

SPIRITUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE AND THE IMPLICATIONS IT HAS ON  
EMPLOYEES AND ORGANIZATIONS

by

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Need for the Study

Interest in workplace spirituality has increased steadily over the last decade of the twentieth century and into the new millennium (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2004).

Spirituality, as defined by Mitroff and Denton (1999), is the basic feeling of being connected with one's complete self, others and the entire universe. As Galen and West (1995) noted,

...a growing number of companies are setting off on spiritual journeys. It's not about bringing religion into the office or requiring that employees chant mantras at their workstations. Rather the spirituality movement in the corporation is an attempt to create a sense of meaning and purpose at work and a connection between the company and its people. (p. 1)

Today, companies like Ford, Nike, Boeing, AT&T, Lotus, and Taco Bell alike, have all begun incorporating spirituality into the workplace.

Today, a spiritual revival is sweeping across Corporate America as executives of all stripes are mixing mysticism into their management, importing into office corridors the lessons usually doled out in churches, temples, and mosques. Gone is the old taboo against talking about God at work. (Conlin, 1999, p. 2)

“Americans are increasingly leading more stressful lives. Surveys show they work more hours than people in most other industrialized countries and take fewer vacation days. At the same time, many are dissatisfied professionally” (Gogoi, 2005, p. 2).

According to the Fellowship for Companies for Christ International, there are 10,000

Bible and prayer groups in workplaces. “Large corporations such as Intel, PepsiCo, Coca-Cola, and Sears allow employee prayer groups. Many of them meet at noontime in gatherings with names such as *higher power lunches*” (Gogoi, 2005, p. 2). Now there are more than 30 conferences on spirituality and the workplace compared to only one 10 years ago (Conlin, 1999). Not only has the number of related books quadrupled each year since 1990, but there are also an increasing number of journal articles devoted to this topic as well.

As incongruous as it may seem, many MBA programs are also stressing spirituality to their students who are chasing million-dollar dreams. Columbia University Business School offers a class, “Creativity and Personal Mastery,” which emphasizes personal growth and exploration of ethics and values. Other B-schools run classes with similar themes under different names. And the American Academy of Management has recently formed a Special Interest group in Management, Spirituality, and Religion. (Gogoi, 2005, p. 2)

Furthermore, academic institutions like The University of Denver and the University of New Haven have opened research centers dedicated to this subject as well.

There is the widespread belief that for companies to survive into the 21<sup>st</sup> century in the face of economical downturn and global competition, it would be helpful to seek inspiration from Above [God/ heaven] and tap into employees’ spiritual resources (Wong, 2003). Spiritual resources may include the Bible, books, articles, conferences, prayer, and meditation. As McDaniel (n.d.) noted, “...our jobs have become devoid of our true selves, more about money than meaning, and completely lacking connection in a sense of God’s presence” (p. 1). There are numerous social and economic changes and

shifts in demographics of the workforce that have contributed to the growing interest of spirituality in the workplace. These contributing factors include layoff; downsizing; mergers; increased employee stress and burnout; decline in job satisfaction; environmental pollution and energy crisis; technological advancements; unethical corporate behavior; workplace violence and threats of terrorism; and unraveling of schools and family. According to a survey conducted by the Conference Board research group, only 50% of Americans are happy with their jobs, down 9% compared to 59% in 1995 (Gogoi, 2005). “In these turbulent times, it is only natural that workers turn to spirituality and religion for remedies, security, and inner peace,” says Paul T.P. Wong, professor at Trinity Western University in Canada (as cited in Gogoi, 2005, p. 2).

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to assess the role spirituality plays in the workplace through the eyes of employees.

