

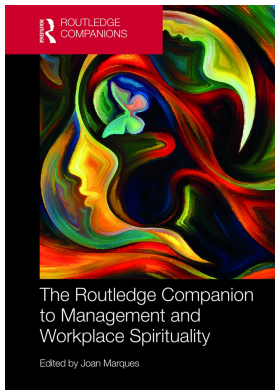
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## **The Routledge Companion to Management and Workplace Spirituality**

Joan Marques

### **Managing Spirituality from a Personal Perspective**

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# 3

## MANAGING SPIRITUALITY FROM A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

*William A. Guillory*

### **Defining Spirituality**

Spirituality is a state of being which is sourced from within—beyond what we have been programmed to believe and value; both genetically and environmentally. Spirituality is the inner source of wisdom that is reflected in values and behaviors which are both humanistic and performance-oriented. These values include empathy, compassion, humility, passion, empowerment, and love; as well as inspiration, creativity, and imagination. One of the most profound expressions of spirituality is religion. Spirituality is source and religion is a human expression which compatibly embraces believers, non-believers, and those who are unaffiliated. Other expressions of spirituality include meditation, prayer, Yoga, and simply treating others with dignity and respect.

Most of all, spirituality is not a single state of being. It dynamically changes as an individual ascends to more expanded levels of existence—and in different forms. We use descriptions and words to describe how a spiritual experience has transformed our thinking and behaviors. Keeping in mind the words of the famous East Indian philosopher, Jiddu Krishnamurti, ... what lies beyond cannot be put into words because, “the word is not the thing”.... Or the Polish–American scientist and philosopher, Alfred Korzybski, who remarked, “the map is not the territory.” Both individuals expressing the view that we use these concepts and models to guide our conversation about a spiritual experience, not to imply that we are describing reality. The closest we come to reality is the experience and the subsequent way our personal consciousness is irreversibly altered.

For example, transforming from the dominant state of human existence on Earth, survival to compatibility, is to become more spiritual. A consciousness of survival is dominantly characterized by:

1. Scarcity
2. Win/lose
3. Competition
4. Separateness, and
5. Polarization.

Based upon power being associated with information; the collection, organization, and interpretation of data. These characteristics dominantly, but not totally, comprise the context of

human existence on Earth. Within the framework of this paradigm, technology is developed with the intent of increasing the potential for acquiring and storing, processing, and retrieving information. In essence, this context of operation allows unlimited access to data, facts, and discoveries for the advancement of science, technology, medicine, economics, and every form of human interest and activity. It also allows planet-wide distribution on the Internet. The intent of one's activity is reflected by how information is used and the result it produces.

For example, information can be applied to characterizing, tracking, and programming individuals in a national or global society, as well as used for weaponry and security. In more advanced ways, it is applied to the development of androids, cyborgs, and the continuing advancement of artificial intelligence (AI). In essence, the applications of technological advancement are no more or less spiritual, in use, than the consciousness which drives it. In a dominantly survival-based society the characteristics above determine the intent of the applications. The question which arises from a personal perspective is "how much do we each participate consistent with a context of survival and how dominant is it in our personal and professional life?"

In contrast, a consciousness of compatibility is dominantly characterized by:

1. Respect
2. Equality
3. Interdependence
4. Collaboration, and
5. Freedom.

Based upon power being associated with knowledge; the creative transformation of information into knowledge. These characteristics are commonly judged as more spiritual than those of the survival paradigm, listed above, based on the observation of greater individual and collective harmony, understanding, and physical and mental wellbeing. The result of a transformation from survival to compatibility in consciousness is the following dominant paradigm for human existence:

### ***The Seven Principles of Social Equality***

1. All humans are *worthy* by virtue of their existence—no human should be exalted as superior to others.
2. All humans have an *inherent* right to be fed, clothed, and sheltered—with the support of others where necessary.
3. All humans have an *inherent* right to be educated to learn both physical survival and global adaptation.
4. All humans have an *inherent* right to freely explore and express their spiritual values through creativity, innovation, and/or any other form of human understanding, compassion, and love.
5. All humans have an *inherent* right to explore consciousness for the continual acquisition of wisdom.
6. All humans have an *inherent* right to religious expressions that provide spiritual growth in concert with the wellbeing of all humanity.
7. All humans have an *inherent* personal and collective responsibility to preserve a planetary social, physical, and spiritual environment for their continued existence.

