

Managing by Values:

The Leadership Spirituality Connection

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In today's ever-increasing globalized, complex chaotic and fast-changing world, leaders — and, by extension, their organizations' — principal role is developing an organizational culture based on shared values. Here we propose a quadraxial values model: economic-pragmatic, ethical-social, emotional-developmental and spiritual. The extent to which leaders are willing and able to obtain buy-in in the respective configuration of these four axes values is reflective of their leadership effectiveness. The quadraxial model, therefore, posits leadership as an intermediary function among complementary — sometimes competing — trajectories of fundamental human values.

Values, once considered “too soft” for managing effectively, have now been accepted as the core of an organization's identity and a central tenet of its strategy. The idea of management by values is fast becoming the principal driver for re-engineering a competitive and well-being culture (Dolan et al., 2006, Dolan, 2010, 2011). At the same time, transcendent spirituality has been embraced as an important characteristic of effective leadership, not only by proponents of spiritual leadership (Fry, 2003) but also by leadership “pragmatists” such as Ken Blanchard (of situational leadership fame: Blanchard & Hodges, 2001).

Here we argue that in today's ever-increasing globalized, complex, chaotic and fast-changing world, leaders need to develop and enshrine an organizational culture based on shared values — fundamental values emanating from the bedrock of mankind and distilled by millennia of the human civilizing experience. The extent to which leaders are willing and able to obtain buy-in for such values is reflective of their leadership effectiveness. The four axial model presented in this paper posits an inherent task for leadership: crafting, modeling and facilitating the four bundles of values, which are complementary but also conflicting, within their organization's culture. We further argue that the adoption of a coaching role by leaders so as to enable this management-by-values is the best way forward not only to facilitating performance excellence, but, in this day and age, for ensuring the viability and even survival of the business.

The Need for a Different Leadership Model

Our global village is changing in an accelerating pace. Who would have envisaged China as the second largest economy a decade ago?

Who would have thought five years ago that the tablet will replace the laptop as the communicator of choice? Who would have imagined only yesterday that 3-D printing would change the way we conceive objects? Consequently, almost any organization, whether private or public, is forced to ask some basic identity questions in increasing frequency: What is the business we are in? Who are our customers? Which and where are our markets? But there is another set of questions that are asked consequently at a deeper and more personal level by organizational actors — from the lay operator at the bottom of the organizational pyramid to the highest paid at the top of the hierarchy echelon. These questions include: Who am I? What do I stand for? How does what I do fit into this picture of myself? Cabrera (2012) names them the “workplace essentials of meaning.” That is why leaders are called upon to address the complex, chaotic and fast-changing environment in which we find ourselves, through managing the core values that serve as the basis for action and interpretation both at the organizational and individual levels (Raich & Dolan, 2008; Fry & Altman, in press).

The Essence of the Tri-axial Model of Values

Dolan and colleagues (Dolan et al., 2006; Dolan et al., 2008; Dolan, 2011) proposed a framework to understand organizational culture as a combination of three facets (or axes) of an organization's value system: 1) economic-pragmatic values; 2) ethical-social values; and 3) emotional-developmental values.

- **Economic-Pragmatic Values** are necessary to maintain and coalesce various organizational subsystems. Encompassing efficiency, performance standards and discipline,

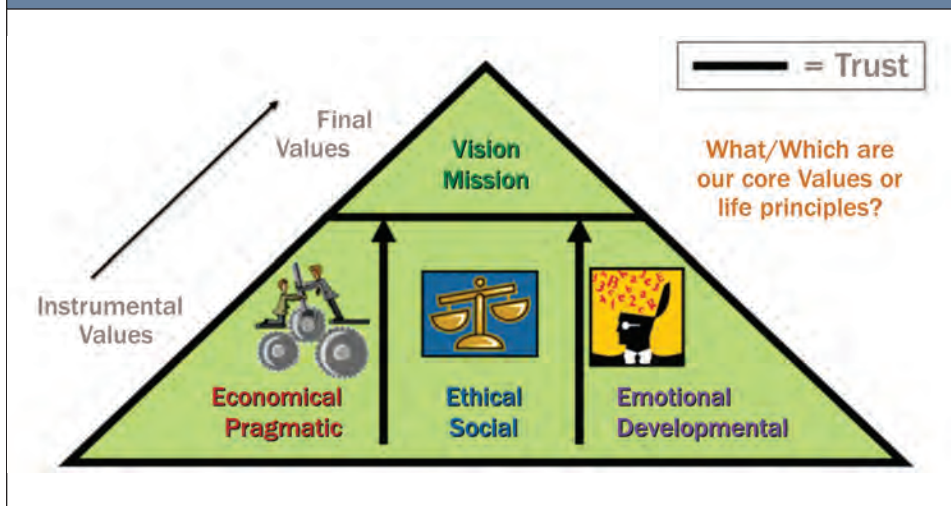
these values guide such activities as planning, quality assurance and accounting, among others. Leaders cannot ignore them, as these values assure the survival of the organization in a competitive environment.