As a new century begins, it is becoming increasingly clear that workers are experiencing a fundamental change of business world values, a change of paradigms as radical as the Age of Information. Corporate America and its employees are responding to a call for a deeper sense of purpose, a more significant sense of faith, and a renewed commitment to spirituality. (Harrington, Preziosi, & Gooden, 2001, p. 155)

#### Statement of the Problem

As Harrington, Preziosi, and Gooden (2001) wrote:

Spirituality at work is not about religious beliefs. Rather, it is about people who perceive themselves as spirited beings, whose spirit needs energizing at work. It is

about experiencing real purpose and meaning in their work beyond paychecks and task performance. Spirituality is really about people sharing and experiencing some common attachment, attraction, and togetherness with each other within their work unit and the organization as a whole. (p. 155)

The problem for consideration in this research focuses on employee perceptions of how spirituality impacts the workplace.

### Research Questions

The research questions addressed in this study are:

1. How and to what degree does the role of spirituality in the workplace affect organizational performance and or productivity?
2. What are the benefits related to integrating spirituality into the workplace?
3. What are employee perceptions as to how workplace spirituality impacts their work attitudes?

### Definition of Terms

1. **Organizational Performance:** Comprises the actual output or results of an organization as measured against its intended outputs or goals and objectives (Wikipedia, 2006).
2. **Religion:** Belief in and reverence for a supernatural power or powers regarded as creator and governor of the universe (The American Heritage Dictionary, 2000).
3. **Spirituality:** Spirituality [is] an essential part of an individual's holistic health and well-being. Here are five key concepts based upon research conducted by Martsof and Mickley (1998):

- Meaning- significance of life; making sense of situation; deriving purpose.
  - Values- beliefs, standards and ethics that are cherished.
  - Transcendence- experience, awareness, and appreciation of a “transcendent dimension” to life beyond self.
  - Connecting- increased awareness of a connection with self, others, God/Spirit/Divine, and nature.
  - Becoming- an unfolding of life that demands reflection and experience; includes a sense of who is and how one knows. (p. 2)
4. Work Attitudes: A state of mind or a feeling; disposition related to a job or employment (The American Heritage Dictionary, 2000).
  5. Workplace Spirituality: A framework of organizational values evidenced in the culture that promote employees’ experience of transcendence through the work process, facilitating their sense of being connected to others in a way that provides feelings of completeness and joy (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2004).

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### Overview

With all of the disasters that have occurred within the past five years, from September 11 to the demise of Enron and WorldCom, employees are searching for spiritual resources to get them through these economical hardships. “People are searching for a way to connect their work lives with their spiritual lives, to work together in community, to be unified in a vision and purpose that goes far beyond making money” (Miller, 1998, p. A6). The purpose of this study is to assess the role spirituality plays in the workplace through the eyes of employees. A review of the literature guided this study. The literature review will be composed of four subject headings related to the research questions posed. The subject headings are: (1) Perceptions of Spirituality; (2) Spirituality vs. Religion; (3) Defining Workplace Spirituality and (4) Benefits of Workplace Spirituality.

#### Methods and Procedures

The problem of the study was to identify employee perceptions of how spirituality impacts the workplace. The type of method used in this study was descriptive research.

As Best and Kahn (2006) noted, descriptive research is defined as:

...what is. It is concerned with conditions or relationships that exist, opinions that are held, processes that are evident, or trends that are developing. It is primarily concerned with the present, although it often considers past events and influences as they relate to current conditions. (p. 118)

The procedure used in the study consisted of identifying journal articles, dissertations, theses, and magazine articles, and obtaining data from Internet sites to be used in trying to obtain answers to the proposed research questions.

The information gathered for the study was obtained through searching Morris Library databases at Southern Illinois University Carbondale. Such databases used included EBSCO, FirstSearch, and ProQuest. The keywords and phrases used to retrieve relevant information included: “religion”, “spirituality”, “spirituality in the workplace”, “workplace spirituality”, and “religion in the workplace”. Other relevant material found through Internet sites was acquired by using Google search engine.

Utilizing the applicable data collected from the research, information found was arranged by subject headings pertinent to answering the research questions. Finally, the literature was synthesized and conclusions and recommendations were determined.

