



Spirituality in the Workplace – A Measure of Success?

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ABSTRACT

In 1995, we explored how executives in a large, federal government, law enforcement agency perceive and define success. In 1999, Mitroff and Denton studied how executives in the private-sector view spirituality, religion, and values. The paper distinguishes between the two studies and illuminates their similar findings. Also, it defines spirituality, suggests a link between spirituality and the notion of success, and proposes a conceptual model that contains four components of both success and spirituality.

Introduction

In the past few years, the interest in spirituality in the workplace and in life in general has seen such an increase that, according to a January 2000 Washington Post article, the publishing industry has dubbed the last 10 years 'the decade of the soul.' So far this interest has been supported mainly by the popular press. In the academia, defining and studying spirituality was "definitely outside of the traditional scholarship" (Mitroff and Denton, 1999, p. 17.) In management, our bias toward Positivism, or toward "objective" and empirical knowledge, and our belief that spirituality closely relates to religion and thus should be excluded from the workplace, prohibited its systematic investigation. Recently, however, the realm of the scientific inquiry has expanded and thinkers, researchers, and academicians are beginning to give the topic serious attention.

Generally, the claim is that employees are longing to express their spirituality and employ it at work. This claim is well documented in Mitroff and Denton's recent book (1999), *A Spiritual Audit of Corporate America* and in their article (summer, 1999), *A Study of Spirituality in the Workplace*. Based on their two-year long study, Mitroff and Denton conclude, "People are hungry for models of practicing spirituality in the workplace...they are searching for non-religious, nondenominational ways of fostering spirituality" (1999, p. xvi.)

This claim is also documented in a study we conducted in 1995. Our study was similar, but not identical, to Mitroff and Denton's. We focused on success, they – on spirituality; we used the focus group methodology, they used mainly interviews to collect and analyze data. As we discuss in detail in the following section, the primary difference between the two studies was the nature of the participants. Yet, whether they discussed spirituality, as they did in Mitroff and Denton's study, or the notion of success, as they did in ours, the studies' participants repeatedly indicated the same longing -- to be a "whole person" at work. In the two studies, the executives voiced a clear yearning for the opportunity to express their full selves at work.

The similarity of the findings surprised and intrigued us. Indeed, it raised the question, Are the two concepts, success and spirituality, related to each other and if so, how? The paper



distinguishes between our study and Mitroff and Denton's and illuminates the two studies' similar findings. Also, it defines spirituality, suggests a link between spirituality and the notion of success, and proposes a conceptual model that contains four components of both success and spirituality.

Our and Mitroff and Denton's Studies

For two years, Mitroff and Denton conducted a study with senior managers and executives to explore their views on spirituality, religion and values. In response to the question, What gives the participants the most meaning and purpose in their jobs, the study participants provided seven categories (ranked from highest to lowest in priority): (1) the ability to realize their potential; (2) being associated with an ethical organization; (3) interesting work; (4) making money; (5) serving humankind; (6) service to future generations; and (7) service to the immediate community (summer 1999, p.85.) Throughout the study, the executives used terms such as being connected to others, oneness, and wholeness to define spirituality, and most of the interviewees were eager to talk about their feelings of spirituality and the need for it in the workplace.

Mitroff and Denton used both personal interviews and mailed surveys to collect data. Together they conducted 68 interviews and analyzed 131 questionnaires. But, as they indicated, "to get a feel for the overall qualitative results" (1999, p. 36) and to comprehend the complexity of spirituality, they used mainly Mitroff's 36 in-depth interviews. Most of their participants were senior executives and senior human resource executives who were chosen for the study because they worked in business alliances or associations that promoted spirituality in the workplace or because of their sensitivity to the broader and deeper needs of employees. The majority of their interviewees came from for-profit organizations.

Our study took place in 1995, when a large, federal government, law-enforcement agency arranged to send their mid-to-top level managers to a customized management program designed by our college. The managers were to acquire knowledge, improve their skills, and enhance the agency's performance.

During the 1990s, the federal government, like businesses in general, was undergoing major changes. Different terms were used to describe these changes: downsizing, right-sizing, reinventing, reengineering, restructuring. Yet, all these management initiatives had the same practical consequences: budgets were cut, positions were eliminated, and the workforce was drastically reduced. Uncertainty marked the times. In numerous discussions in and out of class, the management-training participants expressed frustration, criticism, and cynicism. They consistently voiced a concern regarding their ability to carry on their duties. Explicitly, they worried about the work itself and how it will be done. Implicitly, the deeper issue was their own sense of success. The association with a downsizing organization damaged their feeling of pride, a feeling they had enjoyed for a long time.

