consultant, another principle I have is to try to help the people I work with to achieve their best potential. To get them to look upon work not as something that they just have to do, but as a way of living life – to get them to see that they can do things differently, and can have a better career and do more things with their lives. I also try to get those who are very focused on their work to realise that there are other things they must do in order to have a balanced life. I also try to mediate between people and ask them, “Why do

you have these problems in getting things done? Is it because of your ego? Is it a problem of communication?" I try to help the people I work with in a very practical sense.

I do run a small team at the moment. The way I have tried to develop that group is to give them challenging goals, which make them grow. In order to get things done, we have to learn to communicate better and to trust each other. However, I believe my success here is limited, as they tend to only come and talk to me when there is a problem. I see them therefore more as a group of individuals who are working more or less together, not as a well-structured team.

This is an area where I think that spirituality and the objectives of an organisation happily coincide for me. I think that when a leader believes in empowering individuals, he has the best interests of the company at heart, and can use the empowerment as a vehicle to this end. Having the individual realise his potentials along with the spiritual aspects, and having the organisation develop itself at the same time, are my primary and secondary goals. I regard empowering the individual and making him learn to some extent as an end in itself for that person; and if it helps the organisation and all of the remaining people in the organisation, that is great.

But I do not want to improve my ability to empower people so as to benefit me personally, for example by helping me to get a better bonus at the end of the year, or to be better recognised for my achievements. Whereas this would not be the case for a leader who looks upon employees not as human beings to be empowered, but simply as means to ends – such as company profit and one's own wealth. I would look upon such a leader as focusing not on employee empowerment, but on achieving his own criteria, his own bonus or whatever as a primary goal.

Raghavan, N. S. – India

"Founding Director and former Joint Managing Director of Infosys in India"

Spiritual Theme

"Love and trust" automatically came to my mind as my theme.

Being open to new ideas and experiments

I tried some interesting experiments in Human Resources at Infosys. When we were recruiting the new head of HR, I talked with him and asked him if it was okay for the current HR team to speak with him. He said he didn't mind, so I called the team who would be working for him. I told them to spend an hour with him, ask him any questions, and then come back to me and tell me how they felt about him. So they went and interviewed a person who could become their new boss. It worked out very well.

Similarly, we had a team of four people to whom I gave the job of deciding their own salary increments. I gave them the total amount that was available for pay hike and let them decide to share this amount. I had them sit down in a room and decide, then come back to me and let me know. I also gave them a few rules. Rule number one was that it could not be distributed equally among the four. And rule number two was that they all had to agree as to the distribution among the members. Initially, each had the attitude that his/her contribution was better, but once they got over that, then it became a very open discussion. So I really was fortunate to have a free hand to try all kinds of experiments at Infosys.

Raman, Ananth – USA

“Chairman of Graphtex, Inc. a manufacturing company in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

“Awareness” and “Realising Divinity”

Unity of thought, word, and action

There was a time when we were introducing ISO 9000, which was a system of quality control measures for our company. One of our companies was a job shop where we do specialty items for our customers. Since these products are made for specific applications it is extremely difficult to standardise things and is a very complicated process. This made it a difficult environment to introduce these types of quality measures, since it involves a lot of rigid procedures.

The expert said, “This is all very simple. All you need to do is write down each of the procedures that you are already doing. You don’t have to make any improvement; you don’t have to say anything else except exactly the way you are doing it. This has nothing to do with right or wrong, you simply say what you are doing and do what you say.” Even after he said all of this my fellows were still completely worried.

One evening I was thinking about this while attending a study circle with my spiritual group. I saw that all of this was simply talking about unity of thought, word, and action. So, I called in my employees and gave them a talk about unity of thought, word and action. I told them, “This is nothing but the concept of having what you feel, what you write and how you act be the same. This is all that ISO 9000 is about.”

So we went all over the company and said, “The company’s objective with ISO 9000 is to have unity of thought, word and action.” If I had used the word spiritual to describe the basis of this concept, I would have probably gotten some negative reaction. To me I didn’t feel that I needed to tout this as spiritual. It was just truth and honesty, that’s all. When I explained what unity of word, thought and action meant, they understood the concept very easily.

Sometimes they would even come back with an example such as this: “If a customer wants us to deliver a product the next day and we know it is going to take one week, usually we tell them it will be the day after tomorrow so we can buy some time. Can we do that? If we do, then it disturbs the unity of thought, word and action. So, what do we tell them? Do we tell them the truth?”

They started raising all of these questions throughout the departments; I was amazed at the chain reaction that began. So I told them, “Let’s not go mad about this unity of thought, word and action. Let’s have a monthly meeting where we can discuss these problems where you find it difficult to be totally truthful.” I tried to help them see the difference between telling a customer, “no, it won’t go tomorrow, we are having difficulties,” which is the truth, versus “it will go day after tomorrow,” which is a lie. In this way they could still buy some time without promising something which was not going to happen. We continue to have these monthly meetings where we examine these difficult situations and look to see how we can solve them with a unity of thought, word and action.

Sinclair, James E. – USA

“Chairman and CEO of Tan Range Exploration, Ltd. in the USA and Tanzania”

Spiritual Theme

My theme for spirituality would be “Live it.”

Quietude and introspection

At one time I had a desire to understand why two people with the same opportunity and background didn't have similar results, and how this happens. I also wanted to know what it was in people that differentiated individuals throughout history. When I looked deeper into this, I found only one thing in common among the more successful people: introspection.

What is introspection? It is quietude. What the young men at the Sathya Sai University in India want, what I want, and what you want, is to be a conduit of sorts for this Divine essence to materialise in whatever form it chooses to be. Maybe we can do this by getting out of its way, and striving gets in the way.

Rather than saying, “If you do the following, the following will happen...” (because that will detract, rather than attract) you have to go and look to see what it was in those that have actually been successful and find that modicum of what you will now expand on. You're going to find, I believe (because I found it in every great individual), this personal constructive period of silence. Also, it was easy to understand who they were, and they had a well-defined personal or corporate goal.

So in my organisation, everyday we start here with meditation, right in this office. Previously, I had an office with hundreds of people and even then we started exactly the same way. I tell them, “Take your time and be quiet; begin all activity in silence. Before or after lunch, however you do it, be silent. And before you leave the office at the end of the day, be silent.” I've done this with hundreds of people, but I've never told them how to do it. Why? Because I don't know how to it; it does me.

The theory is that any activity done in silence will naturally slow down thought and will open the individual to that which is true spirituality. Everything else is preparation. I think silence speaks to silence; I don't know why. People worry too much about how they're going to act in the corporation and not enough about their “being” in the corporation. So I remind them, “It is not your job to get anywhere. It is your job to be here. If you can quiet yourself in the moment of any problem or shock, then you will be able to sit back for a moment and practice what this is all about.”

There is no key to how to foster this in others. You can't give anyone a definitive way to open their channel, except the following: stop trying. And by stop trying, I mean to quiet your mind. Quiet does something; silence is powerful.

When you live spirituality, the quietude will start and there will be a time when there will be a perception of a monolithic block of silence that sits somewhere above your shoulder and all of a sudden you will start to get a feeling of “who am I?” in the sense of “what is it that tells me I am?” And the answer will come in the perception of a sound. It is that silence that is the capsulation, if

there is any, of all the miracles, and all the powers, and all the creation, and all of the change that ever existed in the world.

If you have the good fortune of finding your way to Sathya Sai Baba, a universal spiritual teacher in southern India, you will have these moments of quiet; he gives you everything you need. There's nothing left out and there's nobody who can avoid this happening once you open yourself up. Why? Because you cease trying to stop something wonderful from happening. But then the needs of humanity, the need to save the world and do wonderful things, and to be noted for having done that, tends to find its way in. I believe that as long as we have a human body, we will never be free of greed.

Vrethammar, Magnus – Sweden

“Former President for Europe of Pergo Flooring in the UK”

“President of an executive coaching and business development firm Creability AB in Sweden”

Spiritual Theme

Spirituality is an opening process. And then the question is, “What are you opening up to?” I would say love, as long as I am very careful in how I define love. Love can be, on an energy level, a very encompassing and still impersonal energy. So, if one considers this type of love, I would say that my theme is “opening up to love.”

Opening up others to their potential, their self, and greater responsibility

I have often thought about how I can contribute to the process of “opening up” in others. My personal feeling here is that the way you can do this changes over time. When you first open yourself up to spirituality, you can very easily find yourself becoming a missionary of one kind or another. You feel that your experience is good, and you want the whole world to experience specifically what you have experienced – not necessarily the good that *others* have experienced, but what *you* have experienced.

Over time I feel that that missionary attitude does become more and more balanced and attuned to circumstances and other minds. You begin to realise that others exist, and that there is far more than just your own self-imposed importance. Then, hopefully, I think it turns to being an inspiration to others for their opening up. This would be more an implicit, rather than explicit inspiration; it takes place without having to say anything about it.

I think this change has been there for me in both my life and work – and quite dramatically. When I think of spirituality in my work life, I think about how I used to be a missionary, and the fact that that belongs to my past. I could even declare now that I am no longer a missionary of spirituality.

One way I have experienced this process of opening up in others was with a very traditional business like the paper mill business. It had a very traditional, production-oriented, corporate culture that was formed way back in the 1920's, and we turned it into a process-oriented organisation. I am extremely committed to the process-orientation, to organising an organisation according to how things happen, not according to what people know and can do, which is a functional approach.

We gave a lot of responsibility down the lines to the machine operators, sales representatives, customer service, and so on. There was much less control from above. People can accept such responsibilities because they live much richer private lives today. They tie into the Internet, they are on local sports club committees, and they do a lot of work privately that qualifies them for much more sophisticated and independent work professionally.

So during this process, we had a lot of opportunity to have the attention of the people, and that included the opportunity for spiritual development, because people felt they were opening up. This is the key word for me to the whole thing: they were 'opening up' to their own potentials. They were 'opening up' to their own self.

I think that opening up is a challenge, which means you have to challenge the organisation to open up. You have to do that by giving people the responsibility so they themselves can open up. No one can open up anyone else. And you have to do this in a structured way. The culture should be process-oriented and organised according to how things are made, rather than what people can do at the moment, because people can learn.

When you give people a better responsibility, which means they understand what they are doing from A to Z and they understand their contribution to the whole, they can see the inputs and outputs and their roles in this transformation from input to output. Since they are now contributing to a 'whole', they feel that, within their own groups, they are a company within the company, and they can participate in building the whole and in the house-holding of the company.

I would also add on here that turning an organisation towards spirituality, or towards opening up the potential of the individual, which I think are identical, is a long process that takes time. It is like quality, it takes maybe a decade, and you need a decade of quiet, stable circumstances in order to succeed. Because what you are bringing out in people is their belief in themselves and that is a very fragile thing to start with – it has to be pampered, in particular in the beginning, for the process to continue. You come to realise that their belief in themselves is like that of a little scared rabbit coming out of its hiding place; if you push too hard on it, it goes down its hole and hides for good.

Since the business world is changing so rapidly, it's very seldom you can have that stability and safety for the roughly ten years that is required to turn the organisation fully towards spirituality. But whatever shorter time is available can enable the organisation to cope with some circumstantial pressure and still stay spiritual - because surely it will be seriously challenged underway and management changes can limit the process. This is also the reason I want to be implicit, because if I work implicitly with spirituality, a lot of individual changes happen and that stays. If it is implicit, it stays; if it is explicit, it goes.

There was also one very bad experience I had when I was making an analysis for process-oriented change in an organisation. A new management came in and used that analysis for the purpose of zero-based budgeting the company. So they took away all of the values, all of the aspirations, and they just did the cuts. This destroyed the company for 10 years and it was a huge operation. This all happened because the management did not understand spirituality, or the quest or principle of opening up and what it can do for the individual and the company.

CHARACTER – DISCIPLINE (7 STORIES)

Behner, John R. – El Salvador

“Former Country Manager for Nabisco in El Salvador”

Spiritual Theme

“Realising God by serving others.”

Only saying “serving everyone” does not include that, which is the most important to me, which is to realise my oneness with God.

Ensuring discipline through strength and humility

The authority structure was such that, in terms of discipline and guidance of the people, each of these department heads would have to go through the personnel manager to recommend that somebody be disciplined. Then they would all have to meet and listen to why the person wasn't doing what he was supposed to be doing, before anything would take place.

This was sort of a check and balance, because if somebody got mad at somebody else, they just couldn't take it out on the person unilaterally. They had to go with the person to the personnel manager and sit down and listen and find out what had really happened. In that way, you limited the authority of your department heads. That was very important, in order that things would work well. I wouldn't get involved, unless there was some really gross abuse of authority.

Every year we did a survey of our employees' satisfaction, and we tried to make sure that we were getting better. When we could detect areas where we were not doing so well, we would put a lot of attention on that. I was a real stickler on morality, and this was one way for me to check.

For instance, in Latin American countries all the men think of themselves as lovers, and they don't look at it as being immoral. For them, it's just part of a normal, macho behaviour. One of the questions, which the employees would answer anonymously, was if they had a problem with sexual harassment. By the numbers I could see if it was serious or if there were only one or two cases. We would pick up the answers by department; in that way we could see where there might be a problem, and we could put more attention to it. We would especially look at the supervisors, because they could threaten by saying, “You'll lose your job, if you don't go out with me.” We wanted to keep this type of thing under control. I let people go for that – I would throw the guy out. Everybody knew that I was really strong on that, so they were very careful.

What do you do in a situation when you get mad at somebody, and then you cool off and figure that maybe you were a little bit wrong? I actually had this situation. I can remember one day I got really mad at a lady who handled the merchandising in the supermarkets. I don't remember for what reason, but I really got mad at her and told her off. I didn't fire her or anything, just told her that she was doing wrong, and I balled her out for it. Then I thought I was really mistaken. I got into my car and drove to the place where she was working and apologised to her and told her, I was sorry. Ever since that day that lady would have done anything for me and for the company. She had been there before me, and when I left she was still there. You have to be humble, even if you are the boss.

Budin, Philip – USA

“CEO of Royaltons, Ltd. in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

For me spirituality is equanimity.

Firing an employee

My firm, Diversified Investors Corp., owned a company that processed debit and credit card transactions. We had an account executive who was handling a large supermarket account for our company. One day this account executive went to the office of the man who was the head of the supermarket chain, but the man wasn't there. Our account executive went into the man's office and was supposed to leave a note for him, but instead he walked out with the man's personal computer. He hid it under a newspaper and then put it in his attaché case, walked out and took it home with him. So, one of our employees, who was in an executive vice president position, took the personal computer from the desk of the top person of this supermarket chain.

I did not find out about it until about a month and a half after it happened when the executive from the supermarket chain personally called me and told me what had happened. Our employee was caught on video actually taking the personal computer. This man had seen the video the evening of the day it happened, called our employee at home, our employee said it happened by mistake and brought him his computer back that night.

I thanked him for telling me and the next day I brought the young man in and I fired him, very calmly, with love and with peace. I knew he had to be let go. Did I feel bad for him? Yes in one way, and no in another. I spoke to him and told him that we all have to be responsible for our actions now or at some point in the future. So I guess in a way he was lucky that this was happening to him now and not at some point in the future, when he might not know what it was happening for. He apologised and said it wouldn't happen again; however, within our company he could no longer have been trusted.

Because he was interested in spirituality, we had a small spiritual talk before he left. We talked about right action, right state of mind, consciousness, and being clear about our goals. I have had some brief contact with him since then; however, my choice is not to associate with him in the future.

Govindan, Rajan – USA

“Former Senior Managing Director with Bankers Trust in the USA”

“Chief Operating Officer of Bear Stearns Asset Management in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

To me this would be “happiness and contentment” and “to act with right conduct.”

Exploring the issues of when to let employees go

I feel as if only in the last 7 years or so have I internalised the spiritual principles that I've learned. Before that time, it was more superficial, although it was always important for me to be honest with a customer and to admit a mistake if I made one. If I did not act this way, it would really bother me. And I tried to get everyone around me to be the same way. I made it a rule with anyone who worked for me, that if we made a mistake we must call the customers and tell them.

The challenge in all of this for me was what to do with a person who made the same mistakes over and over again. You have to realise that at Bankers Trust, our retirement account customers were huge corporations like IBM and General Motors, so if we made the same mistake even twice, we were running the risk that they would fire us. Also, we would from time to time have to write off millions of dollars due to these mistakes and that would affect every person's salary and bonus pool. So there were major consequences if we did not do our job correctly.

For years, I simply let people go the first time they made a mistake. Today it would be very painful for me to fire a person, whereas in years past, I didn't feel the same way. I was looking out for the customer and that is what justified my actions. Today, looking back, I feel much differently and would try to help them not make the mistake again. If they did make a mistake a second time, then I would try to help them find another place in the company where they would be better suited.

Now I am aware of the suffering that these decisions have caused others and their families. Previously, I felt it was their problem, not mine. Today, I feel their pain and it bothers me, that is why my outlook on these situations has changed.

At Bankers Trust, ultimately I was responsible for the managers who had to let people go. Unfortunately, I was not strong enough spiritually to help them see this from a spiritual perspective. However, I did tell them to be fair and help the person distinguish between right and wrong. I also tried to give a person as much severance compensation as I could when they were let go.

There are some exceptions, but for the most part, I know that people make mistakes because they are not competent, not because they don't care. I think that levels of intelligence are God-given faculties and not everyone is equal. Maybe we hired the wrong people, maybe they had been allowed to stay too long, or maybe they were promoted more than they should have been.

This is very similar to what is happening in the school systems today. Students are being allowed to pass on to the next grade, without really learning what they needed to learn. This happens with employees; sometimes we keep giving them higher promotions when they really don't fit. I think it is so important to evaluate people properly according to what they are capable of doing and then promoting them accordingly. I feel that this will keep them from getting hurt later in their career. And this will keep the company from getting hurt as well. To me this is what I am talking about when I talk about acting with a righteous attitude.

Throughout my career at Bankers Trust, we had a tremendous focus on results. People were fine, but they were secondary. After I left, I would have thoughts back to all of the people that I had fired; it was a very tough game there. I felt overwhelmed by the fact that in some way I would have to pay for all of that. So when I joined Lord & Abbott, I decided that I was not going to work in this way anymore; I wanted to see how I could make things different.

This was difficult at first, because they wanted me to let people go who were not performing well from the very start. However, in the four years I was there, we didn't fire a single person. Some people improved because they were willing to change, and some people did not improve. I think everyone is capable spiritually, but I don't believe that everyone is equally capable to work in the commercial world. Some people think quicker, some are better at sales, some are good at technology, everyone is different. Some people fit in organisations and some people don't, this is just how God has made us. I think that when you work for a corporation you do need to have certain attributes.

Even knowing all of this, I was determined not to fire anyone. So I tried very hard to coach the people and help them to improve. It wasn't easy because so many of them did not want to change. I had a lot of pressure to fire the people who were not productive, but I was not willing to do that. Now I sit back and wonder if that was right or wrong. I did it because I thought, rightly or wrongly, that is what a spiritual person should do. I felt that I needed to figure out how to improve the people, rather than just fire them. My guess is that 80% of the people were willing to change and embrace new things and 20% were not.

I cannot say for sure that they would not have been happier if they had been let go. Maybe they could have found something better for them. I wished I had tried this experiment ten years earlier in my life and could have learned what I have learned now. I do feel that people do not want to be "extra baggage" for the company, so when the people are not able to change in the direction that the organisation is going, it may be good to let them go.

I think that it was good for the organisation that a large percentage of the people did change. They had a valuable history with the company that was very useful. So getting rid of them and starting again with new employees would not have been a smart thing to do. I think that the ability to want to change people for the better is what all management should want to do. I don't think that people intentionally do not want to work well; I think they were shaped by the previous management. So now it was important that we help them understand how to change.

Narayana, G. – India

"Chairman Emeritus for Excel Industries, Ltd. in India"

Spiritual Theme

My spiritual theme is: Noble actions, noble feelings, noble thoughts, noble responsibility.

Reprimanding employees

You must build the people for success and appreciate them. When you want to reprimand, do it like a dose of medicine. Appreciation is like food: morning breakfast, afternoon lunch, evening dinner. But, discrimination and punishment you do like a medicine: required dose, required time, doctor is present. If you give continuous medicine and no food, man will die. If there is only food and no medicine, there is no correction and improvement. Regular food and required medicine ensures health and strength. Integrate recognition and correction appropriately and optimally. So in an organisation, reprimands and punishments should not be given continuously, like a mother-in-law might do. It should be mother-in-love, not mother-in-law.

Whenever any person comes to me, in each transaction I evaluate: “When he leaves from my office, has he become small or has he become tall?” I measure. If he has become small, I will not let him go; I make him sit. Only when he becomes tall he can go. Only when he becomes happy he can go. An unhappy man cannot leave my room. If I were to abuse someone, when he went away I would be unhappy, and he would be unhappy. I may fight with him for eight hours, but I keep at it until he is happy. An unhappy man cannot escape from me. Only a happy man can escape from me. And everyone can judge whether the man is happy or not.

Narendran, Parantha – Czech Republic

“Strategy Director for Eurotel in the Czech Republic”

Spiritual Theme

If I think here of how spirituality affects me at work, it would be that spirituality challenges me and makes me grow.

Dismissing people

Sometimes with very hard decisions I have to think about how I can justify my behaviour. The question I ask myself most frequently in a work context – and probably in a personal context as well – is: “Am I doing the right thing?” And this often starts a pyramid of analyses as to what is the right thing, what is motivating me to do this, which outcome do I want? Often I ask myself these questions, since I have to justify my actions from a spiritual and values perspectives. Does this decision fit with my natural set of values? If this is positive, then it is the right decision. This optimally encapsulates every other decision or question that might come about when I am looking at the particular problem.

For example, when dismissing people I have to think about their interests, the interests of the people who they work with, and the company’s interest. In one way, you have an obligation to dismiss someone who is not performing well, because their poor performance hurts everyone else in the company and you have a responsibility to look after their livelihood – that is why you are entrusted with a certain position. If you are not strong enough to do it, then you are failing in your responsibility.

At the same time you have to ask yourself: Is your ego getting in the way? Is your impatience getting in the way? Can you help change that person, to help him or her achieve their potential in life? I am constantly aware of my doubts, my reflections.

If I am going to fire someone, is it the right decision? If my answer is yes, it is because it is right for the organisation, it is right for what I want to achieve for the group, and it is probably right for the individual in question because it will help him at a later point in his life, even if he doesn’t recognise it at the time.

I do expect people who are being fired to react negatively. But if I do not let a person go, I will go home in the evening and look at myself and say, “Because I didn’t fire this person, there are two other people who are better at their job who deserve their bonus or who deserve to be promoted, who might lose their jobs because I didn’t fire the person here and now.” So, I think this is when you learn that being honest with yourself also requires you to be strong.

Raman, Ananth – USA

“Chairman of Graphtex, Inc. a manufacturing company in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

“Awareness” and “Realising Divinity”

Terminating employees and downsizing the organisation

I would say that the most difficult moral dilemmas that I have had have been around terminating a person if they have done something wrong and letting people go due to economic difficulties.

There was a plant manager in one of the companies who was passing off some of the company drawings to our competitors. We learned about it and warned him a couple of times. But he didn't stop. Since I knew his family I called his wife and told her what was happening and told her he would be facing serious problems if he did not stop.

He still did not stop doing this, so one day I had to dismiss him. I knew that his family would experience great difficulties with this kind of dismissal, as it was in the middle of a deep recession. While I felt that dismissing him was troubling to me initially, when I finally made the decision to do it, I felt that it was important in order to protect the company as a whole. I felt that I had to perform this role, that I must do it. This is how I answered my own question when I asked myself if I was doing the right thing in this matter.

Again, there was another occasion where we had to let a group of people go because the economy, market and business were bad. I felt really uncomfortable about this decision and asked myself, “Am I doing the right thing?” I knew that this would cause the people difficulties, as it would likely be hard for them to find jobs. But at the same time I had a responsibility to protect the company and the shareholders. I knew that I could not continue to pay salaries to these people and not get the economic benefit from it. As a responsible executive I knew that I needed to reduce the cost of our salaries in order to protect the company.

I agonised over this decision for several weeks and finally I decided to let this group go. I have never been that comfortable with the decision and I still do not know what the right answer is. We gave them some extra weeks of pay and assured them that when we were able to hire again, we would take them back. In fact, we did hire most of them back in the following year.

Ranganathan, V. V. – India

“Formerly a Senior Partner with Ernst & Young India”

“Co-founder of Pinnacle Opportunities, a non-profit and Compassites, a product incubation company in Bangalore, India”

Spiritual Theme

“Seeing God in everyone”

Responding to the press and to an employee, due to a major mistake

We have a world-wide practise within Ernst & Young called Environment Management Services. These are all great professionals who care for the environment and who are doing wonderful jobs in terms of helping the government and industries within the different countries to address pollution and other environmental problems. These are all dedicated and socially responsible individuals who have chosen a profession like this.

In one of the projects, there was a preliminary environmental impact report that was submitted to the local authorities in order to clear a project that involved the construction of a dam. In a study like this, you must study the flora and fauna to determine what would happen to the environment if the dam were built in this area. You must also study the local communities to determine the social consequences of building this dam. This is a study that is done within the confines of the country's environmental protection laws. Based on the report that we submitted, it then had to go on to a national board before permission could be given to start the project.

Unfortunately, an over enthusiastic young man, who had only been in our firm for about six months, was working in this area. He had been trained as an environmental engineer in the USA. He cleared an environmental report in less than a week; this was something impossible to do within our firm's normal review process. What he actually did was to use a draft from another report without going through our review process. Then he sent the report to the state board on our letterhead, and they adopted it.

There were a lot of environmental activists who wanted the building of the dam to be stopped and they suspected that this clearance had been done to please the company who was going to build the dam there. So the press picked it up and said that Ernst & Young was a big fraud in how they cleared this large environmental project report.

This young man had committed a big mistake by not following the review process of the firm. I got a lot of calls from the press because they saw this as a very juicy story. I would tell them that I wanted to know the person with whom I was talking – that I was happy to sit and talk with them in person, to have a person-to-person conversation about the issue, but I would not answer their questions over the phone.

When a journalist came to my office, we had a totally different conversation. I asked him, "If someone brought you a story and you published it in good faith, and then you found out it was completely wrong, what would you do? You would come with an apology the next day. This is exactly what has happened here. The firm has not done anything wrong. It is unfortunate that a very immature person did this who was in his position for less than six months. We are very sorry that this has happened. We have officially withdrawn the report and we have agreed to not handle this assignment for our client."

Another reason we did not want to handle this account further with the client is that at the time we were not completely sure whether the client might have influenced this young man to do what he did in such a short span of time.

Some of the larger newspapers came to me and spoke with me for an hour or so and decided it was not a story to be published. Others who did not come and talk with me did publish the story according to what the environmentalists had told them. So we also had a lot of international press. Even though this was actually a small incident, it was really blown out of proportion.

We got many e-mails from environmental groups in the USA, UK and Europe. I would patiently take each one of them and reply. My spiritual context of “seeing God in everyone” helped me in this situation a lot. It allowed me to come out with the truth, nothing but the truth and to put it into perspective. It helped me to speak from a conscious mind with no ulterior motives whatsoever. It helped me to not get mentally agitated at all. I believe that it is only because of this spiritual basis that I could be so tranquil inside. Because there was so much excitement around this situation, it would have been easy to have become a slave to my sensory perceptions.

Management decided to have this fellow leave the firm. Since we have an exit interview process, I was asked to do this interview with him. I took care of him and treated him with respect. I had him come here to Delhi and stay in a comfortable place. When we sat down for the interview, I used the following Sanskrit verse to drive home the point to this young man who was preparing for another career in his life:

“Ayusha Ghandamaadaaya Ravi-rasthamayam Gatha:Ahanyahani Bodhavyam Kimateth Sukrutam Kritham.”

This means: “The Sun as it sets everyday, takes away with it a part of the ‘ayusha’, meaning life – age of people. Therefore, as you engage in every action during the day, you should weigh every one of them to ensure that it is in fact a ‘Sukrutam Kritham’ – meaning a ‘good deed indeed.’”

I also told him that I wanted to hear from him an honest account of what had happened. I assured him that I was not there to reprimand him or to even take a confession from him. I told him that I just wanted to understand what had happened so the firm could prevent it from happening in the future. I told him this was a lesson for me as well.

He was very forthcoming and honest. He told me that he was under tremendous pressure from one of the officials of the local authority. This man told him that a report had already been done recently in an environment that was similar to the one he was working on, and that there was no need to spend so much time. So he was actually foolishly lured into believing that this report was just a small piece of paper that needed to be submitted, that it was just a formality. He didn’t understand the ramifications of this report going out of an office like ours. So he followed what this man said and gave it to that man.

After he told me all of this, I told him there was no point in crying over spilled milk. Here was a young man who committed a grave mistake. He paid for it, and now there was nothing more that he could do. So I told him that he was atoned of the sin that he had committed – he was already receiving the consequences for what he had done. But I also wanted to be sure that he had learned the lesson he needed to learn. I asked him to focus on that lesson, since he had the potential of a very good career ahead of him. His wife was pregnant at that time also.

We cannot blame the entire firm for what he did. There are actually only a few individuals who would have played into what he did. I believe it was a conspiracy of unintentional accidents. I do not believe it was done with the intent to collapse a large organisation and hurt the employees and shareholders.



An inquiry into the nature, activities and results of leading from a spiritual basis

SECTION IV

Leadership

During our 1½ – 2 hour interviews with leaders who participated in our international research programme, we asked each one to share specific stories that exemplified how they drew from their spiritual view of life to respond to a challenging situation.

In this section you will find 35 stories related to the broad topic of “Leadership”. These stories are organised according to the following categories:

- **Career (8 stories)**
- **Empowering others (9 stories)**
- **Principles (9 stories)**
- **Spiritual experiences (9 stories)**

This section contains only the stories excerpted from the full interviews. To review the career history, current responsibilities, spiritual views, and other aspects of leading from a spiritual basis, please refer to the complete transcript of each leader, which can be found in either Volume 1 or 2 or the on-line knowledge-base at www.globaldharma.org/sbl-research.htm.

THE FOLLOWING STORIES ARE CONTAINED IN THIS SECTION:

Leadership – Careers

- Contemplating a resignation – Amber Chand
- Replacing a CEO – Ricardo Levy
- Hiring a spiritual-based CEO – Ricardo Levy
- Making career choices – Parantha Narendran
- Aligning career with spiritual values – Anand Pillai
- Moving to a new position – S. K. Welling
- Facing a false accusation – S. K. Welling
- Making Wise Decisions – Janiece Webb

Leadership – Empowering Others

- Facilitating with silence – André Delbecq
- Helping people manifest their gifts – Nilofer Merchant
- Fostering collaborative work – Nilofer Merchant
- Showing GOD – G. Narayana
- Giving love – G. Narayana
- We can accomplish all things – G. Narayana
- Empowering people – Parantha Narendran
- Being open to new ideas and experiments – N. S. Raghavan
- Current style of leading – Janiece Webb

Leadership – Principled

- Dharmic leadership – Francisco Canada
- Practicing universal principles – Stephen R. Covey
- Leading with character and leaving a legacy – Stephen R. Covey
- Moral campaign with spiritual values – Alvaro Cruz
- Speaking the truth and being available – Niran Jiang
- Exercising equanimity – Victor-Krishna Kanu
- Honesty and openness – Niels Due Jensen
- Understanding inner control during an extremely difficult situation – Anand Pillai
- Being in the present moment – James Sinclair

Leadership – Spiritual Experiences

- Finding strength from a spiritual centre – Thomas Daugherty
- Discovering a spiritual path as a leader – André Delbecq
- Stepping forward with spirituality in business – André Delbecq
- Prayer and Suffering in the Life of a Leader – André Delbecq
- The value of prayer – Nilofer Merchant
- Ego and fear – Parantha Narendran
- Aligning career with spiritual values – Anand Pillai
- Following intuition – James Sinclair
- Facing a false accusation – S. K. Welling

Chand, Amber – USA

“Founder of the Amber Chand Collection: Global Gifts for Peace and Understanding, an internet-based company in the USA that markets the products of artisans from around the world”

Spiritual Theme

Compassion, balance, grace, and friendliness are words that ring as a spiritual theme for me. Yes, this is a “God-being tapestry.”

Contemplating a resignation

Two colleagues suggested I resign as the ship was sinking because my reputation in the world would be tainted. I reflected on this deeply. I wrote a letter of resignation that I did not send:

December 27, 2004

Dear Eziba:

A Journey of a Thousand Miles Starts With a Single Step.

