

## **A Good (God) Thing: Is there a place for spirituality at work?**

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Congratulations goes out to my friend Tryg, who was just hired after several months looking for work. He writes, "The house is done, I'm starting a new job, and the taxes are in the mail. The job gives me a boost of confidence and energy after five months on the sidelines. It turned out to be a good (God?) thing as I look back..."

I was surprised by Tryg's note. Not that he's paying taxes (I figured as much), but because we hadn't talked about a higher power during his job search, and most people leave that out of professional conversations. It got me thinking. Is there a place for spirituality in the working world? Believers say, emphatically, yes. But what about non-believers, or those that just don't know whether they believe in a higher power or not? And what is spirituality, anyway? How can reaching out toward something you can't see, something beyond your ordinary self, bring better luck to your career?

Spirituality implies god-things, praise and worship and wish granting, but it is not limited to higher powers. By definition, spirituality refers to the more broad concept of anything relating to the soul or spirit, the intangible, emotional things in contrast to worldly or material things. Whether practiced through meditation, exercise, prayer, song, volunteerism, or any of its many formats, spirituality is really about moving beyond the task list and the white board, and getting to gut-check level. In career-planning terms, it means you take a computerized strengths assessment (material thing), and then listen to the urge inside you (the intangible) that agrees with the findings; in business, spirituality allows you another perspective, a link between information and emotion that strengthens resolve and improves outcomes.

According to Kees van Amersvoort, who manages an internet group called Business Spirituality, "People are struggling, trying to cope with the accelerated rate of change. Stress levels are high and many people live in fear, feeling 'lost' and out of balance. Business Spirituality means living and working consciously and authentically."

To work consciously means to be well-informed, awake physically, mentally and emotionally and responsive to the stimuli around you. It requires deliberate action over impulsive, knee-jerk reactions. Working consciously means taking ownership for decisions and their consequences. The greater challenge might be working authentically. Are you genuine in the way you work? Are you trustworthy?

Working consciously and authentically enables you to access the intangibles, the knowledge beyond what you see on paper. Moving toward a more spiritual approach gives you another level of information and purpose, and a better, more satisfying career to look back on.

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