### Perceptions of Spirituality

This study is primarily concerned with employees’ views of how spirituality impacts the workplace. Due to the tremendous growth of interest in workplace spirituality, it is important to obtain accurate definitions and descriptions of spirituality as it relates to the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In an effort to gain an indepth understanding of spirituality, what is needed according to Butts (1999) is:

sufficient clarity and theoretical understanding of the meaning of spirituality and how it can apply to work especially in terms of personal satisfaction, peak performance, and overall business success that can also enrich communities, cultures, and the Earth itself. (p. 328)

Based upon the related literature gathered, there are numerous definitions for the term spirituality. Webster's defines spirituality as "of, relating to, consisting of, or affecting the spirit; of or relating to sacred matters; ecclesiastical rather than lay or temporal; concern with religious values; of, related to or joined in spirit" (Garcia-Zamor, 2003, p. 356). Palmer (1999) defined spirituality as "the human quest for connectedness" (p. 8). Turner's (1999) definition described spirituality as coming from within, beyond the survival instincts of the mind: "It means engaging the world from a foundation of meaning values. It pertains to our meaning and dreams, our patterns of thought, our emotions, feelings and behaviors" (p. 41).

Through interviews conducted by Mitroff and Denton (1999), these researchers found commonality among the participants' definitions of spirituality which helped them to come up with key elements of spirituality. Even though the interviews conducted by Mitroff and Denton (1999) failed to produce a common definition for spirituality they were able to use several elements from the participants' definitions of spirituality to come up with a list of the key elements of spirituality.

1. Not formal, structured or organized.
2. Nondenominational, above and beyond denominations.
3. Broadly inclusive, embracing everyone.
4. Universal and timeless.
5. The ultimate source and provider of meaning and purpose in life.
6. The awe we feel in the presence of the transcendent.
7. The sacredness of everything, the ordinariness of everyday life.
8. The deep feeling of the interconnectedness of everything.

9. Inner peace and calm.
10. An inexhaustible source of faith and will power.
11. The ultimate end in itself. (p. 88)

Like much of the literature has stated, there is no one clear definition or perspective of spirituality and management (Konz & Ryan, 1999; McCormick, 1994). In an effort to explain this movement toward spirituality, Len Tischler (1999) based this theory on Maslow's theory of hierarchy of needs. Tischler's (1999) theory says, "as the majority of citizens in any society can be freed from the lower levels [food, shelter, security] of concern, they can, as a society, shift their concern to higher order needs [knowledge, self fulfillment]" (p. 274).

Furthermore, two of the most popular viewpoints of spirituality include the intrinsic origin view, and the existentialist perspective. As Krishnakumar and Neck (2002) noted, "The intrinsic-origin view of spirituality is that which argues that spirituality is a concept or a principle that originates from the inside of an individual" (p.154). Guillory's (2000) definition falls within this perspective as spirituality is defined as "our inner consciousness" and "that which is spiritual comes from within-beyond our programmed beliefs and values" (p. 33). Like Guillory, Brandt (1996) agreed "Spirituality's goal is greater personal awareness of universal values, helping an individual live and work better and more joyfully" (p. 83). Guillory further said that one of the most observed characteristics about this perspective or class of definitions about spirituality is that most of the proponents argue that spirituality is something which is beyond the rules of religion. Graber (2001) argued "Spirituality avoids the formal and ceremonial connotations of religion; it is non-denominational, non-hierarchical, and non-

ecclesiastical. Spirituality implies an inner search for meaning or fulfillment that may be undertaken by anyone regardless of religion” (p. 40).

As for the existentialist view, “this view of spirituality is perhaps the most connected to the concepts such as the search for meaning in what we are doing at the workplace” (Kahnweiler & Otte, 1997). Some of the existential questions which come up are:

- Why am I doing this work?
- What is the meaning of the work I am doing?
- Where does this lead me to?
- Is there a reason for my existence and the organization's?

