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Spiritual Leadership

STB[®] -Exploring the meaning, the advantage and the unique added value of spirituality for leadership and innovation in organizations

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Spiritual Leadership & Spiritual Transformation in Business (STB[©])

**Exploring the meaning, the advantage
and the unique added value of
spirituality for leadership and
innovation in organizations**

Why spirit(uality) in the workplace?

Because (working) people are getting more and more fed up with being used by corporations for the sole and sacred purpose of pleasing their shareholders for the sake of *profit maximizing*. This outcry from the belly for authenticity, creativity and personal meaningfulness –especially in the workplace – is resounding more clearly within corporations that have become the most powerful and influential *global players* on our globe.

The interaction, interplay between spirituality and business has become increasingly evident.

The essentials of spirituality, spiritual leadership both on the level of personal development and fulfillment and that of the growth of the enterprise, what are they?

Spiritual leadership, leadership *tout court*, what's it all about?

Essentially it's all about releasing streams of human potential, about enabling others to break through their own barriers – barriers erected by themselves or by their organizations. It's about the alignment of both the head, the heart and the soul.

A spiritual enterprise?

It's primarily an uplifting of the enterprise to a higher development level across the board. It makes a clean sweep of traditional autocratic management practices and concepts such as e.g. *reengineering, the organization as a machine, the dominant, non-inclusive power*.

What does the **new transformational toolbox of a spiritual enterprise** consist of?

Vision, values, trust, meaningfulness, (higher) purposefulness, ethics, sense of community, (co-)ownership and awareness, higher levels of leadership consciousness...In a **spiritual leadership mind- & soulset** these elusive, intangible (production) factors (mentioned above) are being integrated into and aligned with an accessible, tangible and measurable management system.

This spiritual leadership mind- & soulset is being triggered by **shifts of consciousness** that are needed if we wish to create and discover our full potential: shifts in how we view ourselves, how we view the world, how we experience relationships, and how we express our involvement. This new way of looking at people and things gives a totally new content to leadership, for any kind of leadership.

More concretely, what are we talking about?

On the one hand, we're still witnessing the dominant scenario of entrepreneurship as we have known it for the last centuries with focus on: self-interest, short-term profit, isolationist thinking with the bottom line as jewel in the crown of the next quarter. In this business model the harrowing lack of respect for human nature, its creativity and motivation are exposed.

On the other hand, we are experiencing an **emerging spiritual enterprise scenario** which decisively emphasizes stakeholder value and enterprise culture acting out of a deeper sense

of purposefulness, overall wellbeing and profitability for the common good. These basic values are part of what has been coined as **Spiritual Capital** by Danah ZOHAR & Ian MARSHALL.

The sense of urgency of shifting from shareholder value to **shared & committed value** is key in this ongoing transformational process.

Spiritual leadership in turbulent times?

The tangents between the newest insights in quantum physics, chaos theories and biology, on the one hand, and the daily life (of organizations) on the other. In this global web of ever accelerating changes and connections, we're living infinitely new challenges and opportunities are emerging.

Clearly, **relationships** – and not individuals anymore – constitute the **building blocks of life and organizations**. Chaos and change is the inescapable path to transformation. Participative working together & sharing are the **keystones of spiritual leadership** in order to survive and thrive in this interconnected world, in which natural order is hardly attainable with traditional methods of command and control.

On the contrary, unveiled qualities such as **presence and awareness of mind, heart and soul** are shining as new beacons of light. The source, your source: a principle-centered behavior and leadership, where you are guided by intuition, gut feeling and incorporated and lived inner wisdom.

Indeed, the strength and clarity of your intuition functions as a worthy counterpart and antidote to logical and analytical business decisions and strategies. Intuition helps you with daily decision-making dilemmas in the workplace. Logic and intuition – the outer and inner side of development, growth and progress – when combined, means that business processes and personal processes are no longer separate entities. They build an inextricable whole. The challenge: to (dare to) open up and embrace your inner blueprint. This means to (dare to) be your creative and innovative self. More than ever does the business world need this breath of fresh energy, **spiritual energy**, doesn't it?

The pivotal challenge of spirituality?

How on earth can we as human beings get reconciled with nature again if we are not able to live in harmony with ourselves first? It's more than obvious that our planet adrift has to be healed, isn't it? And globalization is not the adequate answer. Humankind in this millennium is equally adrift and lacks fundamental signs. How long are we going to wait to start caring for the 'inner earth' of the human being? Isn't it true and obvious as well that the outside – which is nothing more than the objectification of humankind's inner world – and the inside are two poles of the same reality?

Therefore, an **inner mutation, transmutation** is as pivotal as the outer transformation.

