

Living Vision: The Human Spirit at Work Pt.5

Several years ago, a friend shared this story with me...

A sojourner came upon three individuals working with stone. Curious as to what the workers were doing with the stones, the traveller approached the first worker and asked, "What are you doing with these stones?" Without hesitation the worker quickly responded, "I am a stone cutter and I am cutting stones." Not satisfied with this answer, the traveller approached the second worker and asked, "What are you doing with these stones?" The second worker paused for a moment and then explained, "I am a stone cutter and I am trying to make enough money to support my family." Having two different answers to the same question, the sojourner made his way to the third worker. The would-be philosopher asked the third worker, "What are you doing with these stones?" The third worker stopped what he was doing, bringing his chisel to his side. Deep in thought, the worker slowly gazed toward the traveller and shared, "I am a stone cutter and I am building a cathedral!"

Let's imagine that I was the owner and architect of this cathedral, and I have a vision: "Build to Inspire". Here we are articulating not only the end vision, but also the *means to the end*. Clearly, world peace would never be achieved through the means of war. I want to create a building which engenders a moment of inspiration in people, awe, an experience of being touched by beauty, elegance, form and simplicity. As the architect, I have the skills and knowledge to construct buildings - the form in which I want to express my inspiration and to inspire. Yet, I understand that I am unable to accomplish this undertaking without others who will dedicate their energies to not only my vision but *their* vision.

"Wanted: Craftsmen who have the energy to create buildings which people stop and admire, admiring the beauty of human creativity."

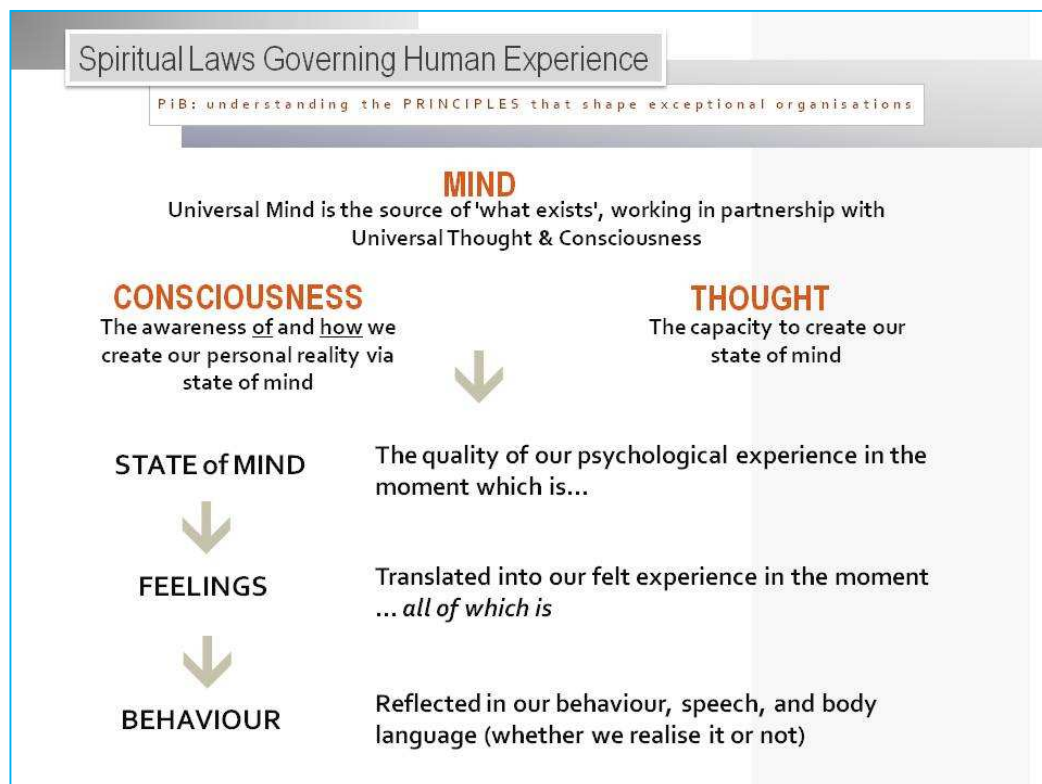
What if the three stone cutters applied for the job? Moreover, that skilled craftsmen are highly sought after, being in demand not only in your local area but throughout the entire region... what would you do? If this was not enough, that the ready supply of quality material at a good price is difficult to procure, while cheap and ready supplies of lesser quality material floods the market... what would you do? All this, and you have just been advised that your skilled project manager has been seriously injured and is not be available for the next three months... what would you do?