This paradigm is available to anyone who chooses to adopt it as a context for living as a human being; or even a spiritual being having a human experience. In order to achieve this way of being and behaving requires the most critical element for spiritual growth—*inner exploration*. As a species, we appear to be deathly afraid of inner exploration, but totally enamored with outer exploration—even to the extent of physical injury or death, e.g., extreme sports or space travel!

### **Inner Exploration**

Inner exploration is the in-depth examination of one's personal consciousness (mind) with the same enthusiasm and commitment as one uses for learning and applying new and existing computer software applications. Human mastery of outer-space exploration far exceeds the knowledge and wisdom that are necessary to constructively manage the technology which has been invented. This process is sometimes referred to as *self-mastery*.

A dedicated exploration of self-mastery begins with the awareness that every interaction experienced that results in a counterproductive feeling or emotion is feedback that an opportunity exists for learning and resolution. Resolution is synonymous with a *realization* (Guillory, 1984). A realization is typically the permanent invalidation of a programmed belief, and even sometimes a value held by some groups, such as the belief of the superiority of an individual relative to another by racial distinctions.

The steps involved in such an examination are the sequence outlined for Emotional Intelligence (Walton, 2002), when there is the experience of an unconscious perception which has the potential or reality for conflict:

1. Become aware of the feelings and emotions you are experiencing—stress, tension, pain, which translates into fear, anger, or sadness.
2. Focus inwardly on that place in your body rather than on the external event or person— inward focus reduces stress and creates a time interval for self-reflection and evaluation.
3. In this time interval, ask yourself: “Is this conflict about the external event/person or my own programming? Or, possibly both?”
4. If the answer is *Yes* to internal programming, then you can control a detrimental reaction—and exercise choice involving a personally appropriate response.
5. When you experience relief and possibly personal transformation, ask yourself: “What did I learn about that conflict that will help me to respond more appropriately in the future?”

One of the most constructive processes of engaging inner exploration is the proactive process of learning through interactive, experiential workshops and/or informal coaching; particularly, where those practices are led by a skilled facilitator. The greatest progress, in terms of inner exploration, is usually realized from a variety of personally chosen modalities, such as Zen, Tai chi, meditation, workshops, reading, gardening, support groups, close friendships, etc. Particularly, when the same level of commitment of an individual involving his or her long-term physical health is also applied to his or her mental health.

In the process, the serious practitioner of mental health soon discovers the iceberg model of in-depth analysis. That is, the true source of one's motivations is programmed at the subliminal levels of one's personal consciousness.

In such cases, there are two approaches one might employ for resolution: (1) the assistance of a skilled individual who knows how to facilitate this level of exploration; and/or (2) direct actions that have the potential to *provoke* and ultimately *unearth* the source of an ongoing problem, without ever knowing what it is through analysis. The challenging (behavioral)

provocation is sufficient to create a *constructive head-on collision* between the two individuals and their unconscious programming.

For example, if an individual has difficulty working with a female in a leadership or management role because of an unknown subliminal perception, one of the most direct means of resolution is to work together on an important project. When they *inevitably* experience conflict in the process, they jointly agree to “dialogue” through the perceived difficulty—commonly assisted by a coach/facilitator. This dialogue is an integral part of the process. As they begin a shared exchange, spontaneous perceptions and beliefs will begin to emerge from a hidden part of the iceberg. Not surprisingly, the breakthrough perception or realization is commonly a perception or insecurity they share in common! It takes both contributing individuals to create and maintain an ongoing conflict. Obviously, this approach requires a commitment to resolution by *both* individuals, since they soon realize they are navigating the uncharted waters of their unconsciousness. The emphasis here is that such an approach is a *process*, not an *event*. The result is a transformation in their relationship and incredible personal growth from an individual perspective. These results are confirmed by the expressions of understanding, acceptance, and contribution to each other’s success.

The ultimate resolution to this challenge—inner exploration—is finding a way to have the general public value equally, physical *and* mental health from K-1 through high school as a source of a healthy, functional individual—as well as a healthy functioning society.

It was suggested previously that spirituality is not a single level of being, but comprises several, if not many, levels, depending on the courage of the individual for inner exploration; each expanded level involving more humane states of functioning. In the next section, we will explore what these states might be and how they influence our thinking and behaviors as human beings.