We have walked many thousands of miles together, embraced by a vision of what is possible when an enterprise emerges for the good of all, knowing that it offers a sense of responsibility towards those it will serve. As one of its founders, I have always felt that what our vision offered was bold, confident, inspired. We envisioned Eziba as an antidote to globalization, an innovative, entrepreneurial company that saw its social responsibility not as an addendum, but as the core of its very best business practice. We sought a balance between a disciplined fiscally responsible business and an inspired vision that sought to change the world, ‘hand by hand’, transforming impoverished communities of talented artisans.

We celebrated the creative human spirit and spoke of the preservation of cultures, social sustainability, and the ecology of business as a holistic model of economic development. Our horizon was one of visionary promise based on the pragmatic realities of sound business practice. We were pioneers seeking to walk a bold course, one that sought to inspire, sustain, strengthen and support the communities that we sought to serve – our shareholders and investors, our customers, our vendors, our employees, and our artisans.

But today, as I stand here, I see around me the rubble of a company that has imploded and finally lost its confidence. A company that in the end, as it desperately sought to survive, made agreements that it could not keep (leaving behind a trail of disappointed and angry vendors, customers and investors). A company, that in its last months, fell prey to bankruptcy laws, and legal manoeuvrings that made no distinction between widowed basket weavers from the Rwandan genocide and large expensive catalogue printing houses. In this world, with all its rationalized legal frameworks, no one could be treated preferentially, each an ironic testament to the democratic principle at work. Was this, after all, what business as usual succumbs to when it takes its last gasp?

Undercapitalized, under financed, poorly managed, misguided, unethical, exploitative, self serving, greedy, arrogant... ..these were now the attributes ascribed to Eziba, the dream child of the socially responsible world, the one that would survive the Darwinian shakeout of dot com failures, the one that would become known as prize-winner in the competitive battlefield. What had happened to this spectacular vision for Business as Unusual?

Charged with creating signature products for the company under its Gifts That Give Back brand, I have made every effort to contribute to the company's revenues and to support its precious mission by launching products that were distinctive, socially responsible, and supported global artisans in vulnerable communities. The Rwandan Peace Basket, the Kabul Bracelet and Jerusalem Candle of Hope were my personal testaments to this work. And now, as I stand here amidst all the legal rationalizations and vendor workouts created with a detachment that horrifies me, it becomes clear to me. I can no longer continue to support an enterprise that has expelled from itself its very moral core, its deepest convictions, its reason for being. How does one defend the fact that, whilst a large Vermont bank is paid off its loan of \$500,000 in December at the height of the company's holiday revenues, some of the poorest producers in the world, the Rwandans, the Bolivians, the South Africans, are not. How does one support this cold and harsh reality?

My voice in the boardroom is a lone voice. My sense of moral outrage is dismissed by litanies of legal rationalities. I am told repeatedly not to push my private agenda. And I realize that I am completely powerless to change the course of Eziba's final destiny. By the very fact that we have not morally stood by the poorest, the most impoverished communities around the world, who have stood by us in our heyday, at this very time as the company is about to suspend its operations, means only one thing-

I MUST CHOOSE TO RESIGN.

I did not send this letter after all. For even though I wanted to walk away and separate myself from some of decisions that were made which I did not agree with, I also felt it irresponsible for me to resign and abandon the company in its dying moment. And as one of its cofounders I felt a particular sense of responsibility – that of a mother wanting to protect her child! Were I to have walked away, I would never have forgiven myself. It was a painful decision, made at a painful and turbulent time.

Levy, Ricardo – USA

“Co-founder and CEO of Catalytica, Inc. in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

“Oneness”

Replacing a CEO

In 1997, we decided we wanted to grow our pharmaceutical side and become a more significant player with our customers, who were multi-billion dollar companies. We knew this would be a major change for us. We looked for a new facility and found a huge one that was being sold. We had an outstanding board that looked closely at this acquisition and really questioned what we were doing as we proceeded through the difficult negotiations.

As a result, we were able to do what seemed impossible: a small, research based company with sales of less than US\$12 million and a market value of less than US\$80 million purchased this magnificent US\$300 million facility. Needless to say, it put us on the map. All of a sudden, in one step, we found ourselves with 1.8 million square feet of building space, 60 acres of industrial site and 600 total acres of land. In making this move we became a company with sales of over US\$300 million. And then we continued to grow even larger than that over the next four years.

In that growth, it became evident that the people I had hired as CEO's for our subsidiaries in the early years were just not the right people for the new stages of the company. So I began to question, "How should I deal with this?" I was the one who hired them thinking they could be part of the company's growth, and now I had to acknowledge that this was a mistake.

In retrospect, as I faced this dilemma, I could have used one of the more important spiritual lessons that I have learned over the last few years: the ability to quiet the mind and let the unresolved issue sit while discerning the right path. My inclination was to "map out" the full solution before acting. I ended up avoiding corrective action because I was focused too much on the complications of the consequences of the action. In a strange way, by following my action-oriented personality I ended up being paralysed. I just felt too uneasy to stay in the space of total unknown to permit discernment of the right approach.

The whole concept of living in the unknown has become more and more important for me. I was never trained in how to do this. In fact, as an engineer I was trained to do just the opposite. My comfort zone was always to look at the alternatives and selecting an option, to analyse the problem in decision tree fashion and have a clear sense of the consequences of the various branches. Not having a plan was very unprofessional.

Now remember, we were a public company by then and we had significant earnings and profits. Just announcing that we were going to replace the CEO could cause tremendous headaches in and of itself. I did not have a clear path to the solution, and I was not spiritually mature enough to stay in that unknown and accept it until I came to a solution that I could act on. Therefore, I just procrastinated and found multiple reasons why I shouldn't do anything at all.

In retrospect if I had been more seasoned in my ability to live in the unknown and accept it, I could have handled this much better. Interestingly enough, I believe that I would probably have made a replacement decision of those CEO's much sooner. As it turned out, I did eventually make the change and it was the right step.

Hiring a spiritual-based CEO

When I hired a replacement CEO for the energy business I was much more aware of the spiritual connection to my business leadership activities and one of my important requirements in identifying this new CEO was my sense of that person's spiritual centre. I acted accordingly and chose a man that I felt was quite genuine. He was with us for less than three years and even though I felt very disappointed that he was leaving, due to our spiritual connection I felt at ease that he was making an honourable move. I trusted what he was telling me and I trusted that he would not do anything that would be detrimental to our company. This made it so much easier for us to part and for me to step in and go from there.

It was not difficult to gain a sense of his spiritual connection; I believe that people who resonate with this domain naturally know when others also resonate with it. In our initial interviews, I did not have to ask him specific questions. Because this is now such a natural part of who I am as a leader, it comes across when I speak and the dialogue flows easily with the resonating partner.

Over the years he and I related to each other in a spiritual way. If we were facing a difficult decision, he would pray about it until he felt comfortable that it was the right path. I understood his discernment process.

Narendran, Parantha – Czech Republic

“Former Strategy Director for Eurotel in the Czech Republic”

“Private Equity Consultant and Investor”

Spiritual Theme

If I think here of how spirituality affects me at work, it would be that spirituality challenges me and makes me grow.

Making career choices

In some ways, I feel like I have moved around a lot in my career. I don't think it is bad at a junior level, but when you get to the senior level you recognise the impact that it has on the organisation as a whole. For example, when I left my first company after the accountant had been fired, I was a reasonably high profile consultant. There were 60 consultants in the UK within that company. Because I left for my own personal reasons, others started to leave for a variety of reasons – some of them also because the accountant had been fired. Within a period of six months, that company collapsed. This made me recognise that if you do take a strong ethical position, it puts a lot of responsibilities on your shoulders.

I think there is one principle that I try and bring to my work, though I can't always live up to it, and that is to make the right decision irrespective of the consequences to myself. For example, I am wondering now how much value I add to Eurotel. I've been given this position as Strategy Director and the Board seems to think that I am doing a reasonable job. But I am not sure whether I am the right person that they want or require. This is a moral dilemma for me right now.

I know that the CEO of the company is someone who launched a number of other mobile operators in Europe. He is very successful and highly recognized in Europe and has a tendency to handpick people to follow him around. My boss is one of those and is possibly being groomed to be the next CEO of the company. I don't consider myself in his league. But if I were to be in that position, I think I would be terrified of the obligation that I would then have.

I do believe that there are times when you are pushed into a situation where you have an obligation to no longer consider your own interests, because you have to consider the best interests of a larger group of people. And I feel that to some extent you must be ready and willing to give up a large part of any apparent choice or freedom you might have. I do feel that I am being pushed more and more in this direction. And I suppose that I have a fear of losing any freedom that I might have. I have more fear of this potential loss of freedom than I suppose I do of being a leader, a decision maker.

I think that if I do accept that I am the right person, then eventually I can be the person who can deliver good stakeholder value. In that case I will have an obligation to everyone, to all of the stakeholders, to do this regardless of my personal view, whether I feel that I am capable or not. I should be strong enough to do this.

If I really want to make an impact with this company, I would stay here a bit longer than my original three years contract stipulates. However, I have always seen myself as being more of an academic, and I would be comfortable returning to that environment at some point in the future; but at this point, I'm not sure if I will get that opportunity. If I ever become convinced that I am not the right person then I would have to leave. That is, if I thought that the company no longer would benefit from my services, I would tell this to my boss even though it would mean that I would lose my job.

Pillai, Anand – India

“Head of the Learning and Development Department for HCL Technologies in India”

Spiritual Theme

Connecting with God, the source of “being.”

Aligning career with spiritual values

In my former position as Vice President of Sales and Marketing, I kept realising there was so much to spirituality and to life. The more I read and studied the Bible, the more I found answers on how to manage stress, how to manage time, how to manage money, and how to manage people. I continued to find so many things. As a result, I decided that I did not want to get so caught up in the corporate world that I didn't have the energy to share my spiritual values and how I follow them as a manager.

I did not want to leave my job, so I began thinking about how I could create the opportunity for doing this. I realised there were a lot of management schools that were already calling me to come and give 1-to-2 hour lectures on topics such as leadership and values-based communications and management. When I looked at what I was doing closely, I saw that I was spending about 20 hours per trip, given my round-trip travel, to go to these schools and give these short talks. I decided that was not good for me and was not the best I could do for the students. So I told them, “Let me create some one-day, one and a half day, or two-day workshops for you where we can do some more intensive work.”

I did this for the Indian Institute of Management and Research in Bombay, with a workshop on communication. Most courses speak of communication from the outer view, which to me is the external manifestation of something much deeper. For me, true communication comes from expressing what is in your heart with full integrity. More importantly, even when you are not speaking in words, your non-verbal communication is there and it's more powerful than words.

I spoke to them for two days on this subject of communication and the Director was very excited. He wrote to our executive vice president and told him what a great experience it was for me to come and deliver this workshop. In his exuberance he stated in his letter that they wanted to offer me a consulting faculty position.

The executive vice president forwarded this letter to the president of HCL and unfortunately it caused a lot of difficulty. The president was basically ready to take a strong action and tell me that I should stop this type of teaching and training outside of the company completely. Then the vice president intervened and told him, “Listen and just think carefully before you take any strong action. Training is Anand's passion, preaching is his passion, and coaching is his way of life. You

cannot stop him from doing that; he has so much to share and offer. The moment you stop him from doing this he will leave.” The president responded that he didn’t want me to leave and he didn’t want to put a restriction on me that would have me leave.

At first, I told the president that I would not do any more training. But the evening after that meeting I really prayed to the Lord. I knew that the training I was doing was for the good and many people had been blessed. So many managers had told me that they had not seen this view, this dimension of spirituality. I had created modules on time management and stress management and used verses in the Bible to illuminate how to live them in a spiritual way. I could not imagine a life of not doing this type of teaching and training.

During this dialogue process with the president, I realised something very important. My core competence was living a life of spirituality and then translating my life’s experiences into something I could teach to others and train them to implement in their own work. I realised that when I worked based upon my core competence, I was able to find a way to bring it to my work in a productive way.

The president called me back in the next day and the first thing I said to him was, “I want to take back my words that I will not do any more training because it is a conflict for the company. I cannot do that. I assure you that if you give me your favourite key responsibilities I will fulfil them.” As I spoke to the president I was fully prepared to quit if I needed to. After listening to me they asked me what it was that I wanted to do. I told them that I wanted to be involved in this type of training in a greater capacity. So we went back and forth for one week discussing what it was that I could best do in the company. As a result of all of this, I am now the head of the Center for Leadership and Management for HCL.

Webb, Janiece – USA

“Former Senior Vice President with Motorola Corporation in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

I think my spiritual theme would be “God in everyone.”

Making wise decisions

I was just offered a very large position within Motorola and I turned it down. People were shocked and told me I shouldn’t turn the job down. I was honest with them when they asked me why I turned it down. I said that I knew they didn’t really want me on their team – they simply wanted me as a figurehead. I knew that my leadership style was not what they wanted. I knew it was a wise decision and I had no difficulty making it.

Welling, S. K. – India

“Former Executive Director of HMT International, Ltd. (Hindustan Machine Tools) in India”

Spiritual Theme

Purity of character through faith, bhakti (devotion), trust and love

Moving to a new position

In December 1994, the watch business group was doing very badly. I was in the Chairman's office when suddenly on a Sunday, the Chairman telephoned to me saying, "I am going to lose my right hand." I said, "What do you mean sir?" He replied, "You know the watch business is in very bad shape. I want you to take over the watch marketing in this company." I said, "Fine I will take over, no problem." Monday morning when he came he showed me the order and I just got up from my chair and went to take over the watch marketing.

Right through my career, I have never ever asked anybody for a transfer or for a promotion. I take things as they come. I always think that whatever comes is an opportunity given by God and I try to make the best use of it. For a good ten years, up to my shift in 1994, I was with the Chairman working directly under his nose. The whole company had respect for me and I was a man with authority, the Chairman's man. Twenty six thousand people knew who Mr. Welling was.

The moment I was told that I was being shifted out, I had no reservations at all. When I moved to watches to corporate planning, people felt that I was taking a demotion. Many of my colleagues said to me, "What is this? You have been working at the highest office. This move is a climb down for you."

But heart-to-heart, that negative way of looking at it never entered my mind. I don't like to hear negative aspects that are not true. So I said, "No, whatever has happened, happened. That phase in my life is over. A new phase is going to start and I am not the least bothered whether I am working in a big office." I never for a moment thought that it was a climb down for me. It was for others to have such thoughts, but they never ever came to my mind when I started in watches.

When I moved into the position, what I saw was that the company was in trouble and I wanted to do something for the people. I saw that if something wasn't done, people might lose their jobs and this part of the company may even be shut down. From day one in my career, I have felt love and affection for people. Even as a young man of 23 straight from college, I had nearly 100 – 110 workers and that love and affection was already embodied in my system. I got into the human relations from this very young age.

I have always had an inner feeling that I must do something for people. I feel so much for people that I am willing to sacrifice for others. It comes very natural for me. This feeling has come I am sure from my earlier association with spiritual teachers and the way I was brought up.

Facing a false accusation

I will tell you of one of the most difficult things that can happen: that is getting wrongly accused. That has happened to me. Despite the faith that I have, I have gotten accused of something that is not true. If anyone else were in my situation, they would likely have had a heart attack.

The last two years (2000-2002) have really helped me to see within myself more than I would have done otherwise. Had this thing not come to me, I would not have gone deeper into my spirituality and myself. I believe God has made me go about this in order to become a more perfect spiritual man. This is the way I look at it.

In the midst of this situation there was not an iota of thinking that I should appear this way or that way. I replied truthfully to the allegations made. It just came from inside. The person who was

helping me said, “Mr. Welling, you are so clear. This is the first time I’m seeing something that is automatic truth.” I said, “What else do you want? This is the truth. This is exactly what happened. Somebody has altered his assessment of the whole thing. Let us educate him.” The last thing I want to do in my life is to blame someone. I never condemn anybody. I blame myself first. If he is doing something against me, it is unfortunate for him. He will face it. It doesn’t stick to me at all.

These things continued and inquiries were held. I have never worried about it; everything just happened – truthfully, I let everything take care of itself. I had no problems at all because I am very clear. My hands are clean; my heart is clean. I stand for truth. I have not done any harm to anyone. I never showed an iota of discomfort or displeasure or frustration to any of my employees. I conducted myself as if nothing had happened to me because I was very clear in my mind.

You know, I believe in God, faith, truth, and I said whatever has to happen will happen. If the system does not recognise truth, I will leave the company and go. When I came here in 2000 April as Executive Director of HMT International, I just did not bother about whether people looked at me as an officer with some black mark against my reputation. I don’t let it upset my life.

In the three years since this false accusation was made against me, despite the allegations, despite the case, my mind is very clear. I have done more work in the last four years than I have even done in the previous four before that. People all around me, in all areas, continually wonder, how is it that this officer’s case has not been cleared and yet he doesn’t bother about it? He is doing his work as if nothing has ever happened to him. Because I know that I did not do anything wrong, I am prepared for whatever happens, they may release the charge or they may send me home.

People come and tell me, “Sir, the employees are feeling hurt for what has happened to you.” But I’m not feeling hurt. Being very frank, it doesn’t hurt me. I’m a firm believer that the truth will prevail in the end. But even if the organisational/management system that has to take care of the truth doesn’t take care of the truth, I will smilingly go out of this building and go and sit at home. I will not be unhappy. This is not my failure, but the failure of the system. I am very clear about that.

I am still trying to understand where does this confidence and peace come from in me? This is so embodied in me that it is difficult to explain. It comes naturally. I do not have to make an effort; it automatically comes from within me. One thing I *do* know: I have a clear conscience. Probably, this is because of the spirituality I believe in.

LEADERSHIP – EMPOWERING OTHERS (9 STORIES)

Delbecq, André, D.B.A. – USA

“Former Dean of the Santa Clara University School of Business in the USA”

“Professor and Director of the Institute for Spirituality and Organizational Leadership at the Santa Clara University School of Business in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

Wonder is the theme that naturally comes to me. I have always loved innovation because I am continuously thrilled to see what was once only imagined (and partially imagined at that) emerge as an institutionalised reality. Innovation scholarship plumbs the mystery of creativity from concept to actualisation within large-scale systems. I have always had and continue to retain a great excitement associated with building collaboration between bright minds seeking to understand a complex problem and engaged in the discovery of a creative solution.

But now my sense of wonder is even enlarged. My eyes are opened to how the unimaginable emerges in all of creation; e.g. in nature in a blossoming flower, in the movements of the tides and the mysteries of the sea. I am increasingly appreciative of the insights from each of my colleagues when they join together for innovation. So the world is filled with wonder, echoing the limitlessness of the transcendent.

I have always had a good sense of adventure: I love boating, motorcycling, and travel and I am willing to take risks. But in the past these activities have been something that I felt I had to work hard at, something I mistakenly thought depended primarily on me. Now I see such efforts as tapping into a mysterious abundance. I don't do much of anything actually; I realise how little I do. This is not to diminish the importance of what each person does, but rather to increasingly see how God (the transcendent mystery that bears a thousand names), is at work in people and in nature. This allows for increased inner joy even in the midst of the greatest difficulties.

Of course I still have days of great unknowing; I still sometimes experience desolation and anguish. Yet even these experiences don't disturb a deep core sense of peace and wonder as my spiritual journey unfolds. It's as if the fire just gets brighter and brighter as my life unfolds.

Facilitating with silence

I received a great gift by being appointed a “Contemplative Practice” Fellow, a grant from the American Council of Learned Societies funded by the Nathan Cummings Foundation. This grant helped to support my sabbatical in 1999. The Contemplative Mind in Society programme brought academics from law, business, architecture, political science, the arts, religion – from all academic fields to share together how contemplative practice could be included in teaching. I would listen to the stories other academics would tell regarding meditation as part of pedagogy. For example, a trial lawyer or an architect would discuss how they incorporated silence into their teaching. And as I listened I began to consider how meditation could be included in my seminar.

I particularly recall a professor who teaches the Holocaust, Apartheid, and American slavery. She includes all three tragic human stories in one course because she found that if she taught just one instance of great human evil individuals would say, “Look what you've done to us/them.” But if she taught the great tragedies together people came to understand that all cultures have histories of

human evil. She also discovered that the study of these tragedies left students either with unresolved bitterness or anger. Meditation became essential to absorb these sorrows without disequilibrium.

Returning to my own effort, I began to conceive how to apply meditative discipline as an intervention in situations associated with leadership. For example, early in my spiritual journey, I was co-ordinating an international meeting with academics. We were involved in the leadership of an organisation that was going through a very difficult time of transition. There were some people who had been with the organisation for many years and were very concerned about maintaining important aspects of the culture that had been part of their history. But there were new members who were searching for the integration of new technology and perspectives from their generation. The organisation was also getting larger and needed to become much more professionalised and systematised. All of these elements came together around restructuring the governance of the organisation. People were passionate regarding both the past and hopes for the future. The meeting became more and more tense.

Based on my experience with the Contemplative Mind in Society Fellowship, I suggested the group enter into silence, and simply be with the meta-goals they held in common, letting go of all preferences regarding means. Now I have spent my whole life as a group facilitator, and thought of myself as a skilled negotiator. I am very good at dealing with intellectual challenges and moving toward innovation. But here, for the first time, I did something that I had never done in my life: I facilitated silence. After 5 minutes of silence, I asked the group to reflect out loud regarding the noble purpose of the organisation, what we really wanted the organisation to achieve for others seven generations from now. I then asked them to return again into silence. This time I asked them to reflect on the question: "What are the gifts of each person sitting at this table that we need to remind ourselves of?" After this period of silence I asked everyone to go for a silent walking meditation in the garden. Only then did we come back together to address the problems.

When we returned we had an electric sense of having stood at the edge of a terribly destructive confrontation – one that could have immobilised the organisation for a decade. This destructive confrontation was avoided because we went into silence. Such an intervention would have never occurred to me prior to the deepening of my spiritual journey and the Contemplative Practice Fellowship. It was a very different leadership intervention for me.

I remember reading about the wonder of knowing you have been in the presence of God. I remember at the end of this meeting feeling that whole meeting had changed its character after those periods of silence. I developed new confidence that meditation works in the height of ferocious organisational conflict, and that silence is a form of prayer appropriate for inter-religious settings. In this meeting we had many religious traditions present: Muslim, Christian, Jewish and even atheists. This "spiritual" intervention had rescued the meeting.

Merchant, Nilofer – USA

"President and founder of Rubicon Consultants, a marketing consulting firm in the USA"

Spiritual Theme

"Living authentically" speaks a lot to me.

Also, I am looking outside at that beautiful tree and thinking about how spirituality helps me to draw strength from the roots of life. The tree doesn't get nourishment from the leaves. And yet what do we see when we look at the tree? We see the branches and leaves and not the root system. So I think spirituality is about defining where our true strength comes from as the root system. We have a chance to consciously change the wellspring from which we draw our nourishment. So another theme would be "a wellspring of nourishment".

Helping people manifest their gifts

When I was managing people while leading in my corporate positions, I always wanted to find a way to use their gifts well. So I often spent time with them personally, rather than on their job duties, and talked to them about what they personally most wanted to do. I would ask them what they felt their natural gifts were, such as organising or working with teams. I tried to help discover what their base strengths were. I would then tailor their jobs so that they could use these skills and strengths optimally. In places where their job required them to do something that they just did not really have the gifts to do, I would find someone else on the team to help them. I would create a team around the responsibility, so that they would not fail.

I feel that the greatest thing a leader can do is to help people manifest their gifts fully. Finding out what those gifts are, and helping people to match up well to the job they have, is an important process to me. I also took a long-term view of this and tried to find the best place for the employee in the organisation, which sometimes meant that they would not stay in the job they were in. Sometimes I had to create a new role for them and sometimes I helped them to acquire new skills so they could find a new job outside of the company that would be better for them.

I never wanted to spend any energy trying to get a person to do something that they did not want to do. I always wanted to find a way to bring out the person's essence. One gift I have is that I can often see what other people cannot see, so that is what I can offer to people that I lead. I can give them a reflection through my words, which may or may not be true for them, but will help them to look and see for themselves what is true for them.

This has been an important part of my own spiritual development, and I have tried to pass that on as a leader. I've always had an opportunity to impact all of the organisations I have worked in by trying to use the people well. This was true whether it was the people who worked directly for me, or the social impact I had while trying to contribute to the organisation as a whole.

Fostering collaborative work

I think that the greatest conversion I have had spiritually in my work has to do with the many times in my career where I thought that I was responsible for finding and convincing others of the right answer, and that everything that happened was based on my sheer intelligence. In other words, it was up to me to figure it all out. I thought that if I just worked harder at the solution that I could come up with something. I worked from sheer individual will power and intelligence.

Now that I look back I can see that this type of attitude and behaviour is what caused me to fail the most. Yes, I might have made it through the project okay, but did I really contribute to the organisation? Did I really help people to unite around a common vision? To me, this way of operating was not what I would consider to be good leadership on my part.

Today, I feel that it is much more about working together in a collaborative way. It is much more about inspiring others to use their gifts well. It is really not about me at all; I am just a vehicle. I may be the person with the most resident knowledge, so I will offer that, but I do not own it as if it

is solely mine. I no longer cling to my identity or to the results having to be a certain way. I no longer feel that I am the one who has to have the right answer. When we all work together and apply our gifts, we will manifest what is right. And, whatever it is that I need to learn and offer will manifest itself as well.

Initially, this was very difficult as a consultant because clients are paying you to be their resident expert and to be a driver of their solutions. But now I have a balance between being in the driver's seat, or leadership position, and also letting them steer the course. I will sit in the seat and drive, but I make sure that they take ownership of where they want to go and how they want to get there.

I often use the following metaphor with my clients. I tell them that we must be very open in our communication so that we can be successful together. I also tell them that we must agree on what we want as a shared goal and we must agree on the roles we will all play. And I am willing to be their chauffeur so that they get where they want to go. If you think about this metaphor you'll see that even a chauffeur has to communicate clearly to the people in their vehicle so that he or she knows exactly where they want to go.

Narayana, G. – India

“Chairman Emeritus for Excel Industries, Ltd. in India”

Spiritual Theme

My spiritual theme is: Noble actions, noble feelings, noble thoughts, noble responsibility.

Showing GOD

When I first came to Excel I showed them “GOD.” What is GOD? Group plus Organisation plus Direction equals “GOD.”

To build the **Group**, I did not put the system first; I put the people first. At first there were only five people in the top management group, each holding two responsibilities. We built a top team and used to meet in that room at 11 o'clock everyday and take decisions together. We discussed and talked together about all fields in the company, everything was a group decision.

To build the **Organisation**, our personnel manager became the R&D manager, our technical manager became the personnel manager, and our marketing manager became the manufacturing manager...all because we were making group decisions together.

To build **Direction**, we practiced 5-D's: discussion, decision, drive, determination, and destination. First we discussed, made decisions, initiated drive, worked with determination, and finally reached our destination. For example, the chief executive builds a team to discuss and search for opportunities, and everyone participates. Then he empowers the leaders, including himself, to make decisions, which initiates the process with resources. The chief executive then authorises the functions to provide the drive to strive for implementing the goals. He inspires the people to stretch with determination to complete the process. *Only when you stretch is there a contribution.* The organisation reaches the destination and there is success, and this elevates the team for the next situation.

Leadership is this process of participation (in a group), decision (for the organisation), and initiation (of the direction). When you have shared vision, shared mission, and shared plan, you must have shared success. Shared success is a *prasad*, a fruit. When success comes, credit must be shared and then fruit must be shared. We did all of this, like partnerships with trust and responsibility.

Management is getting work done by people, by authorising them to meet the organisational goals. Management involves attitude first, then work, then leadership, and then energy. The proper attitudes are dedication, sincerity, honesty and nobility. If you do sincere work, then management will be a dedicated management. If you are dedicated in your endeavour, then you are a loving nurturer. If it is an honest contribution, then you get empowering leaders. If you are an empowering leader, you get honest contribution.

When you are connecting with others, there are four means of connection: power, wealth, knowledge, and strength. (In Indian spiritual terms, these four qualities are related to the goddesses named *Shakthi*, *Lakshmi*, *Saraswathi*, and *Parvathi*.) Then there are three types of consciousness: *creation*, *continuation*, and *conclusion*. (In Indian spiritual terms, these three qualities are related to the gods we call Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshwar.)

Creation comes from *knowledge*, continuation comes from *strength*, and conclusion comes from *wealth*. If you have money, but no knowledge, then connect and gain knowledge. If you have knowledge, but no strength, then connect and gain strength. Thus, the *power* is found in connection; so connection power is super power. The moment you connect the ego is lost.

All of these models come from GOD – Group, Organisation and Direction. This is what we did in Excel – we built this group process; everywhere I went I did this group process. As a leader, I must set the example. I must run myself before I can make others run. First must come leadership by example: intend and achieve, plan and achieve. If you have a plan, then you will achieve because your intention will go. It's a great learning process and provides challenges; when they do it, then they celebrate.

I spoke about this at the Baroda Management Association and after that people from other organisations began to write to me and asked me to come and implement GOD (Group, Organisation and Direction) for them too.

Giving love

Last year, 2001, was our worst performance and was a challenging year. After a lot of growth, we – and all other companies in the industry – did badly. It was our worst profitability. We have recovered now. How?

First of all, when trouble came, I took the responsibility. I went into introspection and then created new leadership. I respected the old group of leaders, and without disturbing them we created all new leadership: not bringing in new people, but rearranging the people we already had. We recognised the people and put them in new positions of leadership to challenge them.

We gave continuous love to every person, and made sure that each one was successful. I know we cannot succeed as a group until each and every person has succeeded.

In giving continuous love, I do not get tired, even though I travel all the time. My wife thinks that I will be coming home tired and she gets tired waiting for me. But I come running and she wants to

know how that can be. But then everyone gives me love back, so I receive more than I give. Love energizes. No matter where I go, I give love, even more than information.

I also give love by speaking often to people outside of the company. For the last four years, I have not slept in the same place more than 3 days. Yesterday I came from Baroda, day before yesterday I was in Delhi. This morning I came here to Mumbai, tomorrow I will go to Lucknow to speak. One day after tomorrow, I will be in Hyderabad. Whoever calls me I will go, I never say no. So I advise people to give continuous love.

We can accomplish all things

We can accomplish all things. All things occur because of four elements: place, time, situation, and self. So, what is the right place? right time? right situation? right person?

The right place is here. When I am here, I should not be there. I should not be in Baroda now with my wife. When I am in Puttaparthi, I should be in Puttaparthi. So right place is here.

The right time is now. I understand the secret of being master of past, present, and future. I cannot think of what has happened yesterday or whether I will drink coffee after one hour. Time is in my hands; I have time even when fully working. Time is two things: subjective time and objective time. Objective time is fixed, subjective time changes. There are no time limitations. I can attend to anything and I fulfil all commitments I make.

The right situation is the current situation. There is no other situation. I must be in this situation here, now, in this company, this year, this month, this day. I ask, "How can I do better?"

The right person is me. Who has to do this? Me, not the other person.

So we accomplish things in and through the here, the now, the situation, and the self. But there is something more: *everything is interchangeable*. You can achieve anything if you have these four. This is how I have not failed in my commitments in the last 10 years since the *Gita* came.

For example, I was invited to get an award from the Baroda Management Association on May 29th and I agreed. Then I was invited to be in Calcutta to be the marriage priest on May 29th. So I told the association I must be in Calcutta, but they said sir you are receiving the cup award. Who should receive the award then? My wife! Oh, better! She received the award; I conducted the marriage. So person, place, time, and situation are interchangeable.

As another example, our vice president's son was getting married and everyone on the board and all top management must attend the son's marriage in Poona, November 19th. So I too must be there; if I do not attend his marriage, he will be unhappy. But if I attend the marriage, I cannot attend the company board meeting in Chandigarh, where as chairman I have to approve 5 crore rupees of investments (US\$1 million). What to do – I have to be in Chandigarh, and I have to be in Poona?

Time and place are interchangeable. If you cannot be in that place at that time, you can be in that place some other time. So I went to Poona on November 18th. In India, marriage ceremonies occur one day before. All the relatives are there, but the public is not. All the relatives, bride and groom are there and the ceremonies are going on. So I went and they said, "Oh Gurujee you have come today, you have come one day in advance." "Yes, I have come one day in advance and we have all the time, I will spend the whole evening with you." Not only that but my brother and aunt who live in Poona came. I went with the family. They were doubly happy.

I said to my vice president, "Tomorrow is the marriage time for your son, and I have a board meeting in Chandigarh, so today I am here. Are you satisfied? Tomorrow I must be in Chandigarh." He said he was already happy that I was there, but tomorrow is also important.

