Spiritual Intelligence: How are you balancing Work and Life?

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I had a discussion with a friend who posed this question recently: “Are you a spiritual person?” I think we often confuse being spiritual with being religious, but they are very different things. When we have spiritual intelligence, we become more aware of “the bigger picture” – for yourself and the universe and your place and purpose in it. This all sounds too out-of-this-world for you?

In the context of my work in leadership and management training and facilitation, there is a definite move from the IQ (intellectual quotient of intelligence) and the EQ (emotional quotient of intelligence) towards SQ – the spiritual quotient of intelligence. The trend in this direction is an indication of the proactive systemic thinking that is happening in all industries, rather than the reactive focus on the obvious cause-and-effect of days gone by.

Are families evolving with this consciousness in the business world? Are you embracing this in your life?
What is spiritual intelligence?

As we move through knowledge, appreciation and understanding of ourselves and of other people in the EQ realm, we progress naturally to the appreciation and understanding of how we all fit into the ‘big picture’.

The concept of spirit comes from the Latin *spiritus*, meaning breath. In modern terms, it refers to our life energy, the ‘non-physical’ part of us, including our emotions and character. Spiritual intelligence, hence, is concerned with how you grow and develop these qualities, and with the protection and development of your ‘soul’ – which the Oxford English Dictionary defines as your ‘moral identity’ and the intensity of ‘its emotional and intellectual energy’.

So what is the ‘soul’ of your business, or of your family? Can we define the evolution of the family as a whole at this point in time? Is it easier to look at it from an individual perspective and portray this soul as the moral identity of each family member? How would you define your soul and how would you help grow your spiritual intelligence?

Abraham Maslow, a respected American psychologist described in his *Hierarchy of Needs*, that regardless of what tribe or place on the planet they were from, all human beings went through ascending stages of survival and spiritual development:

- **Physiological**
  - the need for food and shelter
  - the need for basic survival
- **Security**
  - the need for physical health
  - the need for family
  - the need for education
- **Belonging**
  - the need for social integration
  - the need to belong
- **Self Esteem**
  - the need for intellectual, social and material accomplishment

It is only when all these are met that people reach their ultimate stage of human development: *Self-Actualization*. Maslow defined this as a spiritual state in which the individual poured out creativity, was playful, joyful, tolerant, with a sense of purpose and a mission to help others to achieve this state of wisdom and bliss.
Has the Modern Family come of age yet? Is the average family today generally playing at the level of Security? Are we still playing it safe as the traditional parent emulating the social expectations of ages past when our children are rebelling within these boundaries? Or dare we say we are venturing into Belonging where we wish to be socially accepted as New Age Parents who give total freedom to their children so the lack of boundaries may itself be causing problems? Have we got enough Self Esteem to stand up for all the contributions we can bring to the Modern Family by going beyond Deficiency Needs and Growing from Good to Great: as activist, motivator, visionary, paradigm shifter, genius, leader and so defining what the effective Modern Family really means? Are we proud to stand tall about being a who we are and how we contribute to the ‘big picture’ of our local universe? Are we ready as each family unit to self actualize to a higher level of spiritual intelligence with our collective souls?

**The emerging importance of spiritual intelligence**

More and more people in affluent societies are growing tired of the shallowness of their materialistic lives, and are searching for a new set of values by which to live; values which emphasize a new sense of collective belonging to and responsibility for a world that is increasingly in a fragile state.

A recent survey conducted by John Naisbitt, the author of *Megatrends 2000*, showed that for the first time in history more people were moving from the big cities to the suburbs; from the suburbs to the exurbs; and from the exurbs back to the countryside than were moving into the cities.

Why? Because, people reported, they felt that in some way they were ‘losing their souls’ and they needed to get back in touch with themselves, with Nature, and with the sense of human community for which they longed. They want more Quality of Life; a life that fed, rather than depleted their souls.
So what does this really mean to us as families?

Across the board globally, there is an increasing desire to balance who we are, what we do, who we do it with, and how we go about it with the systemic impact of how that will influence our environment, social values, the world we live in. Do we truly exist in our families with passion while contributing as good citizens, parents, partner, friend, child? Can Science meet Spiritual Philosophy in a balanced ‘bigger picture’?

