

**Teaching the spirit: A study of spirituality and management
programs in business schools and executive education centers:
Comparative analysis and case study.**

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Abstract

The business world is perceived as inherently opposed to the spiritual domain. However, in the last few years there is a trend, around the world, of bringing the spiritual into the business world. A large number of research articles published found out that there is a need for spirituality in the workplace, and that there are positive correlations between spirituality in business and financial, operational and human results. Spiritual discourse has pervaded the business world, with concepts such as values, mission, vision, purpose, mindfulness etc.

As part of this trend, more and more business schools and executive education institutes are introducing programs that try to explore and attempt to integrate these two so apparently different worlds. The numbers are still not so large as in medical schools or education, but they are getting more recognition and legitimacy as main stream topics and research areas.

In our presentation we will survey the literature of teaching spirituality in management or in business, both through empirical research, normative articles, critical articles, and several syllabi send to us. We will compare some areas, and then we will present a case study of two classes (45 students) of a course in "Spirituality, business and management", taught between 2007-2009 in the Executive Education center of the Recanati business school in Tel Aviv University. The case study will be analyzed compared to eight criteria to other programs, while introducing the unique elements in the case, including building the course as a laboratory, two lecturers who represent different points of view, and participation of spouses in some of the meetings. . We will finish with our theoretical and personal implications.

Introduction

In November 2007, an innovative program: "Business, Management and Spirituality" , was introduced in Lahav, the Executive Education Center of Recanati Business School in Tel Aviv University. It was the first course ever given in an Israeli academic institute about spirituality and business; it had very high visibility and exposure inside and outside the university, including quite a few articles in the business press. Both of us, the authors of this paper, as the initiators and moderators of the course, felt quite strongly that we are offering a pioneering course, that may have an influence on the future of the " spirit in management and business" field both in the academia and the business world in Israel . So we put a huge amount of time, effort and soul into building it in such a way that will be in integrity moment by moment, holding an inner space of "humble inquiry" (Schein, 2009) to the

question: Is there a common ground between spirituality , management and business? And if there is what is it and what “should “ it be? We were determined to bring value to the participants, while minimizing criticism or cynicism. Both of us felt this venture as a deep personal intention.

Can you teach spirituality? Can you learn to be spiritual? And if the answer is yes - In what way should you do it? Maybe you can just inquire humbly with the intention for answers and spirit to show up? We faced these questions when we started our journey to build the program. We would like to present it as a case study, with all the questions we asked, some of them answered, some of them not so. We'll do it while taking a broad view at the fieldwork done by our colleagues around the world, comparing our efforts, assumptions and program to theirs.

Spirituality in the workplace – definitions

Spirituality, is typically considered to be a human experience that is pervasive and yet has nothing to do with specific religious faiths or religious traditions, and is beyond the dogma of religion (Guillory, 2000). Schmidt-Wilk, Heaton, and Steingard (2000) refer to it as a personal experience of “silent, unbounded, timeless inner domain that any individual may experience in his or her conscious awareness” (p. 581). Guillory (2000) defines spirituality as our inner consciousness and “that which is spiritual comes from within - beyond our programmed beliefs and values” (p. 33). Similarly, McKnight, (1984) defines the concept as “the basic feeling of being connected with one's complete self, others and the entire universe in a certain ends or purpose that go beyond self (p.138)”.

Researchers have focused on two levels of workplace, one emphasizing the individual and personal experience at work, the second the organizational spiritual culture that provides the context for the personal experience (Gibbons, 2000; Kolodinsky, Giacalone, & Jurkiewicz 2008; Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002).

The **personal dimension**, the ‘**spirit at work**’, has been conceptualized as a distinct state that is characterized by physical, affective, cognitive, interpersonal, spiritual and mystical dimensions (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004). The concept includes such elements as self-workplace integration, meaning in work, transcendence of self, personal growth, harmony with

self, quest for feeling whole, self actualization, a sense of interconnectedness with community and environment, expressions of humility, courage, compassion, fairness and a sense of responsibility (Ashforth & Pratt, 2003; Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Biberman & Whitty; 1997, Fry, 2003; Heaton, Schmidt-Wilk & Travis, 2004; Ingersoll, 2003; Karakas, 2010, Mitroff and Denton, 1999; Panday & Gupta, 2008).