Do you take the three stone cutters and put them to work? Do you concede that certain standards have to be sacrificed in tough employment and supply conditions? As for a project manager - would it be "Well, we'll all have to step up and work harder won't we?"

All the above is nothing new for business is it? The various challenges we speak of frequently have to be faced and dealt with head on... here we return to spirituality once more: the quality of our State of Mind to affect decisions (good or bad). They, the decisions, are ALL about the inner quality of our mind in any given circumstance. If we are overwhelmed, that is directly linked to our thinking. Conversely, clarity and calm is more likely to produce sound and creative responses. Spirituality; or psychology? Does it matter? The interpretation will largely depend on your attitude - the skeptics among us rolling their eyes and asking, "What is your point?!"

Spiritual Laws Governing Human Experience

My point is that without the spiritual laws of MIND, CONSCIOUSNESS and THOUGHT we would not have a psychological experience - or for that matter any experience of life. Our brain is an organ of our physical body and brain activity is essentially spiritual - a unified partnership.



Business reality (any crisis or circumstance) is faced via State of Mind: a view or stance that will enable THE VISION to flourish or die. Reality is not determined by the circumstance.

As we look to our fictional owner/architect, we know that the quality of his actions, the relationships he has with his stakeholders, and the degree to which the original vision is fully realised, will be determined by the quality of his State of Mind. All of these outcomes rely solely on the quality of his thinking (his consciousness or self-awareness), which in turn determines his ability to access creativity in response to whatever life presents. From mental illness to creative genius - it is all a spiritual matter that relies on the three spiritual laws of Mind, Consciousness and Thought. Cutting stone, providing for our families, creating grand cathedrals - or all three... it is determined by the craftsmanship of our understanding of own minds!

In summary

Let's characterise the three stone cutters for a moment...

The first stone cutter may be a person who fails to see the influence of his thinking on his experience. He is less self-aware and more likely to be influenced by external motivation (e.g. carrot or stick). He is less emotionally buoyant, more self-interested and given to mediocrity. He is driven by "What's point?"

Our second stone cutter may be more self-aware of his State of Mind. He is more reflective on life. Hence, he is more self-reliant, motivated to fulfil personal goals, has an expanded sense of responsibility and accountability, has the ability to be an engaged team-player, see the bigger picture; and the capacity to change. In short, he enables a greater good to emerge.

The third stone cutter sees the bigger picture and at the same time, knows that each 'chip' is contributing to the end game. He knows how to select the right stone for its position and how to cut it so that its full contribution is realised. His apprentices in turn find the artist in themselves. His tools, and the company's, are well looked after because they are an extension of **his art**. He is reflective and so contributes to his understanding of self and others and as the years go by, he becomes a student of his and others' humanity. Will he be perfect? No. He may be a 'perfectionist' whom others describe as slow and fussy. Yet, he is steady, reliable, persistent and most of all, an artist in life and work.

What of the owner/architect? One thing is certain. His vision "Build to Inspire" will solely depend on his and others' State of Mind - every decision made and every relationship built; in good times and bad.

In *The Ethics of Excellence*, Price Pritchett said, "Excellence is a process, not just an outcome. Sure, we have to hold out for high standards in the products or services we provide. The goods must be more than 'good enough.' But so must our approach - our methodology, the way we do business and the way we deal with people. How could the ends be considered excellent if we can't be proud of the means?"

Our State of Mind is the only means by which we bring about our vision, and our State of Mind is realised by three powerful and universal spiritual laws. ■ ■

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