But what was "success" to this group of mature managers? How did they define it and to what extent was it work and career related? To what extent were non-work factors such as family and social life part of success? We chose the focus group methodology to explore and collect



data on the concept. Generally, focus groups are used to determine perceptions, feelings, and thoughts of participants on an issue or to gain unique insight into existing beliefs and attitudes. Focus group interviewing is particularly common in research that investigates the process of forming ideas, thoughts, and feelings and thus is common in exploratory research (Kruger, 1988.)

Forty-nine executives participated in our study. As mid and senior level employees in a large, federal government law enforcement agency, these executives spent the past 20-25 years committed to enforcing the immigration and drug laws of the nation. Most of the participants worked their way up in the organization and reached their current positions after spending long and risky periods literally 'on the street'. Although all were public servants committed to contributing to the "common good", due to the nature of their work, they had experienced both the good and dark sides of life. Thus, unlike Mitroff and Denton's executives who were spiritually inclined, or at least sensitive to deeper needs of employees, we presumed our participants were realistic and pragmatic. In addition, while Mitroff and Denton asked specific questions about meaning and purpose in the workplace, our study provided the participants ample opportunities to discuss the materialistic -- money, property, positional power, and status symbols -- and not the spiritual side of life.

Four all male (31 men) and three all female (18 women) groups participated in our study (we expected the care-givers role of women and the providers role of men to affect the way men and women define and perceive success. This was the reason for the single-gender grouping. For a more detailed discussion of the relationships between gender and perceptions of success, see Ashar and Lane-Maher, 1998). As mentioned, the participants were attending a two-week management program designed by our college and had volunteered to spend one lunch break in our conference room. (There was no reason to assume differences between the 49 volunteers and the rest of the trainees. In fact, the 49 volunteers composed about 90% of the trainees who attended classes at the time of the study.) We purposefully did not inform the participants of the study's topic, but rather, invited them to discuss a "management related" issue with us. Each group was asked the same route of questions. Additional probing questions were asked to expand on issues and ideas that were raised. Each session lasted about one and a half hours and was audiotaped. After each session, and after consulting the tapes and the notes each of us took, we entered the data into the computer. We then discussed, summarized, and evaluated the data, incorporating our impressions and preliminary analysis into a detailed report.

Using Focus Groups in Exploratory Research

In a 1989 article, Eisenhardt discusses the process of building theories from case study research. Her premise is that not only case studies can be used to generate theory, but that in some cases, building theory from case studies might be advantageous. She notes:

Theory developed from case study is likely to have important strengths like novelty, testability, and empirical validity, which arise from the intimate linkage with empirical evidence. Second, given the strengths of this theory-building approach and its independence from prior literature or past empirical observation, it is



particularly well suited to new research areas or research areas for which existing theory seems inadequate (pp. 548-49).

Eisenhardt suggests an elaborate eight-step process that case study researchers should follow if the cases they study are to be used to generate theories, build constructs, and refine concepts. Even though we used the focus group and not the case study methodology, we still followed the steps Eisenhardt requires for theory-building research. In the paragraphs below we discuss these eight steps and show that we adhered to them closely.

Step 1: Getting Started. The first step is to clearly define the research question. Ideally, theory-building case study should not be linked a priori to any theory or hypotheses. Thus, it is the defined research question that specifies for the researcher the kind of organization to be studied and the kind of data to be gathered. At the outset of our study, our research question was clearly defined: How do mid- and senior-level executives in a large federal government agency perceive and define success?

Step 2: Selecting Cases. The researcher selects cases for theory building for theoretical - not statistical - reasons, and therefore the cases are not chosen randomly. Rather, s/he chooses them in order "to replicate previous cases or extend emergent theory, or...fill theoretical categories and provide examples of polar types" (p. 537). Although perceptions of success were studied before (Romney et al., 1979; Korman, Wittig-Berman, and Lamg, 1981; Derr, 1986; Gattiker and Larwood, 1988; Chusmir and Parker, 1991; Parker and Chusmir, 1991 and 1992), how mid- and senior-level executives perceived it was never studied. Moreover, most of the success studies to date imposed pre-conceived definitions of success on their participants, denying them the opportunity to express their own views and feelings on the topic. In selecting our study's participants, we not only intended to fill a theoretical category, i.e., to measure executives' perceptions, but we also wanted to capture the voices - both words and images - that executives use to define and discuss success.