Organizational spirituality may be defined as “organizational culture guided by mission statement, leadership and business practices that are socially responsible and value driven, that recognizes the contributions employees make to the organization, that promotes individual spiritual development and well being”(Kinjerski & Skrypnes, 2006, p. 262). Panday & Gupta (2008) describe seven variables of spiritual climate of business organization: **meaningful work that is for life and not only for living** (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000); hopefulness, the belief that organizational goals can be achieved; authenticity, the alignment of people's actions with their core values and beliefs; the employee feeling as whole human being; a sense of community, of interconnectedness and interdependence, care for the world at large, for the social and natural environment; respect for diversity; and work that has a meditative ‘flow’, being at one with the activity (Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004, Zohar & Marshall, 2004). In their pioneering book, Mitroff and Denton (1999) showed that employees seek this climate of spirituality (not religion) in their organizations, and Kolodinskdy et al (2008) found that workers desire workplaces perceived as exuding spiritual values, even if the workers themselves are not personally spiritual.

Teaching Workplace Spirituality: Overview

The academic field of spirituality in the workplace is quite new. Although some books and articles were published in the 90th, it was in 1997, at the Academy of Management conference in Boston, USA, that a group of academics joined together to form what was later accepted as the MSR interest group. The initiation of a peer reviewed high quality journal dedicated to the field, high quality of research papers, the publishing of a few special issues of leading journals, and the breakthrough book of Giacalone & Jurkiewicz - *Handbook of Workplace Spirituality* (2003, now with its second edition at 2010) – all contributed to the establishment of the field as a legitimate and respected part of the organizational behavior field.

Teaching spirituality in the workplace in academic circles is a bit different. The hesitation of universities to expose their students to what might be considered as "religious coercion" or as the personal obsession of the teachers made the penetration of such programs slower and much more difficult.

By 2004, there were about 30 such programs in universities in the western world: some of them started, as we did, as executive education (non MBA) programs, some were mixed with MBA students, and some were part of the curriculum in their university. University of Virginia, Scranton, Columbia, Harvard, University of Wisconsin, Bucknell University, Claremont, Santa Clara, Notre-Dame in Indiana, were some of the leading schools with the first programs. In a survey done by HERI (2005) covering programs of spirituality in the different schools, only 13% were given in business schools, as compared to Sciences (23%), Social Sciences (28%), religious studies (18%) and Arts (8%).

The Story of the Tel Aviv program

The program was initiated by the two authors of this paper: Ora Setter, Ph.D., an Organizational Development practitioner and an academic, teaching at the Recanati business school, (Ora was the former head of Lahav, the Executive Education center in the 5 years preceding the program), and Tova Averbuch, a senior practitioner of OD and a pioneer in using "spirit conducting" methodologies, such as open space technology, in Israel. Both of us felt that a serious effort to find out if spirituality can be found, expressed and enabled in the business setting would be an important contribution to the Israeli business climate and evolving collective consciousness, and would also be a worthwhile personal journey for both of us, as individuals and as a team. We were good friends and colleagues for quite a number of years, but never worked together professionally, and had no idea how the synergy between us would work. Both of us were, personally, deep in the spiritual world, but in very different ways. Ora more in the study of it (at the time she was doing a M.A. in Buddhist Studies), Tova more in the search for and practice of intervention methods that invite and enable spirit to show up as major player, reluctant to talk about it, preferring to just do it.. Both of us felt we don't like the word "spirituality", from different reasons, but, after a long debate, felt that it would be the right thing to use the word in the title of the course.

Convincing the current head of Lahav to host that program within the center was not an easy task, but Ora's being the former head helped. Non MBA executive education programs in Israel (open enrollment) are usually held during the late afternoon, once a week, for a couple of weeks. After a lot of negotiations and discussions with the ExecEd current officers, it was decided that the course will last for 12 weeks, and that every meeting will be constructed as two different parts:

The **first part** (Between 16:00-19:00) was planned as a laboratory, conducted by the two of us, where participants will experience, experiment and inquire, if and how management and business can be changed by inviting spirit in. We also incorporated some short lectures on such topics as what is spirituality, why we are spiritual, the inner voice, theory U (Scharmer, 2004) and spiral dynamics (Beck, 2003). Most of the laboratory part was experiential: we held discussions, role playing, and had open space technology, appreciative inquiry and world café meetings. We also went out on a field trip of inquiry to in search of spirituality in the most prestigious mall in Tel Aviv. Participants looked into their own feelings and expressions of spirituality, at the role measurements are playing in organizations, intention versus result orientations as drivers and as points of view, and the way in which spirituality can be expressed in the organizational setting. Personal and organizational dilemmas were raised and discussed. We also gave them homework – some exercises to be experimented and reported on in between our meetings.

