

# Spirituality in Business

We have gone too far in separating the key elements. We need to integrate spirituality into management.

Mitroff

Spirituality used to be associated with the observance of the ecclesiastical laws of religions and was considered to be private and personal. Over a period of time, people have learnt to dissociate spirituality from organized religion. These days, a number of people proudly proclaim that they are spiritual while not religious. What is meant by being spiritual by these people is that they believe in a supreme power, though not necessarily the ones promoted by religions, and they try to be good to themselves and others. They try to be ethical in their personal and business dealings and they care for the people around and the well being of the society at large.

According to Ira Chaleff (1998) spiritual is distinct from religious. Spiritual acknowledges that there is something sacred about life itself. It acknowledges that, whatever its source, this sacred element is within oneself and within each living being. It understands intuitively that regardless of extreme differences, we share a commonality. From this sacred commonality springs core values of human decency. And, if we honor these values, they inform our decisions and relationships.

Traditionally, spirituality had no place in business as the modern management concepts advocate that the business of business is business. That simply means that the business leaders have the license to compromise on ethical and environmental issues as their sole objective is to maximize the wealth of their shareholders at any cost. The cost to other stakeholders, consumers, competitors, environment and the society at large was never the concern of the business leaders. Gradually this approach to business is also coming under criticism.

Additionally, life has become too very mechanical with the pursuit of material benefits for many people. People seem to work more and more to acquire more and more of material comforts but do not find time to even enjoy them. The pressure in the workplace is also on the rise due to technological changes and global competition. Security on the job is a thing of the past. All these coupled with the degradation in the values and ethics in the society at large, people have started asking some fundamental questions such as:

- What is the purpose of my coming to this earth?
- How do I realize my full potential?
- Is there any alternative for the dog-eat-dog competition at workplace?
- Can we improve the quality of living as opposed to the standard of living?
- How do we move towards a sustainable growth?
- What are our responsibilities to our future generations?

- Can't we conduct business with a purpose other than just profits?

The search for drive, fierce competitive fire, and a do-anything-for-business mentality has been replaced by a search for self, for inner peace. There's an acceptance that money is no longer the Holy Grail. A focus on the lighter side of business is going mainstream. "People are beginning to realize the intense relationship between self-knowledge and success in business," says Richard Barrett, author of *A Guide to Liberating Your Soul and Liberating the Corporate Soul*. "It's allowing people to lead one life at work and at home, rather than the dual lives we're used to living. We don't have to leave our deep inner values in the car when we go to work anymore."

The daunting array of complex and potentially devastating problems facing organizations today has spurred a rash of books advocating popular solutions such as reengineering, downsizing and Total Quality Management. Little more than quick fixes that generate temporary and unsustainable profits, these renewal efforts share one common factor: they ignore the humanity of the corporation. It is this new dimension of spirituality that has the potential to find sustainable solutions for many ills of the society and also enhance business performance. Spirituality is simply grounded in principles often learned in childhood but discouraged in business. By simply putting humanity back in the workplace businesses can achieve success through personal and corporate integrity.

"Imagine such sentiments being spoken 10 years ago. The height of the "greed decade" when business was business and private life was, well, business. Business best-sellers were titled *In Search of Excellence* and *Swim With the Sharks Without Being Eaten Alive*-hard-core strategies with tips on how to win business. The prevailing attitude? By any means necessary. " says Andy Cohen

Check out the latest bestseller list. Authors such as Deepak Chopra, Stephen Covey, and Jack Canfield dominate-with books entitled *The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success*, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, and *Chicken Soup for the Soul*. This ain't *Cutthroat Business 101* anymore. The message now is about finding oneself, caring for coworkers and clients, and doing business in an ethical manner.

All these have led to the renaissance of spirituality. A simple search in the Amazon web-site shows up more than 8000 books on spirituality. It is pretty obvious that there is a spiritual awakening in the society. There is talk of spirituality in public places and in business establishments. Spirituality has started impacting corporate corridors too. Slowly people are realizing the need for a holistic approach to enhancing human potential. One can produce his/her best only when the body, mind and the soul are committed to the work being carried out. See Box - 1 for the list of popular books on Spirituality in the work place. Apart from these there are also several video and audio cassettes that get sold all over the world.

