Chapter 10
Yogis in the Office: Interviews with Workplace Practitioners

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Abstract The Sanskrit term for work as part of spiritual practice is karma-yoga or uniting with the Divine through action. The Gita points to an even higher dimension of work: bhakti or acting from a starting point of love and devotion. How bhakti, the yoga of love, factors in business is the subject of this chapter.

In this chapter, we meet three people who seek to reestablish transcendence in the workplace, referred to here as "workplace yogis." (Yogis: Individuals who seek to unite (yoga) with the Divine by following one or more of the authentic yogic paths such as *hatha* ("seats" or postures), *jnana* (contemplation), and *bhakti* (devotional service).) The first is Sonia Chopra, a Washington, D.C.-based corporate consultant who relies on daily meditation to inform her assessment of clients. The second is New Yorker Kenny Moore who in 1984 left the monastery that had been his home for 18 years and within 2 years of his departure was appointed mediator for a major energy corporation. The third is Rukmini Walker who spent 23 years in Hindu ashrams as personal servant to the deity of Krishna, the embodiment of a loving divinity in yoga culture. Rukmini later discovered that her meditation on the form of love had given her an unexpected advantage in management.

> *Yogis contribute more than those whose work is indifferent, formulaic or selfish. In all circumstances, Arjuna, be a yogi.*
>
> Bhagavad Gita 6.46

Arjuna, the hero of India's ancient epic story *Mahabharata*, confronts workplace conditions so stressful he has a nervous breakdown. He loses focus, panics, breaks out in a sweat, and collapses catatonic at his station. Traumatized by the enormity of his job and the ethical dilemmas it poses, he hands in his resignation. Arjuna's

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good fortune is having an employer named Krishna who understands his crisis and guides him through the meltdown. Less than 3 h later, after a discussion revered today as the Bhagavad Gita or "Song of the Divine," Arjuna is back at work, reconciled to the responsibilities before him and imbued with self-confidence. Whatever the outcome of his assignment, he has had a change of vision and rises to the challenge. What lodges in his mind is Krishna's inspiration: "Armed with yoga, stand and fight."

The Bhagavad Gita is the world's preeminent yoga text, predating Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* by at least a thousand years and defining nearly a dozen forms of yoga practice. Over the generations, scholars have positioned the Gita variously as a religious doctrine espousing the virtues of self-awareness and enlightened action, a literary poem of devotional fervor, and a political tract responding to historic tensions over nascent Buddhist ideology. Followers revere the Gita as a message from the Divine to humanity. By all accounts, the Gita is also a dialog which took place on a battlefield, not in an office, yet the insight revealed by Krishna applies to both: there is more to our calling than meets the eye. Accepting scholarly estimates of the Gita as 3,000–5,000 years old, it would seem that human nature hasn't change much. We withdraw from adversity, underestimate its value, and misread its message of growth. The Gita advocates changing our perception of adversity by looking beneath surface appearance. As a treatise on spirituality at work, this ancient text offers surprisingly relevant perspectives on the twenty-first-century livelihood as integral to self-realization. The Gita declares—and there is no ambiguity on this point—that work is a spiritual path to enlightenment.

The Sanskrit term for work as part of spiritual practice is karma-yoga or uniting with the Divine through action. The Gita points to an even higher dimension of work: bhakti or acting from a starting point of love and devotion. How bhakti, the yoga of love, factors in business is the subject of this chapter.

> Of all yogis, those who act with love are considered by me to be highest of all.
>
> Bhagavad Gita 6.47

The Diminished Self

Prior to capitalism, by some accounts, work had always been a part of spiritually progressive life. Max Weber, a founding father of modern sociology, paints an idyllic portrait of premarket life. In the eighteenth century, he describes life was predictable, and the time spent working was moderate, perhaps 5–6 h a day, and during certain seasons considerably less. Earnings may have been small—enough to lead a respectable life and put something away for harder times—but the short work day permitted socializing, prayer, and communion with nature. Weber goes on to describe the demise of this idyllic workplace when manufacturers realized they could increase profits by directly hiring weavers and other craftspeople, thereby

turning peasants into laborers. "Only an unusually strong character," he writes, "could save an entrepreneur of this new type from the loss of his temperate self-control and from both moral and economic shipwreck" (Weber 2002: 29–31).