In **the second part** (Between 19:00-20:30) took place a dialogue between leading academic lecturers and business executives who are considered "spiritual", focusing on spiritual questions and their possible effects on managerial practices. Of the last, none of the lecturers was a religious leader, but most of them represented spiritual traditions, like Judaism, Buddhism, shamanism, Daoism, and Sufism. We also had a physicist, bio-chemist and a mathematician who touched upon the science-spirit interface. We asked questions about rationality, intention, new age versus old spiritual traditions, morality and ethics, ego, justice, strategy and structure. In the first course, about 30 high profile guest speakers were invited to talk, debate and take part in the dialogue. The number diminished drastically in the second round, as we wanted to give each lecturer a longer space to express their views. Some meetings had written-media coverage, mainly for the more famous executives who dared to make public their spiritual inclinations, practices and beliefs.

Spouses of the course participants and the guest lecturers were invited free of charge to this second part, by thus creating a strong, rich energetic field, lush and creative, that emerged from the special combination of common passion yet wide diversity.

In the years the program took place, 45 senior executives and business leaders from the private sector participated. They came to the first round because of the newness and originality of the course. They came to the second because of the good reputation of the program. Most of them had no previous encounter with spirituality in general and in the business world in particular. At the end of the course, the feedbacks were much better than we dared to expect, and most of the participants asked to keep the group as an ongoing community of knowledge. Several meetings were conducted since the end of the course, planned and executed by the participants. Most started to experiment with, consider or implement some of the practices they met during the course.

In the following part, we will survey the literature of teaching spirituality in management or in business, both through empirical research, normative articles, critical articles, and several syllabi sent to us.

Method:

8 different syllabi of different programs were surveyed. Some of them were sent to us by their teachers, some we found in the internet. (Delbeq, 2000, 2010, Fry, 2010, Mantz, 2005, Robbins 2008, Trott, 2002, Waldman et al, 2009, Wicks, 2009).

11 other descriptions of programs were taken or inferred from articles published in the professional journals, though not as detailed as the syllabi, there was a richer information there about the processes, before, during and after the programs took place (Alspo, 2005, Barnett, Krell, & Sendry, 2000, Becker, 2009, Bento, 2000, Delbeq, 2000, Marques & Dhiman, 2008, Harlos, 2000, Pava, 2007, Pielstick, 2005, Schmidt-Wilk & Steingard, 2000, Waldman et al, 2009, and two articles from the point of view of a participants in such a course (Levy, 2000, Miller, 2000).

We used other sources like articles about educational programs in other domains like medicine (Booth, 2008, HERI, 2005) and some articles that we found relevant to teaching spirituality (Epstein, 2002, Kernochan et al, 2007, Klenke, 2003, marcic, 2000, Marques, 2006, Nur, 2009, Poole, 2009, and Tishler et al, 2009).

Content analysis revealed 8 questions, or criteria for comparison between the different programs:

1. How is spirituality defined and conceptualized by both teachers and researchers.
2. What are the overt and covert objectives of the programs
3. What are the principles guiding the teachers
4. What are the main topics learned
5. What are the processes used to teach, and how "spiritual" are they.
6. How do the teachers present different spiritual traditions
7. What are the dilemmas, fears and dangers teachers are confronting
8. What are the implications of the programs on students, teachers and organizations

Results

1. How is spirituality defined and conceptualized by both teachers and researchers?

We have found 4 different patterns of conceptualization in our literature review:

Spirituality as faith: Spirituality was defined or conceptualized as either a specific faith (in God or the Divine, Pantheism) or as perennial philosophy, that recognize the undercurrent "sameness" of all religions and spiritual traditions, or the belief that they are all different expressions of the same basic intangible truth. (It should be noted that this point of view is also a faith.)

Spirituality as Values and Virtues: Based on the Dalai Lama's distinction between religion (a specific belief in the way for salvation) and spirituality, which is the expression of universal human spirit: love, compassion, integrity, and generosity. The cultivation of these virtues is the major work done in these programs.

Spirituality as actions and behaviors: Here the focus is on how to work and behave in a spiritual way, both in the personal and organizational domains. Words and faiths are not important as deeds are. Servant leadership, transparency, ethics, forms of organizational structures and organizational culture etc.