**Box - 1**  
**Popular Books on Spirituality in the Work Place**

The Living Organization--Spirituality in the Workplace, William A. Guillory / Mass Market Paperback / Published 1997

A Spiritual Audit of Corporate America : A Hard Look at Spirituality, Religion, and Values in the Workplace (Jossey-Bass Business & Management Series), Ian I. Mitroff, Elizabeth A. Denton / Hardcover / Published 1999

Work Miracles: Transform Yourself and Your Organization, Marta C. Wilson, et al / Paperback .

Going Deep : Exploring Spirituality in Life and Leadership, Ian D. Percy / Hardcover / Published 1997

The Stirring of Soul in the Workplace by Alan Briskin, Paperback - 300 pages Reprint edition (April 1998), Berrett-Koehler Pub; ISBN: 157675040X

The New Bottom Line : Bringing Heart & Soul to Business by John Renesch (Editor), Bill Defoore (Editor), Angeles Arriew Paperback - 350 pages (September 1998), New Leaders Pr; ISBN: 188671004X

Spirit at Work : Discovering the Spirituality in Leadership (The Jossey-Bass Management Series) by Jay Alden Conger Hardcover - 222 pages (May 1994)  
Jossey-Bass Publishers; ISBN: 1555426395

Leading With Soul : An Uncommon Journey of Spirit (Jossey-Bass Management)  
by Lee G. Bolman, Terrence E. Deal (Contributor), Hardcover - 195 pages (May 1995)  
Jossey-Bass Publishers; ISBN: 1555427073

Reawakening the Spirit in Work : The Power of Dharmic Management  
by Jack Hawley, Hardcover - 212 pages (June 1993), Berrett-Koehler Pub; ISBN: 1881052222

Artful Work : Awakening Joy, Meaning, and Commitment in the Workplace  
by Dick Richards, Paperback - 144 pages (July 1997), Berkley Pub Group; ISBN: 0425159140

Redefining Corporate Soul; Linking Purpose and People by Allan Cos, Julie Liesse (Contributor), Allan Cox Hardcover - 138 pages (May 1996), Irwin Professional Publishing; ISBN: 078630555X

Liberating the Corporate Soul : Building a Visionary Organization by Richard Barrett  
Paperback - 200 pages (October 28, 1998), Butterworth-Heinemann (Trd); ISBN: 0750670711

Invisible Leadership: Igniting the Soul at Work , by Robert Rabbin  
Paperback - 220 pages 1 edition (September 1998), Acropolis Books Inc; ISBN: 1889051357

Awakening Corporate Soul : Four Paths to Unleash the Power of People at Work  
by Eric Klein, John B. Izzo, Hardcover - 172 pages 2 edition (March 1998)  
Fair Winds Pr; ISBN: 0968214916

Corporate Celebration : Play, Purpose, and Profit at Work by Terrence E. Deal, M. K. Key, Terrence E. Deal, Hardcover - 250 pages (June 1998), Berrett-Koehler Pub; ISBN: 1576750132

Spirited Leadership : 52 Ways to Build Trust on the Job by Ellen Castro, Paperback - (May 1998) 131 pages

"Today's supercharged business climate and round-the-clock work schedules are pushing a lot of people into seeking solace and meaning through spirituality. The world is less certain and predictable now. When there's uncertainty, people raise spiritual issues. It's no surprise that business books based on the teachings of religious leaders are climbing the charts. According to a recent Gallup Organization survey, 48 percent of Americans said they had discussed religious faith at work in the past 24 hours. According to a *Business Week* cover story, "Religion in the Workplace," 10,000 Bible and prayer groups meet regularly at work." Says Robin Wallace in a CNN Report on Biblical Business Lessons.

"People now want more than just money out of their business lives," Barrett says. "Work is now an outlet for partnerships, ethics, values, and relationships. These are the backbone of spirituality and they're making their way into mainstream Corporate America."

Apparently, S. Truett Cathy, the CEO of fast-food chicken restaurant company Chick-fil-A Inc., hosts a prayer service on Monday mornings, and closes his 1,000 fast-food outlets on Sundays to observe the Sabbath. Chick-fil-A is the privately held, Atlanta-based chain whose growth in unit numbers and sales continues to outpace all competitors in the chicken segment - despite the fact that its restaurants are not open on Sundays. The chain also has awarded more than 130,000 \$1,000 scholarships - a total of more than \$13 million - to unit "team members" who are recommended for their joyful attitude and productivity or, in other words, their "spiritual enthusiasm." (Jack Hayes - 1999). See Box - 2 for more cases business run with the spirituality principles.