These questions appear when people are in repetitive and boring jobs, which in turn can lead to existential sickness. When there is a lack of meaning or purpose in work, employees tend to feel separated and alienated from oneself. This can cause employee frustration and reduced productivity.

### Spirituality vs. Religion

There has been much debate as to whether spirituality and religion are one in the same. As Howard (2002) noted, “Part of the confusion arises out of how we distinguish the term “spirituality” from “religion” in our language” (p. 231). Within corporate America, the S-word, spirituality, is often confused with the R-word, religion. While religion looks outward, spirituality looks inward. A definition of religion is given by Bruce (1996): “Religion consists of beliefs, actions, and institutions which assume the existence of supernatural entities with powers of action, or impersonal powers or processes possessed of moral purpose” (p. 7). However, it is also helpful to remember

that spirituality is far broader than religion encompassing character, ethics, and the giving of oneself for the benefit of others. Based upon the literature reviewed, the authors pointed out that the two are very different not just in general, but with regards to the workplace as well. As Garcia-Zamor (2003) noted, “Spirituality and religious belief are compatible, though not identical; they may or may not coexist. In office settings, it is absolutely crucial to understand the differences between the two” (p. 359). Cash and Gray (2000) agreed with Garcia Zamor’s assertion that spirituality and religion are very different concepts by saying:

Advocates of spirituality in the work environment often view spirituality and religion as very different concepts; while they generally oppose the promotion of formal religion in the workplace, they openly defend spirituality as a workplace practice. They assert that spirituality looks inward to an awareness of universal values while formal religion looks outward, using formal rites and scripture. (p. 4)

Furthermore, research conducted by Mitroff and Denton (1999) found that people differentiate between spirituality and religion. “Religion is viewed as intolerant and divisive; and spirituality is seen as universal and broadly inclusive” (p. 359). Their research further found that people have four different orientations toward religion and spirituality [such as]:

- A person can have a positive view of religion and spirituality.
- A person can be positive about religion but negative about spirituality.
- A person can have a negative view of religion, but a positive view of spirituality.
- A person can be negative about both religion and spirituality. (p. 88)

To back up what Mitroff and Denton (1999) found, research in the form of a poll conducted by Newsweek and Beliefnet in August of 2005 found that 55% of people said they were religious and spiritual; 9% said they were religious but not spiritual; 24% said they were spiritual but not religious; 8% said they were not spiritual or religious; and 4% didn't know.

### Defining Workplace Spirituality

What is the soul at work? "*The soul at work*, is a double entendre: it is at once the individual's soul being allowed to be present in the workplace; and it is the emergence of a collective soul of the organization", according to Lewin (n.d., p. 3). "Spirituality within a workplace addresses all dimensions of the organization" (Groen, 2001, p. 21). Not only is this study interested in spirituality in and of itself, it is concerned with spirituality as it relates to the workplace. Klein (2001) noted, "Thus for organizations wanting greater commitment this means opening up the business conversation to include dimensions of soul and spirit that have been traditionally left at the office door" (p. 32).

No agreed upon definition of spirituality in the workplace exists. As Laabs (1995) pointed out, "It is much easier to explain what spirituality in business is not than it is to define what spirituality in business is" (p. 60). However, workplace spirituality has been defined as "a framework of organizational values evidenced in the culture that promote employees' experience of transcendence through the work process, facilitating their sense of being connected to others in a way that provides feelings of completeness and joy" (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2004, p.129). The goal of spirituality in work is seen as being able to have positive attitudes and relationships with the world (McDaniel, n.d). Such

positive attitudes include but are not limited to a focus on health, happiness, empowerment, inner peace, truth, and building relationships not just with oneself but with others as well.

