

Spirituality in Business

Interview with Ken Blanchard, author of the “One Minute Manager” series, by Raz Ingrasci



Ken Blanchard, Ph.D.

Chairman of Blanchard Training and Development, Inc., an international training company, Ken is the author or co-author of twelve books, including the “One Minute Manager” series. He is a visiting lecturer at Cornell University, where he serves as Trustee Emeritus. Dr. Blanchard is also a member of the Hoffman Advisory Board.

Raz: Increasingly people speak about spiritual values in business. What is going on?

Ken: This is the first time in the history of business where you can be great at what you're doing today, and you're out of business tomorrow. My sense is that people become interested in spirituality when things are happening beyond their control. People are looking for some higher power to help them. It's amazing how people start to think about spirituality when they get sick, or they have some major problem, and finally realize they can't figure it all out themselves.

Raz: There is also the sense that when one acts in alignment with a higher power, the action is more likely to lead to both success and satisfaction. So, people are looking for balance and flow, as well as success.

Ken: Right. In the foreword to Bob Juppert's book *Half Time*, Peter Drucker says that 50 to 60 years ago there wasn't a lot of opportunity for success for people. You either owned a farm or a factory, or you were a farm or a factory laborer. Retirement was natural because people were retiring from what they didn't want to do in the first place. Today there are

many more opportunities for success because of the technology and the changing world. Drucker said that today, people who have been successful, suddenly find themselves in their 40's trying to decide what else there is in life. One group doesn't get it, and they think they'd better continue to amass symbols of success, and another group starts to search inward for a spirituality that says there's got be something more than material success. Juppert says that people start moving from success to significance. The point of Half Time is we're in the locker room wondering "what am I going to do for the second half?"

In the appendix to *What Color is Your Parachute*, Dick Bowles has a wonderful section where he says that you can't talk about your "calling" without talking about the "caller." That is another reason people get into spirituality.

Raz: What are some actions people can take to bring spiritual values into their career and business life?

Ken: People need to spend more alone-time, quiet time. I've been trying to help people enter their day more slowly. Successful people often find themselves trying to decide what else there is in life. They start moving from success to significance. The world is so busy and our minds are so busy. Norman Vincent Peale in *The Power of Ethical Management* said that we have two selves: a task-oriented self that's used to getting things done, and an inner-self that reflects our spiritual nature. It takes longer to wake up your reflective inner-self than your external task-oriented self.

The alarm goes off in the morning and people jump out of bed, trying to eat while they're washing in the bathroom, probably with a cell phone on the counter. The whole day goes that way. At night, they fall into bed exhausted, perhaps without even saying goodnight to somebody who is lying next to them. The next day they go at it again, and one day blends into another.

What helps me is to wake up about an hour or so before I have to do anything and then to enter my day slowly. I like to do some spiritual reading and take a walk. In other words, I start the day by feeding my inner Spiritual Self, and from that space step into my day.

I ran into a fascinating businessman who, if he had a problem in his company, would call people together and gather all the information about the problem. Then he'd say, "OK, we've got all the information, now we're going to move to a solution, but before we do that, I'd like you all to sit quietly for 10 minutes." He wouldn't tell them to pray or meditate, just to look for the answer within. Although some people were uncomfortable, he was amazed at the clarity of the thinking that came out of that silent period. Everybody should have a sign on their desk that says "Don't just do something, sit there." This most important thing is not legitimized in organizations.

Raz: So, people bring spiritual values into their businesses first by bringing spirituality into their everyday lives, and paying attention to themselves as spiritual beings. How does the Hoffman Process help with this?

Ken: The Hoffman Process actually brings forth spiritual leadership in a person. Since taking the Process, my title at our company has become Chief Spiritual Officer. Now, I'm working on creating a Center for Chief Spiritual Officers. I want to work with people who have been successful in their organization, and now want to move to a different level and really give their spiritual side a chance to flourish through the way they operate their organizations.

I'm convinced that effective leadership has more to do with character than with methodology and skills. Back in the '60's, Bob Greenfield said there are two kinds of leaders: strong natural leaders and strong natural servants. He said the goal of a strong natural leader is to control and direct. And the goal of a strong natural servant is to serve. The servant leader is open to feedback because their goal is not to hold onto power, their goal is to serve. When I see people with problems in their organizations because of control needs, usually they have issues from their past that really need to be dealt with. The Hoffman Process allows people to resolve many of these issues; which are what they have used to prop their character up, such as unproductive beliefs about themselves and other people, and the need to be controlling.

Raz: In the Process, people shed their false selves to reveal a true and loving, noble servant within, which we call your Spiritual Self. One's spirit, when integrated with one's emotions, intellect and body, results in a new way of being and acting in the world. Spiritually empowered actions are more elegant, accurate and powerful.

Ken: Yes, I think that's really true. The essence is to let this spirit into your heart so you become a different person from the inside out. When that's true, you do things differently, because you have become somebody who really can't stomach doing something other than what is driven by your inner self. What you're teaching in the Process is so very powerful: reaching a truce between the Intellect and the Emotional Child, and then agreeing that the Spiritual Self will be in a powerful leadership role.

Raz: What impact has the Process had on your business life? Through the Hoffman Process, I brought my faith into my daily actions.

Ken: It made my spirituality come alive. I had all these wonderful spiritual thoughts, but I still had behaviors that were getting in my way. Through the Hoffman Process, I actually brought my faith into my daily actions. It gave me a way to have my spirituality be at the center of my life, rather than something I call on when I'm in trouble and it's too late. That is what the Process does for people.

Raz: What importance do you find that tithing, service, or charitable giving can have in a person's business life?

Ken: I think it is all important, it is about energy. If all you do is take energy, you're an energy drainer. Tithing, giving back, being thankful, sends energy out and you get more energy back. John Templeton tells people that the best money practice in the world is to give 10% of what they earn away. Last year was a very successful one for my business so my wife and I tithed 10% of the profit, and we divided it among the employees in the company, from the highest paid to the lowest, and let each of them tithe a percentage of it. The only requirement was that the money had to be tithed to a non-profit organization. One of our lowest paid employees came up to me with tears in his eyes, telling me he had given \$1000 to his Catholic parish. Others donated to hospices, and so

on. We feel that by empowering others to give, we're spreading this energy out much more significantly than if we just did it ourselves. I absolutely believe in the power of tithing and giving back. My own experience about all the blessings I've had in my life is that the more I give away, the more that comes back. That is the way life works, and that is the way energy works.

When you're serious about change

Hoffman Institute UK
Call us on: +44 (0)1903 88 99 90

This website contains intellectual property including graphics and text protected by international copyright. All Rights Reserved. ©1998 Hoffman Institute International Inc.
URL: <http://www.hoffmaninstitute.co.uk>