Spirituality as training toward personal growth and development: meditation, or, in its western name, mindfulness, forgiveness, thankfulness, letting go of control and power – all are ways to spiritual growth that should be mastered and worked on during our lifetime.

In our program, we have begun with the definition of **spirit as "breath"**, as the most basic definition of spirit as "animating vital force" (Webster-Merriam dictionary). In Hebrew, the word "spirit" is also synonym to the word "wind", and we used this to show the "airing" quality of the spirit. It is also synonym to "space" or "hole", and we used these metaphors too. This is why we called our program "a laboratory" and , most of the time acted in the spirit of "humble inquiry" in a space of doubt and experimenting, raising more questions and answering less questions, creating a space where all kinds of conceptualizations are played, and each participant is invited to form his/her own ideas, mixtures and understanding.

2. What are the overt and covert reasons for building the programs?

WE have found 4 reasons for the establishment of the spirituality in the workplace programs:

The first reason is bringing forth the knowledge about spirituality as a new paradigm in the organizational behavior and management studies, and by that **deepening our knowledge about management science**. Spirituality is considered as one more layer of knowledge that is usually either ignored or even set aside. From this point of view, bringing forth theory in the domains of OB topics like – leadership, motivation, career planning and HR practices, decision making etc., and research in job and organizational satisfaction, overall health, OCB, OMB, productivity, creativity etc, to students and to executives, might help us to create friendlier organizations, that are productive and successful and at the same time allow people to show up as whole persons at work, not having to hide their spirit. A sub-category of this objective is the drive to understand other cultures in our global environment that are more spiritual, or their spirituality is different (east meets west, for example).

A second objective is to help **create a "doing well by doing good" business environment**. Whereas the public opinion might be that spirituality has either nothing to do with business, or is even bad for business, that the business domain has its own darwinistic laws (Survival of the fittest) that both people and organizations should abide to, those who teach spirituality aim to show that you can be both a beneficial organization and a profitable one.

The third objective is an **overt or covert missionary**: to promote a certain perception, faith or spiritual method (either specific or perennial), to develop the evolution of the collective consciousness, or – on the other hand – to promote a critical, skeptical outlook on the "trend" and its dangers.

The fourth objective is to help students explore their own spirituality, and to use **spirituality as a pedagogic practice**. (HERI, 2005). Using mindfulness practices, writing diaries and self reflective essays, trying to uncover what does it mean to me to be a good person, strengthen students to be more close to their own truths, and be loyal to themselves, be "whole persons" at work (Mitroff & Denton, 1999).

Our objectives in building the course were threefold and only one concerned the course directly. First of all we wanted to bring some **legitimacy to the exploration of the term "spirituality"** and its connection to the business and management world, in face of the bad reputation and cynicism most managers and academics held (and still hold...) for it. Secondly, we wanted to build a **network of executives and business people** who are not afraid to explore spirit at work and create relationship with their own spirituality, in the business world. In truth, taking into account the high profile media coverage of the course even before it was started, we could say that the time was ripe for this endeavor. And, last but not least, we wished to build an interesting, highest quality course that is both intellectually and practically inspiring, touching mind, heart and spirit, that will **make a difference** and open a window in the field of business and management teaching in Israel and will make a change by opening a window in its participants' lives and organizations.

3. **What are the principles/world views guiding the teachers to create the programs?**

Spiritual/practical views. Although there is a wide diversity in the content of the spiritual approach of the teachers in the different programs, it is obvious that most of them are coming from a solid grounded tradition, be it Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist or New Age, or from a solid methodology like Transcendental Meditation.

From that point of view, the *raison d'etre* of the programs is transformative - both as work at the present time and as building for the future: It has to do with bringing forth the "spirit at work" as a legitimate expression of people at work, and promoting transformation in organizations to help them become more spiritually minded. There is a dire view of the "soulless" organizational

world, as poisonous organizations (Barrette, 2006). There is a tacit promise underlying this approach – that it IS possible to "do well by doing good".

We have not found in the programs we surveyed the **Spiritual /spiritual** views, who see spirituality as an end and not as means for productivity, an approach that is quite common in the literature. (Benefiel, 2003).