Weber wrote at the beginning of the twentieth century, yet his conclusions concerning the effects of capitalism on human character mirror those of current investigations into corruption in American business. In general, these reports declare, Americans have embraced the propaganda that success and consumption are life's purpose. Furthermore, they seem willing to sacrifice their integrity to achieve it (Callahan 2004: 31–32). The "downsizing" of self-image from a transcendent being to a consuming machine resulted from Enlightenment assumptions that science, secularism, and the rational mind would supplant religion and usher in an era of prosperity and peace. The opposite has proven more accurate. Nearly half of the world's population lives in poverty, the last decade alone witnessed more than 100 armed conflicts in 70 locations around the globe, and environmental studies warn of dire consequences if the world's ravaging of natural resources is not quickly curtailed.

In this chapter, we meet three people who seek to reestablish transcendence in the workplace, referred to here as "workplace yogis."[1] The first is Sonia Chopra, a Washington, D.C.-based corporate consultant who relies on daily meditation to inform her assessment of clients. The second is New Yorker Kenny Moore who in 1984 left the monastery that had been his home for 18 years and within 2 years of his departure was appointed mediator for a major energy corporation. The third is Rukmini Walker who spent 23 years in Hindu ashrams as personal servant to the deity of Krishna, the embodiment of a loving divinity in yoga culture. Rukmini later discovered that her meditation on the form of love had given her an unexpected advantage in management.

All three look out on an interdependent and problematic world and ask what it means to them. How can they contribute to the healing of a spiritually depleted culture? What follows are their responses to engagement with that world.

We Are Not Our Jobs

> Those who understand themselves clearly know they—the soul—remain aloof, while the mind and body go about their activities.
>
> Bhagavad Gita 13.30

The yoga texts paint a detailed portrait of the permanent self, the spark of consciousness animating the physical body. Roughly the equivalent of "soul," the *atma*

[1] Yogis: Individuals who seek to unite (yoga) with the Divine by following one or more of the authentic yogic paths such as *hatha* ("seats" or postures), *jnana* (contemplation), and *bhakti* (devotional service).

or deathless self, is a joyful, effulgent being. Without this conscious engine, the body ceases to function. The *atma's* nature is *sat-chit-ananda*: ever-existing, fully self-aware, and joyful. By virtue of its immortality, the *atma* is also resilient to external trauma. Still, stress caused by ambition and the pursuit of money numbs that resilience and compromises the *atma*'s natural equanimity. At death, the *atma* leaves the body and moves into another body fashioned around the thoughts and deeds of that previous life. The more souls transmigrate from one lifetime to another, the more they identify with the body and its work. "To the extent that who we are is defined by our job," writes Buddhist teacher and software entrepreneur Lewis Richmond, "anything that disturbs that identity can represent a serious threat" (Richmond 1999: 59).

The yoga texts urge, "Wake up. No more illusion: go to the eternal reality. No more darkness: go to the light. No more birth and death: become again immortal."[2] The three men and women interviewed for this chapter share that inspiration:

> Those on the yoga path are resolute: their aim is one. The intelligence of those less self-aware is many-branched.
>
> Bhagavad Gita 2.41

What does it feel like to be immortal and self-realized and how would that state of full awareness affect workplace behavior? In the above verse, the Gita describes such an enlightened state as *vyavasayatkmika-buddhi*, steady minded or resolute. Workplace yogis, whatever their status on the food chain, perform as agents of change. They remain cautious about falling into self-doubt, jealousy, and fear of vulnerability. They know how to summon invisible resources when confronting such emotions through prayer, meditation, or other contemplative practices that evoke commitment to the task at hand. "It is not the mountain we conquer," Sir Edmund Hillary once said, "but ourselves."

A yogi views work dispassionately, asking how to best serve the moment. That's hard when confronting unfair or abusive behavior, but by literally breathing through the moment of crisis, a yogi moves the emotional clouds aside to reveal hidden opportunity. And we're always in crisis, so that's a handy skill. Cardiologist Dean Ornish once remarked that some of his patients swear a heart attack was the best thing that ever happened to them. The crisis forced them to focus on health and make changes they would never have otherwise made. If progress is made not by avoiding crisis but by managing it properly, then yoga culture's contribution to crisis management begins with lesson one: as eternal, unchanging consciousness our self-worth is not dependent on results in the office.

[2] *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* 1.3.28.

Company Policy: Mantras

Sonia Chopra knows about commitment. Ms. Chopra is founder-president of a marketing and consulting firm specializing in India-related partnerships. From childhood, she was raised on the Bhagavad Gita but describes that it was only after moving to America that she began to value her upbringing. She particularly appreciates knowing what to do when facing a conflict of interest between her convictions as a devotional yogi and the needs of a client.