Burack (1999) defined workplace spirituality by using three concepts of spirituality in the workplace as his working definition:

- Spiritual growth and advancement of the human experience involve mental growth – problem solving and individual learning will often be the main vehicles of individual development.
- Spiritual growth reflects the gratification of individual needs especially “belonging” and those of higher order such as a sense of achievement. The individual’s context for these is broad encompassing work-family connections and work-place settings.
- Spirituality in the workplace is communicated and reinforced through the institution’s leaders, organizational culture, policies and work design among other factors. Sensitivity to and interest in the person (employee) must be common to all approaches. (p. 281)

In agreement with the views expressed by Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2004), and Burack (1999), Wong (2003) identified several attributes of spirituality within the context of work as follows:

1. Defining ourselves as having inherent values, greater than our roles, titles and possessions.
2. Affirming meaning and purpose in spite of absurdity and chaos.
3. Emphasizing authenticity, inner wisdom, creativity and transformation.

4. Recognizing the immaterial, transcendental, sacred dimensions of reality.
5. Having a servant's attitude towards work and leadership.
6. Embodying spiritual values of integrity, honesty, love, kindness and respect.
7. Emphasizing social responsibility toward the community, society and environment.
8. Viewing God and spiritual principles as the grounding for moral decisions. (p. 3)

Further backing up some of the attributes mentioned in Wong's (2003) list, The Institute for Management Excellence website used seven principles to define spirituality in the workplace. These principles include: creativity, communication, respect, vision, partnership, energy, and flexibility.

- Creativity includes the use of color, laughter and freedom to enhance productivity. When people enjoy what they do, they work much harder.
- Communication is the vehicle that allows people to work together.
- Respect of self and of others; includes: respect for the environment; other people's personal privacy, their physical space and belongings; different viewpoints, philosophies, religion, gender, lifestyle, ethnic origin, physical ability, beliefs and personality.
- Vision means seeing beyond the obvious- seeing the unseen.
- Partnership encompasses individual responsibility and trust that other people will perform according to their commitments for the good of the team and partners. It accepts that different people have different viewpoints and beliefs; those differences are used as positive aspects for broadening the team experience.

- Positive Energy forces are released when people feel creative, have the freedom to express their opinions, and feel respect from their management and their peers.
- Flexibility includes the ability to adapt to changing situations and allowing one's own beliefs and habits to change as needed.
- Fun [is when] people who enjoy their life work harder, make more money, have more confidence in themselves, have more friends and are far healthier than [those who don't].
- Finding Your Self your self (small "s") is the person you are here on this plant. Your Self (capital "S") is the greater energy of the Universe that connects all of us. (pp. 1-5)

#### Benefits of Spirituality in Workplace

"Today's worker is no longer willing to work in an authoritarian and dehumanizing environment. Workers want meaning in their work and balance in their lives" (Herman, Gioia, & Chalkley, 1998, p. 24). Research shows that employees are finding it difficult to continue to separate their spiritual lives from their work lives (Zimmerman, 2004). They believe that integrating spirituality in the workplace will allow them meaning and purpose in life. Not only do they become personally fulfilled, but the organization reaps the benefits of profits, high morale, and less absenteeism. Barrett (n.d.) argued "Successful business leaders of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will need to find a dynamic balance between the interests of the corporation, the interest of the workers, and the interests of society as a whole" (p. 1). This can be achieved only when organizations link the company's goal of profits with the employees' goal of finding meaning and purpose in their work. Once these things are achieved, then optimal performance follows.

Spirituality in the workplace may manifest itself in several ways, but at two different levels: the personal and the organizational (Garcia-Zamor, 2003). Research suggests that the encouragement of spirituality in the workplace can lead to benefits in the areas of creativity, process improvement, customer service, honesty and trust, personal fulfillments, and commitment, which will ultimately lead to increased organizational performance (Krishnakumar et al., 2002; McDaniel, n.d.; Miller, 1999). Research conducted by East (2005) found that employees who feel spiritually connected at work experience peace of mind, inner strength, serenity, patience, calmness, sanity, and positive attitude.

