



ISSUE NO. 7 – MAY 2002

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Welcome

Thank you for joining us to explore The Inside Connection. We want to encourage, challenge, and support you to explore your full potential. We believe that success comes most directly when you look inside yourself first, before seeking change from other people or the things around you. If you enjoy our e-zine, please forward it to colleagues, friends and family who might benefit.

Inside The Inside Connection

Whenever a client asks for my help in solving a personal or business problem, I help them discover the root cause of the problem. Most of us waste too much time fixing the same problem over and over, without ever acknowledging or addressing the true cause of repeated difficulties. Whenever you experience a recurring problem, you can be sure that the problem is just a symptom of something deeper.

One of the best ways to find the root cause of a problem is to ask yourself: "What do I need to do to prevent this problem from EVER happening again?" Even when the upfront cost of a permanent solution is high, getting to the root cause is a much more effective long-term solution than repeatedly fixing the surface symptoms. Addressing the root cause of a recurring problem is one of the best uses of a business or personal coach.

Last month's article was a challenge to begin talking about spirituality in the workplace. This month the challenge goes further and asks you to find reasons and ways to actually practice spirituality at work - not just for your own spiritual well-being, but for the long-term financial success of your business.

One "root cause" of business and work dissatisfaction that I frequently see is an ignorance about, or an unwillingness to address, spiritual needs. Whether or not it's formally discussed, every organization has a collective spirit that needs to be acknowledged and nurtured for long-term success.

Feature: Practical Spirituality at Work

Can spiritual practice produce bottom-line business results?

The most successful businesses are definitely spiritual places, even if it's never talked about or recognized as such. For me, a spiritual workplace has a number of unique qualities:

- | People are recognized as the unique wonders that they are - staff and clients alike.
- | Business decisions take into account values, ethics, morality, and diversity in addition to common business sense. The affect of business decisions on people, communities and the environment are important considerations.
- | The business exists for a purpose beyond making money.
- | There is a palpable spirit that energizes and motivates the organization.
- | When there are challenges, people pull together and qualities like courage, generosity and trust show up and grow larger.

There's no surefire way to tell the spiritual quality of a business by looking at it. You have to engage with an organization in order to know if there's a live, active, respectful spirit operating within. Staff, clients, and vendors - they know if an organization "feels" good to deal with. They know if they can trust and depend on the integrity of an organization. It's not about a great advertising or marketing campaign. It's not even about short-term high-flying success. It's about the long-term relationships that get created and the respect with which people are treated when they interact with anyone at a spiritual workplace. The spirit of a business can be perceived anytime you come in contact with its people.

Here's my hypothesis:

Long-term business success operates in sync with spiritual principles.

When I was an undergrad at Stanford University, I remember a friend telling me about his religious and spiritual beliefs. He was absolutely convinced that there was a god that watched over him and all his actions. When I asked him how he knew there was a god, his reply was "Faith." At that time I was shocked that an intelligent friend of mine would accept anything as intangible as god without some personal proof. He hadn't had a near death experience, no out of body travel, no mystical experiences at all. In fact, his definition of faith was belief in something that you had no proof for. At that time, I really couldn't get my head around believing in something without tangible proof.

Now I'm here asking you to take a leap of faith with me and believe that long-term business success depends on spiritual practices and principles. There are many reasons you may want to join me in this, but here are just two:

- | First, there's an incredible satisfaction in discovering meaningful connections between spirituality and business success. Each time you do it, you reinforce your conviction that you can be both good and prosperous without sacrificing one for the other.
- | Second, every time you find a connection between a spiritual truth and a bottom-line business result, you have another way to make the time you spend at work serve double-duty as spiritual development time. You'll be doing "spiritual" time management!

When spiritual masters suggest that we become fully present to whatever we're doing, there's nothing preventing us from doing that at work. In fact, many ancient spiritual practices hold great potential for aiding us in our work. Consider how things would be different at work if:

- | We used mindfulness to stay fully present to what most needed our attention, allowing us to avoid distractions and information overload.
- | We truly decided to take on "servant leadership" and make the well-being of others our top priority.
- | Customer service reps treated clients as if they were divine beings.
- | We started meetings with a few moments of silence to breathe, to focus on our purpose for the meeting, and perhaps to notice something we appreciate about each person in our meeting.
- | We considered every agreement, every promise, and every commitment we made as sacred.

How would practicing some of these simple (but not necessarily easy) connections between work and spirituality change your daily work interactions and your results? What would it take for this to happen in your company? And what amazing results might you produce?

If you've already taken this leap of faith at work, please write and tell me about your experience.

If you'd like to discuss ways to create success in your life and work by increasing your focus on meaning, significance and spirit, give me, Ken Kesslin, a call at 212-865-2999.

Action Tip: Personal Reflection

Personal reflection seems to be one of the first things to go when we're feeling short on time. That's unfortunate because it's one of the few reliable ways we have to learn about ourselves and increase our effectiveness. Trying to improve without self-reflection is like trying to win a race without knowing the starting or ending lines.

Make a personal commitment (a sacred one!) to spend 15 minutes a day in spiritual self reflection. You can use the time in any way that helps connect you to the best part of yourself - to your spirit, to your soul. Your goal is to simply notice and to reflect on how you've treated yourself and others during the previous 24 hours.

Feel free to do this sitting in silence, walking in nature, writing in a journal, or petting your cat or dog. What you do is less important than the intention you have of reflecting on your day and your actions from a spiritual perspective. If you take this simple action each day, you'll be amazed at what you learn and how quickly you evolve.

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