Box - 2

**Business on Spirituality Principles**

Case - 1

Beckett's (President of Beckett Corp.) corporate philosophy is based on integrity, excellence, and a profound respect for the individual since every person is created in God's image." He tries to translate these values into company policies. Maternity leave is the most notable. Because a child's first years are critical in bonding, a mother can stay home up to a half-year, while her income continues at 25% of normal, and she can borrow an additional 25% at low rates. After this, she can return to work part-time, possibly even at home, for up to three years after birth.

At the core of all of Beckett's activities are daily prayer and Bible reading. The latter did not come easily. For years the Bible simply didn't seem "relevant," he says. But at a seminar about 30 years ago, he accepted a challenge to read it daily. "At first it was sheer drudgery," Beckett admits, "but soon it became a delight." To any businessperson he advises: "Think on the word, meditate on the word, and let it become alive."

#### Case - 2

WHEN FIRE DESTROYED THE HEART OF HIS CENTury-old Malden Mills Industries Inc. textile plant in Lawrence, Mass., in December 1995, President/CEO Aaron Feuerstein refused advice to close the mill, pocket the \$300 million in insurance money, and move the operation.

Feeling that obligation to his employees and the community, Feuerstein vowed that night to rebuild the business. He also announced that all 3,000 employees would receive full pay for the next 90 days and health benefits for 180 days-despite the fact that this cost him \$1.5 million a week and risked his entire life savings. "When all the textile mills in Lawrence ran out to get cheaper labor down south, we stuck," he reminded his workers. "We're going to stay-and rebuild."

With workers toiling day and night to restart production and new machinery air-freighted in, within 10 days the mill was operating again. Within two months 70% of the workforce was back on the job. In September 1997 a new, high-tech \$130 million factory was dedicated, and by the start of '98 all employees who wanted to had returned to work. Not only that, production of the company's Polartec fabric, used in outdoor clothing, increased sharply. Malden Mills now has more than 2,700 employees (some facilities have since closed or moved) and annual sales of about \$400 million.

#### Case - 3

A self-made billionaire, Huntsman is one of the world's leading philanthropists and humanitarians. With Karen, his wife of 40 years, he has donated more than \$250 million to philanthropic causes (not including his annual 10% to the Mormon church). Making substantial charitable contributions is one of the main priorities of his \$4.8 billion-a-year, Salt Lake City corporation. "If we're blessed with money, it's our duty to put it back into the community," he believes. In talks with employees, Huntsman stresses family values and spirituality in a way that's not specific to any religion.

#### Case - 4

FIVE YEARS AGO KRISHAN KALRA WAS, BY HIS OWN admission, one of Silicon Valley's "cutthroat CEOs," interested in amassing wealth. But while the founder and CEO of BioGenex

Laboratories Inc. was prospering financially, his marriage was failing and his children were alienated. This led Kalra to recall the joy, even in poverty, of his early life in India. And so he took a three-month leave from work to immerse himself in the Bhagavad-Gita, one of Hinduism's major sacred scriptures.

Now Kalra's marriage and home life are healthy. His San Ramon, Calif., company-which develops, manufactures, and markets molecular and cellular diagnostic systems used to detect cancer and other diseases-is thriving. And he has experienced a taste of the bliss that comes from right living. He attributes all this to reconnecting to his Hindu spiritual roots, the Bhagavad-Gita in particular.

"The Hindu religion is very democratic, and the Gita gives you a lot of options to reach divine [a force or power]," he says. "The way you run your business helps you to reach divine without going to the Himalayas or to temple or church every day or doing anything special."

One major way to attain divine is called karma yoga. "This means that whatever I'm doing as a CEO, my primary objective is to do it for the divine, meaning society," Kalra explains. "As a result, my focus is first to be the best CEO, ahead of making a lot of money. Money is a byproduct. The Bhagavad-Gita teaches that I have rights on action, but no rights on the fruits of action, nor should I be attached to inaction as a result. So I have the right to be the best CEO but no right to how much money I can earn. And I should be skillful, active, hard-working, and so forth.

"As a result of this, I have no fear of failure, and I can take risks. I am much more composed, at ease, and relaxed," says the mid-50s executive. All this has led the privately owned company he founded in 1981 to "develop some technologies for cancer testing that were thought impossible," he says. "The number of patents and technology breakthroughs we have brought to our small company [150 employees, estimated \$12 million annual revenues] is amazing. And I directly attribute this to my belief in spirituality."