Person is also interchangeable, so I told him my brother and aunt will attend in my place. I asked, "Is that OK?" He said, "Wonderful! You have taken so much trouble to come." So I gave him a gift in advance, blessing in advance, everything in advance. Next day, I was in Chandigarh. At 11 o'clock I rang them up on my mobile while they were in the continuation of the marriage ceremony, and I told them, "I am with you."

So time, place, and situation are interchangeable; person is also interchangeable.

Narendran, Parantha – Czech Republic

"Former Strategy Director for Eurotel in the Czech Republic"
"Private Equity Consultant and Investor"

Spiritual Theme

If I think here of how spirituality affects me at work, it would be that spirituality challenges me and makes me grow.

Empowering people

Now that I am in this company as a leader and not as a consultant, another principle I have is to try to help the people I work with to achieve their best potential. To get them to look upon work not as something that they just have to do, but as a way of living life – to get them to see that they can do things differently, and can have a better career and do more things with their lives. I also try to get those who are very focused on their work to realise that there are other things they must do in order to have a balanced life. I also try to mediate between people and ask them, "Why do you have these problems in getting things done? Is it because of your ego? Is it a problem of communication?" I try to help the people I work with in a very practical sense.

I do run a small team at the moment. The way I have tried to develop that group is to give them challenging goals, which make them grow. In order to get things done, we have to learn to communicate better and to trust each other. However, I believe my success here is limited, as they tend to only come and talk to me when there is a problem. I see them therefore more as a group of individuals who are working more or less together, not as a well-structured team.

This is an area where I think that spirituality and the objectives of an organisation happily coincide for me. I think that when a leader believes in empowering individuals, he has the best interests of the company at heart, and can use the empowerment as a vehicle to this end. Having the individual realise his potentials along with the spiritual aspects, and having the organisation develop itself at the same time, are my primary and secondary goals. I regard empowering the individual and making him learn to some extent as an end in itself for that person; and if it helps the organisation and all of the remaining people in the organisation, that is great.

But I do not want to improve my ability to empower people so as to benefit me personally, for example by helping me to get a better bonus at the end of the year, or to be better recognised for my achievements. Whereas this would not be the case for a leader who looks upon employers not

as human beings to be empowered, but simply as means to ends – such as company profit and one's own wealth. I would look upon such a leader as focusing not on employee empowerment, but on achieving his own criteria, his own bonus or whatever as a primary goal.

Raghavan, N. S. – India

“Founding Director and former Joint Managing Director of Infosys in India”

Spiritual Theme

“Love and trust” automatically came to my mind as my theme.

Being open to new ideas and experiments

I tried some interesting experiments in Human Resources at Infosys. When we were recruiting the new head of HR, I talked with him and asked him if it was okay for the current HR team to speak with him. He said he didn't mind, so I called the team who would be working for him. I told them to spend an hour with him, ask him any questions, and then come back to me and tell me how they felt about him. So they went and interviewed a person who could become their new boss. It worked out very well.

Similarly, we had a team of four people to whom I gave the job of deciding their own salary increments. I gave them the total amount that was available for pay hike and let them decide to share this amount. I had them sit down in a room and decide, then come back to me and let me know. I also gave them a few rules. Rule number one was that it could not be distributed equally among the four. And rule number two was that they all had to agree as to the distribution among the members. Initially, each had the attitude that his/her contribution was better, but once they got over that, then it became a very open discussion. So I really was fortunate to have a free hand to try all kinds of experiments at Infosys.

Webb, Janiece – USA

“Former Senior Vice President with Motorola Corporation in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

I think my spiritual theme would be “God in everyone.”

Current style of leading

When I first took this position as senior vice president of technology, they gave me this office; it used to be the office of the current president of the corporation, so it has a history to it. Because there are so many new players here now, sometimes being an old-timer with a 30-year history is not a good thing. Some people even think that if you've been here more than 2 years it's not good. Also, because I worked for the former president for 10 years, people think that I have special privileges, which is just not true.

In truth, I believe that a position of power is a position of serving the people around you. I feel it is my job to serve people. No one gets anywhere by themselves. To me relationships are very much like making deposits into accounts. I cannot be constantly taking out from the account; I must continually make deposits. I must give energy to people and not be draining their energy all the time. I am only powerful when my energy is connected with other people's energy and we do things as a team. While there are some sages who are powerful in and of themselves, I have not earned that level yet.

I have found that it's okay to admit that you are spiritual and have certain beliefs at work. However, it's important not to try to get someone else to believe the way you do. When I know that someone can handle the subject of spirituality, I talk and discuss it openly. When I know someone cannot handle it, then I just "be" my spirituality and I don't talk about it openly. I can be it, I can show it, and I can exhibit it in my behaviour and attitudes, and I don't have to label it.

I am aware of the fact that sometimes my level of joyfulness can bother people. Sometimes they get angry and attack me in unfair ways. So for the longest time I hid my inner joy and shied away from sharing it here at work. But now I am not afraid to share who I am and let it shine through.

I am only as good as the people around me. I can only achieve our organizational goals by nurturing the people. I encourage people to really believe in themselves and not let the system dictate who they are. I also encourage them to forget about the corporate hierarchy structure. I don't identify myself with my title; that's a label that someone decided to put on me, and I ask them to not let that get in the way.

Sometimes I lead them and sometimes they lead me, I have to be willing to let them do that too. Yes there are times when a command and control style is necessary in a crisis, but for me it must be needed and it must be short lived.

What I have done is make sure that I communicate in every meeting that anyone can speak up and say whatever they need to say to me. I tell them that I am just as fallible as they are and that I don't have any more grand ideas than they do. I feel that I am here to learn from them because they know much more about what we're doing than I do, and I tell them that. I encourage them to enlighten me if I say dumb things. I remind them that we are all trying to solve this problem together.

LEADERSHIP – PRINCIPLES LEADERSHIP (9 STORIES)

Canada, Francisco Roberto – Argentina

“Director and Partner of Errepar S.A., a major publishing firm in Argentina”

Spiritual Theme

Loving God.

Dharmic leadership

A concept from Buddhism and Hinduism, *dharma*, has had an enormous impact on my life. Ordinarily, this term is translated into “right action” or “acting righteously”, but to me this term is much more than these definitions imply. For me it really is all about *responsibility*. Given my nature, my wish to be silent, it is difficult for me to be a business leader, but my concept of dharma as *responsibility* has helped me a lot to understand my position as a leader. It has also helped me to make the difficult decisions I have had to make, such as those dealing with firing people.

Whenever we have to make a decision, and we don't do it in a *dharmic* way, in the long run it becomes obvious, that it was not the right way to decide and not the right decision to make.

On some occasions we have had to refuse publishing a book if it did not align with our principles, even if the book would obviously sell many copies and give financial success to the company. The managers are very focused on earning money, and in many cases they have proposed publications which were not *dharmic* - meaning in these cases that they would not inspire people to act in a proper way. Such books we have turned down.

In the beginning, this attitude sometimes created confusion, but little by little the employees understood that their work, and those affected by our work, was to lead them in the direction of spiritual growth. When we select a book for publication, we focus on quality, in the broad, spiritual sense of the word.

Covey, Stephen R. – USA

“Vice Chairman of FranklinCovey, a global professional services firm based in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

One of my mottoes serves as a powerful spiritual theme for me: “Live life in crescendo.” In other words, the most important work you'll ever do is still ahead of you.

Another such spiritual theme for me would be: “Educate and obey your conscience.” Educating as I speak of it here involves getting into the sacred literature of all the great traditions that have had enduring value and then consciously living true to what you have learned. The more you live true to it, the stronger your conscience becomes. A constant effort is required to stay on track with such stewardship.

Practicing universal principles

I just finished going through four countries in Africa, three countries in the Middle East, India, and Sri Lanka, with the effort to bring together principles that are universal and timeless. I taught from Hinduism, I taught from Islam, I taught from Christianity. I just did a satellite interview to China explaining what this material can do for a Confucian⁴ nation. I teach the exact same principles no matter where I am and show that there is a universal character to these principles. They are metaphysical, they transcend the outside physical world, and they guide all behaviour, all thinking, and many of them are built into assumptions that people make about nature and life.

If controversies arise or if people start feeling that I am being too religious, I say, "Let's just stick with those principles that we all agree on. Let's see if we can follow the principles of fairness, kindness, respect, the development and use of peoples' talents, having meaningful work, and living with integrity. Let's see if we can agree upon these, let's go to our hearts and our souls and live with integrity." That's what I am teaching.

Certainly principles have a moral and spiritual foundation, but no religion has a patent on them. They are not unique to any religion. They are universal and timeless. I have seen in organisations throughout the world that when there is a spirit of openness and synergy, all the values an individual organisation works with are essentially identical to those of other organisations. Yes, there are different practices, and the labels – the words used to define and describe the particular values may be different – but what is being said is essentially the same. It all deals with meaning and integrity.

The easiest way to see this is to look at the mission statements that have been produced. Although the organisations, including the leadership that developed the statements, may not at a given moment be living up to what these statements say, the statements themselves are basically saying the same things.

So if people have certain cultural definitions of what these universal principles are, and of what their values are, I say to them, "I'll just go with yours." The key is to live the values and to be true to the principles that underlie them, to have total integrity – to be integrated around principles – not around people or organisations. Integrity is the highest form of loyalty – and over time it produces loyalty. It's far better to be trusted than to be liked.

To be a spiritual-based leader is to have these universal principles integrated in your inner life and to be true to them in your actions, even when it's dark – when you have power over people and can do things and not be found out. When you have that integrity, then you have peace of conscience.

Leading with character and leaving a legacy

The other day I was in Kenya. In my recent book on *The 8th Habit*, I told the story of a man from Uganda named Stone, who was a professional soccer-player. He was well on his way to a career as a professional in Europe, where the big money is, the dream of all the youth there. During a game, someone hit him, on purpose, in a way that severely damaged his knee and ended his career dreams. Instead of becoming bitter or vindictive or losing himself in self-pity, he has used

⁴ Confucius (551-479 BCE) was a leading thinker, political figure, educator, and founder of the *Ru* School of Chinese thought. His philosophical, ethical and religious ideas provide the basis of a universal moral system that has survived even Chairman Mao's Cultural Revolution (1966-76) and to this day plays a fundamental, though often implicit, role in the mind-set of the Chinese people.

himself to empower underprivileged young Ugandan boys who would otherwise be lost in life, without marketable skills and with no role-models to follow.

Stone came over from Uganda to Kenya for my presentation. It was a very interesting venue. There was a big building with five different balconies, like a theatre in the round, and he was in the fifth one. In my presentation I tried to get people to see themselves as trim-tabbers, (a trim-tab on a boat is the small rudder that turns the big rudder that turns the entire ship), so they can be change agents no matter what their formal or moral authority is, and take the responsibility to leave a legacy. So during my presentation I showed the film on Stone which is included in the companion DVD to my book, and the audience became totally caught up in that film. They have the kind of poverty and the kind of problems that Stone had. The earlier regimes had literally devastated the institutions of the whole country, and children were often growing up without parents because of the AIDS-epidemics. There were so many orphans, and their living conditions and dreams were not very positive, to put it mildly. As a result, many in the audience were able to identify with Stone.

At the end of the film I said, "Stone, come on down here," and they were blown away. He came down, and then I interviewed him in front of the whole audience about what he has been doing to leave a legacy and how he has influenced tens of thousands of young men. One feminist woke up and said "Why don't you work with the young women?" and Stone just gave a sharp answer: "They don't have the problems that men have." He immediately made sense to her.

This guy is like a Mother Teresa in Uganda, and he is totally dedicated to helping these young men, not just with soccer, but as a life-coach so they can be responsible parents. And now they are coming back to him, showing him their families and the contributions they are making. He is immersed in his spiritual endeavour – serving the people and their communities. What a handsome guy, what a wonderful guy, what character and competence and quality.

Even there, on a stage and not on a soccer field, he was very, very pithy and very to the point in his communication. He said, "I am trying to get these kids to realise that they may lose a match, but they don't need to lose in life." He told the audience how he demonstrates for the young men in Uganda how they can follow their conscience and govern their lives – how they can start by learning to become good soccer players, then how important it is for them to become economically self-reliant, then responsible fathers and citizens. Stone explained how he is helping them transform themselves into trim-tabbers, into young men who have the will and discipline and character necessary to transform their society and to win in life.

Cruz, Alvaro – Colombia

"Former Minister of the Government of Colombia and Governor of Cundinamarca, Colombia"
"CEO of an engineering/building company in Colombia, I.C.M. Ingenieros Ltda."

Spiritual Theme

Love and respect others.

Moral campaign with spiritual values

I will tell about an event, which happened in 2000 when I was about to enter into the competition for governorship, when I was running against very traditional and very strong political forces:

I was visiting Whitefield in South India. On May 7 in the year 2000, the people there were singing devotional songs. The moment they were singing a poem about my spiritual master, I felt like I was experiencing enlightenment. This poem speaks of righteousness, truth, harmony, family, order, and peace. At that moment, when I received the essence of this, I adopted it to be my slogan for my election campaign. I applied it and talked about it in all my programmes and presentations thereafter. In no political campaign before had any politician ever come up with a spiritual slogan describing a moral situation. Adopting this poem really made me win. I always began my campaigns with these words, and I swept the voters:

The poem goes like this:

“If there is righteousness in the heart, there will be beauty in the character.

If there is beauty in the character, there will be harmony in the family.

If there is harmony in the family, there will be order in the nation.

If there is order in the nation, there will be peace in the world.”

2½ million people live in this state, which is located around the Capital, Bogota, but does not include it. I took this message to 69 municipalities out of the 116 there are in the State. In many of these municipalities one of the main ideas in my campaign was a mural painted by children where these words would be inscribed on the side.

Jensen, Niels Due – Denmark

“Group Chairman for Grundfos Management A/S in Denmark”

Spiritual Theme

Empathy, compassion, and love for my neighbour.

Honesty and openness

Another story has something to do with my priority to honesty, and having an open and honest conduct towards our employees. About three years ago we had at Grundfos a situation where we had far too many “wild strikes”. People stopped working for a day or two or three, just to demonstrate what they would like to see, or even just to protest towards the way things were run. What I did then was to write an open letter to all employees, telling them in a really straightforward way, that Grundfos was not able to continue with this behaviour from some groups of employees, because it would simply ruin our company.

To begin with this openness and honesty with our people was taken very badly by quite a few, but as time has gone by, people realise that I was right in telling the truth about what our company needed from them. Today I believe that my openness and honesty to our employees at that time really has changed the agenda for our whole company, when it comes to working more in harmony and in dialogue with each other on a daily basis instead of confronting each other with problems.

My philosophy is clearly that it is important to inform in due time about the things which you as a top manager are aware of, as to what might happen in the company, and first of all to tell about unpleasant things before the more pleasant things. Be open in your dialogue, and be very honest. Discuss with your employees also those matters, which might not make them happy. In this way

you will be able to create a dialogue and understanding, also for those unpopular decisions which now and then necessarily must be taken.

Jiang, Niran – Australia

“Formerly Senior Trends Manager for Coca Cola and Marketing Manager for S. C. Johnson in the USA”

“CEO for the Institute of Human Excellence in Australia”

Spiritual Theme

My spiritual theme would be interconnectedness, wonderment, and compassion.

Speaking the truth and being available

While many people ignore many calls, as a result of my feeling of equality and being connected to others, I have made the rule for myself that no matter what, I will always reply to a call. Out of respect for the person who called, I tell the truth. I might say that “I am not interested; I will not buy what you want to sell me, but I returned your call.” With co-workers, I try to be always there for them. When I am out of place – being busy, shutting my door – I know that I am also out of place with my spirituality.

It was always important to me to be truthful, sincere and kind to all people independent of their position in the company I worked with. It’s a challenge for a lot of people to speak the truth at work. We would especially talk about it when I was at Coca Cola, where it was the unspoken, dominating rule that you agreed with your boss, no matter what. But I strove to always speak the truth.

Kanu, Victor-Krishna – Zambia

“Former High Commissioner (Ambassador) for Sierra Leone to the UK, Norway and Sweden”

“Director of The African Institute of Sathya Sai Education in Zambia”

Spiritual Theme

Divine love is the central theme. Oneness is a parallel. Because if you say you love all, you do that because all are one.

Exercising equanimity

When we started the school we exercised considerable patience and equanimity, and we continue to do so. We hear a lot of things that some people say about us, and about the school; some of the things they say are not true, not pleasant, but we have remained calm. We do not respond. That is a spiritual quality. Sathya Sai Baba teaches us about patience and equanimity: be calm whatever happens. People praise you, they blame you; remain the same. This has amazed the people to an extent that they now have become friendly, because they see that we don’t bother. We are only concerned about doing our job, doing our duties. This is very important.

Why is it that people are happy with the school? It is not only because of the book learning; it's also because of the way the teachers behave in society. The way the teachers live with the local people gives the locals the hope that yes, this is different; their children who had been forgotten, their community, which had been forgotten, can be raised to high standards and be recognised for their achievements.

Pillai, Anand – India

“Head of the Learning and Development Department for HCL Technologies in India”

Spiritual Theme

Connecting with God, the source of “being.”

Understanding inner control during an extremely difficult situation

I must give you a personal example of how I responded in an extremely difficult situation by connecting with my spirituality – an example which can also be applied to work situations. A little more than two years ago, my son met with an accident: a fully loaded car drove over his right foot. It caused a lot of damage to his foot. My wife rushed home from work in order to take him to the hospital. I was travelling in Bangalore and received a call that this had happened, so I had to catch a flight back to Delhi.

Everyone who knew what had happened wanted to stone the driver; they wanted to beat him. My wife took control of the situation and said, “Listen, this is our child. Please let us take care of it.” This driver was pleading with my wife not to make a police case because then he would lose his job and would not be employable again.

When I arrived in Delhi I went to the operation theatre and there was my wife, along with the head of HR and vice president of operations from our company who had also come. One person had paid the bill and one person had arranged the doctor. My entire company was involved, even though it happened after office hours and outside of the company business. The vice president of customer support and his wife had also come to be of support to my wife, and his elder daughter went to be with our daughter at home.

When I came, everyone was there and their immediate reaction was one of anger and wanting to know what had happened. For me, I simply asked the doctor two questions: “Will there be any irreparable damage? How long will he take to recover?” That was all I asked. In all of this, I had also called the pastor and he had come. After talking to the doctor, I looked into my wife’s eyes and without words I just said “Thank you” to God. Then I looked at the pastor and said, “Let us thank God for this situation.” My colleagues said, “What is wrong with this guy? Here is his boy who has suffered and by that time had had two operations, and he wants to thank God. For what?” So I went on and prayed, “Lord, thank you for this situation. We want to thank you for preventing a greater damage.”

In all of this, my wife was not crying or throwing a tantrum. She had the presence of mind to keep her focus on and take care of our son, even though it was a very emotionally draining situation. Instead she took control of the situation as a practical person. When I came we were both in complete control. We kept focusing on our son, to support him. Everyone else wanted to focus on what happened, on the driver, on everything else except our son.

Delhi is a very vindictive society, if you do something people want to make sure that you pay for it. Afterwards, my neighbours all got together and said, “Forget the driver, you must go after the owner.” We told them that we would take care of it. The owner of the car came and apologised and offered to pay for the damages. I told him, “Take your money and go back; we don’t need your money. Whatever you do, will not be able to pay back the flesh that my son lost, or the two inches of tendon that my son lost. Recognise that this situation was not in your control or in my control. It was in someone else’s control. However, I want you to recognise that you have a role in maintaining order and discipline. I want you to incur a cost, and the cost I want you to incur is to first go to the community association and apologise to them, that you have been irresponsible in this community and you have let your car driver run over a small boy’s foot. I want you to put that apology in writing and to feel the pain. Then I want you to put boards all over the streets in the community that say ‘Children at Play. Drive Carefully.’ You write these boards yourself and put them up.” Our neighbours had never heard of anything like this being imposed. They were used to using this as an opportunity to receive large amounts of money for damages.

The doctors warned us that this accident could cause our son psychological problems, because at the age of 6 he had gone through such a traumatic experience. We prayed, and we knew that we were maintaining an inner control of ourselves in this situation. He was in the hospital for three months, and one day we opened his diary – a small spiral book that he used to scribble things in. He had written four diagrams. One was a car and a boy with the words “no hurt.” Then there was one with the car close to the boy and he wrote, “hurt, car over leg, blood and flesh comes out.” He wrote this in a positive manner and was able to relate to his own experience without going through the emotions. You should see him today. He is a very jovial boy.

This has become an example in our office. That situation was an uncontrollable situation, but we were in control. By being in control I mean: there is a sphere in which you have control and there is a sphere in which you do not have control. I am in control of my emotions, I am in control of my actions, I am in control of my intentions, and so on. I am not in control of others’ emotions, others’ actions, or others’ intentions. If I try to control that which I cannot control, then I lose control. So if I operate in this zone of control and expand this, it is what I call the sphere of influence. If I stay in this zone that I can control, then I can increase my sphere of influence. In my office, this has become an operating principle for responding to situations.

Sinclair, James E. – USA

“Chairman and CEO of Tan Range Exploration, Ltd. in the USA and Tanzania”

Spiritual Theme

My theme for spirituality would be “Live it.”

Being in the present moment

The reason for living is to work and to adapt. An attention to the results is not my business, but attention to the day is. Like right now, speaking to you and being nowhere else in my mind, is my job. Therefore, attention to each day will bring me the results, and I am living proof that this is true. We certainly plan – we’ve got statistics and plans to the point of nausea – but that’s not why we are where we are today.

However your life is organised at the point that you make a decision that there's something to be done, that is exactly the way it should be organised. In other words, you never get from "here" to "there" without handling "here" first. If you want to improve your business as an entity, or your life as an entity, you're never going to do it by changing something. You can only do it by dealing with what's at hand in a more organised, a more disciplined, a more determined way, however you define that. So work is a big part of this puzzle. It's how to be able to perform your work without your work interfering with your abilities to clearly see what's going on – to clearly know what you're thinking and not simply be an automatic entity.

If you're seeking something that's called spirituality, which is going to have to be defined by each individual and not adopted from another, then the means of doing that is to become quite present – which means being at work both physically and mentally, not being at work while thinking of being somewhere else. And it means the husband or the father, or the person seeking relaxation on the beach, or the friend, being in a very present way, no matter what they are doing.

Creativity is creativity. And this creativity can materialise through any individual anywhere at anytime. But the means of that is what my spiritual teacher, Sathya Sai Baba, has taught and it is very simple: It is to "watch" and to be happy. Whenever Sai Baba – "Swami" as I refer to him – teaches, he will always define a word in the meaning that he intends to communicate, so it may not necessarily be in the dictionary. "Watch" is to watch your words, actions, thoughts, character and heart. "Happy" he defines as unity with Divinity. "Being" is "is-ness"; it is simple existence.

The activity of "watch," which is to watch your words, actions, thoughts, character and heart is not spirituality; it is a training exercise so that when a catastrophic event, or even a wonderful event, takes place, we do not get lost in the materiality. If you want to work in my office, all you need to do is quiet yourself and get out of the way, because what you'll see happen in front of your eyes (either in the quietude of yourself, or possibly the handling of a situation) will be miraculous. And you personally will not have done it.

So the instruction to "watch" is the most practical instruction you can get because you have to start by being observant. That's all "watch" means. So watching your words, is observing what you say. Watching your actions, thoughts, character and heart is all about observing.

LEADERSHIP – SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES (9 STORIES)

Daugherty, Thomas – USA

“Former Vice President of Spiritual Care and Values Integration with the Methodist Health Care System in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

One theme for me would be caring and compassion. Another would be faithfulness. A part of that has to do with persistence and perseverance, courage and humility.

For me, the Christian cross itself evokes all of this for me because it is such a powerful symbol of the Divine-human encounter. It represents the very best and the very worst of human experience, and it also represents the ultimate in God’s love and compassion for all humankind.

The Divine-human encounter is certainly a theme that expresses all of this for me.

Finding strength from a spiritual centre

There has been some resistance to the kind of spiritual change we are working to bring about here in our organisation. As I have encountered people who I fully expected to be supportive of this spiritual approach, due to their position and authority and by virtue of my relationship with them, I have been surprised to discover that some were not supportive, and in some ways were actually acting counter to what we are trying to do.

This has really caused me to come to terms with myself and realise that this whole endeavour is not about me personally. When I have taken these types of experiences personally, I have become immobilised, discouraged and depressed. But when I step back and look inside and listen to that still small voice, I remember why I am here and why God called me here. I realise that God didn’t call me here because this effort was always going to be peaceful and harmonious. It is from this inner place that I can stay the course and persist. It is this kind of struggle with others that has caused me to access this spiritual centre within me.

I do believe that there is a reason that I am here in this position, and I am well aware that this is a big responsibility. I also recognise that getting this job done – transforming this organisational culture to one of spiritual care and values – is bigger than my own individual talents and gifts. So the challenges of this job – working with the dynamics of the organisation, and the resistance to these types of changes that is always present – has pushed me to go deeper and deeper inside, and to deal with my own spiritual understanding of who I am.

I also feel that the supportive relationships I have in my life have contributed to my strength in carrying out my responsibilities here. Besides spurring my spiritual growth, my wife, my spiritual teachers, my therapists, and even some of the consultants we have working with us have also provided an invaluable support to me for doing my job. These are people who really believe that I can do what I am doing and help me to stay in touch with what I really do have to offer this organisation, especially since in many ways I am not a business-minded person.

Delbecq, André, D.B.A. – USA

“Former Dean of the Santa Clara University School of Business in the USA”

“Professor and Director of the Institute for Spirituality and Organizational Leadership at the Santa Clara University School of Business in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

Wonder is the theme that naturally comes to me. I have always loved innovation because I am continuously thrilled to see what was once only imagined (and partially imagined at that) emerge as an institutionalised reality. Innovation scholarship plumbs the mystery of creativity from concept to actualisation within large-scale systems. I have always had and continue to retain a great excitement associated with building collaboration between bright minds seeking to understand a complex problem and engaged in the discovery of a creative solution.

But now my sense of wonder is even enlarged. My eyes are opened to how the unimaginable emerges in all of creation; e.g. in nature in a blossoming flower, in the movements of the tides and the mysteries of the sea. I am increasingly appreciative of the insights from each of my colleagues when they join together for innovation. So the world is filled with wonder, echoing the limitlessness of the transcendent.

I have always had a good sense of adventure: I love boating, motorcycling, and travel and I am willing to take risks. But in the past these activities have been something that I felt I had to work hard at, something I mistakenly thought depended primarily on me. Now I see such efforts as tapping into a mysterious abundance. I don't do much of anything actually; I realise how little I do. This is not to diminish the importance of what each person does, but rather to increasingly see how God (the transcendent mystery that bears a thousand names), is at work in people and in nature. This allows for increased inner joy even in the midst of the greatest difficulties.

Of course I still have days of great unknowing; I still sometimes experience desolation and anguish. Yet even these experiences don't disturb a deep core sense of peace and wonder as my spiritual journey unfolds. It's as if the fire just gets brighter and brighter as my life unfolds.

Discovering a spiritual path as a leader

When I first moved to San Francisco in 1979 to become Dean of the Santa Clara University Business School, I was not prepared for the enormous goodness of the business leaders in Silicon Valley. I expected that they would be bright, competent and ambitious; I did not expect to find, by and large, that they were also people of enormous inner spiritual strength and obvious goodness. Their inner spiritual maturity helped to explain their ability to listen to others and to elicit ideas from people of all ranks. It helped to explain the great respect for the younger engineering and scientific cadres that is such a large part of the Silicon Valley story.

Silicon Valley elders knew things about leadership that I had not internalised even after decades of theoretical study. These were people of great power, yet there were subtle nuances about their presence – they were able to be with others in a manner that allowed them to bring out their best ideas and efforts.

As trust built between us, these leaders began suggesting that since we were a Jesuit Catholic University, our business school should have a course dealing with the inner life of a leader. I told them that we already had a distinguished programme in ethics, but this was not what they meant. I told them we had courses inclusive of attention to social justice, and again it was not what they

referred to. I really didn't understand with any clarity their request. Spirituality was not at that time a shared concept in leadership dialog. Yet I could intuit what they were speaking of.

I also felt they were asking for something that I could not personally respond to, I suggested that maybe we could find a Jesuit someday to address their area of concern. I actually tried to hire a Jesuit who was well prepared in the area of workplace spirituality, but he accepted a different posting. Still, business leaders were persistent in asking for attention to the inner life of a leader. And, I continued to think that somebody should respond, but certainly not this old sinner.

Finally, at the end of the 1980s and in the early 1990s, a few faculty within the Academy of Management began to publish at the intersection between spirituality and management. Authors such as Jay Conger, then at the University of Southern California, Lee Bolman at University of Missouri, Kansas City, and Bob Marx and Charles Manz at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst were among these early pioneers. I was impressed with their courage, but still thought that spirituality was not a topic I personally could appropriately address.

Toward the end of the 1990's, others were beginning to create forums for dialog regarding workplace spirituality. An important conference was hosted by Chancellor David Scott at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst with the title "Going Public with Spirituality in Business and Higher Education". Further, Bob Marx and Lee Bolman brought several MBAs to the Organisation Behavior Teaching Society. When I listened to these students describing the impact that addressing spirituality had on their perspectives as emergent organisational leaders, I was awe-struck. Here were MBAs, who are often cynical regarding the intersection of spirit and work, speaking out of a depth of perspective that was breathtaking.

A few weeks later I was consulting with the University of Illinois Chicago Circle, and a lifelong professional colleague, Elmer Burack, visited with me at the airport while I waited for my plane. He said that he had read a book that changed his life called *From Age-ing to Sage-ing: A Profound New Vision of Growing Older*⁵. He subsequently sent the book to me. Rabbi Zalman in this insightful essay talks about the need for each of us to harvest the wisdom of our lives. I now realised that such an effort would have to be inclusive of spiritual wisdom.

A little while later, Peter Frost, a colleague from the University of British Columbia who had just returned from an intensive personal retreat, came to my home for a visit. I asked what he had focused on during his retreat. He replied that he was trying to think how best to use his last years of teaching. He asked me how I thought about the final years of my teaching. In truth I had never framed such a question. But as a result of these experiences I began to think about my final years as an academic; it was timely to do so as I had a sabbatical coming up.

I had intended to study innovation practices in France during my sabbatical. I had made preliminary contacts and had chosen the French city we would live in during this period. While driving to a conference my wife reminded me that we needed to lease our home since we were soon to depart to France for a year. I heard myself say to her, "I don't think I am going to spend my sabbatical in France." I honestly do not think that I knew I was going to say these words. I had not quite admitted the change in plans to myself yet. I continued, "I am going to study at the Graduate Theological Union and try to understand spirituality." She looked at me like I had just slipped off of a cliff and said, "Well, tell me what is going on!"

⁵ SCHACHTER-SHALOMI, Zalman & Miller, Ronald S., *From Age-ing to Sage-ing: A Profound New Vision of Growing Older*, New York, Warner Books, Inc., 1995. ISBN 0-446-51776-3

There's a line in Rabbi Zalman's essay that says if one decides to deepen the spiritual path and prepare to be an elder, then preparation is not primarily about knowledge or learning. Rather, it must be a commitment to deepen spiritual practice. I was well aware that I didn't really know how to deepen my spiritual practice, and my life had hardly been exemplary. So, returning to the Jesuit tradition, I decided my first step would be to undertake the spiritual exercises of Ignatius. I had no idea what they were; yet I knew they would launch me on a life-changing inward journey having heard others speak of their experience. And, they always spoke of the experience as being outside the ability of words to capture.

So, with some trepidation I commenced the Ignatian exercises under the guidance of a wise and compassionate Jesuit spiritual director, opening up my closet of repressed horrors that I had hidden in the depths of my soul and finding God's mercy. I also commenced intense studies at the Graduate Theological Union at Berkeley, California in the USA.

As part of my sabbatical, because so many of our students at Santa Clara were from the East, I knew it would be important to study Buddhism, Hinduism, and Taoism, and not simply my own Christian tradition. I had never read in depth about any of these Eastern traditions. Even inside my own tradition, understanding contemporary spirituality was a new adventure. So I began reading both Eastern and Western literature. In addition, over several months I spent time with and studied under Chungliang Huang who directs the Living Tao Foundation, and is a tai chi dance master. I also studied with Mel McKnight whose wisdom includes North American Indigenous spirituality. However, at the core of the Sabbatical was studying with Frank Houdek, S.J., a leading teacher of spiritual direction at the Graduate Theological Union. I was also gifted with guidance from Rev. James McGee, a catholic priest who was also studying spirituality.