In fact, some research reveals that organizations that encouraged spirituality experienced higher profits and success (Mitroff & Denton, 1999; Turner, 1999). It has been proven that “spirited workplaces” have done better with respect to profitability (Thompson, 2000). According to Thompson (2000), “In some cases (referring to research studies), the more spirited companies outperformed the others by 400-500 percent, in terms of net earnings, return-on-investment and shareholder value” (p. 19). Research has also shown that organizations perform better and better when they combine profitability and spirituality. As cited in the article entitled, *Are Profitability and Spirituality Polar Opposites?*, Dr. Benefiel found “Fostering a spiritual atmosphere in the workplace does more than keep employees happy – it contributes to the life and health of the business’s future” (pp. 2-3). Johnson (n.d.) suggested “The human potential movement without a soul becomes an empty shell. The soul cannot be quantified or measured. However, its impact on the corporate world is obvious” p. 3).

Spirituality in the workplace leads to intuition, which in turn leads to creativity (Freshman, 1999). When employees are allowed to bring the spiritual side of themselves to work, they become more creative, which leads to happiness and satisfaction (Turner, 1999). This will result in financial success for the organization (Thompson, 2000; Turner, 1999). Neck and Milliman (1994) found that spirituality positively affects organizational performance. Research also found that organizations that promote spirituality report increases in creativity, satisfaction, team performance and organizational commitment (Freshman, 1999; Turner, 1999).

As for personal fulfillment, Turner (1999) noted, “Fostering spirituality will lead to employees feeling complete when they come to work. This will result in a high degree of personal fulfillment and increased morale. This further would lead to increased organizational performance through greater financial success” (p. 41). With regards to commitment, Burack (1999) said spirituality increases commitment by establishing a “Trustful Climate” in the workplace (p. 285). This includes commitment of the employees to the organization and also commitment of the organization to quality and to the customer (Wagner-Marsha & Conely, 1999). “Attitudes of employees in organizations with high levels of spirituality are positive, supportive of the organization, and demonstrate commitment to a much greater degree than in organizations without such values” (Milliman et al., 2001; Pfeffer & Vega, 1999).

In support of the others findings, Wong (2003) noted “...to be effective, spirituality needs to be integrated into the corporate culture and reflected in organizational policies and practices on a daily basis” (p. 3). If organizations want to reap the full benefits of spirituality on morale and productivity, an organizational

transformation has to take place (Wong, 2003). According to Wong (2003), when this happens you will see the following changes at the workplace:

- The organization will become purpose-driven and meaning-based.
- Management with a mission will replace management of efficiency and control.
- There will be a shift from fear-based culture to love-based culture.
- Management practices and decisions will be clearly consistent with spiritual values such as integrity, honesty, love, hope, kindness, respect and nurturing. Adding to what Wong (2003) believes, research has shown that employees who are shown organizational kindness are more motivated to accomplishing tasks (Salzmann, 1997; Schulman, 1999) and Lloyd (1990) [said they] are 86% more productive in organizations that show kindness versus those that don't.
- Spirituality is about bringing passion - bringing your heart, soul and spirit - to what you do, because from a spiritual perspective, work has a deeper meaning and serves a higher purpose.
- Management learns to truly listen and builds a safe place where employees can speak the truth without fear of repercussions.
- Management will break down the walls of hierarchy to create a sense of community and inspire a sense of belonging in the workers.
- There is a new willingness to reflect on the meaning of life and moral implications in making important decisions.