Kalra sees no conflict between his spiritual and business life. In fact, he believes spirituality keeps him "grounded," returning him to "home position" every morning when he closes his eyes, totally disconnects from his work, and offers this simple prayer: "Lord, I am at your service. What is it you want me to do? Lead my way."

Source: Jim Braham, "The Spiritual side", Industry Week; Cleveland; Feb 1, 1999; Volume: 248, Issue: 3, Page: 48-56.

In an empirical study of spirituality in the workplace Mitroff and Elizabeth(1999) report that those associated with organizations they perceived as "more spiritual" also saw their organizations as "more profitable." They reported that they were able to bring more of their "complete selves" to work. They could deploy more of their full creativity, emotions, and intelligence; in short, organizations viewed as more spiritual get more from their participants, and vice versa. Mitroff defines "spirituality" as "the basic feeling of being connected with one's complete self, others, and the entire universe." If a single word best captures the meaning of spirituality and the vital role that it plays in people's lives, that word is "interconnectedness." In general, the participants in the above study differentiated strongly between religion and spirituality. They viewed religion as a highly inappropriate form of expression and topic in the workplace. They saw spirituality, on the other hand, as a highly appropriate subject for discussion.

It is reported that people are hungry for ways in which to practice spirituality in the workplace without offending their coworkers or causing acrimony. They believe strongly that unless organizations learn how to harness the "whole person" and the immense spiritual energy that is at the core of everyone, they will not be able to produce world-class products and services.

When asked what gave them the most meaning and purpose in their jobs, interviewees chose the following answers (ranked from first to seventh):

1. The ability to realize my full potential as a person.
2. Being associated with a good organization or an ethical organization. (Since most people saw "good" and "ethical" as the same, it didn't seem to matter to them whether they picked a good organization or an ethical organization as their second choice).
3. Interesting work.
4. Making money.
5. Having good colleagues; serving humankind.
6. Service to future generations.
7. Service to my immediate community.

Mitroff goes on to question the separation between the brains and feelings or emotions, which contrasts sharply with what gives them the most meaning in their jobs - the opportunity to realize full potential as a person. He argues that the separation of elements was a necessary strategy at earlier stages of human evolution. Art, science, and religion had to separate from each other to develop into more mature forms. A characteristic of earlier stages of human development is that critical elements are so merged together that they have no separate identity. Thus, for development, the key elements need to be separate. However, at our current stage of human development, we face a new challenge. We have gone too far in separating the key elements. We need to integrate spirituality into management.

Executives are expected to be conscious of their long-neglected spiritual identities as well as the spiritual realities of peers, partners, employees, customers and communities. The fruit of that very positive momentum is an awareness by many business leaders that

economic mission statements need to express a new balance of co-operation and competition and that corporate charters need a mainstream shift from the stockholder to the stakeholder model. What it means is that Business executives who find ways to touch the spiritual side of their people -- letting go of the ego-driven, "command-and-control" work-force paradigm - ultimately are going to end up employing the most loyal, intelligent and morally awake individuals available in today's labor market.

### Spiritual Leadership:

Business Executives must understand how to manage a business from higher consciousness and reap the extraordinary rewards of doing so. Leadership involves inspiration, passion and higher moral purposes. Spiritual leadership has its focus on the deeply felt needs of individuals as experienced in formal organizations. These needs are at the heart of individual motivation and transfer to the collective behavior of organizational productivity and effectiveness.

Spiritual acknowledges that there is something sacred about life itself. From this sacred commonality springs core values of human decency. Leadership always implies vision, an ability to discern a direction that others in the group may or may not yet see, but which they can be led to explore. When vision and energy are informed by sacred values, spiritual leadership can emerge.

Spiritual leadership is principled. The leader is willing to pay a price for acting on principle when doing so conflicts with economic or political benefit. His or her values framework clearly places doing the right thing over personal or corporate gain.

These leaders draw deeply on their spiritual orientation for the courage to withstand the pressure placed on them to defy their principles. They draw strength from their spiritual connection to challenge the status quo. If we are witnesses to these acts, we see them as the acts of honorable people and are often unaware of the spiritual underpinning to that honor. Decency and Respect Spiritual leaders act decently. They set a standard for how people are to be treated. This does not mean being soft, ignoring the bottom line or accepting poor performance. It means getting maximum performance from a team through inspiration, not fear, and when making decisions that adversely affect others, implementing them with compassion and respect.