As my understanding grew, I began to put together an outline for a seminar for business leaders. I certainly was not operating out of confidence, but at this point I had discovered what it meant to surrender. For the first time in my life, I was willing to be God's fool. Now this is a tough thing for a senior academic. Your whole sense of self builds on your expertise developed over years of scholarly effort. You never give a lecture unless it is learned. The currency of legitimacy is to know all the nuances before you dare to speak. Yet here I was preparing to teach in a new arena of knowledge where I was still a novice.

Fortunately, I had begun to understand that this spiritual path required me to give up the need to be the expert. Once having accepted this truth, preparation for teaching the seminar unfolded with constant surprises. Everything I needed was given to me. People whom I had never met found out about my efforts and provided constant new resources. So the knowledge I needed began to arrive through others.

Of course, I also worked very hard and read extensively. Each week, I wrote a major essay addressing an important topic I planned to include within the seminar. I would deliver the essay to my Jesuit mentor who was directing my reading at the graduate theological union. He was a wise and gentle man. He would close his eyes and in a calm voice, without embarrassing me or creating any discomfort, turn everything I had written upside down. I would return home and revise the essay. Two days later Rev. James McGee would receive the revision. He would frown and scowl as he went over the revision, and suggest many additional needed changes.

I was able to accept this mentoring from them both and from others, and was able to engage in what seemed to be endless revisions without being in the least bit upset. Somehow I was gifted with the beginner's mind and was at peace with my lack of both knowledge and wisdom. This was a very new experience for an arrogant professor – to be comfortable in the beginner's mind.

When I had finished my year and a half of study and preparation, I invited nine of the very best CEOs that I knew in Silicon Valley (executives with reputations for superior leadership within successful organisations) together with nine MBA students to participate in an initial test of the spirituality seminar for organisational leaders. Twelve individuals, equally distributed between the two groups accepted the invitation.

Let me close this portion of my reflection. The efforts to prepare for the forthcoming seminar took me into new spiritual space. It was not simply the newness of the knowledge I was acquiring. It was also my willingness to give up my safety zone of being an “expert” that was an even greater challenge. I had spent my entire adult life becoming an “expert”. I grew up in a modest family, and had been ill with polio when I was 13. As a result I was never able to play sports. So my compensation was to become a very good student and a very careful scholar. This allowed me to ward off feelings of inadequacy. A great deal of my academic “over-achievement” was doubtless born from these feelings.

Now I was launching into a scholar-teacher effort in a new subject matter about which I could hardly claim expertise. I was a 63-year-old spiritual infant and a scholarly novice in a different field. Anything I was going to do had to depend on God and not me. I don’t remember where I first read the phrase “willing to be God’s fool”. But I arrived at a point where I said, “I am willing to be God’s fool.” To understand this you would have had to know of my prior arrogance born of defensiveness; of all the psychic walls I had built to avoid ever being an intellectual fool. I was really stepping off a high cliff, where I knew I could completely fail in this new endeavour.

The night before I was to deliver my first seminar session, my wife asked me if I was afraid. I told her I wasn’t afraid – I was *terrified*. I had never said “God” before in a public place, and here I was about to commence teaching a seminar where God must be the centre of what the seminar was all about.

This initial alpha test of the seminar was very successful. Because of its favourable reception, I now have permission to repeat the seminar twice each academic year. Both MBA students and a few practicing executives attend each academic quarter it is offered.

Prayer and suffering in the life of a leader

The path that unfolds as I teach the spirituality seminar at the university flows out of my own deep beliefs regarding the spiritual path of leadership integrated with a Christian perspective. The seminar commences by examining the presence of God in all things. So we reflect and meditate on the way in which God acts in the contemporary organisation. We consider its role in providing products and services that are needed by human kind; how human gifts and talents are energised within the organisation, the presence or absence of a supportive community within its culture, the experience of justice or injustice, the charisma of wealth creation, and the manner in which society is supported through both taxes and philanthropy that is a fruit of wealth creation. We also look at potential or real darkness in organisations, without giving power to the darkness.

We then turn to the notion of leadership as a calling. We reflect on each person’s unique gifts, and affirm who they are in their “essential Be-ing”, and what they feel calling in “DO-ing” through the expression of their leadership. Participants begin to listen gently without being overly scrutinising and compulsive to the presence of God in the day-to-day-ness of their organisational leadership. Even if they have a sense that they may be moving to another organisational setting in the future, they discover that their spiritual journey is in the “now” of their present work setting.

The only way I have found to deepen the consciousness of self and organisation within the context of leadership is through meditative/contemplative practice. If you grow in awareness without simultaneously being able to surrender into the Divine, the experience is too overwhelming.

Then, as participants wrestle with this new awareness, which creates a certain amount of anxiety, we begin to examine prayer within the context of the leader's life. Participants begin to understand prayer as openness and listening, as opposed to writing scripts for the transcendent.

We later look at the great temptations of organisational leadership: hubris (exaggerated pride) and greed. We study the spiritual disciplines and virtues that offset these darknesses.

Eventually, we have to come to the mystery of suffering. A transformational organisational leader sets out on a path that will take her/him into suffering. Participants must understand that leadership is not a place where suffering is escaped, but rather a place where redemptive suffering on behalf of the organisation is actualised.

Entry into these topics needs to unfold over a sufficient period of time to allow for prayer and meditation regarding each topic. Participants all say that the internalisation of learning requires all of the two weeks between each module. The spiritual journey unfolds in the fullness of God's time.

Finally, I believe that a calling as a leader can succeed only if you pray deeply for the people you work on behalf of. Success isn't simply a function of brilliance, structure, or process. It depends on the work of the Spirit, so I believe you really have to pray deeply.

At Santa Clara we have formed a meditation community (The Community of Joseph) and we meet for 3 hours every week for intense prayer on behalf of organisational leaders. Members of the community are primarily executives, who are often engaged in very complex discernment. The Community of Joseph exists to provide a place of intense prayer for leaders. (www.communityofjoseph.com).

I believe we need contemplative communities that pray for organisational leaders. We hold prisoners in prayer, physicians in prayer, statesmen in prayer, etc., but few are praying for business leaders. Yet business is a dominant societal institution in developed countries where the majority of the population spends their waking hours. So I believe we need places of very deep prayer on behalf of organisational leaders who influence these important organisations.

Stepping forward with spirituality in business

There are two things I never thought I would see in my lifetime: one was the fall of the Russian empire; and the other was hearing the word "God" spoken of in the Academy of Management. So you can imagine, not everyone applauded my decision to direct my teaching and scholarship toward spirituality. There were certainly colleagues in the Academy of Management who thought I had gone over the edge. Some of these colleagues who are secular humanists hold that spirituality does not belong in the Academy. They feel spirituality isn't pertinent to the "science of management".

No matter, as mentioned earlier, I arrived at the position that I was willing to be God's fool. Certainly in the beginning, I had no idea what the outcome would be. I did not know how the "Spirituality of Organisational Leadership" seminar would be received by MBAs. I did not know what that the path of scholarly publication might be. Remember, this was in the late 90's. At that

time journals devoted to this intersection of management and spirituality had not yet commenced, and traditional journals only occasionally entertained the subject. The Management, Spirituality and Religion Interest Group within the Academy of Management that is now so robust did not exist. The large number of graduate students writing theses and dissertations on this subject matter had not yet emerged. So I was “going public” before the general movement legitimating this new field of study emerged. Yet I must admit that everything was actually easier, because of an act of internal surrender. Once I decided that I couldn’t be humiliated whatever the outcome of my new arena of teaching and scholarship might be, then moving onto the new path was much easier.

I think God makes good use of each of us. The fact that I – a former Dean of the Fellows of the Academy of Management, former chair of three divisions of the Academy, a former member of the Board of Directors of the Academy, a former president of both the Mid-West and Western Divisions of the Academy of Management, a former Executive Director of the Organisation Behavior Teaching Society, a senior scholar with a reputation for rigorous conceptualisation – was entering this new field did provide courage to others. Later when we circulated a petition to the Academy to form an interest group to focus on spirituality, in one afternoon we had the requisite 200 signatures. (At this time the MSR Interest Group has become a very strong entity with quality emergent scholarship. All of these good outcomes have unfolded very quickly).

There is a wonderful French word that describes a blossom that suddenly opens: it symbolises for me the concept of “readiness”. Although I was not aware that it would be the case when I began this programme of teaching and scholarship, there was clearly great readiness on the part of both practicing professionals and academics to commence addressing matters of spirituality.

Merchant, Nilofer – USA

“President and founder of Rubicon Consultants, a marketing consulting firm in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

“Living authentically” speaks a lot to me.

Also, I am looking outside at that beautiful tree and thinking about how spirituality helps me to draw strength from the roots of life. The tree doesn’t get nourishment from the leaves. And yet what do we see when we look at the tree? We see the branches and leaves and not the root system. So I think spirituality is about defining where our true strength comes from as the root system. We have a chance to consciously change the wellspring from which we draw our nourishment. So another theme would be “a wellspring of nourishment”.

The value of prayer

I think that the greatest gift I give myself is to pray. I often ask people who are sharing their problems with me if they have prayed about it, and so many times they say no. So I tell them to pray and listen to God. So I am one of those converted people who has really learned the gift of prayer.

For me, prayer is very simple. I always name all of the things that I am struggling with and I ask God to help me with these things. If I have done something that I do not appreciate within myself – if I have said something or had a feeling that I didn’t like or if I was competitive – I will name that

and ask for a transformation in my heart. Then I will ask, “God please shed your light on the work I am to do today and show me what it is you want done. Please help me to serve and act as You with all of the people that I touch.” This really does set my priorities in order.

I also pray when I am working out at the gym. I will think of everyone that I want to pray for, and I will call him or her by name. So at least 3 times a week I take the quality time to pray for people in my life. I pray for anyone whom I have touched recently; I pray for their health and for their spiritual well-being. This is very intentional for me. To me, when I pray for others, I see them differently, and as a result I cannot do them harm. When I pray for others, I can see our connectedness; I cannot see any separation. I can only see us as one doing God’s Will that we were all meant to do, and using our gifts. It really shapes my heart, even when we disagree. I can see and feel consciously how it is changing me, so to me it is a miracle. When I am not praying for people, I feel separate and have a tendency to make them wrong and myself right.

For the last 30 days, I have been dealing with a new client who has been extremely demanding in a way that is quite outside of my comfort zone. As a result, I stopped doing my practice of daily prayer and became very stressed out. It makes such a difference when I follow this practice. When I do not follow it, I can feel the tension I have, and I am not as present to what is unfolding. I am really making it harder on myself.

It was one of those things that was very fear based. I was very fearful that I would not do this project well enough and thought that I had to do more. Intellectually, I knew all of the way through that the answer was not to hold on tighter; it was to let go. But it has been the hardest thing for me. I kept thinking, “Well, tomorrow I’ll let it go.” I was negotiating with God. As I have returned to this daily practice of prayer, I feel somewhat embarrassed, as I know that stopping this practice was not good for me. I was so living in bliss and stepped out of it for this client. So this was hard for me.

Narendran, Parantha – Czech Republic

“Former Strategy Director for Eurotel in the Czech Republic”
“Private Equity Consultant and Investor”

Spiritual Theme

If I think here of how spirituality affects me at work, it would be that spirituality challenges me and makes me grow.

Ego and fear

There are two fundamental things that I think spirituality makes me aware of – both of which have had a major impact in the way that I work. First of all, spirituality makes me less egotistical – I am very aware of my ego. And secondly, it makes me less fearful.

I think to some extent the ego is the primary factor, and the fear is secondary. Even though I suppose that I was always considered reasonably bright, I nevertheless wanted to be recognised as the person who could come out with the right answer. But now, as I have become more spiritual and am aware of my ego, I can sit in meetings and simply listen to ideas popping up in my head without necessarily feeling the need to tell the others of my ideas. I am finding that the more I become aware, the more these ideas and needs are dying out.

As I listen to the conversation going on in a meeting, I can see where people are perceiving things wrongly because of their egos, and how they want to lead things in a particular way. I can see how they are mis-communicating with each other. I understand what the real issue of the meeting was meant to be and where we should be going, and I can help pull things together in a way that I couldn't do if my ego was in control. Because I can present things clearly and talk to everyone in their own language, and because I can pick up the subtle ways they say things, people are willing to buy into what I am saying. I think this is an enormously spiritual exercise. It is almost like meditation when I am sitting there listening to everyone.

When I do not have an active ego, I am able to help get things done far more effectively. Essentially, it is like a game, and I am actually benefiting the most from the whole exercise. If my ego is active, then I tend to think, "I can't do this and I can't do that" – a bit like when I was trying to raise money and didn't have faith in myself. In those cases, I was forced into a position where I had to do what I thought I couldn't do. I had to make something happen for the benefit of everybody. I had no time to step back and say, "I can't do this" because my ego was afraid of failure. I just had to get it done. And I've done this and realised that I was a lot more capable than I gave myself credit for.

I also want others to learn the same thing. So I try to pass these lessons about ego and fear on to others when I speak to them. And I do this in a straightforward, down to earth manner. I look to see why they are motivated to achieve the goals they are speaking about and what inhibits them in achieving their goals - it makes them think more about their life.

Pillai, Anand – India

"Head of the Learning and Development Department for HCL Technologies in India"

Spiritual Theme

Connecting with God, the source of "being."

Aligning career with spiritual values

In my former position as Vice President of Sales and Marketing, I kept realising there was so much to spirituality and to life. The more I read and studied the Bible, the more I found answers on how to manage stress, how to manage time, how to manage money, and how to manage people. I continued to find so many things. As a result, I decided that I did not want to get so caught up in the corporate world that I didn't have the energy to share my spiritual values and how I follow them as a manager.

I did not want to leave my job, so I began thinking about how I could create the opportunity for doing this. I realised there were a lot of management schools that were already calling me to come and give 1-to-2 hour lectures on topics such as leadership and values-based communications and management. When I looked at what I was doing closely, I saw that I was spending about 20 hours per trip, given my round-trip travel, to go to these schools and give these short talks. I decided that was not good for me and was not the best I could do for the students. So I told them, "Let me create some one-day, one and a half day, or two-day workshops for you where we can do some more intensive work."

I did this for the Indian Institute of Management and Research in Bombay, with a workshop on communication. Most courses speak of communication from the outer view, which to me is the external manifestation of something much deeper. For me, true communication comes from expressing what is in your heart with full integrity. More importantly, even when you are not speaking in words, your non-verbal communication is there and it's more powerful than words.

I spoke to them for two days on this subject of communication and the Director was very excited. He wrote to our executive vice president and told him what a great experience it was for me to come and deliver this workshop. In his exuberance he stated in his letter that they wanted to offer me a consulting faculty position.

The executive vice president forwarded this letter to the president of HCL and unfortunately it caused a lot of difficulty. The president was basically ready to take a strong action and tell me that I should stop this type of teaching and training outside of the company completely. Then the vice president intervened and told him, "Listen and just think carefully before you take any strong action. Training is Anand's passion, preaching is his passion, and coaching is his way of life. You cannot stop him from doing that; he has so much to share and offer. The moment you stop him from doing this he will leave." The president responded that he didn't want me to leave and he didn't want to put a restriction on me that would have me leave.

At first, I told the president that I would not do any more training. But the evening after that meeting I really prayed to the Lord. I knew that the training I was doing was for the good and many people had been blessed. So many managers had told me that they had not seen this view, this dimension of spirituality. I had created modules on time management and stress management and used verses in the Bible to illuminate how to live them in a spiritual way. I could not imagine a life of not doing this type of teaching and training.

During this dialogue process with the president, I realised something very important. My core competence was living a life of spirituality and then translating my life's experiences into something I could teach to others and train them to implement in their own work. I realised that when I worked based upon my core competence, I was able to find a way to bring it to my work in a productive way.

The president called me back in the next day and the first thing I said to him was, "I want to take back my words that I will not do any more training because it is a conflict for the company. I cannot do that. I assure you that if you give me your favourite key responsibilities I will fulfil them." As I spoke to the president I was fully prepared to quit if I needed to. After listening to me they asked me what it was that I wanted to do. I told them that I wanted to be involved in this type of training in a greater capacity. So we went back and forth for one week discussing what it was that I could best do in the company. As a result of all of this, I am now the head of the Center for Leadership and Management for HCL.

Sinclair, James E. – USA

"Chairman and CEO of Tan Range Exploration, Ltd. in the USA and Tanzania"

Spiritual Theme

My theme for spirituality would be "Live it."

Following intuition

I have come to the conclusion that the use of the intuition is “asking yourself the question, fully knowing that you have a right to the answer.” It’s the same way a name comes into your mind when you are trying to remember the name of a person you’ve forgotten. What are you doing? You ask yourself the question and then you put it out of your mind and go on to something else. Every one of us has had that experience.

But I’m going to tell you that the answers to your most serious business problems – whether your markets need to change, or your environment needs to change, or whether you should sell your business – will come to you exactly the same way. The truth of the matter is, you’ll have your answer given to you. And it won’t be you speaking and you won’t be schizophrenic. And the answer will be sent to you and it is constantly sent to you. In other words, it will come up as your own mind speaking to you, but it will be so different and so unique that you can actually ignore it and be wrong.

Now you don’t want to listen to voices or things that come to you from your intellectual mind because this will lead you to doing many incorrect things. But, on the decision tree of possibility, what comes to you without intellectual input is in all probability intuition, that universal mind telling you exactly what to do.

The first level of discernment is to see if the answer is without intellectual argumentation. Secondly, to see if it comes to you out of nowhere. Thirdly, to see if it tends to come to you when your emotions or environmental emotions are not running high. If you’re sitting in a large trading room with a thousand traders, the environment is extremely emotional. So, you don’t make the jump because you have to have discipline. But what you do is take the “possibility” that your intuition has given you as the one you’ll now most put your attention on to determine what you should do.

To have the glimpse of insight is preparation. And preparation means a willingness to remain outside of the fervour of what’s taking place. This is where your “extra sensory” intuitional input is, which is the difference between success and failure. But don’t act on that alone; be scientific, be disciplined, but be in the direction of your intuition.

My decision to liquidate our gold market when it was at a high of US\$887.50 per ounce was made in an environment with a huge room of traders running some of the largest positions in the history of the marketplace. They were enjoying, in the egotistical sense, the adulation of all of the people who were making money and they were getting more public relations than the Secretary of the US Treasury. They were on the front page of the New York Times business section and had their pictures in the Wall Street Journal and were on talk shows like Ted Koppel, Nightline, and Wall Street Week.

In the midst of all of this, I heard inside “it’s over; this market is over.” I sat in shock. Then I went to all of our technical expertise and saw that everything was yelling and screaming that the market was over. “How could I have not seen this?” is what came to me. Then I said, “We have to get out, this is over.” In one night, we kept every trader busy, and spent the whole night selling all of our positions all over the world. We sold a huge amount, 900,000 ounces at over US\$800 per ounce, close to US\$1 billion. When the market opened the next morning in the USA, the price of gold had dropped US\$150 an ounce and never stopped falling until it hit a low of US\$400.

Even in doing what we did, we faced the possibility that the market might have continued to rise to US\$2,000 per ounce as it was predicted to do. But my intuition perceived that the rise was not substantiated by underlying demand and could not continue.

Yes, people were hurt financially by this move we made; this is the nature of this environment. All markets rise and fall short term as they progress higher or lower in their trend longer term, be it positive or negative. People will always gain or lose in a marketplace, which is totally impersonal. I cause no one to gain, nor anyone to lose. They enter positions and are rewarded or punished for their decision in the normal course of order. Markets therefore are pure mechanisms that operate like the universe operates. The market that is the freest of manipulation is the market for commodities, as they have no people to fudge the figures or lie about them.

Hurting is intention. If I go out and intend to bust the market, then I will face the consequences of that, especially if I lie and cheat to do it. This is a game of open competition where the rules of the game say “do what you have the courage to do, don’t lie about it, don’t go out there and try to hurt the market by making bad statements, just do what you’ve got to do.” This is what we did. I’m sure that many traders heard the same intuition that I heard that night, but only a few listened. Maybe I listened and acted faster because in my office we take the time to meditate and to listen to our intuition.

Welling, S. K. – India

“Former Executive Director of HMT International, Ltd. (Hindustan Machine Tools) in India”

Spiritual Theme

Purity of character through faith, bhakti (devotion), trust and love

Facing a false accusation

I will tell you of one of the most difficult things that can happen: that is getting wrongly accused. That has happened to me. Despite the faith that I have, I have gotten accused of something that is not true. If anyone else were in my situation, they would likely have had a heart attack.

The last two years (2000-2002) have really helped me to see within myself more than I would have done otherwise. Had this thing not come to me, I would not have gone deeper into my spirituality and myself. I believe God has made me go about this in order to become a more perfect spiritual man. This is the way I look at it.

In the midst of this situation there was not an iota of thinking that I should appear this way or that way. I replied truthfully to the allegations made. It just came from inside. The person who was helping me said, “Mr. Welling, you are so clear. This is the first time I’m seeing something that is automatic truth.” I said, “What else do you want? This is the truth. This is exactly what happened. Somebody has altered his assessment of the whole thing. Let us educate him.” The last thing I want to do in my life is to blame someone. I never condemn anybody. I blame myself first. If he is doing something against me, it is unfortunate for him. He will face it. It doesn’t stick to me at all.

These things continued and inquiries were held. I have never worried about it; everything just happened – truthfully, I let everything take care of itself. I had no problems at all because I am very clear. My hands are clean; my heart is clean. I stand for truth. I have not done any harm to

anyone. I never showed an iota of discomfort or displeasure or frustration to any of my employees. I conducted myself as if nothing had happened to me because I was very clear in my mind.

You know, I believe in God, faith, truth, and I said whatever has to happen will happen. If the system does not recognise truth, I will leave the company and go. When I came here in 2000 April as Executive Director of HMT International, I just did not bother about whether people looked at me as an officer with some black mark against my reputation. I don't let it upset my life.

In the three years since this false accusation was made against me, despite the allegations, despite the case, my mind is very clear. I have done more work in the last four years than I have even done in the previous four before that. People all around me, in all areas, continually wonder, how is it that this officer's case has not been cleared and yet he doesn't bother about it? He is doing his work as if nothing has ever happened to him. Because I know that I did not do anything wrong, I am prepared for whatever happens, they may release the charge or they may send me home.

People come and tell me, "Sir, the employees are feeling hurt for what has happened to you." But I'm not feeling hurt. Being very frank, it doesn't hurt me. I'm a firm believer that the truth will prevail in the end. But even if the organisational/management system that has to take care of the truth doesn't take care of the truth, I will smilingly go out of this building and go and sit at home. I will not be unhappy. This is not my failure, but the failure of the system. I am very clear about that.

I am still trying to understand where does this confidence and peace come from in me? This is so embodied in me that it is difficult to explain. It comes naturally. I do not have to make an effort; it automatically comes from within me. One thing I *do* know: I have a clear conscience. Probably, this is because of the spirituality I believe in.



An inquiry into the nature, activities and results of leading from a spiritual basis

SECTION V

Organisation

During our 1½ – 2 hour interviews with leaders who participated in our international research programme, we asked each one to share specific stories that exemplified how they drew from their spiritual view of life to respond to a challenging situation.

In this section you will find 29 stories related to the broad topic of “Organisation”. These stories are organised according to the following categories:

- **Conflict resolution (5 stories)**
- **Changing the organisational culture (10 stories)**
- **Creating and sustaining the organisational culture (11 stories)**
- **Quality assurance programmes (3 stories)**

This section contains only the stories excerpted from the full interviews. To review the career history, current responsibilities, spiritual views, and other aspects of leading from a spiritual basis, please refer to the complete transcript of each leader, which can be found in either Volume 1 or 2 or the on-line knowledge-base at www.globaldharma.org/sbl-research.htm.

THE FOLLOWING STORIES ARE CONTAINED IN THIS SECTION:

Organisation – Conflict Resolution

- Treating competitors and distributors with trust and respect – John Behner
- Institutionalising win-win agreements – Stephen R. Covey
- Designing win-win solutions – Stephen R. Covey
- Solving business conflicts – Federico Cuneo
- Practicing non-violence in the workplace – Ashoke Maitra

Organisational Culture – Changing

- Turning around a failing organisation – Dr. A. K. Chattopadhyay
- Spiritual intention in leadership – Stephen Covey
- Starting from the top – Thomas Daugherty
- Changing people's behaviour – Carol Franklin
- Shifting the thinking of the company – Niranjana Jiang
- Reducing grief during the merger of two competitive companies – Ashoke Maitra
- Creating alignment and integration between management and journalists – Ashoke Maitra
- Changing mindsets to change the organisation – Ramón Ollé
- Conducting 360 degree reviews with senior management – N. S. Raghavan
- Unity of thought, word, and action – Ananth Raman

Organisational Culture – Creating and sustaining

- Exposing employees to spirituality – Floy Aguenza
- Human Values as the guidelines for our business – Francisco Canada
- Two initiatives to cultivate spirit in the organisation – Amber Chand
- Having the intention to make a positive difference – Thomas Daugherty
- Integrating values in everyone's day-to-day work – Thomas Daugherty
- Using storytelling in business – Niranjana Jiang
- Cultivating loyalty – Deependra Moitra
- Showing GOD – G. Narayana
- Quietude and introspection – James Sinclair
- Explicit and implicit spirituality in the organisation – Magnus Vrethammar
- Current style of leading – Janiece Webb

Organisation – Quality Assurance Programmes

- Standing firm for having the best – John Behner
- Implementing quality programmes – Deependra Moitra
- Unity of thought, word, and action – Ananth Raman

ORGANISATION – CONFLICT RESOLUTION (5 STORIES)

Behner, John R. – El Salvador

“Former Country Manager for Nabisco in El Salvador”

Spiritual Theme

“Realising God by serving others.”

Only saying “serving everyone” does not include that, which is the most important to me, which is to realise my oneness with God.

Treating competitors and distributors with trust and respect

When Nabisco established its operation in El Salvador and I became the Country Manager, they also were the owners of Del Monte, a huge producer of canned fruits. Products from both these companies, Nabisco and Del Monte, were distributed by another company but by the same fellow who was also a good friend of mine. Now, under the law, we could go in and pay an indemnity to that company and just take those products away from him. So he was afraid that this was what I was going to do.

But I was his personal friend. We talked it over, and he said to me: “I want to tell you what happened with Del Monte. When I was a young boy, 26 years old, I went to San Francisco to meet with the people from Del Monte and tell them I wanted to be their distributor in El Salvador. I sat on their doorstep for three days until they received me. I finally convinced them and they gave me the distribution. That was my first product. This is a line I don’t want to lose.” He said: “I’ll make you a deal. If you don’t take Del Monte from me, I’ll give you Nabisco.”

So I said, “Well, we are going to start manufacturing some of Del Monte’s products here, and I am going to collect royalty on these products. I’ll let these products be sold through you, and you can continue to sell the Del Monte brand and bring other Del Monte products from the USA. But I am going to get the royalty.” And so we had a mutually beneficial agreement.

Another very important thing was our distribution agreements. For a while, we distributed for different companies. The philosophy was that there didn’t necessarily need to be a written contract to be a distributor, unless the other party wanted it. I would say that if we are doing a good job for you, you won’t want to get rid of us, and there won’t be any problem. But if you see that there are not enough sales or business, it’s not going to be worth your while, and it probably isn’t worth our while either. We had these tremendous distribution agreements that didn’t have anything in writing, and yet the companies were very happy, and it shouldn’t have been any other way.

To get back to this spiritual thing, first of all everybody has to do his own thing and not expect that somebody else does something for him. You should do the best you possibly can. In a spiritual sense, every job that we do is important, however small it is. So, if you have taken on the distribution of a product, from a spiritual standpoint you are going to do the best job that you can possibly do to get that product out to as many people as you can at the lowest price you can. If you do that, the other party is going to be very pleased, and the relationship is going to continue, and then it will be profitable in the long run.

Covey, Stephen R. – USA

“Vice Chairman of FranklinCovey, a global professional services firm based in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

One of my mottoes serves as a powerful spiritual theme for me: “Live life in crescendo.” In other words, the most important work you’ll ever do is still ahead of you.

Another such spiritual theme for me would be: “Educate and obey your conscience.” Educating as I speak of it here involves getting into the sacred literature of all the great traditions that have had enduring value and then consciously living true to what you have learned. The more you live true to it, the stronger your conscience becomes. A constant effort is required to stay on track with such stewardship.

Institutionalising win-win agreements

One time in the USA I was working with a man whose insurance company was suffering under internal competition. I had attended their annual celebration where about 20 to 30 people received big awards. I asked, “Did you hire the other people as losers?” He said, “Oh, no, they will have their chance next year.” I said, “Nevertheless you have got about 800 losers out there and only 30 winners. Everyone can be a winner; you have just got to change your mind-set from scarcity to abundance.” He had a fine character and said, “I would like that, but how do we do it?” He didn’t know how, it was not a character issue, it was a competence issue.

I said, “Turfism in your company is a result of the way you have designed your reward system; it nurtures cutthroat internal competition.” He asked, “What can one do?” I said, “Set up win-win agreements. These are agreements where those you want to inspire participate in designing the agreement – the reward system – where if some achieve their goals, all the rest benefit, this is a win-win system where everyone can win. Get off this internal competition.” He had an abundance mentality and immediately responded to the need. Now that he was aware of the challenge, he had to develop the competence for designing and institutionalising participative win-win agreements. He became so inspired that he and his employees designed the new system – and within one year 80 percent of his organisation was producing per person what 3 percent, 30 people, had produced the year before. The pie got so large. Unfortunately, a lot of people operate from the paradigm of scarcity, where the pie is only so large.

Designing win-win solutions

I am working now with a federal judge in producing another book to be called *Blessed are the Peacemakers*. It’s for attorneys, for those who hire attorneys, for those who train attorneys, and for those who don’t want to hire attorneys. Now this judge is getting so good at designing win-win solutions that he hardly ever goes to court. He gets the plaintiffs and defendants to settle in chambers, not through compromise but through synergy. This approach simply changes the relationship between the parties. Now that he is getting known for this competence he is being used by other judges to train them. And his trial docket (the list of cases to be tried) is several times larger than the dockets of his colleagues because he knows how to do this design work; his competency and his fine character make him trustworthy, and this in turn helps him to establish the trust that is a precondition for win-win settlements. A book I am working on about this for children in elementary school is going to be called *And the Little Child Shall Lead Them*.

Speaking of win-win arrangements in legal matters reminds me of a powerful experience I had some years ago. I worked with a land developer, who was in big trouble. His bank wanted to foreclose as he was not living up to the terms of the mortgage. At the same time as he desperately sought to avoid the foreclosure, he was seeking additional funding to finish and market the land so he could repay the bank – but neither the bank nor other financial institutions would provide such additional funding before he made the overdue payments. All the while, there was lots of legal fighting going on. The legal costs grew and grew while the property deteriorated and was becoming an eyesore for the people who already lived there and for the city. I worked with the developer and he agreed to establish a meeting with the bank officials. The atmosphere was very unpleasant, there was a palpable tension and lack of trust, and the bank officials were extremely reluctant – in fact their attorney had committed them to say absolutely nothing. He feared that any statements they might make could compromise the bank's position.

I spoke to the group for a long time about principles-centred leadership. Then I went to the blackboard and did the best I could to convey to them our understanding of the bank's concerns. At first the bank officials and their attorney were quiet, but gradually as we communicated our win-win intentions, based on the principle of seeking first to understand their position before we would try to have them understand our position, they began to open up. Once they began to feel understood, the whole atmosphere changed. There was excitement, optimism that a peaceful settlement could be arrived at.

After about three hours, although they were still convinced of the correctness of their standpoint, they felt understood. With this, their defensiveness melted away and they were open to listen to the developer's concerns. We wrote these concerns on the other side of the blackboard. All of this led to a deeper understanding around the table as to how poor the communication had been earlier, and as to how many misunderstandings and suspicions had resulted. So now there was an awareness both of chronic pain and the progress being made towards synergy. The atmosphere became positive and creative. At this point the developer made his first recommendations, and all present could see that it was an attempt at finding a win-win solution. Further discussion led to the recommendation being reworked so that at the end of the meeting the developer and the bank's representatives could leave the meeting with a plan that could be jointly presented to both the city and the Home Owners Association. In spite of a number of continuing difficulties, the legal fighting ended and the project was successfully completed.

Developing win-win performance agreements is a central activity of a leader. With processes that create and support such agreements, problems with external stakeholders be transformed into manageable, interactive, interdependent realities where synergies can develop. And also internally such performance agreements can lead to synergistic processes that work – employees can manage themselves within such an agreement's framework, something that is now of vital importance in this knowledge-worker age.

Cuneo, Federico – Peru

“Senior Partner with Ernst & Young in Peru”

“Chair of Peru 2021, an NGO comprised of business executives working on sustainable development and corporate social responsibility for the country”

Spiritual Theme

Unity with the rest of the world, love, eternal life and light – those would be words I would use as a theme.