- There is a shared attitude that products and services need to be beneficial to community and humanity.
- Management will value employees based on who they are, what they can become, rather than what they can do for the company.
- Bosses will treat employees in a responsible, respectful and caring way, because people are not instruments to be used and exploited. Research further shows that organizations that demonstrate valuation, mutual respect, and show consideration and concern for others report decreases in stress, burnout, and turnover, as well as increases in productivity (Brockner, 1985; Karasek & Theorell, 1990; Sigall & Gould, 1977; Snyder, 1994).
- Management will also resort to spiritual ways of resolving conflict. Therefore, they will be reluctant in issuing ultimatum and slow in the "firing trigger".
- There will be a move from command-and-control leadership to horizontal servant leadership, which emphasizes empowering, delegation and cooperation.
- There will be an improvement in morale, job satisfaction, loyalty and productivity.
- Spiritual dimension will be fully integrated with every aspect of work life, such as relationships, planning, budgeting, negotiation, compensation, etc (pp. 3-4).

## Summary

The present spiritual movement is probably the most significant trend in management since the human-potential movement in the 50s (Wong, 2003). “With so many Americans spending so much time on the job, some of them are finding ways to bring spirituality to the office, rather than relegating it to weekend religious services” (Zimmerman, 2004, p. 1). A Gallup Organization poll,... found that the percentage of Americans who said they “felt a need... to experience spiritual growth” grew from 58% in 1994 to 78% in 1999 (Harrington et al., 2001, p. 156).

Recent years have seen an unmistakable increase in attention paid to religion and spirituality at the office (Gogoi, 2005). McDaniel (n.d.) wrote:

Gods’ original intention was that work express the unique gifts and qualities of each person in the service of a unified whole... we have a serious and holy calling to be expressed through active engagement with the world around us... through our entire work. (p. 1)

More mainstream companies are using spirituality as a way to prod workers and inspire manager (Galen & West, 2005). Konz and Ryan (1999) asserted “Organizations that provide their employees with opportunities for spiritual development perform better than those that do not provide such development opportunities” (p. 201). Based upon research, when the individual is allowed to bring or engage the soul at work, they feel a part of the organization. Feelings of unhappiness and discontentment fade away and a sense of fulfillment is achieved. As McCormick (1994) noted, “Integrating spirituality and work brings profound meaning to their jobs as managers” (p. 5). The thought of employees

being able to bring their entire self to work helps improve employee attitudes/morale, which in turn prove beneficial to the productivity of the organization.

As cited in Dehler and Welsh (1994), General Electric CEO Jack Welch believes that “hearts are every bit as important as minds,” ... “how profoundly emotions can influence human thought and behavior -- and entire organizations” (p. 19). Work is an emotional experience involving body, emotion, and brain (Dehler & Welsh, 1994). The only thing missing is spirit. “But will this revival amount to anything more than a momentary sensation” (Conlin, 1999, p. 8)? Research may help answer this question.

## CHAPTER 3

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary of Findings

##### Perceptions of Spirituality

“Spirituality in general, and in the workplace in particular, has become an important topic in recent years, reaching even the front page of the Wall Street Journal” (Miller, 1998, p. A1). Given the many perspectives and definitions of spirituality, research has failed to produce a common definition of spirituality. However, if one word could be used to capture the meaning of spirituality, it would be “interconnectedness”. This interconnectedness or connection encompasses self, others, nature or the environment, and a higher power. No matter how broad the perceptions of spirituality may be, all definitions in some way or another utilize the ideas expressed through the word interconnectedness.

##### Spirituality vs. Religion

Spirituality is not to be confused with religion. “It’s not about converting people. It’s about knowing that we are all spiritual beings having a human experience” (Laabs, 1995, p. 61). While religion looks outward focusing on rituals, adhering to dogma, and attending church services, spirituality looks inward focusing on personal experiences, manifesting itself through behaviors, principles, and practices. Laabs (1995) concluded “It’s [spirituality] not about making people believe a system or a thought system or a religious system. It’s about knowing that every person has within themselves, a level of truth and integrity, and that we all have our own divine power” (p. 61).