Step 3: Crafting Instruments and Protocols. Theory-building researchers use multiple methods - interviews, observations, archival information - to collect data. For theory-generation, they need soft data, i.e., data rich with description and anecdote. Also, they use multiple investigators and thus enjoy two advantages. "First, [multiple investigators] enhance the creative potential of the study...Second, the convergence of observations from multiple investigators enhances confidence in the findings" (p. 538). We concur with Eisenhardt: Our collaboration allowed us to compare our notes of the focus group findings to insure empirical validity. Furthermore, it stimulated and enriched our reading and interpretation of the data.

Step 4: Entering the Field, or overlapping data analysis with data collection. "A striking feature of the research to build theory from case studies is the frequent overlap of data analysis with data collection" (p. 538). Writing down comments and impressions next to the data and interjecting the data with preliminary analysis allows researchers the flexibility and the ability to fine-tune the data collection. Like the case study approach, focus group interviewing is flexible by nature. Facilitating the focus group session, we probed and clarified issues, added sub-questions and dug deeper in our questioning-route to gain more insights and better understanding of the topic.



Step 5: Analyzing Data. Analyzing data is "the heart of building theory from case studies" (p. 539). It refers to the researchers' ability to become intimately familiar with each case as a stand-alone entity and to their ability to keep detailed write-ups of data and analysis for each case. With no exception, at the end of each of the seven focus group sessions we entered the data into the computer. Discussing the data, we shared our thoughts and impressions, and looked for emergent themes and trends. At the end of each session, we produced a detailed report that incorporated data and preliminary analysis.

Step 6 and 7: Shaping Hypotheses and Enfolding Literature. These two steps are similar to the hypothesis testing and the literature review that are part of the traditional research process. After examining our findings, we formulated a conceptual model of success and then anchored our study in both the success and spirituality and management literature (Conger, 1994; Dehler and Welsh, 1994; Neck and Milliman, 1994; Bolman and Deal, 1995; Briskin, 1996; Leider, 1998.) Also, we looked for relationships within the data, for example between gender and perceptions of success (we judged the strength and consistency of these relationships to be insignificant, see Ashar and Lane-Maher, 1998).

Step 8: Reaching Closure. One main issue in reaching closure is how many case studies to include in theory-building research. Eisenhardt notes: "while there is no ideal number of cases, a number between 4 to 10 usually works well" (p. 545). If each of our focus group session is considered a case study, our study included 7 cases.

The area we explored -- how mid- and senior-level executives perceive success -- is a new research area. According to Eisenhardt, the appropriate research methodology for new research areas is the qualitative, theory-building research:

This [qualitative, theory-building] type of work is highly complementary to incremental theory building from normal science research. The former is useful in early stages of research on a topic or when a fresh perspective is needed, while the latter is useful in later stages of knowledge (p. 549).

The final product of this methodology "may be concepts...a conceptual framework...or propositions or possibly mid-range theory" (p. 545). Indeed, to gain new insights and better understanding of the issue at hand, and more importantly, to be able to suggest a new model of success, we employed the qualitative, theory-building methodology proposed by Eisenhardt.

Results

One of the more important questions in the question route was - what is success? Each group was asked to define it. The 49 participants generated 40 definitions of success. A careful analysis revealed that the 40 definitions referred to four main components of success, and thus we grouped the definitions into four categories: a sense of accomplishment, balance, contribution to society, and contribution to co-workers.

Before elaborating on the four categories, a note seems in place concerning the 40 definitions. When asked to define success, the 49 participants generated more than 40 statements.



In congruence with the idea of the focus group methodology, many statements were an elaboration of previously mentioned statements. Ideas stimulated ideas, and repetitions were unavoidable. In constructing the four categories, we used the 10% rule as the cutting point. To say, we recorded and transcribed all the statements that were generated in the four male and three female focus groups. This resulted in two lists of definitions--a men's list and a women's list. Only those ideas that were mentioned at least 10% of the time on each list, were included to compose a category. Other definitions were excluded. For example, one of the participants stated: "success is being in a position to command respect". Even though the idea of respect was elaborated by the next speaker, "you earn respect from the right people - that's success", it did not develop any further, was dropped from the discussion shortly after, and did not become a category.