The motto of **spirituality and spiritual leadership?**

Get realigned with the essential, your core: your inner self, your higher Self.

Sustainable spiritual values as well **new virtues of management** are – more than ever – called for. To leverage and transform spiritual wisdom into a captivating and compelling way of managing and leading where one dares to trust that entrepreneurial spirit comes from the core of their own wisdom and love. That's also the way to explore new niche markets while making profit but at the same time being at ease in another world – a world based on trust, faith, love and even serenity as well as transcending with flying colors the generally pathetic *business as usual* mantra, and shifting into *business as unusual and of well-being* discourse. This is a provocative appeal: self-discovery leads to better, more effective and less self-centered and conceited organizations. Work, virtue and love should go along in the workplace. That's the **emergence of a spiritual workplace**.

The **unique added value of a spiritual workplace?**

Greater efficiency and less self-righteousness. A reinvented and revisited working environment focused on creating working conditions guaranteeing a sense of lived experience, belonging, solidarity, tolerance, mutual assistance and trust between the co-workers. The urge for interconnectedness and solidarity with others is latent in layered hierarchical organizations pressured by inhumane "bottom line disconnectedness". No outlived and outdated patriarchal models and power games anymore in such a workplace. The social and inter-human fabric is being restored and gained.

Why is it that some companies make the leap from a good one to a great one and others don't? After all, the goal is not to proclaim that mediocrity is the rule of competence, is it? The goal is rather to make out of a competent company an excellent one, isn't it? In order to make that leap from *good* to *great* you have to go beyond the curse of competence. **Spiritual leadership**: back to basics – simplicity and presence!

When you look at the world differently, you also become aware of your own creative role and the potential to co-create that world. This **shift in perspective** will enable you to see, feel and access new opportunities, and also connect with deeper layers of learning. This is **the key** to creating change that serves the whole (ourselves, organizations and communities) as well. Marcel PROUST once said, "The real act of discovery consists not in finding new lands but in seeing with new eyes". In his seminal book *The forgotten half of change— achieving greater creativity through changes in perception*, author Luc DE BRABANDERE, explains the difference between innovation and creativity. Changing reality is *innovation*. This requires action by a team, is continuous, takes a long time, and delivers something new to the system. Its impact is measurable and certain and it requires the use of tools and project management. *Creativity*, on the other hand, changes perception and requires thinking/feeling. It is a challenge for individuals and it is discontinuous, taking an instant. Its impact cannot be measured, and it requires learning methods fuelled by questions, surprises, and incomplete answers. To really change, we have to change twice. Not only do we have to change things, but we have to change the way we see things. Innovation, thus, is

people's capacity to change reality, and creativity is the capacity of people to change their perception of reality. The key to this shift in perspective and to inner leadership is *turning & tuning within*.

This critical shift in perspective will be triggering a whole new generation of leaders: **spiritual leaders!**

Rediscover and reclaim the soul of business?

A Renaissance of Values. Rediscovering and reclaiming the soul in business means touching once again upon what was once an essential part of our human identity and DNA: our soul.

Working with soul is the quintessence of human experience! **Transformational thinking and feeling** at a higher level, a **higher frequency**.

Working with soul means business with a strongly recognizable identity. It means building solid, lasting relationships. It means inspiring trust and attracting customers by integrity rather than exploitative advertising. In doing business with soul, there is no longer any place for the anxiety and fear that unfortunately massively dominates today's business climate. The **rebirth of values** also means the **rebirth of people as healed and whole human beings**.

This is also the emergence of a new leadership paradigm: **Spiritual leadership**.

Human beings and their creativity are the cornerstones again of the working environment. Intuition is becoming increasingly important in corporate planning. Old organizational hierarchies are crumbling. Company and employee values come into alignment. Leaders view the multicultural work floor as a new challenge, and doing business becomes more and more a socially and **spiritually responsible** and empowering undertaking (CSR).

By attaching sufficient attention to detail, by treating employees with dignity and by setting store by vision and integrity, one reaches excellence in the long term.

The core of this revolution: **spiritually responsible entrepreneurship!**

Its heart and soul: placing gentleness on a par with sober judgment and practicality. In this way employees can express themselves in their acts and not – as is unfortunately so often the case – be soured by stress and an absence of prospects and meaning.

Working with heart and soul requires every employee to commit his or her entire person. With their innovative drive such employees represent genuine added value and ensure the enterprise's steadily growing success.

Inner and emotional involvement becomes a passion, and the enterprise a success story.

Spiritual leadership?