"You can sense in an initial meeting whether a potential client cares about the consequences of their corporate behavior or not," she says. "If my impression is that they are only looking to enhance their bottom line by hook or by crook, then I move politely away. Usually I explain that other projects are monopolizing my time and that I'm not available just now. I stick by my values and refuse to do business the wrong way.*

"That's hard, especially in a down economy, but there are always opportunities," Chopra explains. "One door closes and another opens. You can live with yourself if you do the right thing. What yogis call karma functions almost like an equation in physics: equal and opposite reactions. That's a good reminder to live your life conscientiously, knowing you'll face reactions down the road."

> Common folk are inspired by the deeds of great souls: whatever standards great souls set by example, all the world pursues.
>
> Bhagavad Gita 3.21

Chopra relies on chanting mantras and a diet of vegetarian meals sanctified with prayer as her daily practice. "Initially it was a problem," she says, "because I chant in the mornings and I insist on that hour to gather my energy for the day. At first my husband didn't get it. 'You've got so much to do. How can you sit there so peacefully as if nothing is going on?' My answer would be, 'It's this or antidepressants.' For me to maintain peace of mind, that hour in the morning is critical. Chanting, cooking, and offering meals on my home altar—these are things that my family has come to appreciate."

Chopra says that her devotional yoga practice is "a series of moment by moment choices that add up to how we live our lives" and that each decision carries great weight. Something as commonplace as buying soap can be done mechanically or intentionally, as part of lived yoga. "What kind of company makes this product?" she asks herself when shopping. "Do I want to support this company with my business? If you are awake to the divinity of everything, then your mind gravitates to that kind of thinking. Eventually it becomes second nature. Now, automatically I look for products that don't use animal testing. I go to stores that sell locally made goods. I'll support that kind of company policy. I'll support people who, like me, are trying to do the right thing. Our children reflect that example. My daughter is very particular about not buying food made with rennet, which is an animal extract. The small things add up."

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*Endnote: See line 463

> They are the true yogis who, by comparing with their own lives, see the equality of all beings in their happiness and distress.
>
> Bhagavad Gita 6.32

Such a yogic perspective can have unexpected applications. One of Chopra's clients makes a revolutionary low-cost water filtration system. In many parts of the world, the device is a lifesaver. "Somewhere in the world," Chopra says, "another child dies every eight seconds from lack of drinking water. That the equivalent of eight Jumbo jets carrying two hundred passengers each, crashing every day. People aren't generally aware of how great the water crisis has become globally. People are drinking from filthy wells and lakes because there are no other sources of water. They are killing themselves, and they know it, but they have no choice. They would prefer to die of disease than thirst."

Chopra's client had a solution: a low-cost hand-operated device which takes contaminated water and purifies it to drinkable condition in less than a minute. By minimizing their profits, the company put the device within affordable reach. To encourage locals to help distribute the water purifiers, management prints a wisdom saying on the side of each device. In India, it is a verse from the Bhagavad Gita which says that the Divine can be perceived as the pure taste in water (BG 7.8). "People seeing that simple message," Chopra says, "have become inspired to do more. When you add the spiritual piece, that's when life starts to change. And without it, what do you have? All you need to do is interact for even a little while with people who are anxious for power and success and you see how shallow life can be. I'm not putting anybody down. You have to see them as the product of a heartless culture. These are people who deserve compassion. It's so pathetic what this culture does. I feel empathy with them because, well, I've been there myself."

A Monk in the Boardroom

Kenny Moore doesn't think of himself as a yogi but as a priest. In essence, the two callings trace parallel tracks. He entered a monastery at age 18. Fifteen years later, he was ordained. Soon after, he left the monastery to find his way in the larger society, and the experience of going back into the secular world was devastating.

"What did I feel? Shock. Inadequacy. Fear. Depression. In one sweeping event, your whole identity is wiped out. I mean, I had a very clear, high place in the social structure—I was revered! Then I had nobody and was going for job interviews. But what could I do for a company? Give a homily? Pray?"

His job search led to a position as special assistant to Bob Catell, the CEO of Brooklyn Gas and Electric (soon to be renamed KeySpan), one of the country's largest energy providers. The company delivered energy to millions of customers in New York and New England. Moore retired in 2010 to dedicate himself to teaching, but during his tenure the company had more than 12,000 employees, and he was their liaison with management.

"As a divine plan nothing could be funnier than taking a person with a religious discipline and putting him in that kind of environment," Moore says. "They brought me in from the outside and figured I must know something about performance reviews and so on. I didn't have a clue. What I did know was that the accountants were still stuck with 'aiding employees,' 'listening to their feelings,' 'learning organization,' and that's not what the workplace is about. When I spoke with people, nobody asked me business questions. They ask me spiritual questions."