Definitions of Success

Sense of Accomplishment

Like Mitroff and Denton's sample that listed "the ability to realize your potential" as the most important for a sense of purpose and meaning at work, our sample too indicated that a major component of success was a sense of accomplishment and self-realization. In both the female and male groups, a sense of accomplishment was the most frequently mentioned component of success (see Table1). The message received from our participants was unambiguous: Success is a personal feeling that is determined subjectively. It is not how one is perceived by others but rather - how one feels about himself/herself. It is a sense that comes, and is sustained, from within. To use the participants' terminology:

"There are many measures of success. At the end of the day, are you happy with yourself and with what you have accomplished? If you are satisfied and happy with yourself, you are pretty much successful."

"The feeling has to be self serving; what makes me, not the organization, feel good."

"To me, success means self satisfaction...making the most of your potential."

"Success is in the eye of the beholder...is achieving a goal that you set for yourself...I really don't look at other people and what they define as success."

"There are two segments to success. One is what you feel about yourself. Second, how others perceive you. To me, it's what you feel about yourself."

The participants rejected external criteria of success such as income, position, and status symbols. As one of them said explicitly: "90% of the people define success in terms of career...the societal norms and influences...this is how you measure success...but we didn't skew it in this group". Instead of external criteria, they used an internal yardstick--a sense of accomplishment and self- realization—to define success.



Balance of Work and Family

The second most frequently mentioned component of success was "balance". To be successful, one needs to balance work and family. For the female participants, a sense of accomplishment and balance were equally important indicators of success (31% of the definitions referred to each component). The male's definitions were more self-centered: To feel successful, one needs, first of all, to reach self-fulfillment.

"If work is balanced with other things in my life...I would not call myself successful if I only had material success."

"Success is a balance of life and work."

"Family and work are as important to success."

"I can mention celebrities like Audrey Hepburn, etc., but also ordinary women who balance family, work, and religion and community service responsibilities. For me, success is a combination of being able to contribute in all areas."

Contributions

The testimony regarding contributions was compelling. Thirty five percent of all the statements (14 out of the 40, see Table 1), mentioned contribution--to both the community and colleagues--as a success indicator. The message that came from the respondents was consistent across the gender groups and clear: A sense of accomplishment and caring for one's family is not enough. To be successful, one needs to be other-oriented and generous. One needs to go out and participate in the life of the community outside his/her own family.

Mitroff and Denton's executives expressed similar view. Three of the seven categories that enhanced their sense of meaning and purpose referred to service and contribution. Specifically, their executives mentioned contribution to humankind, future generations, and the immediate community as components of spirituality.

Some of the statements regarding a general contribution generated by our sample were:

"Success is not power or glory. Success is measured by contribution."

"Work is only one part of success. Success is what you contribute to society."

"...Gives more than he takes...does for others...doesn't want to be thanked...The truly successful takes less and gives more."

"Success is independence. It gives you the capability to help people you want to help and live the life you want to live."



"Two people come to mind: Mary Jackson, the first black astronaut. She is a shining star and a role model...Oprah Winfrey...She struggled and overcame many barriers. She reinvests in the community."

"Success is being able to contribute to society."

Other statements referred not to a general contribution, but to helping colleagues:

"Success is this professional satisfaction. It's the ability to get things done for your employees...almost paternalistic."

"Success is getting to the top of the heap and getting others there, too."

"Success is having an impact. By impact I mean, affecting policies and procedures, helping other women and minorities."

"Success is when you start influencing others...Control gives you the ability to give to others, to give back."

Table 1
Frequency Distributions of the Four Components of Success

Component of Success	Female		Male		Entire Sample	
	F	%	f	%	f	%
Sense of Accomplishment	5	31.3%	12	50.0%	17	42.5%
Balance	5	31.3%	4	16.7%	9	22.5%
Contribution to Society	3	18.8%	4	16.7%	7	17.5%
Contribution to Colleagues	3	18.8%	4	16.7%	7	17.5%
Total	16	100.0%	24	100.0%	40	100.0%

Stories of Success

In addition to definitions, we asked the participants to share stories that illustrated success (either personal or other people's stories). In the four all-male focus groups (31 participants), fourteen stories were told, recorded, and transcribed. Each story's synopsis is listed in Table 2. The stories are not listed in the order they were told. We reordered them, to ease the discussion that follows.

A close look at the stories told by the male managers and executives revealed that the first eight illustrations had two common elements: Success was work related and involved interaction with others. The action taken by the successful people--those actions that illustrated their success--were other-oriented. People were considered successful based on their public interaction with other people at work. Moreover, the interactions implied, some more explicitly than others, care for and contribution to others, or at least a positive impact on others. In stories 9



to 13, success is illustrated through balance. Ordinary people, neighbors, wives, who lived a balanced life, were successful.