**Quantum Physics as Wu Li**

*Wu Li*, the Chinese word for Physics, means “patterns of organic energy” which has a synonym: “enlightenment”. The essence of quantum mechanics, quantum logic, special relativity and general relativity indicates that the direction physics seems to be moving is paradoxically closer to the philosophy of Buddhism, and in fact violates the rules of classical logic and Newtonian physics! How so?

Zen Buddhists have developed a technique called the *koan*, which along with meditation, produces changes in our perception and understanding. A koan is a puzzle which cannot be answered in ordinary ways because it is paradoxical. “What is the sound of one hand clapping?” is a Zen koan. Physics is replete with koans, i.e. “picture a massless particle”. Is it a coincidence that Buddhists exploring “internal” reality a millennium ago and physicists exploring “external” reality a millennium later both discovered that “understanding” involves passing the barrier of paradox?

Classical physics breaks down in the region of the atomic process. The concepts of ‘simultaneous decidability’ (the uncertainty principle) is characteristic of quantum mechanics where the properties of a physical system on the one hand, and the projections (wave function) on the other contrasts with the concepts of ordinary logic.

E.g. subatomic particles forever partake of this unceasing dance of annihilation and creation. This twentieth-century discovery, with all its psychedelic implications, is not a new concept. In fact, it is a very similar to the way that much of the earth’s population, including the Hindus and the Buddhists, view their reality.

So the Albert Einsteins and quantum physicists of the twentieth-century are geniuses not only in their IQ, but have been acknowledged as highly spiritual and developed in their SQ. Even in the contrasting realms of Science and Spiritual Philosophy does there seem to be a blurring of boundaries. It is no wonder that in the ‘big picture’, there could well be a common place for both to coexist.
Finding the Balance

What we are realizing now is that unless we find the balance through developing our SQ in what we do for ourselves in relation to the ‘big picture’ around us, we are not as effective and productive individuals. Indeed God help us: there is even the threat of the dreaded “burnout! Hence, the whole trend in the work place is to find ways that every member of the team from the management down to frontline can realize the optimum SQ way of juggling Work and Life. And it certainly is easier said than done.

How do we balance Work and Life? It is becoming apparent that Life and Work is not necessarily mutually exclusive.

Balancing Work and Life is likened to the Chinese acrobat trying to set a series of plates spinning enough so that each plate is kept suspended on the end of its respective bamboo pole. As the agile acrobat moves around to keep say 3 or 4 spinning, the other 4 or 5 start to get so wobbly as to be in danger of crashing to the ground. So the acrobat is continually on the move spinning first one lot, and then another lot. Does that not seem like the endless treadmill we are on – keeping our Plates in our Work and Life spinning so they do not dash to the ground?

Understanding spiritual intelligence is about being aware of balancing the various contexts of our lives to achieve Personal Power without being too overwhelmed in just one area. It is about having a healthy regard for all the contexts so we can continually develop each area – not all at once at any point in time, but through a systematic awareness of being able to work through all of them regularly. Like the acrobat spinning those that are most wobbly and coming back to the others once the former is spinning well, and working the next lot which needs priority attention.

The 8 Sources of Power

It seems then that we have to pay attention to a few areas in our lives that define our Work and Life Balance. We can clearly say that there are 8 Plates we have to keep spinning:
  o Vocation/Career
  o Family
  o Physical
  o Emotional
  o Mental
  o Social
  o Financial
  o Spiritual
Coaching Wisdom, according to Philippa Bond, is one of the current models in Executive Coaching. This model uses these 8 Sources of Power to help the client work through their Work/Life Balance. The beauty of this model is that when the client is concentrating on only one of the 8 contexts, the results of the development in that area can influence the rest of the other areas. It has a flow-on effect. The ultimate objective of this coaching program is that in developing each one of the areas regularly and in a systematic way, the client realizes a more balanced life, increases his/her spiritual intelligence as he/she appreciates the systemic implications of the ‘big picture’ as he/she works on the self.

More and more, executive coaches working in the field have noticed that we may have been hired to develop performance of the individual at work. Yet the result is after a short period, when rapport has been cemented in the coaching relationship, more personal issues become the focus. Ultimately, working on one or the other influences both and all other areas in the coachee’s life.