Solving business conflicts

I think people perceive when you are coming from a spiritual state, or when you vibrate at that level so-to-speak. I think people can see more than the physical. Even though we don't always realise it immediately, we do perceive when another person is fair or trustworthy, we can see that he has something in him like that. When you have spirituality, then you unconsciously portray it to others.

About four months ago, we were having a very difficult time with some of our regional partners and investors. I approached the upcoming meeting by meditating and imagining their faces as being happy. I imagined telling them at the start of the meeting how I would be straight with what I had to say, and that I wanted the good for all of us.

You must realise this meeting was like a battlefield. We had brought in two lawyers, and they brought in three lawyers who loved to fight. As it turned out, both groups came to a place where they could see that through me we could find a solution to our problem. Since then another problem has come up and now we are in the middle of trying to solve that one.

I think that spirituality and meditation are so useful in business and should become a practice. When there are conflicts between family corporations or between two corporations, they usually put them into the hands of lawyers. This can make it worse and can get very expensive. So I think that people who have this spiritual philosophy of life or this discipline can solve these problems, because both sides can trust them.

Sometimes there is a need for someone who has this spiritual discipline to facilitate or mediate these types of problems because the ego gets in the way. I think people are more willing to put off their ego to a third party like this if that person is a righteous person.

Even though I was not a third party when we were trying to solve this problem, both sides still trusted me. At one point there was a break in the negotiations and they asked me to be involved. I told them that I would not betray my partners for them; that I would only live by my convictions. To me this is an honest way to be in life.

These conflicts are very complicated and I am still in the process of solving them. But if I can communicate at a higher level, or vibrate at a higher level, then I know we can tap into the collective soul where I can really understand their needs and where we can become one with each other.

Maitra, Ashoke – India

“Former Director of Human Resources for the Times of India”

“Founder of the Centre for Human Resource Development and the Sri Ramakrishna International Institute of Management in India”

Spiritual Theme

I think my spiritual theme is “Manifestation of latent Divinity.”

Practicing non-violence in the workplace

When I worked with Tata, I had not recruited one director's daughter because of inadequate merits, so he was very upset with me. He said to me, "I'll throw you out of the company. You are not recruiting my daughter, so I am going to sack you." I said, "Why do you want to sack me? I will go." He said, "Where will you stay? Are you going to live under a tree?" I said, "It makes no difference where I stay, God has brought me into this world, God will take care. So if it is giving you so much anxiety for me to stay here, then it is best that I go. I do not want you to suffer from anxiety because of me."

He said, "Okay you go" because he wanted to test me. I immediately took my resignation letter and gave it to Mr. J.R.D. Tata, because I was his executive assistant. J.R.D. Tata asked me why I was resigning. I said, "Sir, I do not want to create anxiety in anyone, so I am going." He asked me why I was going and I told him to ask the director. So J.R.D. called this director in front of me and asked him what had happened. He was so embarrassed. J.R.D. said, "This guy is going and I am going to suffer. He even keeps my medicines properly. So why are you sending him away and he is not even complaining about it?" The director explained to him that I had not recruited his daughter on merits and that he had gotten very angry and shouted at me. J.R.D. said, "He is only following the company's policy." The director said, "Yes, but I lost my cool. I told him to go out of anger and now he has taken it to the extreme and has given his resignation in a letter. He is doing drama." J.R.D. said, "He is not doing drama. He is going because you threatened to take action; that is why he is going."

I so readily agreed to go because I believe in Gandhiji's theory of ahimsa, non-violence. If you want to do violence on me, I will put my body before you. But why do you want to do violence and suffer later? Gandhiji's philosophy was one of non-violence. Gandhiji used to tell the British, "Why do you want to fine me, I am coming freely. If you want to hammer me and beat me do what you want if that gives you satisfaction. But I don't want you to suffer because of me." So these are ingrained values in me also. I say the same thing to my wife. If she feels upset, then I will go away because I do not want her to be upset and have her blood pressure go up. I do not want to be the cause of her unhappiness. For me it is better if I go. I do not want to fight. This has worked for me throughout my life time and again,

Chattopadhyay, A. K. – India

“Former Senior Vice President of ACC Limited Refractories Division in India”

“Executive Director of Tata Refractories, Ltd. in India”

Spiritual Theme

My spiritual theme is a combination of the four goals found in my spiritual view of life:

- To align oneself with a super power
- To find out the reasons within oneself
- To have faith in others
- To have a caring nature

Turning around a failing organisation

When I initially came in to head the operations of ACC Refractories in 1991, I saw right away that there was a big distance between the management and the workers. There was also not enough information being shared between them, so the workers felt totally disillusioned about what was going on. They had totally lost faith in management. To me, the workers are a part of the whole game and you cannot win the game without taking them into proper consideration.

So I started by working with the people. As a management team, we started working closely together with the factory workers and started sharing information with them. We shared what was happening and what was good or what was bad. Slowly the workers responded to this very nicely. I regained the faith of those people. After two years or so, they began to listen more to us than to their union leaders. So naturally the senior management people became their leaders and this was a big transformation.

The first thing I did was to introduce a monthly meeting, which we called a safety meeting. The idea was to address what had happened in the last month, what our market share was, how we performed, where we went wrong, where we went right, and how to learn from the things we did right. It used to be a one-hour meeting at the gate itself. When the workers came in the morning we were there and we would do some formalities and hold the meeting. We started by hoisting the safety flag. We talked about safety practises, including the accidents that took place in the plants and how they could have been avoided. Then we called a worker to talk about all different kinds of safety. Then we asked the engineers to talk about safety. Finally I would talk about the other things in the company. This became a fantastic thing. After a few months, people were eagerly coming to this meeting to listen.

Then we started a quality circle and brought people together to have interactions. We would visit one operation for the whole day and talk about things. Our people are good people; a few people have simply misguided them. So we tried to bring them into the right kind of attitude. As a management philosophy, we said that we are 80-85% responsible for difficulties with the business, and the workers are 15-20% responsible. That is, if we don't get a good price from the customer, that is management's fault. If we don't buy the raw material at a good price, that is management's fault. If inventory is lying in our yard, that is management's fault. When the material has been given to the worker, then it is their job to process it properly.

As a result of all of this, I also saw how we were doing things that were not getting us anywhere in our business, things that were losing money. So a lot of our business processes and strategies were changed. We looked at our product profile, we looked at our customer profile, and we looked to see if we could do the business in a different way. We phased out a lot of products that were not aiding the bottom line and it was a good transformation. We also got a lot of good support from the corporate office and that was what was needed.

We revived the business, and today I can tell you very proudly that we have grown from a 180 million rupee business (US\$3.8 million at the mid-2002 exchange rate) to 1,950 million rupee business (US\$41.5 million at the mid-2002 exchange rate) last year. The ten times growth occurred just by using a proper strategy to run the business and giving value to the people. In 1991 we were almost a non-entity and today we are a force to be reckoned with in the country.

Our products are good, our services are good, and our quality is good. During this same period the refractory industry overall was in very bad shape. However, we still managed to grow and grow.

My spiritual philosophy behind all of this was that I was trying to do good for our employees. They were not aware of the things that they were doing that were actually harmful to them. So I wanted to do good and show them how to do good.

Covey, Stephen R. – USA

“Vice Chairman of FranklinCovey, a global professional services firm based in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

One of my mottoes serves as a powerful spiritual theme for me: “Live life in crescendo.” In other words, the most important work you’ll ever do is still ahead of you.

Another such spiritual theme for me would be: “Educate and obey your conscience.” Educating as I speak of it here involves getting into the sacred literature of all the great traditions that have had enduring value and then consciously living true to what you have learned. The more you live true to it, the stronger your conscience becomes. A constant effort is required to stay on track with such stewardship.

Spiritual intention in leadership

I find that spiritual intention drives perception, which drives behaviour, which then drives results. If you actually get a person to think in terms of their legacy, what they are trying to really do in the long run to bless people’s lives, it gets them immediately into a spiritual frame of mind. I use this approach all the time in my leadership – and in training people to think in terms of supra-ordinate goals.

Let me give you an example. I was working with a large college in Ontario, Canada. They really had a terrible culture; it was characterised by turfism and fighting and interdepartmental resistances, with everyone looking out for themselves, protecting their own situation, silo thinking, and all that kind of stuff. I worked with them over a period of a year to develop a mission statement that would be supra-ordinate. By this I mean larger than one’s self, larger than one’s own institution. It took them about two years before there was broad agreement, and eventually

what happened was that they developed a mission statement to become the yardstick educational institution for all of the state of Ontario – the institution others could measure themselves against. When they really bought into that intention to leave a legacy, the littleness of their souls completely submerged, and the magnanimity of soul exploded inside them.

I have these eye-opening experiences almost on a daily basis, both in my own leadership work at FranklinCovey and in my work helping leaders of other organisations.

Daugherty, Thomas – USA

“Former Vice President of Spiritual Care and Values Integration with the Methodist Health Care System in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

One theme for me would be caring and compassion. Another would be faithfulness. A part of that has to do with persistence and perseverance, courage and humility.

For me, the Christian cross itself evokes all of this for me because it is such a powerful symbol of the Divine-human encounter. It represents the very best and the very worst of human experience, and it also represents the ultimate in God’s love and compassion for all humankind.

The Divine-human encounter is certainly a theme that expresses all of this for me.

Starting from the top

As I contemplate how to develop the programmes we have here, and how to disseminate our values throughout the organisation, I draw a lot from my background in pastoral care, counselling and teaching. But this is also where I have to recognise my own limitations. This is where one of our consultants has been such a resource for us because she brings a rich background in human resources and organisational development, and I have learned a lot from her. One of the things I have learned from her is that we have to take this spiritual approach into the organisation at all levels.

However, I knew from the beginning that it had to start at the top, and some of our most difficult challenges have been working with the senior management group. At the same time, one of the most rewarding, spiritually enriching aspects of this endeavour has been watching these same senior people get involved and articulate their own spirituality. The five values we are now focused on, I CARE (integrity, compassion, accountability, respect and excellence), really came together for us in our CEO Council.

While we have a system-wide committee of people called the “Systems Spiritual Care and Values Integration Committee” that generated a lot of the initial thinking about our values, it was the CEO Council that really embraced them; and they continue to be involved in the leadership of what we are doing. They also vacillate and waver from time to time, so I stay connected with them and continue to work with them; this is where my spiritual values and relationship skills have really helped me a lot.

Franklin, Carol – Switzerland

“Former Head of Human Resources for Swiss Re Insurance in Switzerland”

“Former CEO of the World-Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) in Switzerland”

Spiritual Theme

Caring for and being responsible for the earth and its inhabitants. Be responsible. Be the change you want to see in the world. Help move the world forward.

Changing people’s behaviour

Within the ten years before I joined WWF, 9 CEOs had left, and the year before I joined they did not even have a CEO. When I joined they had especially been looking for somebody from business, but the employees were not so happy with this, because they thought it was a different culture; and so it was. This gave me a relatively difficult start, because a lot of the employees were totally against me and opposed to me simply because I came from the world of business.

We went into a new strategy, the conception of which I was able to participate in from the beginning, which was very lucky for me. That strategy worked quite well. The strategy was to change peoples’ behaviour – to show them that you have to change your own behaviour if you want to change the world. It was kind of Gandhian, “Be the change you want to see in the world.” If you want to change the world, you have to find the longest lever, and that is business, because if you get business on your side, it is easier to change peoples’ behaviour. That meant that on the one hand we wanted to work with business, we wanted to “green” business. On the other hand we wanted to change the consumers’ behaviour - which meant that we were showing them the ways and means to change their behaviour. By doing that, they could influence politics and they could influence business, because obviously business does what the consumers want it to do. That was very successful. We had partnerships; we introduced the first and only real “green” electricity at the time and worked well with lots of corporations. We had an excellent image, and were constantly present in the media, always on a very positive note.

In Switzerland, as in many countries, if you look at the credibility ranking, the NGOs have the top credibility, and at the bottom you have the politicians. As an NGO, our biggest capital was credibility, and that was something we really had to look after. It all worked relatively well for about two to two and a half years, but then again, as with my predecessors, we ran into a structural problem. Most of the NGOs in Switzerland are somewhere between 20 and 40 years old, and they moved away from being in opposition to everybody else, and from being a grass-roots honorary based membership or contributor-organisation to a professional organisation.

There was a gap between the professional way that 180 people worked in the national administration, and the way the chapters in each of the 26 cantons (Swiss ‘states’) were run with more or less grass-roots-people, who had great local interests. The difficulty was trying to goad them into accepting the strategy, recognising that what they did was very important, but had to be the same as what we were doing on a national level and what we were doing on an international level.

So we had the international, the national, and the local level, but in these 26 chapters they had always been able to do whatever they wanted and had not been really integrated into the overall strategy. They didn’t think it was great fun, because they felt we were curtailing their rights. So there was a gap between the locals and the professionals. The locals said, “We are not being paid for this, we are working on an honorary basis, so we can do whatever we want to.” We said

no, and my suggestion at the time was to pay them something, like the firemen who work on a voluntary basis. Then we could draw up contracts with them and say, this is what we agree to do; you agree to do this, and we agree to do that, and if you don't do that, then we don't want you any more. They didn't like that very much, obviously.

These chapters elected over half of the members of the board. So people from the chapters went to the board and said "We don't like what the professional part is doing, because WWF is the local part" and some of the Board members, having been elected by the chapters, agreed.

Another thing is that the board had no idea how such an organisation with 180 employees and 45 million Swiss Francs of income (roughly US\$35 million at the time of the interview), in my opinion, needed to be managed and led. If you change the strategy, at some moment in time you will have to talk to the people and see if they want to be in this organisation - to see whether the organisation is right for them. If you or they come to the conclusion that the organisation is not right for them, then you have to do your best to keep things on a friendly basis so that maybe you can still work with that person, somehow, in the future. If the organisation changes its focus, then you possibly also have to make changes in the organisation and change the way the people work. But the board didn't understand this strategy. Also, they didn't keep their word. They decided things in board meetings and did the opposite two days later.

So what happened? They fired me! But because the employees had by accepted this strategy and supported it, and because the media was very positive about the changes, the employees as well as the media stood up and said, "You can't do this, you can't fire her." So WWF was again all over the media and the organisation lost an awful lot of members. Practically all of Switzerland and all the employees stood up and said, "No, this person is better than the board, you have to fire the board and not her," which they didn't do of course; the board won. But that's why for me, being fired was not such a bad experience. That was three years of WWF.

I knew exactly what I was doing. Eight months before I was fired I went home and said to my husband, "If I carry on like I am working now, they are going to fire me. Can we live with this?" And my husband said, "You can't live differently." This for me was an ethical question. The board was going against the organisation, and I found that I was not there to work for myself; I was there to work for a cause. With all these employees who were of the same opinion, I was willing to jeopardise my job because of the cause. That is why all the employees and all the media went for this. They all said, "This is what ethics in business is about."

Being fired was for me one of the most important points of my life. For me it was simply a matter of principle - if you believe in something, if you believe in something good for the cause, you stick to it.

Jiang, Niran – Australia

"Formerly Senior Trends Manager for Coca Cola and Marketing Manager for S. C. Johnson in the USA"

"CEO for the Institute of Human Excellence in Australia"

Spiritual Theme

My spiritual theme would be interconnectedness, wonderment, and compassion.

Shifting the thinking of the company

I used the same approach at S.C. Johnson as I did later on at Coca Cola with regard to creating an opening for a large acquisition. The company was experiencing stagnant growth, as most established businesses do. But unfortunately, in general we operate on a growth paradigm where zero growth is not acceptable. I feel resigned to accept that paradigm. In that paradigm, you scare business by showing that they go down hill if they don't innovate, which is true. We invited the Boston Consulting Group, BCG, to do a major study of where growth could come from. Based on that study we were ready to look for radical changes for the business.

What stimulates wonderment is when you truly connect the inner life forces. Three of us, who connected really well, said, "Let's take this project." We went into hiding and identified the target for a new acquisition. It was Ziploc – a small plastic storage bag. Everybody said "no", as it was not in our traditional category of household cleaning products; we didn't have the manufacturing capability, and we didn't have any knowledge about making bags. Looking at acquisition criteria, everything said "no, no, no!" But intuitively this was really right for the three of us, and we were amazed at the power of the brand, as a USA brand magazine had listed Ziploc as number 17 on a list of 100 top brands together with names like Disney and Harley Davidson. We knew all the "no's", but we felt a lot of wonderment about this, almost a passion; it was not just about valuation, but about future potentials.

After doing the traditional marketing research, we kept on brainstorming ideas, though not in a way according to the manual of S.C. Johnson. This was pure idea-flow because of the passion and the life force, the wonderment and the mystery of why we were so attracted to this brand. We talked it over in a restaurant where we were joking, having fun, a lot of humour, and all the ideas became very visual and graphic. We opened up to tremendous creativity and were able to catch all those ideas later on. We put everything beautifully on the board for the CEO and said, "This is your future business". After ten minutes he said, "I got it, we're buying it!" The whole senior management committees' jaws dropped. They said, "But what about manufacturing, we don't know how to..." "We'll learn," the CEO said. The company paid US\$ 1.1 billion in 1996-7, and that became their largest acquisition. Today that business has provided the largest growth of the company. I got headhunted away, but I still got the credit for what had happened and I was told that it was amazing how I had been able to shift the thinking of the company.

My spirituality brought to this exciting project a true respect for and feeling of equality on the soul level with everybody in the small team; nobody was afraid of opening up. We were passionate. We had a strong curiosity, which I see as spirituality, as a life force. We got connected to a universal power, and we all felt a great commitment. This is why we succeeded.

Maitra, Ashoke – India

"Former Director of Human Resources for the Times of India"

"Founder of the Centre for Human Resource Development and the Sri Ramakrishna International Institute of Management in India"

Spiritual Theme

I think my spiritual theme is "Manifestation of latent Divinity."

Reducing grief during the merger of two competitive companies

The first story I have to share is when we were merging NOCIL and another petrochemical company. The two companies were very culturally different and were organised very differently; one had only seven levels of management and the other had 19 levels of management. There was a lot of hatred between these two companies because for years they had fought each other to prove who was better. Now one of the companies was merging into the other and would be losing their identity. I was the HR person for NOCIL, which was the surviving company, and I had to lead this merger.

To make things worse, the owner of NOCIL named the managing director of the other company as the managing director of the combined companies. This managing director was a totally unprofessional man. As a result the original managing director of NOCIL, who had a tremendous amount of credibility and was well liked by the workers, resigned in disgust.

The owner of NOCIL, Mr. Mafatlal, decided that the merger had to be done seamlessly, but did not give any direction. So I thought that the best way to merge would be to integrate people at the spiritual level and therefore I experimented. No one stopped me since from the initial stage the shareholders got good feedback.

The first thing I realised was that I must not identify myself with either company, while at the same time taking full ownership of my HR position and responsibilities. I knew that I had to be clear and often thought of Vivekananda's talk that we should be able to attach and detach with equal ease. I became detached so I could properly facilitate the process.

You see, I knew my job, even back then, was to take people out of grief. I knew I had to be involved in it, but out of it; I had to be like a lotus in the water, but not of it. I began to read the spiritual texts as much as possible – Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Sathya Sai Baba, Rajnish – in order to school myself on being detached with equipoise.

I realised we had to create one HRD department and one marketing department, both of which would have equal representation from each company. I knew that the first step was to have them learn to sit with each other, nothing else. I called all the top management from both sides and told them, "We have to create a new vision for this company. Your purpose cannot be to hate each other, let us go beneath all of this and see what our purpose is. The fact is we have been legally merged, so what do we do?" They needed to connect spiritually.

At first there were a lot of grievances that surfaced. By the afternoon, we said okay, it is the worst thing to happen in life, but it has happened. Now what do we do? We started examining the question of purpose and in three days time we came to a top management integration of the purpose of the combined companies.

I then conducted 44 workshops of two days each to help employees understand this new vision for the company and what we were out to do together. It was a residential workshop and the first day people sat separately, even during the lunch they remained separate. By the end of the two days there was some amount of mutual respect where they could at least look at each other and sit next to each other. That was followed by a large number of sensitivity training workshops, which I conducted. These workshops taught them how to be sensitive to others and to find their own space and their own theory in life.

I got people together, through a participatory process, to develop respect and positive feelings for each other. I believe that if I had not been detached and acted with equipoise that I could have

never achieved this. I was not an external facilitator; I was the HR head of the surviving company. As such, they had every right to turn on me and think that I had betrayed them. My transparency and credibility had to be grounded on my spiritual foundation because people knew I was a spiritual person

In the sensitivity training and workshops we did, we first asked them to define their purpose in life. We didn't ask them to define the purpose of the company; we asked them to define their purpose, to define what they are here to do in life and what they want from life. Most of the people said they wanted happiness and satisfaction from life. We asked them, "How do you get satisfaction?" We pointed out that you get satisfaction by not hating anyone; you get satisfaction when you are not greedy, and when you do not have anger. When they pointed out that they were angry because of the merger, I reminded them that the merger has nothing to do with them personally; it is a legal merger and they should not get so attached to it.

This is the first stage where we had them begin their introspection. Spirituality is all about introspection. When you put people in an introspective mode in an exercise, then they start to question their own life and their own reason for existence, such as what they are here to do and how they will achieve it. Then, many times they see the futility of getting angry and see that they are doing exactly the opposite of what they want to achieve.

If my goal is to be the best HRD Director, then I need to examine whether anger is going to help me, or whether it will be an obstacle. If I realise that it is going to be an obstacle then I need to examine why I am getting angry in the first place.

My overriding mission during the entire process was to reduce grief and not increase grief. I was able to spiritually detach myself while being part of it, and I wanted to transfer this knowledge to them. This detachment comes naturally for me because I have stayed with so many saints. However, this level of detachment was not happening for them and as a result they were suffering from grief.

My call as the head of HR was more of a compassionate call to them. It was out of compassion that I wanted the employees to forget what was happening in the company and to just look after themselves. I think the reason they accepted what I said is because they saw I was not concerned about the company; I was concerned about them and their grief.

I reminded them that this was actually a great opportunity. I told them to treat life as if it were a play and to know that things are going to happen with or without their will many times. If you learn to detach yourself and look at what is going on as a spectator, you can have a much better life.

We had one of the smoothest mergers in the history of India of two competitive petrochemical companies. We had no press reference, even though we could have been the centre of attention in the news at that time.

Creating alignment and integration between management and journalists

When I came to the Times Group about 7 years back, I began with a very difficult assignment. There was a big fight between the journalists and the management and they each had major criticisms of each other. I knew I had to create a clear alignment and integration of these two groups as we were all working for the same paper and for the same purpose.

The first thing I did was to come and sit here in the editor's cabin. You see, this is the journalist area of the Times of India; this is not the management floor. When I came and sat here the first

thing they asked me was, “How can you come and sit here? You are from the other side.” I said, “But I thought we were all on the same side.” They said, “No, you are from the other side.” So I said, “Fine, I am sitting here and if you hate me I will go away. But it is your choice because I have taken my first step not to have any discrimination. I have made my first move to show you that we are all one, because that is what I believe. I believe in Vedanta and I believe that all of us are the same. If you think I am some kind of skunk, then I will leave, but give me 15 days to see whether you want me to sit here or not.”

After 15 days I went to the floor and asked them whether I should stay or go. They said no and asked me to stay. They were very happy that a management man was there because, if nothing else, I would at least make sure the bathrooms were clean. I have now been on this floor for over six years.

During those early days I held a strategic planning workshop that was completely initiated by me. Because there was a lot of misunderstanding between the journalists and management, I felt there was an acute need to bring them together through a participatory process to create a sense of well-being, understanding and camaraderie between them. After all, all of us worked for the same cause.

My colleagues, who are Directors, in fact were very critical. They opined I was wasting my time trying to change the behaviour of journalists based on their past record. But I persisted, with my faith and my shareholders blessings, because I strongly believe every human being is intrinsically good and our work should be able to bring out our best.

Even the owner of the Times Group warned me that the journalists would not attend this strategic planning workshop. The first person to walk into the workshop was the resident editor of the Times of India and then came the Economic Times editor. Someone asked one of the editors why she came and she said, “I came because Ashoke called me and I know Ashoke doesn’t see any difference between the management and journalists. If anyone else had called, I would not have come.” All the editors came and all the managers came and we had a 3-day workshop to decide the future of the company. It worked. I am happy.

Ollé, Ramón – The Netherlands

“President of Epson Europe in The Netherlands”

Spiritual Theme

“To know thyself.”

Changing mindsets to change the organisation

The most difficult part of changing an organisation is to change the mindsets of the people. Why? Because we are living in a multi-cultural environment where everyone has been educated in a different manner and we are not sharing the same values. Even the basic concepts of people are different from culture to culture.

Designing change is a logical matter with a certain risk. But at the end what makes it really happen is when everyone aligns their mindsets in one direction. Some people are able to re-adjust to the new way of thinking, and some people are not capable of adjusting their mind in

order to think differently from the way they did in the past. I have discovered that people do not want to give up their old traditional concepts because that is where they are more comfortable. This is why many organisations are not changing today.

When I am facing very critical situations, I impose learning problems on our people. I try to help them clarify their inner understanding of the problem we are facing so that we can move from the inner understanding to the outside action. In other words, I have 100% trust in the Chinese proverb: first know and help yourself, then your family, then your village, then your country.

Whenever I am passing through a critical period in my own life, if I try to first put my priorities on things outside, on the external world, I never succeed. Everything works out after I put myself in order inside. When I am capable of reflecting within myself on what my internal problems are, what my internal dreams are and what the internal consequences of the acts I am considering are, automatically I can also work with others to help them to look within and to put themselves in order. All of the people in the world have basically the same desires, the same emotions, the same loves, the same fears. So, if I am capable of understanding this, then I can understand the different cultures we work with and in. If I do not do this, then I cannot really understand anything.

I discovered that when it is not possible for a person to change his mindset, even when he has had training and coaching, then he must be let go and replaced. We are talking about the human spirit and we must do all we can to bring out this spirit, but sometimes there are limits. The change must come from within and not from the outside; we cannot do anything if a person is not willing to change.

We all have the same rights and obligations within the organisation, which means we have to be respectful of others, we have to respect society, and we have to be respectful of the rules. This is fundamental to Epson's leadership philosophy. I do on occasion meet people who are not following the rules of the organisation, and when I do I will invite them to leave. I do not compromise on this; I will send them out of our system. To me, a person is not married to the company; when something is not right, it is better to part ways.

When you make a transformation in your company, you will see it in the faces of the people, in the way they are working, and in the meetings you have with them. You will see the transformation being manifested in many ways. Of course, you cannot measure happiness, and you cannot measure commitment. But you will see it.

Raghavan, N. S. – India

“Founding Director and former Joint Managing Director of Infosys in India”

Spiritual Theme

“Love and trust” automatically came to my mind as my theme.

Conducting 360 degree reviews with senior management

We had a Management Council at Infosys, headed up by the Managing Director that ran the whole show. There were about sixteen people on the council at that time. I told them I wanted to conduct 360-degree appraisals and asked for their permission to do this for everyone who was on

the council except the MD. I told them that I would personally talk to the people and collect the information for each council member.

Since this was a first-time experiment and they were all very senior people, I made them two guarantees. I told them that I would not share with the MD any of the detailed information I was collecting, except for an MC summary of the feedback. I also told them that I would be the only person to have the information, and that I would do the analysis and give feedback to each one of them. I did this because I knew that it was important to maintain this type of confidentiality. Nobody could really object because this was something good, and so they agreed.

I prepared two different components to this 360-degree appraisal. One had to do with their leadership abilities and the other with their behaviour. I created the questionnaire and had both a number rating and a place for qualitative remarks about them. I had them rate each other, and I also had a few subordinates rate them.

This took about three months for me to do – it was a very big job. I wanted to test it out and show them the importance of this kind of feedback. When I started having people fill out the questionnaires, I warned them not to try to get out of this by saying that they did not know the person that well. I told them that even if they didn't feel they knew the person very well, they still had their own perceptions of them and they should report on those. I told them that perceptions drove their behaviour and therefore were equally valid and important for me to collect and then give feedback on. I asked them to be very truthful and not to worry about it.

To help them understand the importance of this whole process, I told them this story... There was a company that was going downhill, and the board decided to get a new CEO to turn it around. After a couple of months, the new CEO got a feel for the whole place and realised that some of the senior managers were critically under-performing.

He called one of the senior under-performing managers in for a talk. The CEO told him that even though he hadn't been with the company a long time, he understood that the manager was not performing well. He told him that he must improve his performance or he would have to go. The manager reacted and told him, "I don't know where you got this information. If you look at my performance reports you'll see that I have been rated very good year after year. I am a very good performer. I think you have gotten some wrong information."

The CEO then told him to go to two of his other senior colleagues and ask them to openly tell him the truth of what they thought of his performance. Then he told him to come back to him after he had done this and they would see what to do. So the senior manager went to his colleagues and told them he wanted their honest opinion and asked them to tell him the truth. All of them told him the truth that the CEO was correct that he was not performing well.

The senior manager came back to the CEO and admitted that what he, the CEO, had said was true. He said to the CEO, "I do not feel bad about getting this negative feedback. What I feel bad about is that I have been here for 15 years and I have been thinking that I was doing a great job. I thought I was contributing. I wish someone had told me the truth years ago. Maybe this wasn't even the best place for me to work to bring out my expertise and strengths. Now I feel so miserable, I have been working here thinking that I was a great contributor and actually I am not."

I like to tell people this story because it shows them how important their honest feedback is. I tell them that they are doing another person a disservice if they are not honest in their feedback. I also tell them that if one person gives a negative feedback, you can dismiss it as biased or that the individual has not known him well. If two people give the same feedback, then you better start

getting concerned. But if five people give similar feedback, then it cannot be rejected and needs to be attended to. If your assessment is that the negative feedback is just a perception issue, then you need to change that perception. On the other hand if you are convinced that it must be the truth, then you need to try hard to change, as these are leadership attributes that are important.

There were a lot of things that came out and in many ways it was not comfortable. Everyone got a good sense of where they stood. A lot of people came back to me and said that this was a very useful exercise – that they had received benefit from it and that they were better able to understand themselves.

Raman, Ananth – USA

“Chairman of Graphtex, Inc. a manufacturing company in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

“Awareness” and “Realising Divinity”

Unity of thought, word, and action

There was a time when we were introducing ISO 9000, which was a system of quality control measures for our company. One of our companies was a job shop where we do specialty items for our customers. Since these products are made for specific applications it is extremely difficult to standardise things and is a very complicated process. This made it a difficult environment to introduce these types of quality measures, since it involves a lot of rigid procedures.

The expert said, “This is all very simple. All you need to do is write down each of the procedures that you are already doing. You don’t have to make any improvement; you don’t have to say anything else except exactly the way you are doing it. This has nothing to do with right or wrong, you simply say what you are doing and do what you say.” Even after he said all of this my fellows were still completely worried.

One evening I was thinking about this while attending a study circle with my spiritual group. I saw that all of this was simply talking about unity of thought, word, and action. So, I called in my employees and gave them a talk about unity of thought, word and action. I told them, “This is nothing but the concept of having what you feel, what you write and how you act be the same. This is all that ISO 9000 is about.”

So we went all over the company and said, “The company’s objective with ISO 9000 is to have unity of thought, word and action.” If I had used the word spiritual to describe the basis of this concept, I would have probably gotten some negative reaction. To me I didn’t feel that I needed to tout this as spiritual. It was just truth and honesty, that’s all. When I explained what unity of word, thought and action meant, they understood the concept very easily.

Sometimes they would even come back with an example such as this: “If a customer wants us to deliver a product the next day and we know it is going to take one week, usually we tell them it will be the day after tomorrow so we can buy some time. Can we do that? If we do, then it disturbs the unity of thought, word and action. So, what do we tell them? Do we tell them the truth?”

They started raising all of these questions throughout the departments; I was amazed at the chain reaction that began. So I told them, "Let's not go mad about this unity of thought, word and action. Let's have a monthly meeting where we can discuss these problems where you find it difficult to be totally truthful." I tried to help them see the difference between telling a customer, "no, it won't go tomorrow, we are having difficulties," which is the truth, versus "it will go day after tomorrow," which is a lie. In this way they could still buy some time without promising something which was not going to happen. We continue to have these monthly meetings where we examine these difficult situations and look to see how we can solve them with a unity of thought, word and action.

ORGANISATION – CREATING AND SUSTAINING THE ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE (11 STORIES)

Aguenza, Floy – The Philippines

“President and COO of Planters Development Bank in The Philippines”

Spiritual Theme

“What would Jesus do?” “What would the Lord do?”