Table 2
The Stories' Synopsis (male participants)

Story	Synopsis
1	150 people came to the retirement party of the successful person
2	Manager presented an idea to an hostile group and convinced the group
3	Manager received disturbing, personal news during a meeting but kept his emotions under control
4	Manager who consistently shows concern for employees
5	CEO of a big corporation who makes an impact on society
6	Entrepreneur, just started his company, makes an impact
7	A messenger, working in the agency, who is active in the community
8	Manager who disciplined a problem employee by talking from heart
9	Neighbor, an attorney, keeps a balance between work and family
10	Senior executive who balances career and family
11	My wife who balances career and family
12	My father who had a balanced life
13	My daughter who developed a career and is getting married
14	My brother who is focused, is not turned off

The 18 female participants generated seven success stories. Table 3 lists each story's synopsis. Again, the stories were reordered. In six of the seven stories, success was illustrated by a sense of accomplishment. Successful people were those who knew themselves, i.e., their capabilities, potential, and dreams and who pursued and achieved them. The successful people must have had a sense of accomplishment and self- realization.

Table 3
The Stories' Synopsis (female participants)

Story	Synopsis
1	Friend, an unhappy teacher, retreated, self-reflects, gained self-knowledge and courage, became an artist
2	Colleague, systems analyst, knows who she is
3	My mom, at 50 fulfilled her dream, went back to school, became a nurse, retired at 78
4	Neighbor, a secretary, she aspires to be the best at what she does
5	Myself: I look at the agents I trained and see them do a good job
6	Myself: I received my graduate degree and was invited to enroll in the SES prestigious training
7	Myself: my retiring mentor finally complemented me



The male managers' success stories illustrated the components of balance and contribution, while their definitions of success emphasized a sense of accomplishment. The female's case was the reverse. Their success stories illustrated a sense of accomplishment as an indicator of success, while their definitions stressed both a sense of accomplishment and balance. Across the gender groups, the four components of success--a sense of accomplishment, balance, contribution to society and to colleagues--were reinforced through definitions, stories, and discussions.

The four components of success, at least as reported publicly by our executives, suggest that success is multi-dimensional. The seven focus groups' participants made it clear that to be successful, one cannot focus on self only and cannot be involved solely in work. And thus, what emerged from the data is a four-cell matrix that contains the concept of success. The two dimensions of success are (1) the focus of success: self or others; and (2) the context in which success occurs: work or non-work.

The first dimension, the focus of success, describes the four components in reference to either the self or others. The second dimension, the context of success, describes the four components in reference to the setting, work or non-work, in which success takes place. In this model, a sense of accomplishment refers to rewards received from work. Obviously, this is a limited view because a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction can be derived from many sources. However, for senior level managers and executives in a big organization, work is a major source of self-fulfillment.

Table 4
Model of Success

		Focus of Success	
		<u>Self</u>	<u>Others</u>
Context of	<u>Work</u>	Sense of Accomplishment	Contribution to Colleagues
Success	<u>Non-Work</u>	Balance	Contribution to Society

The model of success that emerged from the data implies simplicity yet wholeness. The study's participants portrayed a rounded profile of success. According to them, the successful person is a common, functional individual who aspires a sense of accomplishment and who cherishes relationships, care, and connectedness. It is an individual who tends to him/her self, his/her family, and his/her professional and social community. It is an attainable profile that, indeed, some of them believe they have achieved. To use a statement made by one participant toward the end of the focus group session: "I personally felt successful going to work and accomplishing, coming home to enjoy the family, being involved in the community. I chose to do these things."



Discussion and Conclusions

Our data and the data reported by Mitroff and Denton came from executives in different industries doing different jobs. Mitroff and Denton interviewed four distinct groups of senior managers and executives, mostly from the for-profit sector. Denton interviewed 32 supporters of greater spiritual development in the workplace, and Mitroff interviewed 36 senior managers and executives mainly from organizations with traditional economic goals. Our 49 senior managers and executives came from a large, law enforcement agency of the US government. Also, the data came as a response to slightly two different questions. In our case, What is success? In Mitroff and Denton's, What gives you meaning and purpose in your work?

Despite these differences, the message that emerged from the various groups was loud, and clear, and similar. The senior managers wanted the opportunity to express their "whole person" at work; to realize their potential while carrying out their jobs. At the same time, they wanted to help and contribute to others. They wished less compartmentalization and more wholeness could be expressed at work.

