

# Spirit at Work - Ten Frequently Asked Questions

*These notes are taken from a talk that I gave recently. Organisational strategies are not created in isolation, but depend on the context of the world around them. Over the last decade or more, there has been a growth in public awareness around health, environment, and social responsibility. People are beginning to question the relationships between large corporations, their employees, and society as a whole. One consequence of this questioning is a growing expectation that work WILL be a personally fulfilling experience. Spirit at Work is about that fulfilment.*

## 1 Is it something religious?

Not exactly! It's about drawing on your beliefs and using them to guide you in the decisions that you take and your actions at work. Some people have well developed "religious" beliefs while others don't, but the idea of "spirit at work" applies to all.

## 2 What exactly do you mean?

Some beliefs don't need to be "spiritual". Personally, I believe that everyone has the potential to learn new things. I also believe that it is a part of my role as a manager to encourage them to do so. This can guide my decisions and actions but isn't necessarily spiritual. I might also believe that there's a common purpose to all life on earth and that we all have a part to play in this grand design. If, as a manager, I see that an element of my role is to help people find their part and play it, then that is "spiritual" and it is an aspect of spirit at work.

## 3 Do I need to believe in God?

No. Although it is perhaps easier to relate to the idea of "spirit" if you do have some sense of a "higher force", there are compelling arguments for connectedness towards nature and people that certainly do not require belief in God.

## 4 What are the benefits?

It's easy to claim great benefits, but harder to prove them. Some are directly quantifiable; others aren't. Some are anecdotal; some are directly observable. But the person who needs "proof" is missing the point. Whatever your "religious" beliefs, spirit at work is about being prepared to accept that people who are "connected" to their work are happier, more creative, highly productive, more fulfilled and likely to make a bigger and better contribution to society and the world as a whole, than their counterparts. There's evidence that companies that embrace spirituality, have been among the longest survivors in the corporate world - some even dating back to the 1700s. Do you need more benefits than those?

## 5 What will our 'customers' see?

An organization that has this "connectedness" tends to exhibit some common traits: prudence, justice, moderation, hopeful anticipation, positive regard and courage. Although the words may differ, customers usually describe them as thoughtful, caring and open.

## 6 How do our beliefs influence our work?

Most of us rely on "models" of the world around us to help us make sense of things and take decisions. This happens - there's nothing we can do to stop it, but we can refine those models and improve the sensitivity with which we use them. Another phrase to describe these is "personal constructs" - we construct them and they are personal to us. Our beliefs directly affect these and therefore profoundly influence our work.

## 7 The symptoms of not being "engaged" with my work

People who can't distinguish between personal constructs and facts tend to be overly dogmatic, trying to force others to adopt their point of view. They tend to be either highly cynical or blindly focused on their

world. Interestingly, those who are "engaged" can distinguish between themselves and others better, they don't try to force their views on other people and can see their work in the context of a bigger picture. Their contribution is usually greater, more effective and less volatile.

## 8 "Oh no! My boss is an evangelist!"

Spirit at work has nothing to do with "evangelism". If your impression of your boss is that they are, then re-read answer (7)! The word "spirit" is meant in a much wider sense than the religious one. The six organizational traits in answer (5) actually come from ancient Greek philosophy and have no direct connection with a particular Faith.

## 9 How does it affect Managers?

Working in a connected organization is far healthier in the long run. The people you work with are more mature psychologically. The styles of management you need to call on are less confrontational. Generally decisions are more considered, involve wider consultation, and are communicated in a less "dictatorial" style. Obviously this calls for a certain style of management.

## 10 Where can I find out more?

If you visit my website ([www.grahamwilson.org](http://www.grahamwilson.org)) and click the link for Spirit at Work you'll find details of books, readings, websites, and networks to join. Alternatively, check out my leadership coaching offer as a way of exploring your own situation.

**For details of my leadership coaching, public speaking and other activities, please check out my website:**

[www.grahamwilson.org](http://www.grahamwilson.org)

or telephone me on 07785 222380.

© 2005 Graham Wilson Ltd  
V1.0 (UK)

## Leadership Coaching

An effective development route for executives:

- **To acquire gravitas and develop presence** - enabling them to demonstrate the qualities that help get things done incisively and with compassion, but without aggression.
- **To find their purpose in life.** Aware of the need for strategic thinking and a clear vision, leaders of all kinds can nevertheless find themselves caught up in a whirlwind of daily problems.
- **To re-align themselves.** Recognising that they aren't quite achieving what they want to achieve - we look at what led to their success in the first place and what works now. Finding there are better ways of managing situations so they are clearer, energised and more effective.

## Leadership Coaching

I meet clients at a variety of locations around the country, including London, Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Surrey, Hampshire, Northamptonshire, Warwickshire and the West Midlands. Appointments can be made to suit your timetable - many clients preferring to meet outside their core working hours.

## Graham Wilson

For the last 17 years, I've worked with the leaders of organisations, and their people, helping create a vision of what their world could be like, and then helping them to achieve it.

Believing in the enormous potential that people have I love to see them discover and tap into this in every aspect of their life.

Whilst both a futurist and strategist, my work has its roots in organisation development and is shaped by my training as a psychotherapist, sports coach, and minister.

You can read more about my background, leadership roles and my books on my website:

[www.grahamwilson.org](http://www.grahamwilson.org)

49 Freehold St  
Lower Heyford  
Oxfordshire  
OX25 5NT

T: 07785 222380  
E: [coach@grahamwilson.org](mailto:coach@grahamwilson.org)  
W: [www.grahamwilson.org](http://www.grahamwilson.org)

# SPIRIT AT WORK FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Guide  
for Today's Executives

GRAHAM WILSON  
LONDON • OXFORD