- **Critical/Practical views.** Spirituality is considered as an important variable in both the business world and in the global market, and so a matter of study. Only one program was guided by a critical , non-spiritual principles
- - **Not-knowing views.** If we can label our own program, it would be "holesome" – full of holes (and maybe wholesome too...). For us, teaching the spirit is meaningless. We can only offer learning by a process that zeros in to not knowing, to doubt, trial and error. We see reality as complex, subjective and whole, while any theory of action (Argyris & Schon, 1978) is fragmented, simplified and pretending to be objective. So our point of view focused on shedding light on business or managerial issues that were chosen by the participants as meaningful in their life, under the assumption that only "spirited" , self organization methods would give space for every voice to be heard, and to act from generative "empty" place (Scharmer, 2007), so as to generate new life and new solutions. Our insistence, most of the time, on NOT knowing, allowed search that is more concerned with the process than with the results. Our not knowing was not faked, but reflected our own spirituality, that was – is – a combination – different for both of us – of faith and doubts, full of "holes", with a lot of "wind" blowing through.
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 - Practically, inviting all the 30 experts, each with his own voice and views, each with his own passion, way and truth, provided a richness of stimuli for the participants, and forced them away from simple and robust ways of being in the world to a more tentative, explorative, mindful outlook.
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□ 4. What are the main topics learned?

General topics: Some of the programs went into general way of looking at the combination of spirituality and management: from the definitions of spirituality, both personal and organizational, finding out the different dimensions of spirituality, an overview of the trend, or

mega-trend of spirituality in general and in management in particular, the way spirituality is expressed in business and in managerial practices, the synergy of life and personal valued and the business world, and some spiritual techniques, like mindfulness.

Spiritual views of a topic: some programs introduced several points of view to the same topic, e.i. how would Christians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhist, Hindus treat a certain dilemma

Managerial topics: some programs chose one of several managerial issues and built the program around that. Leadership (Fry 2003. Ethics and values, Strategy, Motivation, mission and calling, decision making, team work , personal development , organizational culture and structure, etc.

In our program, we did all of the above, and added one more topic: we thought of **major spiritual questions**, and enquired about their expression at the workplace. Such questions as – what is "good" and "bad", the "ego" and and it's role as ruler or a loyal servant, about control and flow, about doing and not doing, rationality and the inner voice, compassion and transcendence, and, obviously, the "meaning of life" and interdependence, "one-ness" and ways of being in the world

5. What are the processes used to teach, and how "spiritual" are they?

Can we teach spirituality the same way we teach other, more regular topics? What would be spiritual ways of learning?

Here are some processes mentioned in our survey

Traditional, frontal teaching: lectures, readings of articles and books.

Participative processes: class and groups discussions, simulations and role playing, analysis of case studies.

Demonstrative: e.i. communication as martial arts

Experiential training: meditation, mindfulness and listening, imagination, CBT

Homework exercises : diary writing, exercising of forgiveness, thankfulness, stopping the flow of thinking being in the flow, giving up control, a study of a major experience in life, acting with inner truth.

We used all the variety mentioned above. We have added to those outdoor exercises (looking for spirituality in a mall), exercises of planning (an organization that has spiritual culture), and three spirited OD methodologies - Open Space Technology, World Café and Appreciative Enquiry.

An important demonstrative force was our ability to stay in inquiry state of being with the subject and in respectful disagreement guarding one another from falling to the trap of "knowing/preaching".

6. How do the teachers present different spiritual traditions?

We have found a spectrum of approaches to the question of how to address different spiritual traditions. They ranged from presentation of the common ground in several traditions, to ignoring differing points of view.

Starting with Andre Delbeq's pioneering course (2000), most programs emphasized the **common origins** of those traditions. By bringing in both texts and quest lecturers from diversity of religions and traditions (mainly Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist and Hindu, but also non-religious, agnostic or new age), they are able to demonstrate the similarity of most when relating to the same issue. It is even more so concerning the moral/ethical behavior in management as seen from those different perspectives.

However, some others teach the "**one way**" or no way at all, and ignore or r the other traditions. It was the "lived experience" of the participants that was discussed and not their belief system.

In our program, we **combined these two approaches**. In the first part, the laboratory, we focused solely on the experience of the participants, their dilemmas, their way of integrating the business world and the spirit, or infusing spirit into their daily life. In the second part, we invited guest speakers who introduced the way the Kabala, native American shamanism, early christianism ,Daoism, New age and Buddhism approached several "spiritual" questions, and its implications on business practices. Some of them were University professors, some of them executives.