- **Ethical-Social Values** emerge from beliefs and mores as to how people should conduct themselves in public and at work and go about their collegial and professional relationships. We associate these with values such as honesty, integrity, respect and loyalty, to name the more common ones. These values are embedded in contemporary concepts such as “corporate social responsibility,” “sustainable environment” and “the triple bottom line” (also known as “People, Planet, Profit”) (Savitz & Weber, 2006; Fry & Nisiewicz, 2012).
- **Emotional-Developmental Values** are essential for creating impetus for action. They are values related to intrinsic motivation: optimism, passion, perceived freedom and happiness are a few examples of such values. Deficiency in these values may hinder initiative, innovation and organizational commitment.

Dolan and colleagues argued that the task of an effective leader is to build a culture that aligns these values with the “corporate core” (key organizational values), the latter leading to what they term “corporate well-being.” Corporate well-being is achieved when the core values of an organization are shared and aligned with the mission and vision of the organization (Exhibit 1).

The challenge of leaders is to retain effective mechanisms for monitoring results while stimulating the potential of each and every organizational member. While just about everyone agrees with this proposition in theory, putting it into practice is another matter. Determining which values and beliefs to

EXHIBIT 1: A TRI-AXIAL VALUE-BASED MODEL OF CORPORATE WELL-BEING



retain and which to challenge, how and when to initiate a change process, how far to take it and, most importantly, how to lead and steer it, present great opportunities as well as major obstacles.

To aid in aligning the tri-axial model, Dolan and colleagues created a tool to audit organizational culture through a values assessment instrument. The extent to which each of the three dimensions is present in the work context reflects an organization's value culture. Managing by values is the bounding, expansion or adaptation of these three dimensions to align them with the organization's goals and objectives (Dolan et al., 2006; Dolan & Richley, 2006; Dolan, 2011).

The Missing Link: The Aspired, Perspired and Inspired Leader and the Road to a Quadraxial Values Model

We follow Avinash Kaushik's (2006) imaginative distinction among three "spires" of great leadership: the roles he labels aspire, perspire and inspire.

- **Aspire** means to have a great ambition or ultimate goal — to strive toward an end. Great leaders aspire to greatness — for themselves, for their teams, for their companies and possibly for each and every person around them. They are not content with what exists; they are hungry; they want more; and they are not satisfied with the status quo. They want to change the world (even if it is just their bounded small-scale entity) for the benefit — as they see it

— of their employees, their organizations and themselves (and sometimes other stakeholders, such as the community or the environment). Aspiration is the common trait of leadership, the archetypal example being Napoleon Bonaparte. Bonaparte aspired to be a great leader, aspired for his close circle to become great leaders, aspired for his followers to touch greatness through engagement with his vision, and aspired for France to become a great nation.

- **Perspire** means to work hard and be industrious (and to sweat). It also means to resist pressures, to perform with great diligence or energy and to sustain effort. Great leaders are not necessarily those who stay at work until midnight and make people work weekends (rather stressful and counterproductive habits) (Dolan & Moodie, 2010). Great leaders simply bring all of themselves to work, stay focused and don't give up easily, setting an awesome example for all those around them. Through their persona, they develop a "followship" and encourage others to follow suit. Perspirational leaders are not uncommon, particularly in business and management, because putting in long hours and showing drive and tenacity are a well-established formula for success (Altman, 1997). An exemplary model of this genre was John D. Rockefeller, who used to say: "Get up early, work hard, strike oil."
- **Inspire** means to affect, guide or arouse by divine influence — to fill with enlivening or exalting emotion or to stimulate to action. Great leaders who inspire act out of inner conviction guided by a moral, religious or spiritual edict, framed by a worldview that

dictates thriving for betterment of society, for the common good or in the service of correcting injustice and pursuing the truth. While inspirational leaders may be less numbered than the two other types, we have all known exemplary figures during our lifetime. In politics, the names of President John F. Kennedy, Fidel Castro and the towering figure of Nelson Mandela would be in the front row; exemplary inspirational spiritual leaders include Pope John-Paul II, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the guru sage Sathya Sai Baba. In business and management, the likes of Steve Jobs, Sir Richard Branson and Peter Drucker come to mind.

