



# PUT YOUR SPIRITUALITY TO WORK

Conversation Starters for the Workplace

## 1.21 ATTAINING THE HARMONY OF SUCCESS

When we allow our spiritual goals to subsume our career goals, we find true harmony in life – a state where our inner values naturally align with our worldly results.

**IF YOU ASK** people at work, “What does success mean to you?” most of them would likely say things like “making money”, “getting promotions”, or “having what I want”. But do these ‘symbols’ of success make for a truly harmonious life and career, especially from a spiritual point of view? What about the feeling that your job is meaningful and that it makes a difference to customers and society? What about the feeling that you’re growing and learning through your work – not only in job skills but also spiritually?

As we look back on our own careers and think about the people and leaders we’ve met and interviewed along the way, we’ve found that “success” takes on an expanded meaning when it emerges from our spiritual view of life. For example, the spiritual scriptures of India dwell upon this notion by describing *four goals* of “success” in life:

- *Dharma*: Living in consonance with creation and society
- *Artha*: Generating wealth for oneself and others (the wealth of good education, health, character and material well-being)
- *Kama*: Satisfying basic desires (a life of comfort, health, enjoyment and respect for one’s family and community)
- *Moksha*: Attaining spiritual fulfillment or liberation

While we look forward to delving more deeply into each of these goals in future articles, we were inspired by the words of Sathya Sai Baba, a spiritual teacher in India, when he described how we can integrate all four goals of life in order to reap the feeling of true harmony and success:

*Man should earn wealth through right means, and direct desires towards spiritual liberation. But man ignores righteousness and liberation and struggles to direct desires towards wealth. His sense of values has become topsy-turvy. Let righteousness dominate wealth, and liberation dominate worldly desire. Then your life will be a success.*

But, we wondered, what does it look like to integrate these four goals from a spiritual point of view *and* in a practical, day-to-day way? The executives we’ve interviewed gave answers that had a distinctly personal perspective – one that highlights *dharma* and *moksha* in some

way and brings harmony to their busy careers. Here's how some of them have translated their spiritual view of life into definitions of personal success at work:

1. Spiritual View of Life: Opening up to love  
Personal Success at Work: *Success for me is a lasting, positive attitude towards an opening up in the people that I have touched, I measure my results by the level of contentment I feel.*
  
2. Spiritual View of Life: Compassion, balance, grace, and friendliness  
Personal Success at Work: *To me, in order to be successful I must embrace all three aspects of mind, body and spirit.*
  
3. Spiritual View of Life: Wonder  
Personal Success at Work: *I define success as being as prepared as I can be, knowing that no matter how well prepared I am, I am not prepared because things unfold according to the mystery of the universe, of which I am a small player.*
  
4. Spiritual View of Life: Spirituality challenges me and makes me grow  
Personal Success at Work: *I would say that success in my life would be learning to conquer my fears.*
  
5. Spiritual View of Life: Awareness, and realising Divinity  
Personal Success at Work: *I think you should not measure success or failure at all. What's most important is to determine: Have I given my best effort? Have I followed my inner conscience? What was my underlying motivation? Did I analyse things with the proper sense of ethical values? My learning from spiritual texts leads me to this view of success.*

When we allow our spiritual goals to subsume our career goals, we find true harmony in life – a state where our inner values naturally align with our worldly results. As Sathya Sai Baba so beautifully puts it:

*(Spiritual) liberation is the goal that must dominate all the activities of life. That is to say, man must earn wealth through righteous means and desire above all for spiritual liberation.*

So, ask yourself: *From my spiritual view of life, how can I bring the four goals of life into harmony as I strive for success in my work?*

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This article is an excerpt from the book, *Put Your Spirituality to Work: The Basics*. To download the full book of articles, as well as additional book chapters, articles, workbooks, and research on the subject of “spirituality and human values for leadership and work”, visit our website: [www.globaldharma.org](http://www.globaldharma.org)