When asked to define "spirituality," Mitroff and Denton's executives indicated that spirituality is "the basic feeling of being connected with one's complete self, others, and the entire universe" (summer 1999, p. 83). A typical response stated that "spirituality is the feeling of this interconnectedness... is giving expression to one's feelings... (it) is inextricably connected with caring, hope, kindness, love, and optimism" (summer, 1999, p. 89). This definition is similar to what Schmidt-Wilk, Heaton, and Steingard (2000) term "applied spirituality". According to Schmidt-Wilk, Heaton and Steingard, pure spirituality is a personal, inner, and deep domain within us that we can experience as a state of extraordinary calm and happiness, of awareness that is beyond the ordinary waking consciousness, or as a state of harmony and oneness with the universe. Applied spirituality, as the term suggests, is the practical aspect of pure spirituality. It is "the outer domain, the practical applications, and measurable outcomes that automatically arise from an inner experience of pure spirituality" (p. 580). Behaviorally, one way to manifest applied spirituality is through acts of respect and care for others.

When asked to describe "success," our executives claimed it is one's ability to realize his/her potential at work while simultaneously contributing to others. The successful individual, they argued, is well integrated; it is someone who can express his/her "whole person" at work. In the two studies, participants defined either spirituality or success as an inner feeling, indicating the same two elements -- personal substance and connectedness -- as its components.

The findings imply a link between the two concepts, success and spirituality, and raise an important question: Is the link sample specific, as Maslow and also Handy (1997) argue, or is it more general, as Remen (1988) argues? More specifically, is the search for spirituality exclusive to successful people who have already fulfilled lower level (physiological, safety, etc.) needs and are now ascending to higher ones, or is it a basic and common search that can be generalized to all people?

Maslow, and more recently Handy, believe that spirituality follows material success. Freed from financial and economic concerns, successful people can move on to an "elitist" need



and search for meaning and purpose through contribution, service, and care for others. In an interview with Leader to Leader to discuss the search for meaning in the workplace, Handy (1997) argued:

We generate more money than we really need to live on. And money becomes a rather crude measure of success...The first half of life is certainly a struggle to prove that you can survive and then can achieve some special capacity. But the interesting thing for me is that given that you can survive, that you are successful, what is it you can contribute? (p. 17).

Following Maslow and Handy, one might argue that our study's participants were experienced senior managers who have already achieved a high level of income and status. That at this stage in their life their inner-directed search for spirituality merely reflects a life cycle stage and age-related seeking. In other words, one might argue that the apparent link between success and spirituality in our findings is sample specific and cannot be generalized to other samples. Yet, following Remen (1988) a contradictory argument may be proposed.

In her highly popular article, *On Defining Spirit*, Remen (1988) asserts that spirituality is not morality or ethics; nor is it the psyche or religion. Rather it is an essential need of human nature. "The spiritual is inclusive. It is the deepest sense of belonging and participation. We all participate in the spiritual all the times, whether we know it or not" (p. 41). Unlike Handy, Remen does not view spirituality as a "luxury" that succeeds material success. To the contrary, she believes it is an inner domain, basic, and personal. It is absolute and universal. Therefore any discussion that explores serious issues like success in one's work will pertain to spirituality, regardless of the socioeconomic status or the life-cycle stage of the sample discussing it. The longing for belonging and participation, and the use of language that denotes wholeness, care, and contribution, will be expressed by almost any sample that explores serious issues like success in one's work.

The distinction between the need for success and spirituality, on the one hand, and the need for self-realization, on the other, should be made clear so it can offset skeptics' question, What's new here and how is the search for spirituality and success different from motivation research? Our point is: While Remen, and Schmidt-Wilk, Heaton, and Steingard advance the notion that the aspirations for success and spirituality are basic and revolve around the search for meaningful existence and connectedness, the aspirations for self-realization revolve around the attainment of high personal goals. Indeed, we suggest that the question, How are we all part of the same river is different from the question, What makes one swim hard and fast in that river.

To validate the conceptual model of success that emerged from our research, and in particular, to further investigate the link between the search for success and spirituality, our study needs to be replicated. That is, to find out whether the way managers define success is sample specific or general, more studies with other groups of managers are needed. If managers in different sectors, different stages of their career, and different professional areas perceive spirituality as a part of success and aspire for a sense of accomplishment, balance, and contribution, the theoretical soundness of the four success criteria and the link between the two concepts will be enhanced. Moreover, if executives across different industries and different types



of jobs long for the same aspiration -- the opportunity to express their full selves at work -- it's probably time to pay attention to their longing.



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