There are numerous ways to explicate the word "inspire." What is the true meaning of an inspirational leader? Let us consider the following metaphor: When we inspire, we breathe into ourselves in order to breathe upon others and give them life. When a leader is inspirational (i.e., gives "life" to another) the other is empowered to live. It is the most powerful gift a leader may endow upon a follower. Note, though, that there is a difference between acting with inspiration and being in inspiration. We argue that in order for a leader to inspire, they must breathe in inspiration; thus, they need to become inspired themselves. Inspiration is personal and particular. Some may find inspiration inside themselves, some may find it in the external world, others will find it in past events or by reference to fictional characters, and yet others will gain inspiration from the transcendence.

Internal inspiration emerges by addressing the most personal and probably deepest essence of one's self and being: What is my core purpose in life? What am I passionate about? What is it within me that drives, even compels me, to take action? How will I follow and express this desire? External inspiration distills itself in encounters with the external world: Who or what out there inspires me? Which characteristics of people or events do I find inspiring? What wrongs in the world steer me to action? The past has been a source of inspiration for millennia, since Homo sapiens started to indulge in oral history. Carl Jung famously attributed to the collective unconscious, as he called it, an inspirational drive that propels mankind. Fiction, too, has served as a powerful device for inspirational action. The great works of literature: "The Iliad," "The Letters of Abelard and Heloise," "Don Quixote" and "The Sorrows of Young Werther," to name a few of the all-time greats,

have inspired followers in spirit if not in deed. And, last but not least, the transcendence, whether informed by institutional religion, new-age spirituality, Mother Nature or an unexplained inner conviction, have been a source of inspiration since Noah built an ark to the annoyance of his mystified neighbors.

The most distinguishing characteristic of inspirational effective leaders has been their relentless insistence upon sticking to their personal values. They embody a sense of personal integrity and radiate a conviction of purpose, vitality and will. Will here is treated as a spiritual attribute, a spiritual state of being that manifests in standing (or standing up) for something. This way of being is reflective of an inner truth — a personal value set that drives attitudes and behaviors. Thus, Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. never took courses on nonviolence; Harry S. Truman did not get coaching lessons on “straight talk” and President Abraham Lincoln was not instructed in “valuing diversity.”¹ They trusted their values to guide them in doing the right things. They *were* their values.

Spirituality escapes tight definitions ... In this paper, the connection between spirituality and leadership is explored via the framework of the tri-axial model of organizational values.

Having already presented the ethical, emotional and economic values when describing the tri-axial model, we will, in this section, explore the connection of inspirational leadership with spiritual values. The set of values that come under the label of spiritual values is not new. Some of them overlap with emotional values; they correspond closely with ethical values and can even be inferred from economic values. The primary reason for differentiating them from the previous set is that these values emanate from and engender a beyond body, beyond here and now perspective of life and the universe (Veer, 2009; Coetzer et al., 2008; Neal and Biberman, 2004; Garcia-Zamor, 2003).

Spirituality escapes tight definitions. Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003), for example, provide 14 different definitions of spirituality.

A sample includes the following:

- A personal life principle that animates a transcendent quality of relationship with God
- The human striving for the transforming power present in life; the attraction and movement of the human person toward the divine
- The personal expression of ultimate concern
- A transcendent dimension within human experience

Others describe spirituality according to various characteristics, ranging from the personal to the supreme to interconnectedness to a guiding plan for our lives (Rhodes 2003). In short, there is no one universally accepted definition of spirituality. In this paper, the connection between spirituality and leadership is explored via the framework of the tri-axial model of organizational values, which is expanded to include spirituality, thus forming a quadraxial model whereby values such as life purpose, oneness and unity, virtue, truth and hope are embedded.