Exposing employees to spirituality

I believe that people who are well-balanced and spiritual make better employees. I spent a lot of time thinking about how to help nurture the spiritual growth of our people. So I decided I wanted to see how I could expose the employees of the bank to spirituality. Traffic here in Manila is quite difficult, so many of our employees leave their homes very early in the morning, sometimes 5:30 or 6:00 am, and they get back home to their families at 7:00 or 8:00 pm or some even 9:00 pm. So since they spend most of their waking hours in the bank, we must try to help them without sacrificing the objectives of the bank.

We started with letting our people attend retreats as part of our training activities. I send the bank's branch managers and male officers personal letters of invitation to spiritual retreats, and the turnouts have been quite good with very positive feedback.

Instituting Prayer. I was the only woman in the management committee. Typically, Filipino men are not very comfortable about spirituality, as this goes against the Filipino macho culture. But knowing that our Chairman was himself quite open, I suggested we start our meetings with prayers to which he readily agreed. That was the start of our practice of starting all meetings with a prayer and all important initiatives and occasions with the Holy Mass. This is also how the ecumenical Plantersbank family prayer has developed. We also created a prayer and meditation room where the staff can go if they need some time alone or to pray.

Our Plantersbank family prayer is:

*Lord God, Heavenly King and Father
We thank You for Your continued presence among Your people.
Grant that we may learn
To exercise responsible stewardship
Over all the resources You entrust to us,

That we may consciously use our talents and skills
For the glory of Your name
And the betterment of our fellowmen,
And that our day-to-day decisions
May be in accordance with Your Most Holy Will
Lord, help us to see in every client
An opportunity to be of service
And to be a blessing to the life of another;
To find in our fellow workers
A greater inspiration to give our best
In everything we do.*

*Teach us always to be Your disciples
That we may establish Your kingdom in the marketplace
So that at the end of the day
We may humbly present to You
A Bank that is worthy of Your presence
A Bank with a heart...
A Bank with conscience and compassion
Planters Development Bank.
All these, we pray
In Jesus name. Amen.*

Conducting worship services. Later on, we began the Wednesday and Friday masses. We asked Fr. Armand Robleza, who conducts our retreats, to be our official Chaplain and to guide our spiritual programme. He has been doing this for the last 13 years. We also conduct worship services for those belonging to other denominations which I also try to attend. To this day, I get letters from some of our staff thanking us for these opportunities for spiritual development.

Each year also begins with a grand celebration of thanksgiving to God where officers from our head office and the more than 65 branches all over the country come together to praise and thank God for the blessings, pray, review the past year, recognise people and events, and offer our plans for the coming year.

Since there is a small minority of our employees who are not Catholic, we have worship services for them. I myself also attend worship services of faiths other than mine because I want the employees to feel that they are not marginalised because they are of a different faith. Any time something happens, such as a death in the family, I consciously go out of my way to show that I am concerned about what has happened. We want our employees to be happy and fulfilled working for us and we want our customers to be happy. We really do mean this.

Canada, Francisco Roberto – Argentina

“Director and Partner of Errepar S.A., a major publishing firm in Argentina”

Spiritual Theme

Loving God.

Human Values as the guidelines for our business

Like all difficult things, leading a business becomes easier as time goes by. Seven years ago we developed some principles of action in our company. We began to hold weekly meetings where we discuss leadership according to the principles of my spiritual teacher, as we read about them in a book on management, *Sai Baba's Mahavakya on Leadership*, by Lieut. General in the Indian army, Dr. M.L. Chibber. In these meetings we discuss how to grow the company using spiritual principles. Everybody in the company knows that the three owners are all devotees of the same Indian spiritual teacher.

We hold these meetings with the sales managers, product managers, systems managers, and all the staff. We talk about how to apply the teachings and principles of Spiritual Leadership, both at work and in our daily life.

In these weekly meetings we focus on principles based on the human values of truth, right action, love, peace and non-violence - not on religion. We use examples from all religions, but each person has his own spiritual way. The employees accept this in a wonderful way.

When the company went through hard times for a period of roughly three years, the weekly meetings stopped. The difficult times arose when the company was being split from just one firm into four companies, each with its own newly hired general manager and with the three partners as the board for each of these companies.

Recently we have taken up the weekly meetings again, but have changed them. Now the meetings are being run by trainers in each company and on different levels - with the managers, with the middle management, and with the employees. These trainers have been trained in working with the human values, and the first results of the meetings are beautiful.

But not everyone finds working with us to be so beautiful. Sometimes it happens that an employee doesn't get on well with the company. They find that with the family spirit and the spiritual orientation, which permeates our way of doing business, it has a different vibration than they are used to, and so they leave.

When we, the three owners, worked directly with everybody, there was a certain family spirit in the company. When we began growing as a business and then changed the organisational structure by installing general managers for each of the companies, the spirit of the overall organisation suffered. People who have stayed with us through all the 25 years tell us that they feel that with these weekly meetings, which we began again three months ago, the whole organisation, all four companies, are going to revive the old family spirit.

Chand, Amber – USA

“Founder of the Amber Chand Collection: Global Gifts for Peace and Understanding, an internet-based company in the USA that markets the products of artisans from around the world”

Spiritual Theme

Compassion, balance, grace, and friendliness are words that ring as a spiritual theme for me. Yes, this is a “God-being tapestry.”

Two initiatives to cultivate spirit in the organisation

As a co-founder of this company, I have a very interesting role. I have a tremendous amount of influence, but I have not been interested in seeing it as power. So in everything I do people see me as a co-founder and respect me for that role. It is a status and respect that I hold very humbly.

I know when I walk through this company that employees look to me sort of like a mother, a nurturing spirit. So I try to continually find ways to be that nurturing, reassuring, loving spirit for them. This allows me to authentically be my spirit-self. I am very grateful that I do not have to be any different than who I am. As a result I have been able to actually cultivate a great confidence in others by being more spiritual: they expect it of me, they see it in me, they laugh at me, they dismiss me, all of that.

There are two initiatives that I think my spiritual theme – this beautiful tapestry of compassion, balance, grace, and friendliness – has inspired. I created the first one about a year ago and called

it “tea with Amber.” To me this is exactly the way I see that spirit should work in a company. I was inspired to do this when, one day, my heart sank when I realised that the company had grown to such a degree that I no longer knew everybody. I could not see how I could be in the nurturer role if I didn’t know everyone by name. I thought about this and began to search for a way that I could connect with everyone in the company.

So the idea came to me to just begin to have a cup of tea with every person. The first thing I noticed was that my office was not the nurturing atmosphere that I wanted, so I rearranged my office completely. I created a little sitting area where I have some lamps and plants, I got out my lovely Mexican tea set and then I began to invite people to tea.

One by one people began to come and sit with me for tea. Some people were very nervous because they were sitting with the co-founder. I would make them a cup of tea and what I noticed is that once they began to sip their tea, they would start to relax physically. Once we could both relax with each other, then we could actually open ourselves up to the “art of conversation.”

This whole concept has continued to grow and now it is on the website as a column. Who would have ever thought that it would have blossomed so much? What is so wonderful about this is that it is definitely something that the employees look forward to. It has become seen as a very important part of my work in this company and as a way for us to continue to highlight Eziba as a company with a social conscience.

The second initiative I started early on was to speak to the customers who were unhappy with us. I remembered my childhood where my mother and father taught me to treat a guest who came to our house as God. You do everything you can to make their time with you happy and satisfying and comfortable. So during our first customer training, I told them this story. I told them that at Eziba, I like to feel that the customer is God. So when the customer calls, we drop everything and we listen. People actually listened to what I said and thought it was nice.

We have a fabulous customer service group and yet I still want to speak with all of the unhappy customers. It is actually helpful for our employees to see that the co-founder is working alongside them, supporting the larger work, which is to satisfy all our customers. I always pick up the phone and call the unhappy customers. I begin by apologising to them, “I am so sorry that we have dissatisfied you in some way.” I must tell you that customers are amazed; they cannot believe that one of the founders is taking the time to call them. From this call, I always end up with a happy customer; we usually end up feeling a lot of joy and laugh together. I tell them to call me again if they ever have any problems and I give them my direct line. So it is another way of being thoughtful and it works.

Daugherty, Thomas – USA

“Former Vice President of Spiritual Care and Values Integration with the Methodist Health Care System in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

One theme for me would be caring and compassion. Another would be faithfulness. A part of that has to do with persistence and perseverance, courage and humility.

For me, the Christian cross itself evokes all of this for me because it is such a powerful symbol of the Divine-human encounter. It represents the very best and the very worst of human experience, and it also represents the ultimate in God's love and compassion for all humankind.

The Divine-human encounter is certainly a theme that expresses all of this for me.

Having the intention to make a positive difference

The difference I hope to make here at Methodist Health Care Systems is to enhance the quality of care and the spiritual environments in which that care is given. The title I have now is Vice President of Spiritual Care and Values Integration. Ordinarily, people think the "spiritual care" portion of my title has to do with the chaplains who provide their services in the hospital. While I do have some relationship to the chaplains, they actually report to someone else in the organisation; I don't have administrative responsibilities for them.

What I have tried to communicate since I have been in this position is that spiritual care refers to a quality of caring that we provide in this environment. It is a quality that connects us with the spirit of the organisation and with the spirit of the Divine, which is in our midst. For me, it is something that involves everyone, and not just the chaplains who will always play a prominent role as well. It is a quality of caring that involves our administration, our board members, our housekeeping personnel, our nurses, our physicians, everyone. So it is comprehensive and inclusive. I am hoping to influence the environment where everyone receiving care in any of our hospitals can feel there is a difference in their care and on some level they realise they are receiving spiritual care.

I don't think at this point people consciously choose to come to our hospitals because we have a fine spiritual environment. Primarily, they are coming to the Methodist Health Care System because we have a reputation for having the best physicians and the best track record in taking care of their physical problems. However, this Texas Medical Center is full of hospitals; this is the largest conglomeration of hospitals and health care facilities in the world. So there's something else that I believe does enter into their decision even now, and I think unconsciously people do come here because they expect to receive something different. They may not consciously know what it is, but they feel and expect something different in the environment.

To me, the name "Methodist", which indicates that this organisation is based in Christian principles, does imply in some way that people should be able to expect a difference in the quality of care they receive and the way they are treated. So my work is about cultivating a holistic, comprehensive spiritual environment where this caring can take place. I think the spiritual and the material aspects of health care and healing were once connected. I want to reconnect the aspects of this environment that have been so long disconnected.

Integrating values in everyone's day-to-day work

As we move forward with our values integration effort, one of the things we are trying to do is to integrate these values into every aspect of the employee's life cycle: from the application process to the hiring interviews, all the way through the evaluation processes and exit interviews. We want to hire people who are the kind of people who will live these values and will fit with this environment. While we expect people to have the best clinical and technical competence, we feel that this alone is not enough – a person can be competent and capable; however, he or she may not fit into this culture. Living these values, which will in turn cultivate a spiritual environment, is just as important. The way our employees treat each other in their workgroup, the way they treat

their internal customers, the way they treat people who come here to be served – the way they go about treating people is just as important as *what* they do in their job.

The training process we currently have in progress will continue from now on. It will take us twelve months just to train our current 8,000 employees. However, we plan to make it a part of our new employee orientation. We also plan to expand this training as well.

The next phase we will be introducing in the next couple of months is called the “workgroup commitment process.” This is a process in which we ask all executives, managers, directors, and supervisors to engage the people who report to them in a process of looking at and integrating the five core values. They will first ask “Who are our internal customers and who are our external customers?” and “How well are we doing with the services we provide them?” Next, they will take each of the five values and ask “in our particular workgroup what does it mean to...” For example, in our day-to-day working with each other, what does it mean to show respect? This is exploring group-specific behaviours. I, myself, will start this process with the CEO Council.

Jiang, Niran – Australia

“Formerly Senior Trends Manager for Coca Cola and Marketing Manager for S. C. Johnson in the USA”

“CEO for the Institute of Human Excellence in Australia”

Spiritual Theme

My spiritual theme would be interconnectedness, wonderment, and compassion.

Using storytelling in business

Businesses are more motivated to change when they see crises coming, and more open to change when there is chaos around. By doing Future Trends at Coca Cola, part of my job was almost to scare the people by showing them “the real picture”. I showed them how different the consumers were from what they thought, how different the future would be – not based on cost efficiency, but more on idea-power – and how they could approach making decisions. I painted a picture that had them feel very inadequate, and that created openings.

I started an Urban Teen Connection Project, bringing teenagers to the company, doing a lot of story telling, and learning from their stories. Also in business, stories teach in magic ways, and they don’t preach. We tried to understand teens, to build a brand with teens and to bring this into the process of initiating new PR and new advertising activities in a most competitive landscape. It was about creating growth in a difficult market for a difficult consumer segment, because urban teenagers were turning to other drinks. I started the process by doing strategic planning differently from what they had been doing, and a year later it led to and created good business results. It was a chain effect. I role modelled and gave everyone the credit along the way as a result of the interconnectedness I felt. I had people collaborate rather than compete for credit so they could get a promotion. It was a little cultural change in the company.

Moitra, Deependra – India

“Formerly the youngest General Manager within Lucent Technologies, who at the time had 70,000 employees worldwide”

“Associate Vice President with Infosys Technologies, Ltd. in India”

Spiritual Theme

“Living with a purpose” would be my theme. True fulfilment is then the outcome of this journey.

Cultivating loyalty

Fundamentally, I do think that we all need to think about business in a radically different manner. In you look at most major corporations, you will find that basically they all react. What this indicates to me is that our footing is not solid. What good is strategy if it warrants you to react every alternate week? This means, that in actuality, we don't have a strategy. I think that as a corporation we need to change this pattern. We need to be very clear as to whether we want to stay focused and create opportunities, or whether we want to be driven by the market and continuously react.

The reason I am talking about this is that it has a tremendous effect on employees. I personally do not like the word “loyalty” because in today's world the employee cannot be loyal to the corporation, since the corporations are not loyal to the employees. If you look at most companies, the one thing they continue to do is lay off employees when the business takes a downturn. Now I see a fundamental conflict here. On one hand we want to increase the workforce, we want to do great things, we want to bring on new employees, and yet when we get hit financially, the first thing we want to do is get rid of employees. To be honest, we cannot really be financially sound or sustain our financial soundness by only eliminating our employees as a reaction.

If you think about this in family terms, if you have a sick child you do not just get rid of him or her. You have a commitment to your child, and so you do everything you can to help them get well. So I think we need to take a very different approach than what we are doing now. This would be an all-encompassing approach where we make sure that we utilise employee involvement in a manner that helps to make our position in the marketplace solid. We have to understand the emotional side of our employees and make sure that they feel part of the whole process, as opposed to being mere labourers in the process.

Employees are human beings, and they put their hearts and minds and emotions into the development of the business. We cannot play with their emotions, such as when you need them you pat them on the back, and when you don't need them you ruthlessly get rid of them. We have to recognise that the company exists because of its people, and that does call for a spiritual approach. I think this should be the very first step that every business should take in order to progress toward a spiritual way of doing business.

When I think about a company being spiritual, I think that the first and foremost place where spirituality has to be demonstrated is with its stakeholders. We must create a system where we can, without talking about loyalty, have loyalty become ingrained. No one has to talk about loyalty, no one has to ask about loyalty, but the whole operating framework is such that loyalty becomes a second name for everyone. What this means is that loyalty takes on a spiritual meaning, as opposed to an attitude of “I will stick with you.” Loyalty must also work both ways. A business cannot seek the loyalty of their employees without being loyal to them.

Narayana, G. – India

“Chairman Emeritus for Excel Industries, Ltd. in India”

Spiritual Theme

My spiritual theme is: Noble actions, noble feelings, noble thoughts, noble responsibility.

Showing GOD

When I first came to Excel I showed them “GOD.” What is GOD? Group plus Organisation plus Direction equals “GOD.”

To build the **Group**, I did not put the system first; I put the people first. At first there were only five people in the top management group, each holding two responsibilities. We built a top team and used to meet in that room at 11 o'clock everyday and take decisions together. We discussed and talked together about all fields in the company, everything was a group decision.

To build the **Organisation**, our personnel manager became the R&D manager, our technical manager became the personnel manager, and our marketing manager became the manufacturing manager...all because we were making group decisions together.

To build **Direction**, we practiced 5-D's: discussion, decision, drive, determination, and destination. First we discussed, made decisions, initiated drive, worked with determination, and finally reached our destination. For example, the chief executive builds a team to discuss and search for opportunities, and everyone participates. Then he empowers the leaders, including himself, to make decisions, which initiates the process with resources. The chief executive then authorises the functions to provide the drive to strive for implementing the goals. He inspires the people to stretch with determination to complete the process. *Only when you stretch is there a contribution.* The organisation reaches the destination and there is success, and this elevates the team for the next situation.

Leadership is this process of participation (in a group), decision (for the organisation), and initiation (of the direction). When you have shared vision, shared mission, and shared plan, you must have shared success. Shared success is a *prasad*, a fruit. When success comes, credit must be shared and then fruit must be shared. We did all of this, like partnerships with trust and responsibility.

Management is getting work done by people, by authorising them to meet the organisational goals. Management involves attitude first, then work, then leadership, and then energy. The proper attitudes are dedication, sincerity, honesty and nobility. If you do sincere work, then management will be a dedicated management. If you are dedicated in your endeavour, then you are a loving nurturer. If it is an honest contribution, then you get empowering leaders. If you are an empowering leader, you get honest contribution.

When you are connecting with others, there are four means of connection: power, wealth, knowledge, and strength. (In Indian spiritual terms, these four qualities are related to the goddesses named *Shakthi*, *Lakshmi*, *Saraswathi*, and *Parvathi*.) Then there are three types of consciousness: *creation*, *continuation*, and *conclusion*. (In Indian spiritual terms, these three qualities are related to the gods we call Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshwar.)

Creation comes from *knowledge*, continuation comes from *strength*, and conclusion comes from *wealth*. If you have money, but no knowledge, then connect and gain knowledge. If you have knowledge, but no strength, then connect and gain strength. Thus, the *power* is found in connection; so connection power is super power. The moment you connect the ego is lost.

All of these models come from GOD – Group, Organisation and Direction. This is what we did in Excel – we built this group process; everywhere I went I did this group process. As a leader, I must set the example. I must run myself before I can make others run. First must come leadership by example: intend and achieve, plan and achieve. If you have a plan, then you will achieve because your intention will go. It's a great learning process and provides challenges; when they do it, then they celebrate.

I spoke about this at the Baroda Management Association and after that people from other organisations began to write to me and asked me to come and implement GOD (Group, Organisation and Direction) for them too.

Sinclair, James E. – USA

“Chairman and CEO of Tan Range Exploration, Ltd. in the USA and Tanzania”

Spiritual Theme

My theme for spirituality would be “Live it.”

Quietude and introspection

At one time I had a desire to understand why two people with the same opportunity and background didn't have similar results, and how this happens. I also wanted to know what it was in people that differentiated individuals throughout history. When I looked deeper into this, I found only one thing in common among the more successful people: introspection.

What is introspection? It is quietude. What the young men at the Sathya Sai University in India want, what I want, and what you want, is to be a conduit of sorts for this Divine essence to materialise in whatever form it chooses to be. Maybe we can do this by getting out of its way, and striving gets in the way.

Rather than saying, “If you do the following, the following will happen...” (because that will detract, rather than attract) you have to go and look to see what it was in those that have actually been successful and find that modicum of what you will now expand on. You're going to find, I believe (because I found it in every great individual), this personal constructive period of silence. Also, it was easy to understand who they were, and they had a well-defined personal or corporate goal.

So in my organisation, everyday we start here with meditation, right in this office. Previously, I had an office with hundreds of people and even then we started exactly the same way. I tell them, “Take your time and be quiet; begin all activity in silence. Before or after lunch, however you do it, be silent. And before you leave the office at the end of the day, be silent.” I've done this with hundreds of people, but I've never told them how to do it. Why? Because I don't know how to it; it does me.

The theory is that any activity done in silence will naturally slow down thought and will open the individual to that which is true spirituality. Everything else is preparation. I think silence speaks to silence; I don't know why. People worry too much about how they're going to act in the corporation and not enough about their "being" in the corporation. So I remind them, "It is not your job to get anywhere. It is your job to be here. If you can quiet yourself in the moment of any problem or shock, then you will be able to sit back for a moment and practice what this is all about."

There is no key to how to foster this in others. You can't give anyone a definitive way to open their channel, except the following: stop trying. And by stop trying, I mean to quiet your mind. Quiet does something; silence is powerful.

When you live spirituality, the quietude will start and there will be a time when there will be a perception of a monolithic block of silence that sits somewhere above your shoulder and all of a sudden you will start to get a feeling of "who am I?" in the sense of "what is it that tells me I am?" And the answer will come in the perception of a sound. It is that silence that is the capsulation, if there is any, of all the miracles, and all the powers, and all the creation, and all of the change that ever existed in the world.

If you have the good fortune of finding your way to Sathya Sai Baba, a universal spiritual teacher in southern India, you will have these moments of quiet; he gives you everything you need. There's nothing left out and there's nobody who can avoid this happening once you open yourself up. Why? Because you cease trying to stop something wonderful from happening. But then the needs of humanity, the need to save the world and do wonderful things, and to be noted for having done that, tends to find its way in. I believe that as long as we have a human body, we will never be free of greed.

Vrethammar, Magnus – Sweden

"Former President for Europe of Pergo Flooring in the UK"

"President of an executive coaching and business development firm Creability AB in Sweden"

Spiritual Theme

Spirituality is an opening process. And then the question is, "What are you opening up to?" I would say love, as long as I am very careful in how I define love. Love can be, on an energy level, a very encompassing and still impersonal energy. So, if one considers this type of love, I would say that my theme is "opening up to love."

Explicit and implicit spirituality in the organisation

I used to be more explicit in how I led by my spirituality. I did that through company values and mission statements and through education and development programmes. However, looking back, I gradually became more implicit: less programme-oriented and more doing-oriented. This is how I lead now.

I now definitely believe that the explicit and outward motive for house-holding an operation is simply house-holding an operation, nothing else. It is economics. To me, this makes life very simple and what you have to do as a spiritual-based leader is very clear too. You don't fire 'spirits,' you fire 'employees.' Your personal quest is also clear: it is house-holding.

Now the implicit part is: “How do I live my life while doing this? How does this way of living affect my professional situation and the organisation?”

As an example, Pergo was the most implicitly value-oriented company I managed. At Pergo, I was faced with a severe decline in turnover. We were compelled to reduce the workforce by 30%. Circumstances were such that Pergo had not put out new products and had not changed technology for the last five to eight years. So the first thing that I did was to convince the board of the strategy of how to change the whole thing. I came with plans for a wave of new investments and provided a lot of positive thinking. Then, in the next meeting I had to announce that there must be a reduction in workforce by 30% in order for the rest to survive. First the strategy came, then came the tough news.

In order to not have a bad conscience in all of this, I believe you can only be honest. But in this case, I didn't really know the magnitude of the changes that were required. People don't always remember what you said. If you are sharing both good news and bad news, they don't necessarily listen to the negative things that were said, so I had to remind the board of these things too. I did talk about the hardships that were coming and that some people would have to go, but they didn't hear these types of statements. If I had been explicit about spirituality prior to this I would have been looked upon as a 'smiling Boston strangler.' Nobody would have believed me, and I feel that credibility is important.

If I turn this around and say that the spiritual part is the explicit and the house-holding is the implicit, I know that I am killing the spirituality. Let me tell you why. The minute I put spirituality as the explicit part, people will look at me as an organisational priest and they will focus on the deviation of what I do as compared to the “textbook,” rather than looking at my good deeds as a business leader. This will kill spirituality. This will crystallise spirituality and make it a religion. Then you will have to start defending spirituality.

After many hours of thoughts on this, I have to say that my conclusion is that the explicit part of business is the house-holding operation. But this can be done by good people, and the implicit part of business is to support their spiritual quest in opening up. While I now take a more cynical approach to having explicit rules, to having explicit systems of values-based leadership and to auditing corporate responsibility – since my experience tells me these will crystallise the values and will have a diminishing potential – they are better than other kinds of rules. And while people do not become spiritual because of these types of rules, since spirituality is not rules, on the whole, it may be better to have such rules than not to have them.

For example, the most explicitly values-oriented organisation I managed was Finess. At Finess we had a lot of written policies and we also explained the policies and their relationship to the golden rule and other things like that. This helps people to reflect on things like “me and them,” “me and my work” and so on. It was very interesting that when the company was sold, all of this *apparently* went out the window. Later when I came back to work with them as a consultant, I wanted to see if any of it had been left. To my surprise, a lot of these values stayed within the individuals, more than I could have expected. They *internalised* these values and now relate to this as a successful part of their life.

Webb, Janiece – USA

“Former Senior Vice President with Motorola Corporation in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

I think my spiritual theme would be “God in everyone.”

Current style of leading

When I first took this position as senior vice president of technology, they gave me this office; it used to be the office of the current president of the corporation, so it has a history to it. Because there are so many new players here now, sometimes being an old-timer with a 30-year history is not a good thing. Some people even think that if you’ve been here more than 2 years it’s not good. Also, because I worked for the former president for 10 years, people think that I have special privileges, which is just not true.

In truth, I believe that a position of power is a position of serving the people around you. I feel it is my job to serve people. No one gets anywhere by themselves. To me relationships are very much like making deposits into accounts. I cannot be constantly taking out from the account; I must continually make deposits. I must give energy to people and not be draining their energy all the time. I am only powerful when my energy is connected with other people’s energy and we do things as a team. While there are some sages who are powerful in and of themselves, I have not earned that level yet.

I have found that it’s okay to admit that you are spiritual and have certain beliefs at work. However, it’s important not to try to get someone else to believe the way you do. When I know that someone can handle the subject of spirituality, I talk and discuss it openly. When I know someone cannot handle it, then I just “be” my spirituality and I don’t talk about it openly. I can be it, I can show it, and I can exhibit it in my behaviour and attitudes, and I don’t have to label it.

I am aware of the fact that sometimes my level of joyfulness can bother people. Sometimes they get angry and attack me in unfair ways. So for the longest time I hid my inner joy and shied away from sharing it here at work. But now I am not afraid to share who I am and let it shine through.

I am only as good as the people around me. I can only achieve our organizational goals by nurturing the people. I encourage people to really believe in themselves and not let the system dictate who they are. I also encourage them to forget about the corporate hierarchy structure. I don’t identify myself with my title; that’s a label that someone decided to put on me, and I ask them to not let that get in the way.

Sometimes I lead them and sometimes they lead me, I have to be willing to let them do that too. Yes there are times when a command and control style is necessary in a crisis, but for me it must be needed and it must be short lived.

What I have done is make sure that I communicate in every meeting that anyone can speak up and say whatever they need to say to me. I tell them that I am just as fallible as they are and that I don’t have any more grand ideas than they do. I feel that I am here to learn from them because they know much more about what we’re doing than I do, and I tell them that. I encourage them to enlighten me if I say dumb things. I remind them that we are all trying to solve this problem together.

ORGANISATION – QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAMMES (3 STORIES)

Behner, John R. – El Salvador

“Former Country Manager for Nabisco in El Salvador”

Spiritual Theme

“Realising God by serving others.”

Only saying “serving everyone” does not include that, which is the most important to me, which is to realise my oneness with God.

Standing firm for having the best

After I met my spiritual teacher, Sathya Sai Baba, I started looking more closely at the products we were dealing with. Nabisco had a big plant in Ecuador where all the subsidiary companies like ours would buy the raw gelatine for their factories. The gelatine was made out of the skins of animals. I started experimenting with a vegetarian gelatine from a company called Kelko, and found out that if we used this instead of the animal gelatine, it would not form mould in the refrigerator after two or three days. To me, that was enough reason to stop buying gelatine from our company’s plant, and instead buy it from Kelko. It did not cause good feelings in our company, but they never said, “You have to buy from our company,” because I gave them the reason for doing what I did.

The same thing happened with yeast. I found instant yeast in Mexico, which was cheaper, better and faster than the yeast from our company. Yeast was big business. Nabisco had a multimillion-dollar plant in Brazil where everybody in the company bought their yeast, but I bought from Mexico. I was told to buy from our plant, and said, “OK, give me the same price, the same conditions that I am getting in Mexico, and get your product up to standard, and I’ll buy from you.” But they never could, and I never did. I was firm in trying to get the best products for the people, but it didn’t make me too popular with the top part of the company.

Moitra, Deependra – India

“Formerly the youngest General Manager within Lucent Technologies, who at the time had 70,000 employees worldwide”

“Associate Vice President with Infosys Technologies, Ltd. in India”

Spiritual Theme

“Living with a purpose” would be my theme. True fulfilment is then the outcome of this journey.

Implementing quality programmes

I have been responsible for the total quality programmes in both my current company and in the company I last worked for. Typically, this is all about change, and it is usually dictated from the

top down. The orders are usually handed down from the top without really explaining the purpose and context for why it is they are wanting this change.

I think I have been very successful in running quality programmes, not in terms of merely achieving certifications, but also making sure there are results that impact the bottom line of the business. There are two things that I realised in all of this. I feel that most people who have to implement these quality programmes are not clear about their purpose or how the programmes help the business. The new graduates are hired and they want to lay their hands on writing software code. They do not have a real appreciation for what these quality programmes are all about and why are they needed.

I have found a way to address this. I use a principle called TCP-IP. TCP-IP is something that any electrical, electronics or computer science engineer can easily relate to. It is a protocol that is used in communications networks. So I knew that anyone who came from this background would immediately get interested because it sounds like a technology to them. In terms of a quality programme, to me it stands for “Technology, Customer, Process, Information and People.”

So one way that I have really helped them understand what these quality programmes are all about is to use this TCP-IP concept. It really helps to give them a purpose and create that missionary zeal in them. I tell them:

The ‘T’ is for technology. You are getting into the technology world and of course it is important for your success to understand technology, to develop new technology, and to continue to acquire new skills and knowledge. But this technology is no good if you don’t have ‘C’ – customers who will pay for the technology, or customers who are happy with the technology. So having a grasp of technology itself is important, but it is not sufficient in and of itself. You must understand what your customer wants and why they want it. Then you package your technology to do this. In order to understand what your customer wants and how to best give your customer what he wants, then comes the ‘P,’ the process.

So I help them understand the role of process in this whole chain of technology and customers. I help them understand the need for processes and how they play a meaningful role in translating your technological products into customer delight.

With respect to information and people, you have to realise that the high technology workforce is not like factory workers who easily follow your instructions. They are highly educated people and that is why we must take a different approach to all of this. It’s the distinction between a labour-intensive economy and an information-and-knowledge-intensive economy. Here, nothing will work by force. You have to influence people by creating a cause, by creating a mission, and helping them to identify their position in the whole process and how they can contribute. I help them to realise how all of this will contribute to their own growth first, before we talk about the growth of the organisation.

In terms of my senior management, I have had to take a different approach. I have had to help them identify the context, or the purpose, for why they want these quality initiatives. I am very frank and honest with my superiors, but not at the cost of their dignity. Within certain boundaries, I do not hesitate to confront them if it is needed. So, in terms of these quality programmes, I have had to confront some of my most senior managers and ask them these types of questions: “Do you know what you are getting into? Do you want a set of certificates to hang on your wall, or do you really want it to translate into business results?” I have even told them that if they were just looking to get some certificates to hang on the wall, that I was not interested in getting involved.

While I saw that senior management was committed to this quality process, I felt they were reluctant to get involved. There is a difference between commitment and involvement. So I told them that I wanted their involvement and that would come only when our context was very clear and our goals in that specific context were clear. So it was both a negotiation and education process with my management. And at the same time, I was helping everyone to identify the cause, the context, and make sure that all of our actions were aligned with that context.

I have led brainstorming exercises that helped the senior management identify the reasons for why they wanted to do these quality programmes and have these quality certificates. My fundamental focus there was to help them identify the context of what they wanted the quality team to do, so that we could make sure that we did everything within that specific context and not just in a mechanical manner.

At the workforce level, I also needed to show them what benefits they would get from this process and then link it to the benefits that the organisation would gain. Focus and purpose were very much present here – and that's how it links to my way of defining spirituality as an approach to fulfilment.

As a result of all of this, when we engaged in a quality programme to be certified as a Bell Labs, we were able to become certified in just one year's time, which is the only time this has happened in the history of Lucent Technologies. We not only received this quality certification, we also got a few other quality certifications in the same timeframe.