### Horizontal and Vertical Transformations

Figure 3.1 is a diagram of ascending levels of consciousness. The lowest level is the *bodymind domain* driven by survival. The common emotion experienced by this level of functioning is fear. Hence, there is a great emphasis on the application of technology for personal, national, and international security systems, as well as private weapons for self-protection from each other. Our behaviors with each other are strongly influenced by *fear* of each other, more than the outside world. In essence, fear is the companion emotion of survival—both perceived and real.

The circles within each level represent rings of consciousness—the total intelligence, knowledge, and wisdom of an individual or a group within that domain of functioning. In essence, the size of the ring is in direct proportion to an individual’s reality *and* his or her openness for learning.  $\Delta C$  represents the expansion in consciousness of an individual or a group as a result of a challenging, growth-producing event, such as the resolution of an individual’s ordinary conflicts, misunderstandings, and occasional confrontations. A *node of transformation* represents the challenging event.

The greater the ring size, the greater an individual’s mastery of that domain of operation.  $\Delta C$  events represent *ordinary* acts of transformation. Whereas transformation between levels involves a paradigm shift which reorders significantly an individual’s being, thinking, and behaving. These are referred to as vertical transformations and those within a level are referred to as horizontal transformations. Vertical transformation or transcendence (to even higher levels of consciousness) are typically the result of an *existential crisis*—a crisis which redefines an individual’s reality about purpose, meaning, and values.