Leadership Effectiveness, Spiritual Values and the Paths to Happiness

To better understand the connection between leadership effectiveness, spirituality and happiness in the context of the workplace, we wish to deploy the concept of visionary leadership, a current idea widely used in contemporary leadership discourse (e.g., Dilts, 1996; Manning & Robertson, 2002; Branson, 2009). Visionary leadership is often related to the ability or propensity to see higher spiritual forces at work behind the scenes of events. Visionary leaders typically seek alignment with these transcendent and redemptive forces. Visionary leaders, in addition to being inspirational, are also, in

reference to Kaushik (2006), aspirational and perspirational. They have the capacity to think big and the ambition to achieve greatness. They have the energy, drive and tenacity to make things happen and lead others do the same. But, first and foremost, they have the inner conviction, the moral compass and the belief in the truth of their purpose.

Two great political and military world leaders, President George Washington and Winston Churchill spoke about the help they received from a “guiding hand.” Churchill said: “... we have a guardian because we serve a great cause, and we shall have that guardian as long as we serve that cause faithfully.” President Anwar Sadat of Egypt is reported to have had a visitation of Mohammed telling him to make peace in the Middle East, which he pursued with determination. However, Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini also saw the “hand of destiny” guiding their actions. Alas, visionary leadership is not confined to the good.

In another sphere of action, Sojourner Truth, a former slave, was guided by an inner spiritual experience to preach the emancipation of slaves and women’s rights all over the country during the U.S. Civil War; while Saint Mother Theresa, working within the frame of her religion, enlisted the world to help the destitute of Calcutta, India.

Here are some quotes from well-known business leaders and thinkers regarding visionary leadership and the connection with spirituality:

“The companies that survive longest are the ones that work out what they uniquely can give to the world — not just growth or money, but their excellence, their respect for others or their ability to make people happy. Some call those things a soul.”

— Charles Handy

“A leader has the vision and conviction that a dream can be achieved. He inspires the power and energy to get it done.”

— Ralph Lauren

“A leader’s role is to raise people’s aspirations for what they can become and to release their energies so they will try to get there.”

— David Gergen

Visionary leaders understand that spirituality in the workplace context is about finding ➤

¹ Source: <http://www.coachingandmentoring.com/Articles/value.html> (last update June 28, 2010)



Visionary leaders understand that spirituality in the workplace context is about finding meaning and purpose, beyond one's self, through work and work-related opportunities.

meaning and purpose, beyond one's self, through work and work-related opportunities. Finding or unearthing these meanings and purposes would engender profound feelings of well-being, a gratifying belief that one's work makes a unique and/or significant contribution. It may enable a sense of connection to others and instill an awareness of a unified whole around and with us. Visionary leadership is much more than directing followers. It emanates from within. Leading from within is a way of focusing on our inner knowing and our innate strengths. The key to unleashing this abundant source is by recourse to our values.

Times of crisis may also be times of enlightenment with potential for change and growth. It is often a time we begin to question our deeds, priorities and the way we live and work. Major (and often painful) life events, such as loss of a loved one, breakup of one's family, illness or redundancy, can be viewed as opportunities as much as challenges (Dolan, 2008). Sometimes referred to as the "dark night of the soul," these events tend to bring forth a need to engender meaning, and the insights that follow are key to how we emerge from them (Fry & Altman, in press). Similarly, profound spiritual encounters such as a near-death experience or a personal epiphany incident may also have that transformative power and quality.

Visionary leaders who aspire, perspire and inspire understand that in order for them to instill meaning, they also need to show their followers the paths to happiness. Martin

Seligman (2008, 2011), the father of positive psychology, proposed three paths to happiness: the life of pleasure, the life of engagement and the life of meaning. The "pleasurable life" is what we experience when we do enjoyable activities such as buying something new, playing games with our children, sharing a good meal with friends or taking holidays. The life of engagement is about understanding and using our strengths in the day-to-day. The "good life" comes through deep engagement in any activity that one finds challenging and rewarding, which could be one's work, play or family life. When we experience this deep engagement and total absorption, we are in a state of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975, Gardner et al., 2002). Finally, a life of meaning develops when we use our strengths for the purpose of something larger than one's self. A "meaningful life" comes from serving others and may include attending to the family, caring for other people, volunteer activities or purposeful work. The visionary manager can help followers to these paths to happiness, though the first path (pleasure) is typically attained outside work and, normally, we know how to attain it, while the second (engagement) has been on the work and management agenda for the past 50 years or more. It is with the third path (meaning) that leaders may be instrumental by opening opportunities to meaningful work.

