

BOOK REVIEW

THE PALGRAVE HANDBOOK OF SPIRITUALITY AND BUSINESS; EDITED BY LUK BOUCKAERT AND LASZLO ZSOLNAI; PALGRAVE-MACMILLAN, HAMPSHIRE; ENGLAND, 2011

Key spiritual values embraced in a business context include integrity, honesty, accountability, quality, cooperation, service, intuition, trustworthiness, respect, justice, and service. The Container Store chain nationwide tells workers they are “morally obligated to help customers solve problems” – they’re not just to sell people products. The CEO of Vermont Country Store, a popular national catalogue company, honored--instead of fired--an employee who told the truth in a widely circulated memo. This greatly increased morale and built a sense of trust in his company.

A commitment to values is an outstanding characteristic of all visionary leaders. They embody a sense of personal integrity, and radiate a sense of energy, vitality and will. Will is standing in a spiritual state of being. Will is a spiritual attribute, which allows a leader to stand for something.

There is a profound interconnectedness between the leader and the whole, and true visionary leaders serve the good of the whole. They recognize that there is some truth on both sides of most polarized issues in our society today. They search for solutions that transcend the usual adversarial approaches and address the causal level of problems. They find a higher synthesis of the best of both sides of an issue and address the systemic root causes of problems to create real breakthroughs.

The differences between spiritual organizations and others are very subtle and they have a great deal to do with how we hold and react to the events that surround us. In a spiritual organization, people are much clearer that they are there of their own choosing and that they are masters of their own destiny. People are much less likely to think that they are victims. People tend to treat each experience as an opportunity for personal growth. Thus when they get angry or their ego gets bruised, they are more able to work with those situations in the following constructive ways.

- Create a shared vision.
- Maintain a high level of individual and organizational integrity. Keep agreements.

- Create an organizational culture that values service, excellence, dedication, contact with the customer, and action over personal advancement and personal gain.
- Create cooperation, communication, and community.
- Create a supportive environment for the individual.
- Create an organizational culture that supports personal growth.

While reviewing The Palgrave Handbook of Spirituality and Business it is found that the editors attempted on publishing this compendium on three basic premises:

- 1 There is a growing interest from the academic as well as the entrepreneurial side in spirituality as the term is applied today in models of transformational leadership, in the theories of social capital and in the practice of value-driven management.
- 2 There is a growing awareness that the world is unsustainable without a strong commitment in managing global goods.
- 3 to clarify the concept of spirituality in the fields of business and economics.

There are forty eight contributions across the globe and the book is divided into five major parts:

- 1 Part I deals with the nature of spirituality
- 2 Part II Spirituality inspired economics
- 3 Part III Socioeconomic problems in spiritual perspectives
- 4 Part IV Business spirituality and
- 5 Part V Good practices and working models

Overall, this handbook highlights the new development of spirituality as a social experience within and outside the context of institutionalized religions. This handbook is focused on the form of profane and applied spirituality in the fields of business, economics and social life.

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