Raman, Ananth – USA

“Chairman of Graphtex, Inc. a manufacturing company in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

“Awareness” and “Realising Divinity”

Unity of thought, word, and action

There was a time when we were introducing ISO 9000, which was a system of quality control measures for our company. One of our companies was a job shop where we do specialty items for our customers. Since these products are made for specific applications it is extremely difficult to standardise things and is a very complicated process. This made it a difficult environment to introduce these types of quality measures, since it involves a lot of rigid procedures.

The expert said, “This is all very simple. All you need to do is write down each of the procedures that you are already doing. You don't have to make any improvement; you don't have to say anything else except exactly the way you are doing it. This has nothing to do with right or wrong, you simply say what you are doing and do what you say.” Even after he said all of this my fellows were still completely worried.

One evening I was thinking about this while attending a study circle with my spiritual group. I saw that all of this was simply talking about unity of thought, word, and action. So, I called in my employees and gave them a talk about unity of thought, word and action. I told them, “This is nothing but the concept of having what you feel, what you write and how you act be the same. This is all that ISO 9000 is about.”

So we went all over the company and said, "The company's objective with ISO 9000 is to have unity of thought, word and action." If I had used the word spiritual to describe the basis of this concept, I would have probably gotten some negative reaction. To me I didn't feel that I needed to tout this as spiritual. It was just truth and honesty, that's all. When I explained what unity of word, thought and action meant, they understood the concept very easily.

Sometimes they would even come back with an example such as this: "If a customer wants us to deliver a product the next day and we know it is going to take one week, usually we tell them it will be the day after tomorrow so we can buy some time. Can we do that? If we do, then it disturbs the unity of thought, word and action. So, what do we tell them? Do we tell them the truth?"

They started raising all of these questions throughout the departments; I was amazed at the chain reaction that began. So I told them, "Let's not go mad about this unity of thought, word and action. Let's have a monthly meeting where we can discuss these problems where you find it difficult to be totally truthful." I tried to help them see the difference between telling a customer, "no, it won't go tomorrow, we are having difficulties," which is the truth, versus "it will go day after tomorrow," which is a lie. In this way they could still buy some time without promising something which was not going to happen. We continue to have these monthly meetings where we examine these difficult situations and look to see how we can solve them with a unity of thought, word and action.



An inquiry into the nature, activities and results of leading from a spiritual basis

SECTION VI

Stakeholder Relations

During our 1½ – 2 hour interviews with leaders who participated in our international research programme, we asked each one to share specific stories that exemplified how they drew from their spiritual view of life to respond to a challenging situation.

In this section you will find 30 stories related to the broad topic of “Stakeholder Relations”. These stories are organised according to the following categories:

- **Customer/client/vendor relations (10 stories)**
- **Executive relations (6 stories)**
- **Influencing others (6 stories)**
- **Societal relations (5 stories)**
- **Union relations (3 stories)**

This section contains only the stories excerpted from the full interviews. To review the career history, current responsibilities, spiritual views, and other aspects of leading from a spiritual basis, please refer to the complete transcript of each leader, which can be found in either Volume 1 or 2 or the on-line knowledge-base at www.globaldharma.org/sbl-research.htm.

THE FOLLOWING STORIES ARE CONTAINED IN THIS SECTION:

Stakeholder Relations – Customer/Client/Vendor Relations

- Supporting our customers' values – Floy Aguenza
- Looking after our customers – John Behner
- Two initiatives to cultivate spirit in the organisation – Amber Chand
- Supporting a customer when the work was done by someone else – A. K. Chattopadhyay
- Having the intention to make a positive difference – Thomas Daugherty
- Solving the source of the problem – Anand Pillai
- Repaying debts with integrity – Ananth Raman
- Elevating the consciousness of a client regarding tax planning – V. V. Ranganathan
- Elevating the consciousness of a client regarding labour laws – V. V. Ranganathan
- Doing the right thing – James Sinclair

Stakeholder Relations – Executive Relations

- Starting from the top – Thomas Daugherty
- Touching and shifting people's level of consciousness – Niran Jiang
- Sharing equally to help my partners grow – Hélène Ploix
- Conducting 360 degree reviews with senior management – N. S. Raghavan
- Developing open communication between the board members and CEO's – N. S. Raghavan
- Making wise decisions – Janiece Webb

Stakeholder Relations – Influencing Others

- Being a spiritual influence to others – Philip Budin
- Leading with character and leaving a legacy – Stephen Covey
- Social responsibility – Neils due Jensen
- Creating alignment and integration between management and journalists – Ashoke Maitra
- Addressing fears in a group – Nilofer Merchant
- Responding to a good friend – V. V. Ranganathan

Stakeholder Relations – Societal Relations

- Partnerships and principles that prevent crime and build schools – Stephen R. Covey
- Helping society – Alvaro Cruz
- Social responsibility – Niels Due Jensen
- Creating partnership – G. Narayana
- Basic education in a multi-cultural organisation – Ramón Ollé
- Doing the right thing – James Sinclair

Stakeholder Relations – Union Relations

- Creating partnership – G. Narayana
- Following conscience – Magnus Vrethammar
- A challenge from the union leaders – S. K. Welling

STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS – CUSTOMER/CLIENT/VENDOR RELATIONS (10 STORIES)

Aguenza, Floy – The Philippines

“President and COO of Planters Development Bank in The Philippines”

Spiritual Theme

“What would Jesus do?” “What would the Lord do?”

Supporting our customers’ values

Growth in the early years was sure and steady. We knew we were doing something good and took one sure step at a time. Part of our approach is to establish close relationships with our customers, most of whom run family-owned businesses, and support them not just in their financial requirements but in other ways which enable them to run their business better. We go to their place of business to observe how they run their business and treat their employees. Yes, we want to lend to companies and businesses which are anchored on the right values. For example, if their employees are exploited and mistreated, then they are susceptible to labour problems which affect their capacity to pay their loans.

When talking to new customers, an important part of our credit process is finding out about the character and lifestyle of the principal. This is something we have learned through experience. We have developed our own approach in helping SMEs manage their finances and provide them the proper tools and guidance to build their business. Over the years we have been able to proactively see how events that are happening in their personal lives will affect their business. So we are able to step in and give them advice or market linkages. In this, we become a part of their lives, helping their business as financial advisors and even more than that; we become friends.

One of the ideas I have had is to open up our spiritual programmes to our customers who run small and medium-sized businesses. This would go beyond giving them technical assistance and linking them up to markets. This time, it is aimed at helping them build their own spiritual culture. It’s a bit daunting to think about, but I know we can start slowly. Even if we’re busy, I want to devote time to this. This is one way we can expand beyond the boundaries of our bank.

Behner, John R. – El Salvador

“Former Country Manager for Nabisco in El Salvador”

Spiritual Theme

“Realising God by serving others.”

Only saying “serving everyone” does not include that, which is the most important to me, which is to realise my oneness with God.

Looking after our customers

I believe that to be available for clients is a spiritual thing. We sold products to the countries around us and one client from Nicaragua always came on Sunday nights. He would go to Guatemala, buy a lot of things and then come through El Salvador on his way back to Nicaragua. On Sunday nights you couldn't ask somebody to go in and open the warehouse and dispatch, so I would do it. I would personally go over there and dispatch this fellow. He would come through there maybe one Sunday night a month, and if I was in India or otherwise away, I would ask one of the salesmen to sacrifice his Sunday night. We would take care of this fellow; he was a good client. This kind of little extra, that you can be sure to be taken care of, you don't find that in many companies. This goes hand in hand with making good on any kind of an error you have with your clients.

We would sell a lot of baking powder. We manufactured it. Sometimes, when the bread didn't rise, the first accusation was that something was wrong with the baking powder. We'd make good on that. We'd say to the client, "Anything we sell you, we guarantee, we stand behind it." The bakers would call us and say, "This baking powder isn't working; the bread won't rise." We'd send a technician to analyse what they were doing and since they had lost a batch, we would give them a couple of cases to make up for it, even if it wasn't our fault. If it were our fault, we would look into the formula to see if there was a little change, which might be needed. Baking powder is a very delicate product, but we would always respond.

Another example: People would buy a bunch of gelatine – let's say there was some offer where they would get one case free if they bought ten, so they would buy the 11 cases. Maybe for the size of their business that was too much, and they would call us a year later and say, "Well, we have six cases of gelatine here that we haven't been able to sell, and they've expired." Now what would you do? Would you change it? Would you change it for something else? Or would you say, "Well, you bought it, so you eat it!" Those persons aren't going to take a loss; they would try to sell it at a reduced price or try to do something with it to get their money back. So we would always change it. That was our rule. You're losing money when you do that, but at the same time you are protecting your name, your client's interest, and indirectly you are protecting your own interest. I would say that it is a spiritual outlook to sacrifice and not just look at the bottom line at that moment.

Chand, Amber – USA

"Founder of the Amber Chand Collection: Global Gifts for Peace and Understanding, an internet-based company in the USA that markets the products of artisans from around the world"

Spiritual Theme

Compassion, balance, grace, and friendliness are words that ring as a spiritual theme for me. Yes, this is a "God-being tapestry."

Two initiatives to cultivate spirit in the organisation

As a co-founder of this company, I have a very interesting role. I have a tremendous amount of influence, but I have not been interested in seeing it as power. So in everything I do people see me as a co-founder and respect me for that role. It is a status and respect that I hold very humbly.

I know when I walk through this company that employees look to me sort of like a mother, a nurturing spirit. So I try to continually find ways to be that nurturing, reassuring, loving spirit for

them. This allows me to authentically be my spirit-self. I am very grateful that I do not have to be any different than who I am. As a result I have been able to actually cultivate a great confidence in others by being more spiritual: they expect it of me, they see it in me, they laugh at me, they dismiss me, all of that.

There are two initiatives that I think my spiritual theme – this beautiful tapestry of compassion, balance, grace, and friendliness – has inspired. I created the first one about a year ago and called it “tea with Amber.” To me this is exactly the way I see that spirit should work in a company. I was inspired to do this when, one day, my heart sank when I realised that the company had grown to such a degree that I no longer knew everybody. I could not see how I could be in the nurturer role if I didn’t know everyone by name. I thought about this and began to search for a way that I could connect with everyone in the company.

So the idea came to me to just begin to have a cup of tea with every person. The first thing I noticed was that my office was not the nurturing atmosphere that I wanted, so I rearranged my office completely. I created a little sitting area where I have some lamps and plants, I got out my lovely Mexican tea set and then I began to invite people to tea.

One by one people began to come and sit with me for tea. Some people were very nervous because they were sitting with the co-founder. I would make them a cup of tea and what I noticed is that once they began to sip their tea, they would start to relax physically. Once we could both relax with each other, then we could actually open ourselves up to the “art of conversation.”

This whole concept has continued to grow and now it is on the website as a column. Who would have ever thought that it would have blossomed so much? What is so wonderful about this is that it is definitely something that the employees look forward to. It has become seen as a very important part of my work in this company and as a way for us to continue to highlight Eziba as a company with a social conscience.

The second initiative I started early on was to speak to the customers who were unhappy with us. I remembered my childhood where my mother and father taught me to treat a guest who came to our house as God. You do everything you can to make their time with you happy and satisfying and comfortable. So during our first customer training, I told them this story. I told them that at Eziba, I like to feel that the customer is God. So when the customer calls, we drop everything and we listen. People actually listened to what I said and thought it was nice.

We have a fabulous customer service group and yet I still want to speak with all of the unhappy customers. It is actually helpful for our employees to see that the co-founder is working alongside them, supporting the larger work, which is to satisfy all our customers. I always pick up the phone and call the unhappy customers. I begin by apologising to them, “I am so sorry that we have dissatisfied you in some way.” I must tell you that customers are amazed; they cannot believe that one of the founders is taking the time to call them. From this call, I always end up with a happy customer; we usually end up feeling a lot of joy and laugh together. I tell them to call me again if they ever have any problems and I give them my direct line. So it is another way of being thoughtful and it works.

Chattopadhyay, A. K. – India

“Former Senior Vice President of ACC Limited Refractories Division in India”
“Executive Director of Tata Refractories, Ltd. in India”

Spiritual Theme

My spiritual theme is a combination of the four goals found in my spiritual view of life:

- To align oneself with a super power
- To find out the reasons within oneself
- To have faith in others
- To have a caring nature

Supporting a customer when the work was done by someone else

One incident happened sometime back when a man who had previously worked for ACC supplied and installed some refractory material to one of our customers. He represented himself to his customer as an ACC employee and claimed that the material had come from ACC, which was not true. So the client agreed to let him do the work because he used the ACC name. It so happens that the work that he did failed after two months.

The customer came to me and talked with me about what had happened. I went through all of the purchase orders, but could not find one for that specific job. Then he mentioned the name of the man who did the work. I told him that that man had not worked for us for over six months. The customer assured me that this man told him that he worked for ACC and that he was using ACC materials.

In this situation, we had no legal obligation. The work was not done by our people or with our materials. But I felt it was our moral responsibility to stand behind this job because this customer gave the job to this man based on the ACC name. I replaced the material and sent my engineer out to install it. We lost heavily as there was no income whatsoever on this job. Even though I faced a lot of audit queries about this, I had the support of ACC management behind me.

Yes, it did help us to maintain our reputation, which is important to us. If we ever have material that we have installed that is defective, we will replace it free of cost; that is our culture.

Daugherty, Thomas – USA

“Former Vice President of Spiritual Care and Values Integration with the Methodist Health Care System in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

One theme for me would be caring and compassion. Another would be faithfulness. A part of that has to do with persistence and perseverance, courage and humility.

For me, the Christian cross itself evokes all of this for me because it is such a powerful symbol of the Divine-human encounter. It represents the very best and the very worst of human experience, and it also represents the ultimate in God’s love and compassion for all humankind.

The Divine-human encounter is certainly a theme that expresses all of this for me.

Having the intention to make a positive difference

The difference I hope to make here at Methodist Health Care Systems is to enhance the quality of care and the spiritual environments in which that care is given. The title I have now is Vice President of Spiritual Care and Values Integration. Ordinarily, people think the “spiritual care” portion of my title has to do with the chaplains who provide their services in the hospital. While I do have some relationship to the chaplains, they actually report to someone else in the organisation; I don’t have administrative responsibilities for them.

What I have tried to communicate since I have been in this position is that spiritual care refers to a quality of caring that we provide in this environment. It is a quality that connects us with the spirit of the organisation and with the spirit of the Divine, which is in our midst. For me, it is something that involves everyone, and not just the chaplains who will always play a prominent role as well. It is a quality of caring that involves our administration, our board members, our housekeeping personnel, our nurses, our physicians, everyone. So it is comprehensive and inclusive. I am hoping to influence the environment where everyone receiving care in any of our hospitals can feel there is a difference in their care and on some level they realise they are receiving spiritual care.

I don’t think at this point people consciously choose to come to our hospitals because we have a fine spiritual environment. Primarily, they are coming to the Methodist Health Care System because we have a reputation for having the best physicians and the best track record in taking care of their physical problems. However, this Texas Medical Center is full of hospitals; this is the largest conglomeration of hospitals and health care facilities in the world. So there’s something else that I believe does enter into their decision even now, and I think unconsciously people do come here because they expect to receive something different. They may not consciously know what it is, but they feel and expect something different in the environment.

To me, the name “Methodist”, which indicates that this organisation is based in Christian principles, does imply in some way that people should be able to expect a difference in the quality of care they receive and the way they are treated. So my work is about cultivating a holistic, comprehensive spiritual environment where this caring can take place. I think the spiritual and the material aspects of health care and healing were once connected. I want to reconnect the aspects of this environment that have been so long disconnected.

Pillai, Anand – India

“Head of the Learning and Development Department for HCL Technologies in India”

Spiritual Theme

Connecting with God, the source of “being.”

Solving the source of the problem

There was a time when I had just moved into a new assignment and a vendor had not been paid because he had not supplied what he was suppose to have supplied. This vendor was upset because he had not received his money. This conflict had been going on for quite some time when I took this position.

My secretary received a call from this vendor, and she came to ask me if she should tell him that I was not there. While she had the receiver covered she told me what a nasty fellow he was, and

how he was going to shout at me. While she kept the receiver down for a minute, I told her that I did not want to hurt her, but I wanted to take the call. I took the call and asked the man what I could do for him. He said that his payment had not come. I told him the truth, I said, “Sir, I have just moved into this position one week ago. Give me your details, phone number and invoice. I cannot promise you a payment; however, I can promise you that within the next half of hour I will tell you why your payment has not been made. Then we can see what we need to do so you can receive your payment.”

He shouted that everyone promised to call back, but no one ever called back. I said with a calm voice, “Sir, you have spoken to me for the first time; please give me that respect. If I don’t call you back then you can yell at me also.” In that half hour, I talked with my secretary, first about how she was avoiding rather than solving the problem. I told her that we must solve the cause of the problem and not just the symptoms. I said, “By your saying that I am not here, you are only solving the symptoms. We don’t want him to give up as a dissatisfied vendor. We want him to be a satisfied vendor.”

I then went to the accounts department and found out that he had short supplied an item. In less than fifteen minutes, I called him back and told him exactly what the facts were. I told him that if he supplied the item that was not supplied, then we would pay him. He said, “Sir, I don’t even want the payment now that I am talking to you. I want to thank you for giving me the full details. Yes, there was initially a short supply, but the reason I did not supply the full amount was because I talked with a person in your company and he told me I would not be paid even if I supplied the rest of the order.” He supplied the item and got his payment; and my secretary increased her faith and ability to handle problems.

I did not shout back at this man the way others before me had. I basically asked for some time so I could fully understand the problem. Before the time I had promised, I called him and I told him the full details. So he got his job done and I got my job done. More importantly, I do not have to dread his call in the future, and my secretary does not have to dread his call.

So the values that I was leading from were transferred to both of these people. From this experience, my secretary gained a clear conviction to solve the problems and not the symptoms.

Raman, Ananth – USA

“Chairman of Graphtex, Inc. a manufacturing company in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

“Awareness” and “Realising Divinity”

Repaying debts with integrity

There was an instance where I was not the decision maker; my boss was the one who had to make a very important decision. However, I was able to see the basis of this decision from a spiritual perspective only after it had happened. We had borrowed a large sum of money from a banker who wanted to pull out of their operations in the USA, and we had a large multi-million dollar loan due to them.

I went to the lender and told them that since they were the ones who were leaving, we would like to pay them less than the total amount. I proposed a certain reduction in what we owed them, and we had an extensive discussion about this. With hesitation, they agreed to a reduction, but it was a smaller reduction than what I had proposed. Since we couldn't finalise the actual amount of the reduction, they had the head person from their London organisation come to the USA to meet with our principle shareholder from Switzerland; and we decided to let those two people work it out.

I had briefed our principle shareholder, who was actually my immediate boss, on what had taken place up to that point. I suggested that he offer an amount for the reduction that was a little more than they had agreed to. I went into the discussions feeling very proud that I had negotiated this loan reduction, and had gained this extra income for the company.

As we moved toward this critical point during the talks, my boss suddenly said, "I have not come here to ask for this reduction, I will not do it." We had negotiated so hard for this reduction, and now this man was saying that he would not ask for this! He told them that we would in due time pay back the entire amount of the loan.

I was totally shocked. Here we had a huge gift of money available, and my boss was giving it away. Afterwards I asked him why he had done this, and he said, "As a businessman we have a responsibility. We are responsible not only to our shareholders, but also to our bankers. We have borrowed this money from them; we must repay it to them. This company is not bankrupt – we are able to pay this money to them. So there is absolutely no reason why we should take advantage of this situation just because they want to pull their operations out of the USA. This is no way to do business."

I was really struck by all of this. He was not a religious person or anything like that. He was just a gentleman with a deep sense of values. He considered this loan not as something that we simply wrote down and now we can debate about whether to pay or not pay. Rather, he took it as an obligation to society.

I felt this was a deep spiritual lesson for me. The lesson was that all *obligations must be honoured*. They must be paid back in the right way, not by arguing like this. I saw that all obligations, whether they are in cash, such as this, or in some other form, must be repaid in some way or another. This is my duty and I must honour that duty. I saw that this was the only way to do business in this world.

If I had not looked at this from a spiritual perspective, I would have thought, "I did all of this hard work for this man, and he is not even appreciating it." My financial controller was with me, and he is still not convinced today that what my boss did was right. He still calls it a stupid decision, and I continue to tell him why it was not a stupid decision.

Ranganathan, V. V. – India

"Formerly a Senior Partner with Ernst & Young India"

"Co-founder of Pinnacle Opportunities, a non-profit and Compassites, a product incubation company in Bangalore, India"

Spiritual Theme

“Seeing God in everyone”

Elevating the consciousness of a client regarding tax planning

Often I come across a number of situations in my professional life where, within a framework of what is the right thing to do, certain actions seem okay in form, but not in substance. So the concept of “the substance that is behind the form” is something that I have to deal with on almost a daily basis.

For example, a client may be following the letter of the law – following the form of the law – and so it looks like they are complying with a law. But if you look at it in substance, they may actually be circumventing the law, because they are not complying with the underlying purpose for which the law was made. We must put their actions to the test.

The tax laws are a very good case in point. These laws keep you from avoiding taxes, but they also allow you to plan your taxes in order to minimise them. The difference between avoiding taxes and planning in order to minimise taxes is very subtle. Where do you draw the line? Of course, the courts have gone into this and have said what is planning and what is not planning. As a professional, if the tax law says that there is a correct way to compute a particular income, then you can find a hundred tax loopholes to plan it such that you do not have taxable income. These situations arise because the tax laws are complex and vexatious. Simplicity is often a casualty.

So the difficult question that often arises for a tax professional is: are we the tax man who makes sure that the organisation’s officers follow the *form and letter* of the law? Or, are we the ombudsman who makes sure that the organisation’s officers follow the *substance and purpose* of the law?

The substance is the motive: “What is the motive behind what the client is doing?” Even if actions seem to be within the law, the motives should be subject to question. At this time, the legal framework does not provide this opportunity. The judiciary only looks at the form and not the substance behind the form. This change in consciousness is what I am trying to bring out in the work we are doing in the practises of our organisation as well as with our clients. I believe that if you are careful in understanding the mindsets of people, it is possible to raise their consciousness. Then automatically, usually without their preconceived notions getting in the way, you can touch the chord of their being, and bring out the truth. Interestingly someone in the tax department has realised the potential of this appeal and the advertisements from the tax department urging people to pay taxes are now more persuasive than threatening. But the tax collector has equally onerous responsibilities to be accountable for the spending of the tax payer’s money.

When I confront these situations with clients, I do it through a dialogue. It doesn’t have to be what confrontation is usually thought of. You must touch that chord in another being by saying, “Is there not another way of doing this so we don’t have to transgress within ourselves? Why don’t we look at it like this?” So what you are doing is prodding the other person to think and helping him to understand your point of view, that way he has the space and time to come out with an alternative.

In this regard, I describe the *substance* of my work as karma yoga (selfless action) and full consciousness, whereas the *form* of my work is accounting numbers and tax law. When I am with a client, I bring this substance to our work together.

Elevating the consciousness of a client regarding labour laws

Another example of the issue of form versus substance in my work is the time I dealt with particular laws concerning contract labour. If you look into the rhyme and reason for these laws, it is to stop the exploitation of workers who are paid in cash by these contractors. It is to make sure that the workers are paid proper wages and that their social security contribution is being paid to the government. Yes, a few may be able to get around this law somehow, but here are human beings whose rights are being violated. Often times we must look at the original bill that was behind the enactment of these laws in order to understand its original purpose and intention. We must also consider the moral issues. We as professionals have this duty to perform; we must understand the underlying intention and purpose of these laws. As auditors, we realise these implications, and we must process this within our system to determine what steps we are going to take.

Many times clients tell us things such as their practises concerning contract labour. When this happens, I urge the management of my clients to look at the situation seriously. I point out any legal responsibilities they have and I ask them to look at the moral issues. I will ask them questions like, “Do you want to deal with a contractor who has such little respect for human beings? Does this fit within your vision and mission statements?”

By taking this route, I redirect their attention to something more transcendent. I have them look at their values and appeal to them from that perspective: “Look, these are the goals and values of your company. Are you living these? If you have hired someone who is not in line with these values, you should help them understand that they need to follow these values if they are going to work for you.”

Once I can help a person open their mind and flush out these types of thoughts, I am paving the way for them to apply their values and come to terms with whatever they need to do. This transports our conversation to a whole new plane altogether, a transcendent plane.

We all have to start somewhere and I believe it is our spiritual duty to engage in conversations with management like this and to evoke the spirituality of the individuals who formed the company. You must be able to elevate the consciousness of another person to your bandwidth, so that you can communicate. If you are able to do this, then those communications will naturally result in producing the truth. If you begin with a preconceived notion in your mind that this is going to be a difficult conversation, then nothing happens, nothing is resolved. It is more like theatrics, drama. But in this spiritual way, you are honestly sharing your entire self with this person, and from that place you will strike a chord with him and there will be communication.

Sinclair, James E. – USA

“Chairman and CEO of Tan Range Exploration, Ltd. in the USA and Tanzania”

Spiritual Theme

My theme for spirituality would be “Live it.”

Doing the right thing

I am a risk taker; I take risks that are beyond reason. Statistics would say that there is no reason for me to be sitting here talking to you today, because I should have been history a long time ago. And I know that I should have been history, because I've almost become history so many times I wouldn't even want my wife to know.

I look back and wonder how in the world, on the last day, on the last month, did I make it until I got a deal. And how in the world did a company come in and buy 13 pieces of my land, the most they've bought from anyone, anywhere, anytime? I couldn't make them do that. So every month I knew the next month would be fine, or if it wasn't, then it wasn't. Now I've taken all that I've made over the years and invested it into this Africa venture because my spiritual teacher told me to. And if it is a failure, so what?

I will be the first to admit, I never wanted to go back to Africa to do business after the horrendous experience I had in the mid-90's. But my spiritual teacher told me to go back to Africa. I told him I didn't want to go back. I travelled to see him numerous times to ask him to reconsider and let me out of it. He finally had enough of it, and so I went back even though my previous experience was a disaster. Right now it's taking all of the money I have and the strangest things in the world are happening. I am the first guy in this type of business (gold mining) to do this without any investors. But even then I am standing strong to only do what works.

For example, an African local lost his concession (piece of land) because he didn't pay the money required and so the license went back to the state. Here is this very desirable piece of land with a mine already on it. I wanted that piece of land and the government was ready to give it to me. But I said, "No, give it back to the man who owned it. I'm going to make a deal with him because he wasn't sophisticated enough to keep it." I got him back into the loop and now he owns 30% of the option and we're paying him US\$50,000 for the privilege and we'll buy the rest of it as his participation in the joint venture.

I did this because it seemed like the right thing to do. As a result, the word has gotten around that I'm a straight-shooter who is going to treat these African locals like human beings with respect. I paid them the same amount of money that I would pay someone in the USA. As a result, my company ended up with 52 pieces of land for mining, about half the size of the state of Connecticut. These are all some of the finest pieces of land in the world. We gave all of the landowners the respect of being real partners; we paid them and didn't even take the land out of their name. I was only willing to treat these people with the same respect that I would treat someone in the USA.

The word got around and now I can't keep people out of our offices who want to do business with us. I have made a lot of Tanzanians wealthy. Am I helping them or hurting them? I don't know. But I do know that to hurt someone requires an intention. If I set up a business with the intent to hurt another person or business, then this is hurting and you know you are doing it. There is something in the environment that will control the stability of the world and eventually those businesses that do intentionally hurt others cannot survive. If your intention as a human is to hurt, you are looking for disaster. I don't care if you've got the oracle of Delphi giving you insight.

STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS – EXECUTIVE RELATIONS (6 STORIES)

Daugherty, Thomas – USA

“Former Vice President of Spiritual Care and Values Integration with the Methodist Health Care System in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

One theme for me would be caring and compassion. Another would be faithfulness. A part of that has to do with persistence and perseverance, courage and humility.

For me, the Christian cross itself evokes all of this for me because it is such a powerful symbol of the Divine-human encounter. It represents the very best and the very worst of human experience, and it also represents the ultimate in God’s love and compassion for all humankind.

The Divine-human encounter is certainly a theme that expresses all of this for me.

Starting from the top

As I contemplate how to develop the programmes we have here, and how to disseminate our values throughout the organisation, I draw a lot from my background in pastoral care, counselling and teaching. But this is also where I have to recognise my own limitations. This is where one of our consultants has been such a resource for us because she brings a rich background in human resources and organisational development, and I have learned a lot from her. One of the things I have learned from her is that we have to take this spiritual approach into the organisation at all levels.

However, I knew from the beginning that it had to start at the top, and some of our most difficult challenges have been working with the senior management group. At the same time, one of the most rewarding, spiritually enriching aspects of this endeavour has been watching these same senior people get involved and articulate their own spirituality. The five values we are now focused on, I CARE (integrity, compassion, accountability, respect and excellence), really came together for us in our CEO Council.

While we have a system-wide committee of people called the “Systems Spiritual Care and Values Integration Committee” that generated a lot of the initial thinking about our values, it was the CEO Council that really embraced them; and they continue to be involved in the leadership of what we are doing. They also vacillate and waver from time to time, so I stay connected with them and continue to work with them; this is where my spiritual values and relationship skills have really helped me a lot.

Jiang, Niran – Australia

“Formerly Senior Trends Manager for Coca Cola and Marketing Manager for S. C. Johnson in the USA”

“CEO for the Institute of Human Excellence in Australia”

Spiritual Theme

My spiritual theme would be interconnectedness, wonderment, and compassion.

Touching and shifting people's level of consciousness

I was given the job of building business models and delivering brand, channel and organisation innovation at Coca Cola in the USA, so I developed the first Future Trends function for USA. When you are the number one market leader in the world in the soft drink industry, you have to be alert. My way of creating things there came from my spiritual orientation and ideas about co-creation. I decided to interview the top 30 leaders at Coca Cola both domestically in the USA and internationally, to take into consideration the bigger picture. I spent roughly 45 minutes with each business leader in order to learn and understand the business scenario: What drove and motivated them? But it was also about engaging them by developing what I call a co-creating process. Out of that process I summarised a piece of learning and presented to the senior VP how I saw things.

A lot of difficult issues were coming up, which the management top leaders knew about, but were not willing to face. By making one-to-one interviews and coming from a space of pure respect, I created a very safe environment for a lot of stuff to come out. Also I set very clear boundaries, and I was trusted. Of course, all the interviews were anonymous – core business issues and core relationship issues. I summarised my findings in a non-confrontational document and presented it to the Senior VP. At first he said, "I have ten minutes for you." The power they have in large American corporations and the way they treat people, it's worse than in communist China! They treat you like a peanut. But I refuse to feel like a peanut. I treat people below me with dignity, I treat people above me with dignity, and I don't take a confrontational style. So he said "Ten minutes," and I said "Fine", and went straight to the heart of the issue, bringing up the truth in a calm and gentle way, not criticising him. This turned into a two hour meeting.

This is how I see consciousness shifting; it's not just a piece of work. The business agenda is about the bottom line, for example selling more Coke, but I don't care about that. I care about the processes that touch people and get them to shift. The Senior VP obviously got confronted with a lot of issues about how people truly felt, and that they were not able to speak the truth. I brought out issues that he could connect to from his level of consciousness and which could motivate him to create change. Therefore, from then on I got a tremendous amount of support in creating initiatives that were very new and very challenging for the company. Out of the work we were able to accomplish, via Future Trends, there were major costs saving initiatives in a number of departments at Coca Cola. In one project we actually quantified a cost saving of over a million US dollars.

Ploix, Hélène – France

"Chairman and Managing Director of Pechel Industries and Pechel Industries Partenaires in Paris, France"

Spiritual Theme

I think I can express this as: "To contribute to society". And to try to be attentive to others and have a better understanding of them.

Sharing equally to help my partners grow

I decided to create the management company and divide it in three equal shares. Some of my colleagues would take a majority and leave a smaller percentage to the others. In our business we have to have a personal interest, otherwise we don't get investors. The management must align their interests with those of their investors. In the first company, Pechel Industries, I had a greater share than the others. Now we share equally. I could stay forever, but my real purpose is to have my partners and the younger people we hire be more and more in charge and feel that it is their own thing. I want to prepare them for taking over at a certain point.

We take very seriously the character of the people we hire. We pay a lot of attention to the way they are, how they behave, how they express themselves, so that we feel that they really think like us and will contribute to the atmosphere we have created.

Raghavan, N. S. – India

“Founding Director and former Joint Managing Director of Infosys in India”

Spiritual Theme

“Love and trust” automatically came to my mind as my theme.

Conducting 360 degree reviews with senior management

We had a Management Council at Infosys, headed up by the Managing Director that ran the whole show. There were about sixteen people on the council at that time. I told them I wanted to conduct 360-degree appraisals and asked for their permission to do this for everyone who was on the council except the MD. I told them that I would personally talk to the people and collect the information for each council member.

