

# Transforming the Way We Do Business:

## Blending Spiritual Values with Professionalism

By Camille Leon

**T**he world is in flux and we are transforming every day - both individually and as a society. Those of us who work in holistic practices are becoming part of the leading edge for a world that is in pain from resistance to change.

At the same time, many of us are still hiding our Light -- uncomfortable with balancing healing and spirit with a need for financial sustainability. We work at our jobs, take care of our families and seek to help others on an (almost) volunteer basis. By doing this, we burn ourselves out. Unable to find time for everyone who needs us, we hold back and those who need us most have a hard time finding us.

As we prepare to enter a new year, I invite you to consider the following with me.

Can spiritual practices strengthen our ability to connect, personally and in business, and create a bridge to take us into - and beyond - 2012? Yes!

It took a family health crisis to help me see today's disconnection between holistic professionals/practitioners and those who are successful in business. When my grandmother and mother had separate issues, my research led me to hidden alternatives, difficult to find because those who are grounded in spirituality often avoid the process of buying and selling. They are uncomfortable with "business as usual."

Frequently, they fall to one extreme or another - too shy to share their value with a world that does not understand or too pas-

sionate in their delivery to accept that some are not ready yet. In order to address these challenges, we must ask ourselves key questions that will bring us together and enable us to communicate with those around us. Perhaps then we can unite with each other and assist those who need us most.

### The Breakdown of Business

When did we get so disconnected? There was a time, not so long ago, when business luminaries and politicians also had families and philanthropic activities that kept them grounded. After all, Andrew Carnegie is known for his success in business and in philanthropy. Carnegie is known for setting Napoleon Hill on a journey that would impact the success of millions. The Kennedys are still recognized for their charitable endeavors. Yes, they had their dark sides - but nowadays many corporate powerhouses seem even more out-of-touch with themselves, their families and the rest of the world. The old economic structures are crumbling before our eyes and bringing much of the world down with them.

Let me suggest that this downward spiral started accelerating on 9/11/2001 when business, government, families and individuals all came to a screeching halt. Instead of going to work that day, we were watching an event that should have been the trailer for a new Denzel Washington movie, rather than in the news and in our living rooms. Sadly, since then, rather than turn the tide, we have seen leadership at major companies, such as Enron, Tyco Toys, MCI Telecom and Goldman Sachs, make decisions that created scandals with far-reaching side effects in both the energy and financial markets. More recently, oil giant British Petroleum (BP) made choices that led to an environmental disaster whose long-term consequences far outweigh

any potential gain that could have been anticipated. The fallout from these events has reverberated globally, as well as, into our personal economies.

### Toward a Replacement Structure

"Out of the ashes of crisis, corruption and public distrust, a grassroots movement to revitalize the ethics and spirit of free enterprise is gaining momentum and attracting millions," says Patricia Aburdene in *Megatrends 2010*. Slowly, the seeds of a new economy are taking root.

When renovating a building, it is fairly simple to demolish the old structure before creating the new one. Unfortunately, when considering solutions for a world of people on a planet that is ecologically stressed, the process is more complex. New organizations and structures need to be developed first so that individuals and businesses have options available immediately.

At its most rudimentary level, business is simply the exchange of money for a service or product. It is the original form of bartering. If you were a master carpenter in need of a pig for your family's meal and your neighbor already had a house and no need for your services, what could you exchange for the pig? Thus it became necessary to create a medium of exchange.

These days, of course, the almighty dollar has become something that many value for its own sake, rather than for its value in terms of quality of living, health and happiness. In other words, we have become disconnected from the original purpose of money -- as an equal exchange.

In the late 1600s, Quakers became successful in business because of their ability to blend their values with practical applications that worked - and still work - in the world of commerce. In Peter Jackson's BBC News article of 1/20/2010, we are reminded that some of the oldest and most successful companies are firmly rooted in a community that merges personal ethics with "real life." Ironically, it is because of their non-conformist views that they were forced into starting businesses. As non-Anglicans, the Quakers were barred from universities, as well as, many civic and public offices. Although it is not generally known, companies including Barclays and Lloyds banks, Clarks shoes, and chocolatiers Cadbury (now owned by Kraft) and Rowntree's, are

just a few of those founded by members of the pacifist group.

### What is holistic?

As we move into 2012, the need to balance short-term results with long-term consequences is becoming even more important.

How do we find like-minded professionals and practitioners who can help us find the "solutions" that will sustain us?

Can we reach out to the people who need us most and speak to them in terms they understand and embrace?

Finally, is it better to come from a position of love or of judgment?

When I am brainstorming with colleagues and discussing the merits of values-based business, I have to remind myself that each person is in a different position on the continuum. In defining holistic and sustainable alternatives, it is helpful to leave room for others to join me, no matter where they are starting.

We can begin by connecting with like-minded friends and colleagues who help us come full circle.

"Holistic" is not just about health and healing, or even mind-body-spirit. The best holistic professionals and businesses, whether they are attorneys or bookkeepers or healers or coaches, consider long-term consequences, as well as, short-term results. While physical, emotional and mental health are critical, most of us are better off when our legal house is in order, our environment is clean and our financial accounts are safe.

To maintain lasting balance, it is critical to blend our spiritual values with our business practices and lead the world in replacing a worn-out economic model with new sustainable structures. This is true for solo professionals and practitioners, as well as, for those who represent holistic values in larger corporations.

With this, I encourage you to transform your practice by answering the questions posed in this article and understanding that "marketing" is just a different word for "shining your Light."

Watch for more articles from Camille in future issues of *Energy Magazine*! Where she will cover issues related to healthy

*business practices from time management, client confidentiality and social media networking to websites and public presentation skills.*



About the author:

Camille Leon is the Executive Director of The Holistic Chamber of Commerce, a growing community of

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