7. What are the dangers teachers are confronting?

Missionary preaching (resulting in rejection):

A cynical-**instrumental use** of spirituality in the service of the organization and its shareholders ('being spiritual is worth it')

Teaching a tool that can **increase control** over employees through soul-work (deeper and more profound subordination than emotional control)

Promising that spirituality will induce results (on personal, economical or even spirit level)

Illusion of perfect congruence and harmony between man and organization (a 'win-win' steady state) created by good intention and positivistic presentation of spirit.

Of all these, the first and last ones were the most difficult to handle in our program. As we are not employers, the control or instrumental dangers were not relevant and by not being the disciples of "the Secret" (Byrne, 2006) or of the "Diamond Cutter" (Roach, 2000), there was no question of promising anything, but the urge to preach and to create the illusion of perfect harmony between these concepts was present all the time, and fought with, with some success...

8. What are the short term and long term effects of the programs on the students?

Who are the students?

While in some cases it was a class of MBA students, most of the programs were executive education groups, with executives. In one case, it was a mixed group.

In our class, as the first program ever in an academic setting, we felt that we need to start it with executives. In a few weeks, one of us (Ora) is going to teach an academic course for students in business school, also the first time in Israel.

What is the motivation of the students?

We found out, both in the literature and from our experience, a large variance. For some students, it is part of their studies, and they have no other option. Most times, however, there is a choice: most choose it because of some spiritual intention. Few because it is convenient and suits into their schedule, or just because of the novelty of it.

In our classes we had some "professional" spiritual participants and veterans of several spiritual schools, but most of them disappeared after one or two meetings, finding out that we are not preaching their certain way of spirituality.

The major issue asked, from the first meeting to the last– is whether spirituality and business can go hand in hand. Can we really live in the regular business world, in our regular jobs, and still act according to our spiritual values and inclinations without paying a price? Can we gain from this integration? What price do we pay for inner spleet and fragmentation? etc.. Although many of the participants thought integration is possible some found out they want to leave the regular world, and move to a place, either a community or a workplace, where they can practice spirituality without compromise, some felt they have to take "time out" and listen for deeper answers to their need for personal integration.

What were the short term effects of the program? In our course the short term results were very clear: High satisfaction (we got tremendous feedbacks), a lot of inner tuning, deep listening to self and the world, growing awareness and development of consciousness. Alongside with this widening and deepening of scope, emerged a better understanding and a clearer image of the environment they want to create for themselves and others. Some made changes in the way they operated in their business, more to the direction of listening to others, and being more authentic, more loyal to their inner voice and guidance. A few of them not only changed their own behavior, but also implemented several changes in their org~~an~~izations, that are conducive to better communication, more "voice" and influence to employees, and a clearer vision of ethics and social responsibility.

There were some **unintended consequences**: two participants separated from their spouses right after the end of the course, one resigned from his job. Did those come as a direct influence of the course? It is hard to tell, . Yet it may indicate that something in touching spirit, in every way, has strong transformative potential powers and ought to be "handled with care", love and respect even if it takes place in an academic setting.

Long-term effects: students and teachers of the program followed more structured and unstructured learning in spirituality/practice; some of them reported that they feel their attitude became more open in general and they remember the course as intriguing and 'meaningful experience'.

We asked several of them two years after the completion of the program to tell us what happened to them since the program. Here are some indicative quotes;

- The main lesson I took with me is to ask and listen, to pay attention to subtleties and to keep all channels open - to be less opinionated.
- I learned to listen and trust my 'inner voice', and most of all I learned to give it legitimacy vis-à-vis the rational voiced that prevail in business
- I learned to recognize the developmental stage of each unit and colleague in my organization and adjust my expectations accordingly
- I am a much less 'knowing' manager, more attuned to my people.
- I met a friend who is now a fierce competitor. Listened to him for 48 minutes without interruption, trusting we will find a common ground. And so a joint venture emerged' out of that deep attentive listening. Like magic.

Discussion

What was unique in our program?

