

## ***Age quod agis.***

"He who is false to present duty breaks a thread in the loom, and will find the flaw when he may have forgotten its cause." - Henry Ward Beecher

I remember a Latin phrase we were taught in elementary school: *Age quod agis*. In essence, the phrase means do what you do and do it with all of yourself. When we do what we do with our *whole* self, it means working from our center, our core i.e, our heart and our soul (not only from the neck up).

When we work from our *heart* and *soul*, we're **not** talking about some airy-fairy, new-age, soft, religious, theological or subversive approach to work. We are, however, talking about a deeper approach to work.

This deeper approach to work focuses on excellence, ethics and fairness. This deeper approach to work asks questions - some very tough questions - such as:

How can business promote sustainability and the environment?  
What is a fair and just wage, compensation package, or bonus?  
When are outsourcing, downsizing, and layoff efforts justified?  
How does business promote the family?  
How can I find my true calling?  
Is there an enlightened economics?  
How can we restore trust in the workplace?  
Can our workplaces be more ethical and humane?  
Does work have to be dull, boring, routine and meaningless?  
Can the "anti-Dilbert" exist in the workplace?  
Is the separation of spirituality and the boardroom a given?  
Can people do the right thing without management control?  
Why do so many, when they reach the top of the ladder, find it resting against the wrong building?  
How do we respond to unethical conduct?  
How do we make money *and* meaning?  
How do we resist the bribe and kickback way of doing business?  
How do we avoid gossip and bullying and demonstrate humility and respect?  
What will I do with the rest of my life after retirement?

Warren Buffet said, "I've seen a lot of not-very-good human beings succeed in business; I wish it were otherwise." Now, there are probable many Warren Buffet-type-thinkers among us who would agree. Moreover, with the downturn in the economy, many folks are discovering not only are they doing just fine with less, and being happier, but now wonder why they needed more in the first place.

*Age quod agis* is about integrating spirituality with business an integration many are discovering is long overdue given the throes of the economic and financial crises we're currently experiencing. There's no question people are becoming more introspective about who they are and how they are at work given the cataclysmic storm of the unethical, immoral, and illegal shenanigans we read and hear about daily.

Given the unhealthy, unhappy, fear-based, and worrisome workplace environments many folks find themselves in, the creative energy that flows from the heart and soul might just be one catalyst that can transform today's workplace into a healthier, more engaging, more ethical place to spend the majority of their waking hours.

## **What we do with our whole self**

"To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment." - Ralph Waldo Emerson

Research and self-reports show more and more workers are seeking calm and well-being in the midst of the storm by going inside and reevaluating their values and motivations and discovering that when they come to work (and life) from a deeper, non-egoic place, they experience a greater sense of meaning, fulfillment, and well-being than what they formerly experienced when driven by ego-based needs and wants, driven by greed and speed. Many are finding that spiritual and humanistic assets are becoming greater desires than wealth and material gain and serve as greater psycho-emotional supports than sustaining an image or persona.

Coming to work with our whole self means focusing on who you really are, your being and your character within your team, your group, your organization and in your civic and social community.

Coming to work with our whole self means consciously and proactively dealing with the tension between spirituality and spiritual values, and work.

Coming to work with our whole self means choosing to take the time to look up from our spreadsheets to consciously focus on people and values, to speak out for what's right, and by making an effort to act with compassion.

### **Personal discontent**

In today's workplace, constant competition, fear, vigilance, gossip, bullying and stress are leading to personal unhappiness, dissatisfaction and dis-ease not a very productive way to live life at work. Coming to work with ones whole self fosters calm and provides a perspective that gives one an edge which is a genuine resource in overcoming angst, agitation, anxiety and aggression. Coming to work with a heart-soul-mind-driven focus provides mental, emotional, physical and psychological balance and harmony a balance that supports a workplace characterized by "we" instead of "I vs. you", and engenders a strong ethic of personal responsibility for, and self-management of, "who I am" and "how I am" at work.

### **Discernment**

Coming to work with one's whole self fosters a spiritual practice known as discernment - a way of quieting the mind and moving away from the constant din and chatter - internal and external - and allows the wisdom of the unknown (intuitive "right knowing", "right understanding" and "right action") to arise from within instead of always forcing our logical-comparative mind to answer questions and find solutions which are often quick, simple and...wrong.

### **Dealing with people**

The most intangible and complex element in any business equation is the people. *Age quod agis* means dealing with people by first dealing with yourself; as Socrates suggests, "Know thyself". Having a firm grasp of one's core values, inner motivations and purpose for being on the planet, coupled with a emotional maturity are what allow one to show up in integrity, authentically and real. *Age quod agis* when combined with effective leadership and management thinking creates a high-performing workplace where ethical behavior, trust and trustworthiness, respect and meaning inform one's day-to-day do-ings and be-ings.

*Age quod agis* means acting with wisdom, discernment, integrity, empathy and compassion qualities that emanate from a deeper self - qualities that are not co-opted by greed or speed. *Age quod agis* means doing the right thing, from moment to moment, with your whole self.

### **So, some questions for self-reflection are:**

- Do you check your heart, soul and values at the door when you show up at work?

- Do you deal with the "whole person" in your relationships with others at work (and at home, and play)?
- Do you ever take time out during your workday to be quiet (walk mindfully, reflect, meditate...)?
- Are greed and speed the two major driving forces at your workplace?
- Do you feel others see you at work as a "whole" person or simply as a "function" (how about at home)?
- Do you feel workplace decisions are generally ethical and fair? What about your workplace decisions and choices?
- Do "anti-Dilberts" exist in your workplace?
- Does your organization give attention to social and civic concerns?
- Do people commonly do the "right thing", even when no one is watching?
- Does your organization take your family into account in some way, shape or form? If not, how does that make you feel?
- Does your organization make efforts to reduce the dull and routine and add meaning to work. Do you?
- Do "not-very-good human beings" succeed in your workplace. How so?
- Can you envision a workplace where the *Age quod agis* approach to work is "business as usual"?

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