A paper reviewing more than 150 studies shows that there is a consistency between spiritual values and practices and effective leadership (Reave, 2005). Values that have

long been considered spiritual virtues, such as compassion, contemplation and meditation, have been demonstrated to be related to leadership success (George, 2010). Similarly, practices traditionally associated with spirituality practiced in daily life, such as prayer, have also been proposed to be connected to leadership effectiveness (Freeman, 2011). All of the following actual applications of beliefs have been emphasized in many spiritual traditions (faiths), and they have also been found to be crucial leadership skills: showing respect for others, demonstrating fair treatment, expressing caring and concern, listening responsively, recognizing the contributions of others and engaging in reflective practice.

In sum, spirituality can be used as a framework for workplace organizational values. In the framework we propose here, spiritual values do not demonstrate a direct instrumentality like the tri-axial values (i.e., they do not impact directly on organizational effectiveness), but they establish an enabling platform upon which the other, instrumental, values may be aligned. In the short term, an organization and a leader may do without them; in the longer term, this becomes a near impossibility.

Toward a Value-Based Universal Leadership Model

We tend to forget that people are complex, coming to the workplace with attitudes, habits, needs, beliefs and values — and that these must be aligned to enable sustainable good performance. Because value alliance is considered a soft skill, it is not taught in the curriculum of business schools (Mellahi, 2000). This is a mistake. Understanding values, coaching for and by values, and values re-engineering should be taught and should become essential tools for business and organizational leaders (Dolan, 2011).

Values represent the nucleus of an organization, the DNA of its culture. All meaning and behaviors orbit around them. If an organization wishes to use people only as extensions of its machines and technologies, then do not expect them to innovate and become exemplary citizens of your enterprise. At the other extreme, we do not assume organizations will develop cultures of having solely fun; this is a fantasy that no organization can afford, though work and play is entirely possible and most desirable (Menemelis &

Altman, 2010). However, if an organizational culture can be designed where body and spirit are united, then alignment with the vision and mission of the organization can be engineered. Coaching by values is the methodology of facilitating managing by values that explains the processes of generating an organizationwide dialogue and designing a value alignment (Dolan, 2011; Dolan & Raich, in press).

We contend that contemporary leaders need to develop a capacity to embrace and enact all four sets of values of the quadraxial value model: economic-pragmatic, ethical-social, emotional-developmental and spiritual. We refer to such leaders as “universal” leaders because they deploy and refer to fundamental truths, to worldwide faiths and spiritual traditions that, surprisingly perhaps, share much more in common than may seem to differentiate them (Smith, 1993).

The universal value-based leader should undertake the role of identifying and promoting the values shared by the stakeholders inside and outside his or her organization.

Leaders who practice this type of leadership will increase organizational well-being. Notice that we focus on organizational well-being rather than organizational performance. The organizational well-being framework provides a rich perspective for understanding how various individual and organizational factors interact and influence particular employee and organizational outcomes. It is a strong evidence-based model that is also consistent with previous quality-of-life research and cognitive-relational stress research (Dolan, 2006). It has been applied in a wide variety of occupational settings, sectors and organizations and has been demonstrated to be very robust in predicting employee well-being and performance-related outcomes (Bao et al 2012). The three values connected with the tri-axial model — economic, ethical and emotional (see Exhibit 2) — can be instrumental to enhance performance (and profits) as long as they do not deter from the quality of life and meaning of work. The spiritual values axis, however, should entail noninstrumental properties and need not necessarily be directly linked to organizational performance. This goes along

with the fundamental paradox of organizational spirituality highlighted by Marjolein Lips-Wiersma (2007): “Those who practice spirituality in order to achieve better corporate results undermine both its practice and its ultimate benefits.”