We are sorely in need of leaders who model and insist on decency. Spiritual leadership never demeans the human beings it serves. Spiritual leadership requires that we step back periodically and ask ourselves how our activities benefit those whose lives we touch. How are we using the power we have acquired to do good?

Whether the leadership comes from high or low, we know spiritual leaders not by invocations, study groups or proclamations, but by their deeds. We know them by their courageous and respectful treatment of the incarnate spirit in the form of their colleagues and staff, their customers and clients, their neighbors and communities.



The concept of servant leadership should be the goal of spiritual business leaders. They should strive to serve their associates who, in turn, serve the customer. In other words, follow the Golden Rule, do unto others as you would have them do unto you, and the customer is king. Everybody wins.

### Sales People and Spirituality

The relationship between spirituality and sales actually goes back to the Dale Carnegie beginnings of training and motivation. The message for salespeople then was to keep their heads up every day, always remain positive and confident no matter what happened on the last call. Pretty straightforward. But it's the undertone in the message-that salespeople must feel good about themselves and be in touch with who they are before they sell-that's now openly spoken about in the workplace.

As sales organizations are beginning to realize that success comes from partnerships with customers, spirituality has found a natural place in the business world. For example, Mark Backalus has been a salesperson for about 20 years. Ever day he makes at least 4 to 5 telephone contacts and 2 face-to-face calls with customers. And he finds 20 minutes to sit alone in his office and meditate. He says it was not until he learned to do this last step that he became successful. (For a detailed case study on Backalus see Box - 3).

#### Box - 3

##### The case of a spiritual sales person

Mark Backalus has been a salesperson for about 20 years. Every day he gets up, puts on a suit, and makes at least five phone contacts and two face-to-face calls with customers. And he finds 20 minutes to sit alone in his office and meditate. He says it wasn't until he learned to do this last step that he became successful.

Fifteen years ago Backalus, 45, found out how to "relate to a higher power and begin understanding myself." A book titled *Zen and the Art of Making a Living*, by Laurence Boldt, was recommended to him. He says it changed his life. It taught him how to relax, how to evaluate situations, and how to visualize himself in future sales presentations. And now, as a rep for a steel manufacturing company in Austin, he can't imagine selling without the level of self-awareness that he's found. "When I'm meditating I'm really looking at my inner self-seeing what I like and what I don't and forcing the good stuff to the fore," Backalus says. "When I learned how to do this, I started to understand how to pick myself up after rejection."

And that, he says, has turned him into the quota-busting, president's-club honored salesperson he is today. During the lunch break of Success 1997, Backalus relays a story of how spirituality helped him get through a very

rough 1996 sales year. His numbers were down the first half of last year, as steel buyers pared budgets with housing starts in the area declining. "No matter what I tried, people just weren't buying," he says. "It was a bad time to be in the steel business."

But Backalus didn't look down on himself. The positive self-image he's gained in the past decade outweighed the lost sales. And he spent a lot of time locked in his office, blocking out the bad, clearing his mind by closing his eyes and visualizing times when sales were best. He explains the feeling as "otherworldly." While everything around him was failing, he was on a high. It was almost like he could step away from the dire situation and look at it from afar and laugh-even while he made no money. He just continued to do his job. "I made calls every day, even to people who I knew couldn't buy anything," he says. "I just wanted to stay in contact, keep finding out more about their situations, and be there if the tide turned."

Finally it did. By the summer, housing starts were beginning to rise, and steel was becoming an important commodity again. And for Backalus, staying in touch with his customers paid off. He sold more from August to December than he did all of the previous year.

"Having a positive sense of self, and being in touch with who I am, allows me to keep coming back from rejection," Backalus says. "I don't take the failures personally, and that's the key to sales." Yes, it may be odd to spend time locked in an office thinking about good times when the world is crumbling around you. Taking action is probably a better alternative. But for Backalus it was a way to deal with a tough situation. And because of it he kept relationships with valuable customers. His actions helped him sell later on.