**The Wisdom Revolution**

Juggling 8 plates to ensure we feel fulfilled and effective as individuals functioning as part of a bigger picture shows that there is now no clear delineation of where Work ends and Life begins.
Ricardo Semler in his book *The Seven-Day Weekend* brings forth the realization that the traditional 5-day week of 9-5 followed by a weekend for rest is practically dead and gone. Do we not tend to work through whatever day or time of day – just to keep up with what is needed at work? Then we have to juggle the picking up of children from school and a variety of activities, keeping up with the social engagements (because getting ahead at work is not necessarily about the work itself but about the networking to build relationships to advance one’s career!), the continuous upskilling required through reading and courses, the need to stay healthy through physical exercise and ingesting the correct nutrition, maintaining or pursuing a stable relationship so we can share our success with a life partner, keeping up and going beyond what is required in our chosen vocation to stay in the career game, and then to endeavour to develop personally, professionally and spiritually for the greater good….it does seem quite a handful, doesn’t it?

So there is really a blur now with the so-called weekday vs the weekend. Instead of seeing it as a dreary 7-Day Week, why not experience it positively as a 7-Day Weekend? After all, why can’t we answer emails on Sunday, and go to the movies with the children on Monday?

There is the cliché that there is nothing as permanent as change. On the contrary, people don’t really live that day to day – they actively seek certainty and stability. They want insurance, financial security, 5-year plans, OH&S. Change is overrated anyway. Nothing really has dramatically changes in the automobile industry for the last 100 years – Henry Ford’s car basically is still what we have today – metal chassis, internal combustion gasoline-powered engine, 4 wheels with rubber tires, steering wheel. 50 years after development of the jet engine, planes have changed little – they have grown bigger, wider and carry more people. It’s taken the telephone over a hundred years to become mobile. When our toddlers go to school, we are essentially placing them in an old-fashioned system that is meant to emulate the past and to teach our offspring to be like us. We don’t ask why. Even the school holidays is a function of a 1700s agrarian society where children were needed during the long summer growing and harvest season. There is now a shift to Problem Based Learning in some University programs around the globe in an attempt to look at what is possible to teach our graduates how to fish as opposed to giving them fish in the old system. Yet the academic world is divided, those against the change proclaiming that these new graduates have a second class training to their predecessors.

*The Seven-Day Weekend* is just a metaphor and reminder that change is constant. Let us not be afraid of it. *The Seven-Day Weekend* is an opportunity, not a threat. The world desperately needs an “Age of Wisdom” and workplaces should be an inspiring start. Let us develop our collective spiritual intelligence through the individuals in our profession tapping into their souls, resourcing their reservoir of talent and finding the equilibrium in their Work and Life through engaging their 8 Sources of Power.
The Call to Action – Do what you love!

What I am proposing is that too often we work to spin just 2-3 plates and are devastated when we find that several other plates that are just as valuable have been smashed to smithereens from our lack of attention. We realize too late their value. The devastation can then extend their destructive shrapnel into areas that you have been working so hard on. So it is about balance.

Today I am completing this article on my laptop as I am watching my children play in the park. You know, it was enjoyable and more effective for both myself and the kids. I finished the article ahead of schedule – and we got to play ball.

So now, I am inviting you to consider all the areas in your life and to start putting some Outcome Planning (refer The Magic of Outcome Planning) into each of them so none of the plates crash to the ground.

Stay focussed on the big picture. Value all parts of your life and give them equal attention. Keep an Outcome Plan on each of these areas so that you have a Life Vision. A Bigger Picture. Engage your 8 Sources of Power to connect with your wisdom and your soul – your SQ. Let us be inspired, and hence be inspiring, in developing our spiritual intelligence: as an individual, as a family and ultimately as a global community.

Remember that when you change one part of your life, you cannot help effecting change in all other areas of the system. You be the best you can be, and so too will your family and those around you benefit. Imagine all that fun you can have in all other areas of your life too.

Lighten up and enjoy!

