

Chapter 6

Management Education for Developing Spiritual Integrity

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ABSTRACT

This chapter explores the interface between spirituality and integrity, and focuses particularly on educational processes that may facilitate this development. First, definitions and constructs of integrity are discussed as they relate to spirituality. The second section explores teaching pedagogies related to processes for developing one's inner leadership. Such processes facilitate the dissolution of subject-object, and open the way for an awareness that goes beyond our 'small selves' for more ethical and sustainable futures to be imagined. The third part of this chapter explores outcomes for students with examples of teaching pedagogies presented regarding how students may connect with something far deeper than their 'small selves'. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion on organisational and managerial implications of spiritual integrity, through both practical and theoretical insights. These include leadership as being ethical and authentic; a more meaningful sense of personal, organisational and societal purpose; and finally developing a deeper awareness of stewardship of the earth.

INTRODUCTION

MORPHEUS ASKED NEO, "Will you choose the blue pill where this story ends and you wake up in your bed and believe whatever you want to believe? Or the red pill and see what is really real and how far down the rabbit hole you can really go" (Wachowski & Wachowski, 1999).

Neo chooses the red pill and takes the journey to learn the truth of what is real, thus freeing him from the matrix which is just an illusionary stimulated reality. The blue pill represents the blissful ignorance of illusion where you are a slave in a prism of what you think is real. The red pill however, represents the journey of breaking out of the matrix. It is a journey of self-discovery that involves wrestling with questions regarding 'who am I?, why am I here?, what is my purpose?' Such questions ask us to examine our place in a broader connected universe rather than focusing

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solely on our own self-interest. These questions require us to understand who we truly are, what our values are and how we can integrate these into building a more integrated and cohesive society.

This chapter therefore explores our responsibilities as educators regarding the interface between spirituality (our place in a connected universe) and integrity (an inner moral code that guides us). Growing criticisms of functionalist approaches in education require new modes and methods of educating. For instance, Harrison, Leitch and Chia (2007) note that our focus on education should be on what shapes the development of knowledge rather than the knowledge itself; that is, from representational to causal thinking. Scharmer (2008) too claims that we ought to be training the mind to ignite inspired connections and actions based on integrity rather than solely learning competencies that focus on skill and knowledge deficits. These comments support the distinction between knowledge and wisdom: knowledge is a 'filling up' of externalised facts and irrefutable propositions, whereas wisdom is an ambiguous disposition that is attained through a process of 'emptying out'. Chia and Holt (2007) claim that this 'emptying out' enables us to be more flexible and adaptable in our outlook and therefore more consensus-driven for harmonious living. Indeed, Mayo (1999, p. 5) suggests that, "Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of generations into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it [knowledge], or it becomes the 'practice of freedom', the means by which men and women deal critically with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world [wisdom]". It is the latter upon which this chapter rests, whereby the education process is an active critical pedagogy requiring students to question their existing assumptions and values. This places the emphasis on how one constructs meaning from one's own inner platform. As Palmer (1998) claims, education should focus on the 'who am I', rather than solely on the 'what

and 'how'. Integrity is therefore the *use* of that wisdom that resides within ourselves. Thus, breaking out of the 'matrix' represents the growing interest in spirituality as we seek to explore our inner truth to find deeper meaning and purpose in life. As Morpheus said, "*Unfortunately no-one can be told what the matrix is. You have to see it for yourself... You feel it. You felt it your whole life. You don't know what it is, but it feels like a splinter*" (Wachowski & Wachowski, 1999). This highlights that the journey of self-discovery begins with the experience of the first person rather than third person observations.

Becker (1998, p. 157-8) defines integrity as "commitment *in action* to a morally justifiable set of principles and values...." This implies adherence to a more objective perspective of integrity based upon universal truths, as opposed to a more subjective view of individually espoused integrity (Parry & Proctor-Thomson, 2002). The search for these universal truths encompasses a spiritual journey through an examination of one's inner life (Drivers, 2007). Spirituality involves being self-aware, knowing one's role and purpose in society and taking care of each other and the earth through stewardship: an issue recently highlighted by the devastating Fukushima nuclear reactor disaster. How could such a dangerous activity be built on a known seismic fault line, and why was this nuclear plant not decommissioned years ago when reports suggested that it should be? The on-going and serious repercussions in Japanese society (for example no safe drinking water, radiation health risks) highlights that no organisational action occurs in isolation, and hence managers have a responsibility to act in the 'right way' to protect its citizens. This requires being aware that we are part of something larger than ourselves, and that what we do affects the other. As Fox (1994, p. 2) describes, "Spirit means life, and both life and livelihood are about living in depth, living with meaning, purpose, joy and a sense of contributing to a greater community. The spirituality of work is about bringing life and livelihood back together

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