Source: Andy Cohen, "The guiding light", Sales and Marketing Management; New York; Aug 1997; Volume: 149, Issue: 8, Page: 46-54

### Biblenomics and Socially Responsible Investing:

Biblenomics. It's the practice of managing your money in accordance with Christian principles. And it's catching on. Groups such as Crown Ministries and Christian Financial Concepts in Gainesville, Ga. -- two of the largest non-profit groups in the field -- teach their members to use Biblical Scripture as instruction on how to earn, save, spend and manage their income.

Depending on who you ask, theologians say the Christian Bible contains between 1,600 and 2,500 references to personal finance.

One example:

"He said to them, 'Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions'" (Luke 12:15)

The groups also emphasize debt reduction and stewardship of assets.

According to their teachings, that means the money you earn and the possessions you've acquired actually belong to God. That, in turn, obligates you to earn, spend and manage your assets according to the scripture.

### Mixing Businesses and faith :

Sister Patricia Daly is what you might call a thorn in the side of Corporate America.

The Catholic nun, who's environmental debate with General Electric Chairman Jack Welch escalated into a widely publicized shouting match last year, spends most of her time fighting for socially responsible shareholder resolutions.

She travels the country, meeting with top executives of multi-national corporations. She delivers speeches and she rallies support for everything from workplace diversity to sweatshop bans. It all comes down to this.

### Socially Responsible Investing:

Socially Responsible Investing (SRI) has its roots in religious ideology.

A century ago, the United Methodist Church proclaimed it a sin to profit from any business involved in the tobacco or alcohol trades, thereby establishing one of the first social investment screens in the country. The Quakers also rejected profit from products and the slave trade.

These days, most religious sectors have implemented similar screens, preventing their pension funds and endowments from investing in companies tied to the manufacturing of weapons, the gaming industry and those with a disregard for human rights. Among them: Catholics, Presbyterians, Baptists, Episcopalians and the United Church of Christ.

Collectively, the 275 mostly Christian organizations and investment groups that belong to the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility (ICCR), a non-profit group, hold a total of about \$90 billion in their pension funds and other investment portfolios.

And the number of socially responsible mutual funds tripled to 144 in 1997, from 55 in 1995. Today, that number has climbed even higher.

"It used to be you'd go to work, invest your money and it didn't matter if it hurt people or the environment," she said. "People aren't taking that anymore. That extreme disconnect between your home life and your financial life is no longer accepted in American culture."

Socially responsible mutual funds screen companies carefully before including them into their portfolio. Ten or fifteen years ago, most would exclude businesses involved in the tobacco, alcohol and gaming industries.

Today, they've got higher standards still. SRI funds use a variety of criteria, but most zero in on one or more of the following: environmental policies, community impact, product safety, diversity in the workforce, women in upper management positions, family friendly benefits, and human rights policies.

Companies involved in the nuclear power business, the weapons industry and those with a tarnished track record abroad also frequently get blacklisted by these funds.

#### Criticism of Spirituality movement:

While spirituality is helping some businesspeople succeed, both believers and nonbelievers agree that spirituality will never become omnipresent in Corporate America. It's not something many people can grasp-or comprehend in the least. Even those who believe in it struggle to clearly define it. They tend to double-talk themselves. And they constantly dance around the issue of meaning.

While the tenets of the movement jibe with strategies that are successful in business today, there's just not going to be buy-in to the idea of spirituality guiding it. One manager who requested anonymity says, "It's nice to do business ethically and partner with customers, but worshipping a higher being and getting in touch with your own soul? Forget it. It may help some people, but that type of talk doesn't go over too well in the workplace."

Spiritual people tend to agree with this. Their solution? They try to impart their spiritual philosophies on their coworkers without terming them as such. "I don't sit around and philosophize about this at work because others won't believe it," Silberman says. "But I do bring it into the office, just in language they'll understand. I present it as sales skills: listening, partnering, values. They don't need to hear things like, 'God is my boss.'"

Another killer for spirituality is its image. The purveyors, the people such as Deepak Chopra and Anthony Robbins, who offer insight and a so-called better way, are often viewed as hucksters. "They may have good things to say, and I know a lot of people believe in them, but how can you really trust them if they're just trying to sell as many audiotapes as possible?" says Bill Mirra, vice president of sales at Klour Office Products in Phoenix. "It seems incongruous that these people say they're trying to help you when at the same time they're taking money from you."

It's that attitude that hurts the spiritual movement. In today's sensitive sales environment, any impression that a product is being pushed too hard ends up killing it in the end. But right now, some people can't get enough of spiritualism-and its products.

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