Conclusion

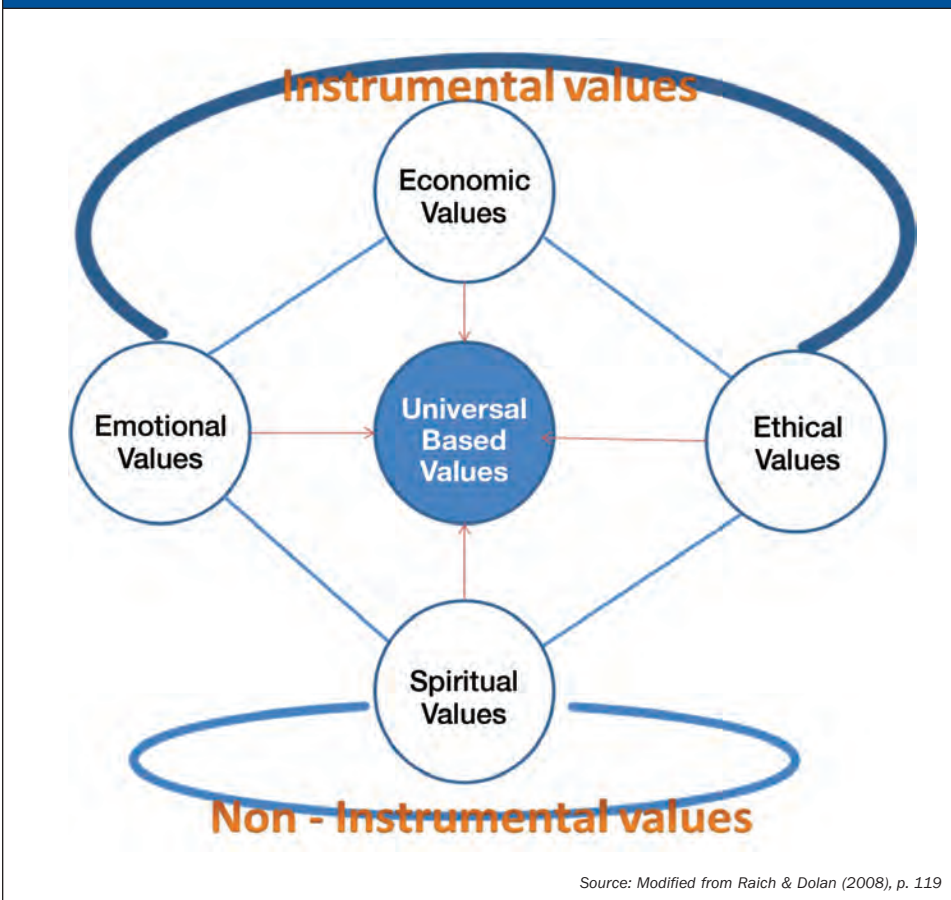
Employing the Dolan et. al (2006) and Dolan (2011) tri-axial model as a conceptual tool to compare leaders and their organizations, this paper proposes adding another axis to the model: the axis of spirituality. Today, thousands of individuals representing a new breed of visionary leaders are emerging in all fields of human endeavour around the world. They are leading a quiet revolution energized by power of the soul. By embracing and supporting those who lead from their core spiritual values, we can perhaps also strengthen those leadership qualities in ourselves.

A spiritually friendly workplace respects people’s deepest beliefs, allows and encourages them to wear their faiths (including nonfaith) on their sleeves and incorporate these values in what they do and how they go about their work, giving expression — a voice — to their innermost values. While some may feel uneasy about using words such as “spirituality” and “spiritual” when discussing workplace values, it is important to remember that “spiritual” and “religious” are not synonymous (Mitroff & Denton, 1999). Spirituality is not defined by an explicit set of religious beliefs or practices. The “experiencing of life,” as an existential agenda is often missing from the pages of management journals. No matter how broad the perceptions of spirituality may be, all definitions in some way or another utilize the ideas expressed through the term “interconnectedness.” Thus, it is proposed to use the quadraxial model to serve as the link between the instrumental values of the real business world and the spiritual needs for experiencing life that sustains it.

We contend that talking about spirituality and leadership is risky business. Leaders in the business world and, these days, in the public sector, too, are normally judged by hard-number figures, added value and wealth creation. But, surely, leadership is in itself a risky business, and a visionary leader does not shy away from taking risks — because following a vision is inherently risky.

Let us conclude with the following words of wisdom: “We are all spiritual beings. Unleash- ➤

EXHIBIT 2: A UNIVERSAL VALUE-BASED LEADER



Source: Modified from Raich & Dolan (2008), p. 119

ing the whole capability of the individual — mind, body and spirit, gives enormous power to the organization. Spirituality unlocks the real sense of significance of the organization's purpose." (Deshpande & Shukla, 2010, p. 848) **P&S**

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