1. Our presence as **two facilitators on a joint expedition**. We have in common the nontraditional non - religious point of view and the ethical implications of spirit at work, but differed in almost everything else. This creative tension of similarities and dissimilarities created a field of possibility to respectfully inquire into the question of relationship between business/ management and spirit. This configuration also allowed each one of us (Ora and Tova) to talk from a deep evolutionary drive to explore in laboratory setting with quite a large number of way travelers - companions. The fact that we both hold some inner convictions, on the one hand, and offer doubt and question marks on the other hand also served as living microcosm of the possibility to disagree and respect over content and yet share the commitment of walking the way while paving/finding the trail together.. In the class, whenever one of us entered a "knowing and perching" mode and started using positivist sentences such as "this is how things are!!!!" the other would add with moon-shine smile: "Or may be not.... 😊", we would all laugh, and the "laboratory spirit" could prevail. More than anything else, this was a good modeling to the class.
2. **Inviting the immediate environment in** : We invited spouses to the second part of each meeting, the guest frontal lecture, with no extra fee. This move was proposed as an answer

to the concern that spouses who are not part of the process might fear that their partners are "getting off the tracks". The idea of inviting spouses free of charge to the course emerged from the life experience of Ora, who encountered adverse reactions from her husband when started to talk in public about her spiritual journey. Fears of drifting away, becoming orthodox, getting weird, and getting bad publicity and reputation were expressed. But a huge change occurred in his position when he was invited in to participate in spiritual activities. Listening to friends who we knew this was a common challenge for couples that one of them started "airing" their spirituality. So the main reason of inviting spouses was to legitimate, to dissipate fear and scorn, to show that other "normal people" were engaged in spiritual learning without danger of being ridiculed or cast out.... we know that when spouses share the taste of the same journey, it is enriching their spiritual and emotional relationships.

Of the 45 participants, 8 spouses never missed a meeting, about 30 came irregularly, and only a minority never showed up. In their feedback, most spouses said that it was a very meaningful experience in their marital life: discussing the course questions and answers, lectures and lecturers, became not only a topic for conversation but also a platform for getting closer to each other, sometimes even a trigger to get to advanced studies. Needless to say, it was also a good marketing strategy: Some of the spouses decided to take the whole course next year...

We also invited all guest lecturers to participate in one another's lectures with the free spirit of learning and searching together, each contributing transparently allowing constant emergence of new answers . Some of them chose to come and this enriched the depth and width of our collective wisdom and at the same time created nice flow between in and out groups of this endeavor.

3. **Use of variety of learning and teaching modalities:** We realized that different people prefer different ways to learn. Some like to sit back and listen, others to participate actively. Some would like the order of a planned lecture, others the chaos of the lab. The feedbacks we got demonstrated perfectly that everyone got his own way of learning, which made it a great experience for everyone involved.

What are the traps we encountered?

We were aware and trying to avoid falling into several traps

Moving too fast to **intellectualization**, this showed up in the class whenever we found ourselves or the student talking 'about' spiritualism rather than allowing and creating space for spirit to show up when we were listening from a "knowing" place, downloading what we already know and trying to be right and persuasive. We found ourselves sometimes expressing views about the spiritual world that practically meant that we mentally closed the "hole". So sometimes we talked about the spirit knowingly, and by that lost the spirit of the moment, the spirit of inquiry. We found it very challenging to keep opening the holding space for spirit to show up, instead of defining, explaining and preaching...

Moving too fast to **emotional ecstatic** dimension. One of the tempting domain of new age spirituality is looking for what we call "a narcissistic 'wow'", an instrumental use of the spiritual dialogue and experimentation to bust the adrenalin and ego. Sometimes it can turn to be a gateway to genuine search, many times it keeps commonly resulting in self grandeur and 'we/them' discourse. This sometimes happened with very charismatic guest lecturers who were very impressive and inspirational.

Moving too fast to **metaphysical explanation**. Resulting in helplessness or in manipulative subordination.

What is our main conclusion and offerings to people trying to teach spirit?

Let the spirit of experimentation guide you while you create and maintain an environment in **of inquiry and not knowing**, is a good space for teaching and learning processes to take place and flourish...

Use "Spirit conductive" processes: space in which every voice is invited to speak, to be heard., In doing so a collective container for self organization in the whole learning experience is created and enabled.

Invite and allow for Polyphony, many voices: By introducing many and varied voices of teachers and students, and many voices in every one of us, the "wisdom of the many" emergence.

Be aware of intention, do not harness spirit, and work with intention and invitation, inquiry and direction without harnessing spirit to premeditated results in organization and or in personal life. This is vital since the language of classical business is the language of premeditated gain, the language of classical management measurement yet the language of spirit is the language of free and unexpected motion of life.

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