Creating space for silence, presence, also a breathing space of letting to. We don't only and always need action, do we? Also contemplation, stepping back and seeing things from a distance. Stress gives way to a slowing down, the head and brain are allowed to rest and the heart takes over. Only someone who loves himself can also love other people. Only men and women who overcome self-denigration and self-pity gain real contact with themselves and others. The gaping gulf we find in ourselves is due to the fact that we find it so hard to forgive ourselves and others. By allowing the heart to speak more and more, new worlds open up to us, and we get closer again to the core of our being: our loving and beating heart, also in the working place.

Once we apply the principles of these higher states of consciousness to the business world, a real breakthrough emerges. Only **organizations with soul** will be able to survive these turbulent times.

Working with soul means first of all insourcing again one's own being: becoming an integrated personality in which head, heart and soul are (re)aligned, and operate in harmony with one another. Employees are not merely *liabilities* but rather an enterprise's greatest *assets*, aren't they? They are reclaiming their human dignity by increasingly striving for authenticity and integrity.

The forward-thinking entrepreneur doesn't want to miss the high speed train of global and interpersonal changes, does he?

Quality – in the widest sense of the word – has become an obsession in almost every self-respecting enterprise that is seeking to keep its head above water in today's global digital economy. Yet, how do we translate this obsession into dynamic results? Strategic quality management ought to be flowing through all layers of the enterprise, and in the first place emanating from the top.

Indeed, what's the workplace really about? It is about **relationships, about human behavior and their interaction, isn't it?** How on earth is it possible then that the basic values of human nature and the nature of work itself are still not or hardly ever respected, if at all, in most of our daily work, grinding work?

Spiritual entrepreneurship?

In essence, it's about self-realization. Once applied to and allowed in the workplace, it may well one day effect a Copernican Revolution in work and society.

People in the workplace deserve again that full attention is paid to their human nature and dignity, don't they?

The obsolete and worn-out, but still triumphantly dominant economic paradigm of power, profit and performance is not in sync anymore with our times, and certainly not with the times to come.

It's high time to transcend once and for all the old and engrained duality that has controlled and determined our (human) life, thinking and feeling since Descartes, and even before, isn't it? It's high time to restore this lost unity so that head, heart and soul resonate again in harmony with one another.

Spiritual entrepreneurship?

Primary focus on **healed**, thus **whole** and **holy human being** again! Soulfulness, genuineness, character, authenticity and integrity are the essential ingredients and values that are called for to reclaim and restore new meaningfulness and purposefulness in our daily lives and the totally unpredictable world of work alike.

Management is about doing the things right. Leadership is about doing the right things. **Spiritual leadership** is about doing the right things right. This may sound easy, but is not so easy...It calls for a totally new approach and attitude: the power that we draw from within ourselves! That's the time that you experience happiness in its highest form. You emanate joy, creativity and sheer involvement. So-called problems melt away like snow in the sun, making way for an overwhelming sense of transcendence and freedom. And the good news? Everyone has the ability and the potential power to access this state of *flow* – as coined by world-renowned psychologist Mihaly CSIKSZENTMIHALYI – at work, during play or in relationships. Once you have grasped the concept of flow, you learn how to live in harmony with yourself, with society and with the universe. You return to the state of complete happiness which is in fact everyone's birthright, isn't it?

New spiritual dimensions are emerging in the world of entrepreneurship. Centre of attention are human beings with their dignity, emotionality and qualities, and not so much the – in the long term – stultifying bottom line. It's becoming crystal clear that the golden calves of old-style economic thinking – productivity, hunting for profit and lust for power – have had their day.

The **future of an enterprise** and the **enterprise of the future** lies in its values and its vision: in social inclusiveness, the importance of intuitive, female, creative and ethically and, let's be bold, **corporate spiritual responsibility** (CSR). Only this way can a business enterprise be a positive force for service to and change in our world.

Spiritual entrepreneurship?

Dare to exit the logic of power and to enter in a new logic of competence, excellence, sensitivity and genius. Of femininity too...Once you commit yourself to take this step, you bridge the gulf between your professional efficiency and the human dimension. Is there another way to achieve a harmonious balance between work and the human being? You access again your inner source and strength, and from this core your limits are constantly stretched and expanded.

Transformational, spiritual leaders are the leaders of the future. They will safely lead the massive changes that major enterprises are called on to make in the coming decades, in times of crisis and chaos.

Our ultimate purpose is to fulfill a spiritual destiny, isn't it? What if the source of all our problems lies in our thinking? And what if the answers and solutions to these problems are hidden in our heart and soul? What a liberating insight! The true challenge remains to transcend our preconceived concepts and (pseudo-)problems and plug into a spiritual grid of higher frequency. To reconnect with this higher frequency is, in fact, to (re)plug into spirit altogether!

Yet, the key to success starts with a true and thorough **transformation of oneself**.