##### Defining Workplace Spirituality

“Work spirituality is expressing our desires to find meaning and purpose in our lives and is a process of living out one’s set of deeply held personal values” (Neck & Milliman, 1994, p. 9). It’s not about bringing religion to the workplace, but about being able to bring one’s entire self to work. Without the existence of the human spirit at work, there is no meaning in work. In order for people to find self fulfillment not only in their personal lives, but at work as well, they must be able to express their values, dreams, and creativity. “A future-focused corporate culture will make a place for such spiritual expression, which may take many different forms, resulting in benefits ranging from better internal communication to new product design” (Herman et al., 1998, p. 28).

#### Benefits of Spirituality in Workplace

Research has shown that there are numerous benefits associated with integrating spirituality in the workplace. The employees and organization alike reap the benefits. This means higher profits, less absenteeism, higher morale, and less stress. Brandt (1996) suggested “By recognizing and appreciating colleagues not only for the professional roles they play, but also for the interesting, diverse and worthwhile people they are, you will take the most effective step possible toward a more spiritually sustaining workplace” (p. 86).

#### Conclusions

##### Perceptions of Spirituality

Although there are various perspectives and definitions of spirituality, it is important to remember that its focus is on the individual. It is about individual personal behaviors, principles, practices, and values. Howard (2002) concluded:

Spirituality encompasses the way an individual lives out his or her sense of interconnectedness with the world through an ability to tap into deep resources. It encompasses truth, service, and wholeness. It is about self awareness and unity. (p. 231)

### Spirituality vs. Religion

Research has shown that spirituality and religion are not one in the same. Based upon a study conducted by Mitroff and Denton (1999), the participants viewed religion as a highly inappropriate topic in the workplace. They saw spirituality, on the other hand, as a highly appropriate subject for discussion. Furthermore, spirituality's focus is inward, while religion's is outward. Spirituality is broader in scope and religion more narrow in scope.

### Defining Workplace Spirituality

There is no question that the interest in spirituality in the workplace is steadily increasing. Because of social and economic changes in the workplace like downsizing, scandals, and low morale, people are looking to include the spiritual aspects of their lives into their work. They are trying to create meaning and purpose in the workplace.

“Whether it's uniting or dividing, benefiting corporations or individuals, religion is a force that can't be ignored in the 9-to-5 world” (Gogoi, 2005, p. 3).

### Benefits of Spirituality in Workplace

Wong (2003) asserted “A healthy dose of spirituality and meaning at the workplace is good for business, because it improves moral and productivity” (p. 1). These are just two of the many benefits of incorporating spirituality in the workplace. Other benefits include, but are not limited to higher profits, less absenteeism, more positive

attitudes, increased commitment, greater satisfaction, and team performance. When an individual feels connected with self, others, and the organization, optimal performance is achieved, thus rendering the organization a success.

### Recommendations

#### Recommendations for Further Studies

1. Further studies should be done to explain why the topic of spirituality in the workplace has been neglected until the last decade.
2. Further studies should be conducted to determine the effects spirituality in the workplace has on employees and the organization alike.
3. Further studies should be instituted to determine if the pros of incorporating spirituality in the workplace outweigh the cons.

#### Recommendations for Organizational Implementation

1. An effort should be made to help employees feel comfortable expressing themselves and or their ideas. Provide them with immediate feedback. Let them know that you are listening and that their ideas/suggestions or even complaints are not falling on deaf ears.
2. Efforts should be made by organizations to encourage balance between work and family. Life off the job is just as important as life on the job to employees. When it comes to personal/professional balance, organizations need to be sensitive to the needs of its employees.
3. Efforts should be made to acknowledge and reward employee achievements. Organizations should have a compensation policy to recognize and reward

employees' contributions to the organization. For example, if your team has perfect attendance for the month, bring them a treat.

4. Efforts should be made by organizations to show commitment to employees.

Organizations need to show their employees that they are valued based on who they are as an individual rather than what they can do for the company.

Commitment can be shown through respect, listening and words of encouragement to let them know their contributions are not going unnoticed.

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