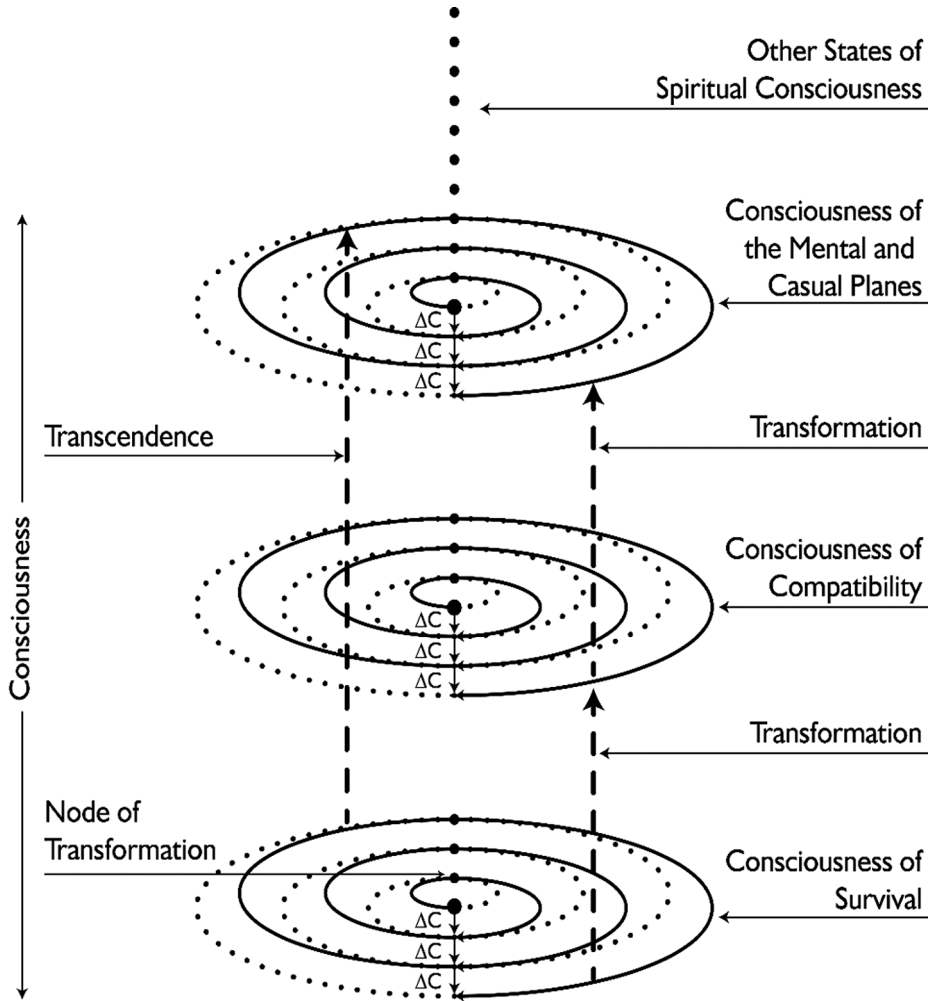


Figure 3.1 Ascending Levels of Consciousness

Vertical transformations are commonly triggered by *extraordinary* events, such as separation and/or divorce, death of a relative or friend, a car crash, or a life-surviving heart attack or illness. Vertical transformations also commonly occur among individuals who practice personal growth, as a way of life. *Personal growth is probably the most effective preventative way of ensuring one's health and longevity, along with preventative medicine.* In essence, the greater elimination of the source of personal conflicts—large and small—the more *resilient* an individual becomes. We define resilience as the ability to *respond* constructively to adversity (Reivich & Shatté, 2003). This ability is primarily forged during childhood by the way we learn to respond/react to life events. The vertical transformation we have discussed thus far is the shift from survival to compatibility—which is accompanied by greater understanding, empathy, and compassion for others—and gradually becomes a permanent (spiritual) way of being.

The transformation from Compatibility to the Mental-Casual Coupled Plane is shown as an ascending stage of spirituality. The Mental Plane represents the mastery of the accurate

interpretation of interpersonal events as a threat or a non-threat to one’s physical survival. It is the result of dedicated personal growth. The same as one would be committed to his or her physical wellbeing, through diet, weight-control, exercise, and overall lifestyle. The Casual Plane is mastery of the appropriate accompanying emotional response consistent with the accurate interpretation of an interpersonal event. Examples include *happiness* at a wedding, *empathy* for someone’s loss, *joy* for one’s success, and *elation* for one’s resiliency. Mastery of this coupled level is the activities involved in Mindfulness—an in-depth understanding, empathy, and compassion for oneself and others (Watt, 2012).

Finally, we have noted other expanded spiritual states of existence beyond the Mental-Casual Plane. These levels are commonly experienced either in the meditative or sleep state, or through closed-eye imagery exercise. These experiences are generally employed for transforming and expanding further one’s human reality through in-depth consciousness exploration.

### Spirituality and Channeling

*Channeling* is simply the transition from one state of consciousness to another—typically from a more limited state to one which allows greater freedom, imagination, and exploration. Upon return from the channeled metaphysical experience, the realization is usually expressed as a book, insight, new invention, design idea, painting, or whatever form is consistent with an individual’s passion. The expression could be as simple as being more humane with respect to differences. Figure 3.2 illustrates the transition from the bodymind domain to the metaphysical domain. The bodymind domain is governed by the laws of physics and the measurable concrete world. The metaphysical domain refers to those levels or states of consciousness corresponding