Since this was a first-time experiment and they were all very senior people, I made them two guarantees. I told them that I would not share with the MD any of the detailed information I was collecting, except for an MC summary of the feedback. I also told them that I would be the only person to have the information, and that I would do the analysis and give feedback to each one of them. I did this because I knew that it was important to maintain this type of confidentiality. Nobody could really object because this was something good, and so they agreed.

I prepared two different components to this 360-degree appraisal. One had to do with their leadership abilities and the other with their behaviour. I created the questionnaire and had both a number rating and a place for qualitative remarks about them. I had them rate each other, and I also had a few subordinates rate them.

This took about three months for me to do – it was a very big job. I wanted to test it out and show them the importance of this kind of feedback. When I started having people fill out the questionnaires, I warned them not to try to get out of this by saying that they did not know the person that well. I told them that even if they didn't feel they knew the person very well, they still had their own perceptions of them and they should report on those. I told them that perceptions drove their behaviour and therefore were equally valid and important for me to collect and then give feedback on. I asked them to be very truthful and not to worry about it.

To help them understand the importance of this whole process, I told them this story... There was a company that was going downhill, and the board decided to get a new CEO to turn it around. After a couple of months, the new CEO got a feel for the whole place and realised that some of the senior managers were critically under-performing.

He called one of the senior under-performing managers in for a talk. The CEO told him that even though he hadn't been with the company a long time, he understood that the manager was not performing well. He told him that he must improve his performance or he would have to go. The manager reacted and told him, "I don't know where you got this information. If you look at my performance reports you'll see that I have been rated very good year after year. I am a very good performer. I think you have gotten some wrong information."

The CEO then told him to go to two of his other senior colleagues and ask them to openly tell him the truth of what they thought of his performance. Then he told him to come back to him after he had done this and they would see what to do. So the senior manager went to his colleagues and told them he wanted their honest opinion and asked them to tell him the truth. All of them told him the truth that the CEO was correct that he was not performing well.

The senior manager came back to the CEO and admitted that what he, the CEO, had said was true. He said to the CEO, "I do not feel bad about getting this negative feedback. What I feel bad about is that I have been here for 15 years and I have been thinking that I was doing a great job. I thought I was contributing. I wish someone had told me the truth years ago. Maybe this wasn't even the best place for me to work to bring out my expertise and strengths. Now I feel so miserable, I have been working here thinking that I was a great contributor and actually I am not."

I like to tell people this story because it shows them how important their honest feedback is. I tell them that they are doing another person a disservice if they are not honest in their feedback. I also tell them that if one person gives a negative feedback, you can dismiss it as biased or that the individual has not known him well. If two people give the same feedback, then you better start getting concerned. But if five people give similar feedback, then it cannot be rejected and needs to be attended to. If your assessment is that the negative feedback is just a perception issue, then you need to change that perception. On the other hand if you are convinced that it must be the truth, then you need to try hard to change, as these are leadership attributes that are important.

There were a lot of things that came out and in many ways it was not comfortable. Everyone got a good sense of where they stood. A lot of people came back to me and said that this was a very useful exercise – that they had received benefit from it and that they were better able to understand themselves.

Webb, Janiece – USA

"Former Senior Vice President with Motorola Corporation in the USA"

Spiritual Theme

I think my spiritual theme would be "God in everyone."

Making wise decisions

I was just offered a very large position within Motorola and I turned it down. People were shocked and told me I shouldn't turn the job down. I was honest with them when they asked me why I turned it down. I said that I knew they didn't really want me on their team – they simply wanted me as a figurehead. I knew that my leadership style was not what they wanted. I knew it was a wise decision and I had no difficulty making it.

STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS – INFLUENCING OTHERS (6 STORIES)

Budin, Philip – USA

“CEO of Royaltions, Ltd. in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

For me spirituality is equanimity.

Being a spiritual influence to others

I think that part of going back into business in 1981 was interacting with business people who were not necessarily on a spiritual path at the time we interacted. But after meeting me, a lot of them came to me for help and asked me to teach them how to meditate and how to do this and that. I started doing this, and I began to feel uncomfortable about it. So I told my spiritual teacher what was happening and asked him about it. He said, “Yes, continue to teach them. More will come.”

So maybe this is part of the reason why my spiritual teacher sent me back into business, I don’t know. But I do know that a whole lot of people are interested in learning how to meditate and are interested in learning how to be calm. It’s totally alien to them, and when they interact with me they get high. I’m not doing it; they’re just quieting down and feeling the calm.

When someone comes to me, meditation is the primary path that I recommend to them. The meditation I teach to others is to follow their breath and see how long they can do that before a thought comes in. As soon as they realise they can’t do this for more than 2 or 3 seconds, they become quite surprised and upset. They become especially upset when I ask them, “If you are not controlling your mind, then who is?” It’s a great question and is one that really blew me away. When I tried to focus on something years ago, I couldn’t do it. That’s when I asked, “If I’m not controlling my mind, then who the heck is?” That was a scary thought, at least to me. So when I am talking to people who are running companies and are in high profile positions and ask them this question, it makes them crazy. Some of them will run away and some of them will really work on it. Either way it is okay with me.

Covey, Stephen R. – USA

“Vice Chairman of FranklinCovey, a global professional services firm based in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

One of my mottoes serves as a powerful spiritual theme for me: “Live life in crescendo.” In other words, the most important work you’ll ever do is still ahead of you.

Another such spiritual theme for me would be: “Educate and obey your conscience.” Educating as I speak of it here involves getting into the sacred literature of all the great traditions that have had enduring value and then consciously living true to what you have learned. The more you live true

to it, the stronger your conscience becomes. A constant effort is required to stay on track with such stewardship.

Leading with character and leaving a legacy

The other day I was in Kenya. In my recent book on *The 8th Habit*, I told the story of a man from Uganda named Stone, who was a professional soccer-player. He was well on his way to a career as a professional in Europe, where the big money is, the dream of all the youth there. During a game, someone hit him, on purpose, in a way that severely damaged his knee and ended his career dreams. Instead of becoming bitter or vindictive or losing himself in self-pity, he has used himself to empower underprivileged young Ugandan boys who would otherwise be lost in life, without marketable skills and with no role-models to follow.

Stone came over from Uganda to Kenya for my presentation. It was a very interesting venue. There was a big building with five different balconies, like a theatre in the round, and he was in the fifth one. In my presentation I tried to get people to see themselves as trim-tabbers, (a trim-tab on a boat is the small rudder that turns the big rudder that turns the entire ship), so they can be change agents no matter what their formal or moral authority is, and take the responsibility to leave a legacy. So during my presentation I showed the film on Stone which is included in the companion DVD to my book, and the audience became totally caught up in that film. They have the kind of poverty and the kind of problems that Stone had. The earlier regimes had literally devastated the institutions of the whole country, and children were often growing up without parents because of the AIDS-epidemics. There were so many orphans, and their living conditions and dreams were not very positive, to put it mildly. As a result, many in the audience were able to identify with Stone.

At the end of the film I said, “Stone, come on down here,” and they were blown away. He came down, and then I interviewed him in front of the whole audience about what he has been doing to leave a legacy and how he has influenced tens of thousands of young men. One feminist woke up and said “Why don’t you work with the young women?” and Stone just gave a sharp answer: “They don’t have the problems that men have.” He immediately made sense to her.

This guy is like a Mother Teresa in Uganda, and he is totally dedicated to helping these young men, not just with soccer, but as a life-coach so they can be responsible parents. And now they are coming back to him, showing him their families and the contributions they are making. He is immersed in his spiritual endeavour – serving the people and their communities. What a handsome guy, what a wonderful guy, what character and competence and quality.

Even there, on a stage and not on a soccer field, he was very, very pithy and very to the point in his communication. He said, “I am trying to get these kids to realise that they may lose a match, but they don’t need to lose in life.” He told the audience how he demonstrates for the young men in Uganda how they can follow their conscience and govern their lives – how they can start by learning to become good soccer players, then how important it is for them to become economically self-reliant, then responsible fathers and citizens. Stone explained how he is helping them transform themselves into trim-tabbers, into young men who have the will and discipline and character necessary to transform their society and to win in life.

Jensen, Niels Due – Denmark

“Group Chairman for Grundfos Management A/S in Denmark”

Spiritual Theme

Empathy, compassion, and love for my neighbour.

Social responsibility

My principle of trying to 'love your neighbour' has guided me in the direction of also developing what we call 'social responsibility' at Grundfos. It wasn't something I started; it was in fact my father who already in the late 1960's began our tradition of practising social responsibility. Because of my spiritual background I have always had this activity within Grundfos high on my agenda. Over the years it has developed in such a way, that today we have a considerable number of employees who would probably not be able to be with us without a certain support and attention from our company. Out of about 4,500 employees in our Danish factories and companies, close to 3,000 being hourly paid, we have about 150 who are employed under, what we call 'special conditions'.

Having employees with a mental or physical handicap working for Grundfos has become a natural part of the company's life and behaviour. We in the management have made it clear that this is our responsibility; this is our policy, and these are conditions you have to accept as an employee, if you want to work for Grundfos. People have accepted that over the years and they are more and more proud of Grundfos having this tradition. They are also increasingly accepting that it is a natural and right thing for a company like Grundfos to acknowledge and act in accord with our responsibility towards the general society.

So today we do not hear any protests against employing these workers; it is simply accepted as a natural part of our responsibility. They work part time or full time, they might have eight hours of work, but in a very easy job, and they are helped to be able to perform as well as they can.

If I had not had my Christian background, including the desire to do something for such unfortunate people, we would not have had this tradition at Grundfos. You may call it the need to love your neighbour, and this means your neighbour in this local society, but first of all your employees in the company. It is my strong belief, that my example has been of importance to many business leaders in Denmark, and therefore I believe that I have inspired them to go in the same direction.

I have been able to spread this message out to many other Danish companies over the years, not only as an example through the way I have behaved, but also through the way I have spoken about social responsibility. We have a Danish National Network of Business Leaders working with Corporate Social Responsibility. This network was founded in 1997 by the then Minister for Social Affairs. I became a member of the board; later I became the chairman.

Through this network we have been able to spread into other companies the tradition of engaging themselves in social responsibility on a daily basis; first of all towards their own employees, but secondly, if they have the energy to do it, to helping in the local society. We now have about Danish 700 companies as members of this network through six regional networks. It has spread, and I think that Denmark is one of the nations in Europe that is at the very forefront in exercising social responsibility on a daily basis, first of all focused on the employees.

About a year ago we introduced a new policy for what we call Corporate Social Responsibility within Grundfos. We have laid down some major framework and policies as to how we could like to see the foreign Grundfos companies be active in living up to a social responsibility. We do not demand that they do exactly as we do in Denmark, as the cultural environments differ from

country to country, and therefore the way you execute this corporate social responsibility on a daily basis is very different. We allow and encourage our local companies to lead the activities, which they feel are most helpful to them in being socially responsible towards their employees and their local community.

Maitra, Ashoke – India

“Former Director of Human Resources for the Times of India”

“Founder of the Centre for Human Resource Development and the Sri Ramakrishna International Institute of Management in India”

Spiritual Theme

I think my spiritual theme is “Manifestation of latent Divinity.”

Creating alignment and integration between management and journalists

When I came to the Times Group about 7 years back, I began with a very difficult assignment. There was a big fight between the journalists and the management and they each had major criticisms of each other. I knew I had to create a clear alignment and integration of these two groups as we were all working for the same paper and for the same purpose.

The first thing I did was to come and sit here in the editor’s cabin. You see, this is the journalist area of the Times of India; this is not the management floor. When I came and sat here the first thing they asked me was, “How can you come and sit here? You are from the other side.” I said, “But I thought we were all on the same side.” They said, “No, you are from the other side.” So I said, “Fine, I am sitting here and if you hate me I will go away. But it is your choice because I have taken my first step not to have any discrimination. I have made my first move to show you that we are all one, because that is what I believe. I believe in Vedanta and I believe that all of us are the same. If you think I am some kind of skunk, then I will leave, but give me 15 days to see whether you want me to sit here or not.”

After 15 days I went to the floor and asked them whether I should stay or go. They said no and asked me to stay. They were very happy that a management man was there because, if nothing else, I would at least make sure the bathrooms were clean. I have now been on this floor for over six years.

During those early days I held a strategic planning workshop that was completely initiated by me. Because there was a lot of misunderstanding between the journalists and management, I felt there was an acute need to bring them together through a participatory process to create a sense of well-being, understanding and camaraderie between them. After all, all of us worked for the same cause.

My colleagues, who are Directors, in fact were very critical. They opined I was wasting my time trying to change the behaviour of journalists based on their past record. But I persisted, with my faith and my shareholders blessings, because I strongly believe every human being is intrinsically good and our work should be able to bring out our best.

Even the owner of the Times Group warned me that the journalists would not attend this strategic planning workshop. The first person to walk into the workshop was the resident editor of the

Times of India and then came the Economic Times editor. Someone asked one of the editors why she came and she said, "I came because Ashoke called me and I know Ashoke doesn't see any difference between the management and journalists. If anyone else had called, I would not have come." All the editors came and all the managers came and we had a 3-day workshop to decide the future of the company. It worked. I am happy.

Merchant, Nilofer – USA

"President and founder of Rubicon Consultants, a marketing consulting firm in the USA"

Spiritual Theme

"Living authentically" speaks a lot to me.

Also, I am looking outside at that beautiful tree and thinking about how spirituality helps me to draw strength from the roots of life. The tree doesn't get nourishment from the leaves. And yet what do we see when we look at the tree? We see the branches and leaves and not the root system. So I think spirituality is about defining where our true strength comes from as the root system. We have a chance to consciously change the wellspring from which we draw our nourishment. So another theme would be "a wellspring of nourishment".

Addressing fears in a group

I do believe in people's goodness and in the redemption quality of people – that even if they do make a mistake, they can come back tomorrow and do it right. And I think I am often the voice of truth in a group, so that whatever is unsaid I am usually the person who can articulate that. This is how I use my gifts in my work.

A lot of what I do is to design solutions and then help people to do their best in evaluating the options. So being the voice of truth in that process is very important. Many people are afraid to speak their underlying fears, and so I help create a safe environment for them to do that. Once people are able to name these fears, they are able to address them in a whole new way. I have found that every fear can actually serve the process.

Not long ago, one of my clients with whom I was doing marketing strategy work (which is what I do 90%-95% of the time) was at the same time going through an organisational change. The ramifications of the decisions on marketing strategy they were about to make were also going to make a quantum shift in their organisation.

We were in a group discussion with the Senior Directors, Executive VP's and VP's where everyone was talking about this in a very intellectual way, the way you normally proceed in business. We had presented all of the options, along with the pros and cons. I was watching the dynamics going back and forth and was well aware that there was lots of tension in the room, which no one was addressing; everyone was in their minds speaking intellectually.

I had really prayed that morning that the group could come to a consensus and use their decision as a positive move forward. Since I had done so much of the legwork beforehand, I did have some apprehension going into the meeting as to whether I had given them all of the right information that they needed.

I was very quiet for some time as I watched the group, even though I was actually leading the group. I was fully present, and I kept feeling as if there was an important question that needed to be asked. I closed my eyes for a second and when I came back I said, "What is it we are not saying? What is it we are not addressing?" These were actually very neutral questions in many ways and people could have answered them from many different perspectives. However, because of the way I asked the questions, it created a sense of safety and people were able to respond and say what was true in their hearts.

Someone who had been very reluctant the whole time spoke up and said, "I am really afraid about what this will mean for my people." It brought the whole group together and people began to step forward and say, "I'll take 50 of your people" and "I can really see your people transitioning into this new organisation, we'll take care of them."

For the first time in that discussion, that one Vice President was able to agree to the new organisational structure even though it meant he would be sacrificing his organisation. This was really the big decision that was on the table, even though it had not been said explicitly. He was able to let go of his positions that he had held tightly to, and offer up his organisation for the benefit of the whole team.

When I was being that voice of truth in that meeting, I came across as neutral to the group, even though I personally did have some biases that I had formed given the amount of research I had done. Even after I thought about it later, I realised that I had no idea those questions were going to come out of my mouth. It was one of those moments where I just offered to the group the gift from my heart that happened to be there. I just happened to be the one who could help them find the truth that was already there.

I think this process drew upon people's goodness. I think sometimes we forget that most people really do want to live in alignment with their values, but they just don't know how. So often it's up to the leader to create the environment so people can live their values.

Ranganathan, V. V. – India

"Formerly a Senior Partner with Ernst & Young India"

"Co-founder of Pinnacle Opportunities, a non-profit and Compassites, a product incubation company in Bangalore, India"

Spiritual Theme

"Seeing God in everyone"

Responding to a good friend

In 1990, I moved to a small town in Southern Africa and formed a partnership there with my friend as a public accountant. I cannot forget that he helped me start my life after I had lost my brother. It was the largest firm there locally. My friend and I were also partners in a larger partnership. He began to complain of their improper practises and said he wanted to extricate himself from them. So I helped him organise our de-linking from that firm and we set up our own partnership. The practise was going very well and we were working with small and medium enterprises, giving them a lot of advice on how to run their business and manage their finances. We also helped them manage their personal wealth and did a lot of personal estate planning.

We travelled all across Africa, and I really enjoyed this time. My wife and I had an excellent lifestyle there. We had a large house with lots of servants, lots of trees, and beautiful gardens. It was during this time that I realised that my friend was in fact slowly and perhaps unconsciously following the footsteps of the other firm. I told him once or twice about this and that I did not believe this was any way to establish our firm. He knew better and we reached a stage where I said that it was time for me to go, so I bid him farewell.

I must admit, thinking back to all of this today, 12 or 13 years hence, I would have done things differently. Yes, I must give credit to what I did back then, which was to tell him point blank that what he was doing was unacceptable. Today, I would seek to strike a chord with him on a different plane. I would connect with his spiritual being and reason with him. I would bring a consciousness to the situation that did not have a right or wrong judgment. I would not bicker or argue with him; I would ask him to see my point of view and try to understand the merits of what I was saying. I would have given him the space and time to digest this and I would have been patient.

But at that time, I did not do that. I confronted him, and he responded that he knew what he was doing, meaning that he felt what he was doing was right.. I left the partnership and moved out of the country. At some point after I left, my friend did finally realise that he must turn his clients over to a professional firm, and now he is a big industrialist. Today we are still good friends and respect each other.

STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS – SOCIETAL RELATIONS (5 STORIES)

Covey, Stephen R. – USA

“Vice Chairman of FranklinCovey, a global professional services firm based in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

One of my mottoes serves as a powerful spiritual theme for me: “Live life in crescendo.” In other words, the most important work you’ll ever do is still ahead of you.

Another such spiritual theme for me would be: “Educate and obey your conscience.” Educating as I speak of it here involves getting into the sacred literature of all the great traditions that have had enduring value and then consciously living true to what you have learned. The more you live true to it, the stronger your conscience becomes. A constant effort is required to stay on track with such stewardship.

Partnerships and principles that prevent crime and build schools

I am spending time now working with leadership problems in crime prevention. One of the books I am working on now is called *Partnering to Prevent Crime and Terror*. Basically it’s about a new paradigm of not just catching and punishing criminals, which is a traditional approach to policing, but on how to create a partnership with the community, including the youth and in particular the marginalised youth, and with the parents, and with the schools, so as to be able to create the mores and norms *inside* the culture that enable and encourage acting to serve a shared purpose, in this case to prevent crime.

We have films on my work with crime-prevention. Recently I was with the sheriff of greater Los Angeles County. I asked him, “What is your goal?” and he said, “For Los Angeles to be the best and the safest large city in the world”. I said, “It’s way too small of a goal, you have to think in terms of a mega-goal, an extraordinary goal, one that allows your city to be a model for other large cities throughout the entire world, and to send ambassadors out to mentor these cities, so that they can better deal with their crime issues.” Such goals require the creation of the kind of partnerships that I am promoting in my leadership activities. Such partnering definitely is a spiritual approach; it integrates the temporal and the spiritual based on a whole different approach to preventing crime. And crime is going down. Where this approach has been used, the rate of crime is falling and is now reduced between two thirds and up to 90 pct.

The same basic ideas of partnering based on principles are being successfully applied in schools. In the schools I have worked with to introduce principle-based character into the curriculum, the results are measurable and very dramatic. The school principal I have worked with and written about in my recent book, *The 8th Habit*, Mrs. Muriel Thomas Summers, is now totally dedicated to this paradigm of principles and partnership. She is not leading a typical American school, if one exists. It has students from 56 different nationalities, and English is not even the primary language for a lot of these kids. They are mainly from five to 10 years old. Mrs. Summers’ vision was to introduce principle-based character education into the curriculum, and to do this by involving her administrators, the faculty and the families in preparing and implementing the new educational processes. Their mission – the school’s mission, the students’ mission, the parents’ mission is to produce the future leaders of the world, one child at a time.

It's working. There is a clear connection between learning and principles, between academic performance and character. In a matter of a year and a half the impact of introducing principle-centred character training was significant, an increase of over 40% in the percentage of students performing at or above grade level in national academic standards. Since then the school, A.B. Combs, has received a number of prestigious awards at the national and state level.

Other schools are duplicating this school's situation. I just ran into a school in Johannesburg, South Africa, where they have done the same thing for a secondary school. The impact on those kids' lives and the impact those kids have on their parents is amazing. A lot of them don't come out of strong homes, so they become transition-figures for their own homes. They go upstream against cultural forces that are pushing against them. They are getting these surrogate parents and this new culture that is building on their spiritual DNA and going right through the cultural DNA of their upbringing.

Cruz, Alvaro – Colombia

“Former Minister of the Government of Colombia and Governor of Cundinamarca, Colombia”
“CEO of an engineering/building company in Colombia, I.C.M. Ingenieros Ltda.”

Spiritual Theme

Love and respect others.

Helping society

Tremendous efforts were invested in social causes. 83,000 children suffering from mal-nourishment were provided a daily breakfast. 140,000 poor children below six years of age were given recreation, including teaching lessons to develop their IQ. 10,000 other children were given medical attention in 50 regional centres for the handicapped. In the families of these children with disabilities, a feeling of participation in society was generated through the integrated programme we established to include the parents, just as in the educational programme.

Jensen, Niels Due – Denmark

“Group Chairman for Grundfos Management A/S in Denmark”

Spiritual Theme

Empathy, compassion, and love for my neighbour.

Social responsibility

My principle of trying to ‘love your neighbour’ has guided me in the direction of also developing what we call ‘social responsibility’ at Grundfos. It wasn't something I started; it was in fact my father who already in the late 1960's began our tradition of practising social responsibility. Because of my spiritual background I have always had this activity within Grundfos high on my agenda. Over the years it has developed in such a way, that today we have a considerable number of employees who would probably not be able to be with us without a certain support and

attention from our company. Out of about 4,500 employees in our Danish factories and companies, close to 3,000 being hourly paid, we have about 150 who are employed under, what we call 'special conditions'.

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So today we do not hear any protests against employing these workers; it is simply accepted as a natural part of our responsibility. They work part time or full time, they might have eight hours of work, but in a very easy job, and they are helped to be able to perform as well as they can.

If I had not had my Christian background, including the desire to do something for such unfortunate people, we would not have had this tradition at Grundfos. You may call it the need to love your neighbour, and this means your neighbour in this local society, but first of all your employees in the company. It is my strong belief, that my example has been of importance to many business leaders in Denmark, and therefore I believe that I have inspired them to go in the same direction.

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About a year ago we introduced a new policy for what we call Corporate Social Responsibility within Grundfos. We have laid down some major framework and policies as to how we could like to see the foreign Grundfos companies be active in living up to a social responsibility. We do not demand that they do exactly as we do in Denmark, as the cultural environments differ from country to country, and therefore the way you execute this corporate social responsibility on a daily basis is very different. We allow and encourage our local companies to lead the activities, which they feel are most helpful to them in being socially responsible towards their employees and their local community.

Ollé, Ramón – The Netherlands

“President of Epson Europe in The Netherlands”

Spiritual Theme

“To know thyself.”

Basic education in a multi-cultural organisation

The company I lead is very multi-cultural with 31 different nationalities represented in the Headquarters, so it is much more difficult to bring forth transformation in this kind of environment. One reason is because everyone has been educated and raised in a different manner. Communication is not just what is said and what is heard between people. Cultural codes affect understanding and can be the cause of misunderstanding. Our ways of listening, interpreting and understanding are embedded in our cultures. Then when people have to adapt to an organisation's way of doing things, it can be difficult.

We implicitly think that our global world is a common world. However you become aware of the richness when you discover and respect all the differences. It requires a lot of skill to navigate in these different waters. Just like the physical world has a lot of hills and mountains which is more interesting than a flat landscape with only desert, an organisational world that has many different cultures is richer than an organisation without such complexity when we are able to integrate all of this while respecting the differences.

The capacity to work, the capacity to make an effort, the capacity to learn, the capacity to understand, the capacity to communicate and to share, all of these capabilities are now lacking in the basic educational system. To develop these essential skills in people, first of all we need to change the educational systems in most countries. We have to give importance to values and to the human being; today our education systems are only giving importance to skills. Nobody wants to talk about spirituality or religion. When this change happens, people and families can begin to readjust their lives.

We cannot just turn the education of our children over to society. If these values have not been transmitted to children before the age of 12, then it is very difficult to do so later. If you were to read the managerial programs for most corporations, you would see training for skills, training for self-knowledge, training for team-oriented groups, training for corporate values, training for leader values, and training for leadership. This means that the business now has to support what years ago was a very normal part of our basic education.

Sinclair, James E. – USA

“Chairman and CEO of Tan Range Exploration, Ltd. in the USA and Tanzania”

Spiritual Theme

My theme for spirituality would be “Live it.”

Doing the right thing

I am a risk taker; I take risks that are beyond reason. Statistics would say that there is no reason for me to be sitting here talking to you today, because I should have been history a long time ago. And I know that I should have been history, because I've almost become history so many times I wouldn't even want my wife to know.

I look back and wonder how in the world, on the last day, on the last month, did I make it until I got a deal. And how in the world did a company come in and buy 13 pieces of my land, the most they've bought from anyone, anywhere, anytime? I couldn't make them do that. So every month I knew the next month would be fine, or if it wasn't, then it wasn't. Now I've taken all that I've made over the years and invested it into this Africa venture because my spiritual teacher told me to. And if it is a failure, so what?

I will be the first to admit, I never wanted to go back to Africa to do business after the horrendous experience I had in the mid-90's. But my spiritual teacher told me to go back to Africa. I told him I didn't want to go back. I travelled to see him numerous times to ask him to reconsider and let me out of it. He finally had enough of it, and so I went back even though my previous experience was a disaster. Right now it's taking all of the money I have and the strangest things in the world are happening. I am the first guy in this type of business (gold mining) to do this without any investors. But even then I am standing strong to only do what works.

For example, an African local lost his concession (piece of land) because he didn't pay the money required and so the license went back to the state. Here is this very desirable piece of land with a mine already on it. I wanted that piece of land and the government was ready to give it to me. But I said, "No, give it back to the man who owned it. I'm going to make a deal with him because he wasn't sophisticated enough to keep it." I got him back into the loop and now he owns 30% of the option and we're paying him US\$50,000 for the privilege and we'll buy the rest of it as his participation in the joint venture.

I did this because it seemed like the right thing to do. As a result, the word has gotten around that I'm a straight-shooter who is going to treat these African locals like human beings with respect. I paid them the same amount of money that I would pay someone in the USA. As a result, my company ended up with 52 pieces of land for mining, about half the size of the state of Connecticut. These are all some of the finest pieces of land in the world. We gave all of the landowners the respect of being real partners; we paid them and didn't even take the land out of their name. I was only willing to treat these people with the same respect that I would treat someone in the USA.

The word got around and now I can't keep people out of our offices who want to do business with us. I have made a lot of Tanzanians wealthy. Am I helping them or hurting them? I don't know. But I do know that to hurt someone requires an intention. If I set up a business with the intent to hurt another person or business, then this is hurting and you know you are doing it. There is something in the environment that will control the stability of the world and eventually those businesses that do intentionally hurt others cannot survive. If your intention as a human is to hurt, you are looking for disaster. I don't care if you've got the oracle of Delphi giving you insight.

STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS – UNION RELATIONS (3 STORIES)

Narayana, G. – India

“Chairman Emeritus for Excel Industries, Ltd. in India”

Spiritual Theme

My spiritual theme is: Noble actions, noble feelings, noble thoughts, noble responsibility.

Creating partnership

In the companies that I am connected with, I went to the union leaders and to management, and I told them they were doing the wrong things. I told them the secret of partnership: first trust, then agreement.

- If agreement is there, but not trust, then they become allies; however, if an argument comes, then they become adversaries straight away.
- If trust is there, but agreement is not there, they become opponents.
- If there is no agreement and no trust, they will become adversaries.
- By building trust first, you ultimately build solid agreement in the relationship.

One time, I went to the union leaders because they and the top management were not talking. I went to the factory and asked them what happened. I asked them why they were not talking with management and told them to come and talk tomorrow. Normally the union leaders will “surround” management (have a mass demonstration) when talks are not going well. I told the union leaders, “I am surrounding you! You sit inside this room with the managers and you solve the problems together.” Then I called the managers and told them to talk.

The next day I was waiting there for them; I had a strong intention. They talked through the problems together. I am “Guru-ji” (“beloved teacher”) to both the union leaders and the management. They all call me Guru-ji and take my blessing. I tell union leaders everywhere to offer love and receive dedication, offer value and receive work – just as I’ve taught our own managers.

Vrethammar, Magnus – Sweden

“Former President for Europe of Pergo Flooring in the UK”

“President of an executive coaching and business development firm Creability AB in Sweden”

Spiritual Theme

Spirituality is an opening process. And then the question is, “What are you opening up to?” I would say love, as long as I am very careful in how I define love. Love can be, on an energy level, a very encompassing and still impersonal energy. So, if one considers this type of love, I would say that my theme is “opening up to love.”

Following conscience

I do feel that I have a balance between my professional life and my private life. Do I face questions or situations in my professional life that challenge my ethical and moral stance? Yes, definitely I do. I do face situations where information needs to be communicated to the government or to auditors that could be detrimental to the company, and I have to determine how I can perform in these circumstances and maintain my moral, ethical stance. I feel that the only way I can do this is to stay very firm on my own personal borderlines. This also happens during power struggles on boards.

One example of this was when I was supposed to sign an important document dealing with a new investment in the Logistics Centre that was financed by the local community together with a number of large companies. I was sitting together with both the press and the head of the local community, while I had the union waiting for me in the next room. After signing the document, I had to make my exit and discuss firing a number of employees with the union. Nobody at the table would have signed if they knew what the next action was going to be. Did I feel that I was doing something morally right? Yes, because it was legal and in the best interest of the company, it was important for its survival - which was important as well for the community.

Welling, S. K. – India

“Former Executive Director of HMT International, Ltd. (Hindustan Machine Tools) in India”

Spiritual Theme

Purity of character through faith, bhakti (devotion), trust and love

A challenge from the union leaders

When I was the Executive Director of HMT International, there was an internal advertisement put out to recruit and fill some open positions within the international division. There were several people whom the Chairman wanted to have placed into these positions as a favour to him.

The day the interviews were called, the union leaders came to my office, about twenty of them, in order to put pressure on me not to hire these specific people. I called them all into my office, and they began to shout and tell me how these two people should not be hired because of pressure from the Chairman.

I first told them: “You should leave this to me. I will not accept these two just because there is pressure from the Chairman. Nor will I *not* take these two fellows just because you are saying that I should not take them. I will apply my own mind, my own judgment, and I will only go by the merits in each case. I will see how they fare in the interview and where they stand and I will take my decision from that. If you think that I am going to take them based on pressure from the Chairman, I am the last one to do that. I would resign and go away instead. And just because you are saying that I should not take these two fellows, I will not bow to your pressure either. I will not work under pressure from either of you.”

Once I said this, they all calmed down. Then I invited them to sit and have coffee, and we were able to talk harmoniously.

When they first came loudly to my office, I knew I didn't need a personnel man to help me with this. Instead, I needed to clear their doubts myself. Because of the spiritual feelings I have inside,

I knew immediately when they came that they didn't mean anything against me; they just wanted to put up a show. They wanted to show their strength, vis-à-vis what they were feeling against the Chairman. They could not go and do this show with the Chairman, so they came to me.

I knew this very well in my heart, and as such, I could anticipate this right up front. Without this perspective, most people in my position would have been very frightened by this display from the union leaders, and likely would have called for the security officer and the personnel manager before going to meet with the union leaders. But since I had the inner feeling that they meant no harm to me, I had no reason to be concerned.



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