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Transformational Leadership Challenge™ (TLC):  
*Unleashing your children’s potential through you*

The overall outcome of the TLC (Transformational Leadership Challenge) for actualizing parents is a simple one. This workshop (endearingly dubbed “The Greatest Challenge on Earth”) treats parents as leaders not only in their family, but more so as a leader in their own lives. By setting the example as a role model for the rest of the family, they become aware of how they can lead the best lives for themselves and hence be a credible mentor, effective manager, coach and leader of their families. For instance, a parent can sometimes call upon their child(ren) to do their utmost best in life to achieve their highest potential in their chosen contexts – e.g. career, family, health, physical, intellectual, emotional, or spiritual. In the process, the parent may place most of their family resources in the endeavour. However, the parent themselves short change themselves on opportunities to personally develop themselves. For instance, the parent may not pursue their own love of a talent or a gift – and hence, do not maximize the potential themselves. They do not walk their talk, so to speak. As we know, children are by far the best role modelers. As is commonly said: “Monkey see monkey do!” So what message are we truly conveying to our children when we do not “go for gold” ourselves – at the expense of letting the children savour all the opportunities? TLC truly brings that home. Live your dreams and values, and your children will follow suit – with unsolicited respect.

Respect is not automatically deserving just because you are a parent these days. That more traditional Confucian ethic is not alive and well! Respect is earned. You show children respect, and it is more likely to be reciprocated. One way to show respect is to be consistent with word and deed. In the “old days” – the boundaries were clear about what is expected of parent roles, and that of the kids. It tended to be set by social norms. Behaviour considered as “right” was more black and white then. Today, it seems it runs mostly into the grey area. Hence, each family has to clearly define
what their values, goals and boundaries are, and to run their unit accordingly. There is no hard and fast rules.

As leaders of corporate organizations spend time and money planning their goals, vision, values and purpose so everybody within it understands the culture and expectations. Do we as leaders of our family unit do the same? Have we even thought about what it is we are about? What are our individual dreams? Are all members aligned in values? Do we have useful methods to communicate amongst each other about how we envision our family unit striving synergistically towards individual goals whilst respecting each other’s values? Can we all contribute towards each other’s goals whilst satisfying each other’s needs? What are our beliefs about our children – do these hold them back or drive them forward? The TLC program strives to constructively take these issues and put them into realistic Life Plans for individuals whilst being aligned to a greater Family Vision.

**Review of NLP, NS as models that drive TLC**

Neuro Linguistic Programming (or NLP for short) and Neuro Semantics (or NS for short) describe programs by which we naturally (and mostly unconsciously) run our brains by default – out of habitual use of those patterns. Many of these patterns serve us – and we take them for granted. The awareness will allow the parents participating to utilize these patterns more consciously and consistently. Some of these patterns however may not always be useful. The TLC parenting workshop instils processes that will create awareness of these patterns in ourselves and provide an opportunity for the parents to discover new ways to replace or override these unresourceful patterns whenever we choose to obtain new results. For example, there may be an emotional outburst from the parent every time a teenager comes home later than expected from an evening excursion leading to further shutting down of already poor communications between parent and child. It may be useful to attempt to generate a new response to that trigger. NLP and NS can provide a variety of ways to override the habitual pattern above with a new one that may get a more appropriate result.
Another example: a parent may have a belief that there is a need to shelter their child(ren) from the world for there are too many hazards out there. The more protective they are, the paradox is – they are preventing the child(ren) from learning life skills that continue to hamper their independence and self-sufficiency. NLP and NS can intervene through one of their many belief change patterns to give the concerned parent new choices of how to protect the child from the dangers of our world by giving the children opportunities to learn self-initiated life skills of managing when their parents are not there.

The TLC program offers opportunities for individuals in each family to maximize satisfaction of each other’s needs through awareness of the issues that drive each of us. Another outcome of the program is to create a Family Vision that continually develops over time through a mutual understanding of the ever-changing boundaries that affect each family unit. Hence, it is a program by which you can truly unleash your children’s potential through you.

About the Author: Dr Yvonne Sum is a pioneer in Parent Leadership coaching. She is on a quest to co-create joyful learning partnerships between parents and children to simultaneously bring out each other’s authentic best. She inspires parents to learn from our children mirroring to us what we most need to learn about ourselves and vice-versa. Through her series of Transformational Leadership Challenge™ (TLC) programs, Dr Sum is committed to transform leaders of tomorrow today by highlighting family values and celebrating parents as role models and heroes in life who proactively unleash our children’s potential through self actualization, intentional living and powerful leadership centred on love and high purpose. She expresses this passion to bring out our authentic best through her roles as an international speaker, writer, transformational corporate facilitator, executive and parent Meta-Coach, Neuro Linguistic Programming trainer, business woman, wife and mother. Please visit www.dryvonnesum.com for more information.