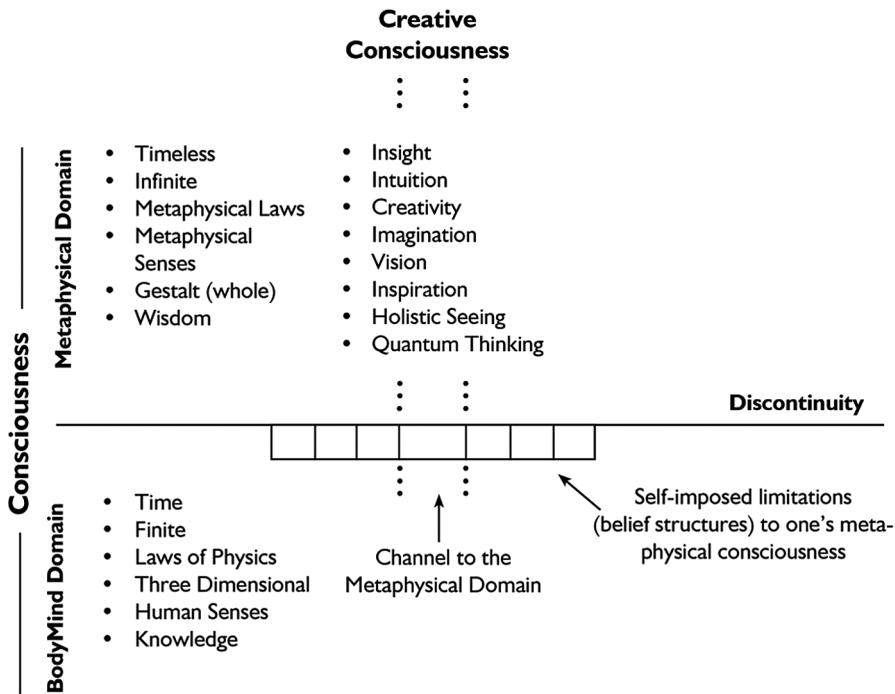


Figure 3.2 Domains of Consciousness



to the descriptors listed. Since Consciousness is infinite in capacity, there are states and domains beyond one's imagination and comprehension, represented by the dots. In truth most of us visit the metaphysical world on a nightly basis every time we dream—for rest, recovery, and problem solving as well as exploration. Whether we remember or not is irrelevant, since these processes are essential for our continued healthy existence.

The discontinuity which separates these two realms of consciousness is typical of an individual who *has not* created a natural channel through in-depth personal growth, or more commonly through personal trauma. The blocks below the line represent self-limiting beliefs an individual possesses, such as, “I don't believe ... in metaphysics, or telepathy, or clairvoyance, or anything which might invalidate the infinite barrier one has erected to prevent this type of inner exploration or confrontation.”

These blocks also represent the belief structures which are the nodes in Figure 3.1 that are used for the systematic process of consciousness expansion by the horizontal transformations we discussed. When one's ring size produces a highly self-aware individual with a natural aspiration for inner exploration, a spontaneous breakthrough occurs as a result of a “defining event.” The rupture is usually permanent and leads to unlimited exploration, usually by conscious choice.

Besides the fun of exploration, every voyage to the other world automatically begins to create an expanded ring of consciousness—beyond compatibility or even more expanded states. This new ring begins to create an alternate reality within which that individual begins to also function, simultaneously!

In truth, most humans access the metaphysical realm on a regular basis whenever they are creative, innovative, imaginative, or inspired. Or, more likely, the state accesses them, in stressful situations, and then shuts down at the completion of the spontaneous-looking event. This is a common experience for artists, writers, actors, scientists, clergy, and others who experience *periods* of creativity and inspiration. For more daring individuals of inner exploration, they learn to *request* such experiences, which lead to the unlimited exploration of consciousness. Thus, visitations or spiritual experiences to other realms of consciousness may include conversations with spirit guides, paradigm creation, astral travel, visitation to other universes, spiritual oneness, and many other spiritual experiences, limited only by one's imagination or interest.

The crucial point of this discussion is that as a result of such experiences, the individual becomes more understanding of the shortcomings of others, open to possibilities, compassionate of human suffering, passionate about human experience and the opportunity to influence the wellbeing of others; and most of all, a much less desire for material possessions or symbols of success. This is an example of an *existential shift* in values that was referred to above. Eventually, the channel to the spiritual realm becomes so wide that it no longer exists. The result is a totally *integrated* or *actualized* individual which Maslow (n.d.) pointed to, at the time he created his hierarchy of needs.

### ***Ten Ways to Integrate Spirituality in Your Life***

1. First and foremost, embrace personal growth as life's opportunity for acquiring greater wisdom.
2. When you experience personal (or workplace) conflict, reflect inwardly for the source of your reactive emotion(s)—discover your unmet expectation as the key to discovering the source (Emotional Intelligence).
3. Compare your personal values with the major activities in your life. If the two are significantly out of alignment, attempt to understand and resolve the disparity.



4. Commit to one or two personal growth activities per month, e.g., self-help books or discs, seminars or workshops, local support groups, or simple meditation or self-reflection, etc.
5. Create a personal development program that enhances your career development plan, e.g., seminars on relationships, communication, leadership, teamwork, diversity, and creativity.
6. Adopt a personally appropriate spiritual practice that connects you to your inner wisdom, e.g., Yoga, meditation, prayer, Zen, visualization, dream journaling, etc.
7. Take 10 minutes each morning and afternoon to center yourself with respect to workplace and life's activities.
8. Become aware if you waste your personal or organization's resources (without permission), e.g., food, water, electricity, pencils, paper, fax, copies, phone time, work time on personal matters—your personal integrity.
9. Be more compassionate and non-judgmental of the shortcomings of others. (Remember, a person who is angry is a person in pain.)
10. Practice ways of contributing to others or your community with no expected recognition, reward, or profit in return.

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