"Spirituality at work isn't about hosting prayer groups or Bible study sessions," Moore says. "I don't think the business world is ready for that, and I'm not sure it should be. The separation of church and state continues to be a viable model in such a diverse world. I believe the Divine is more interested in having us acknowledge our God-given talents and using them for the betterment of others and ourselves. There's something inherently holy about embarking on that effort." (Cattell and Moore 2002: 234)

> A sober person is not bewildered by change or transformation, not even by death.
>
> Bhagavad Gita 2.13

Kenny Moore wasn't the only one going through a transformation. So was the company. Because of mergers and market deregulation, KeySpan was in the middle of dramatic change. Like the company's obsolete storage tanks, the energy business as they had known it was being blown apart. Employees lived with the threat of downsizing, anxiety over working for different employers, and fear of an unknown future. If this one-hundred-year-old gas company was going to survive, it would have to transform. Right from the start, Moore's advice was spontaneous and radical. Change, he argued, starts not with a beginning but with an ending.

"I thought, why don't we do a corporate funeral? Bob thought I was crazy."

Catell agreed to the plan, and company executives and employees filed in to the auditorium where they were greeted by an unusual sight. On stage, Catell stood in front of a Styrofoam headstone engraved with the words "Brooklyn Gas, R. I. P." There were flowers and candles. Kenny Moore stood to the side wearing his old priestly stole. This was a familiar scenario for him, a corporate equivalent of "The Exercise for a Happy Death" he had performed each month in the monastery.

Moore then brought a graphic artist into the KeySpan cafeteria to help executives sketch out a mural of how they envisioned the future of the company. He brought in a stand-up comic to help teach improvisational skills. The unorthodox strategies worked, and the transition took place with minimal disruption.

Moore credits his love of spontaneity to an aggressive form of cancer that nearly killed him and to a heart attack that led to a quadruple bypass. "Two near-death experiences have taught me that it's not worth waiting to try to be who you are," he says. "I show up with a sense of surprise because I don't know why I'm here or what I'm supposed to do. I'm always open to where things might go. I have

no business plan. Life is improv and one of the rules of improv is whatever is given, you take it. Don't question it; don't judge it—go with it. That's enlivening and fun."

> Life as a spiritual being is lived joyfully.
>
> Bhagavad Gita 9.2

Every Monday morning Moore would stroll down the street from KeySpan to a local florist and order flowers for two employees whom he picked sometimes for good deeds, sometimes at random. The flowers arrived with an anonymous card: "You may think no one knows, but we do. Thank you for caring so much about being here—from someone who knows."

In Kenny Moore's spiritual view, what's good for the spirit is good for the company.

Moore's philosophy echoes the perspective of the Gita that there is more to workplace challenges than meets the eye. "Sure we've got to earn a living and sure we have a job to do. But there's other stuff going on," he says. "We have been given gifts, and we have been given obligations, and happiness lies in bringing those two together. That has social implications. Aristotle said, 'Where the needs of the world and your talents intersect, therein lies your vocation.' We have to be connected to some larger issues. Just saving our own souls is a little myopic."

> Work performed without ego, with determination and enthusiasm, and without wavering in success or failure is work in goodness.
>
> Bhagavad Gita 18.26

The Feminine Mystique

Rukmini Walker shares Moore's sense of God's imminence in detail but less of his high intensity over finding it. She wears her spirituality like an old sweater, comfortable and roomy. She is the same age as Moore yet seems much younger, an ageless blend of Victoriana and Hindu mysticism, angelic and constantly smiling. Shuttling between her three clothing boutiques in metropolitan Washington, D.C., Walker is poised, relaxed, and graceful.

Like Moore, Rukmini spent many years in a faith community. Unlike Moore, she describes returning to secular life not as a break with the past but as a "continuum" in which little changed from the routine of her former life. Humanistic psychologist Abraham Maslow used the phrase "peak experience" to describe a condition of at peace with oneself (Rukmini's "continuum") and of being at home with one's life. "As [the individual in peak-experience] gets to be more purely and singly himself, he is more able to fuse with the world, with what was formerly not-self, e.g., the lovers come closer to forming a unit rather than two people, the I-Thou monism becomes more possible, the creator becomes one with his work being created…" (Maslow 1968: 105).

By age 15 in 1968, Rukmini was already reading popular literature—in particular, books by American mystic theologian Alan Watts and German poet-philosopher Herman Hesse—in search of answers to life's grand questions. Oldest of three children born to nonpracticing Jewish parents, Rukmini remembers watching from the window of her affluent home in the suburbs of Chicago as people went off to work and thinking, "Why are they working so hard? They go to work, they come back—and then they die. Why? It made no sense to me."

In 1968, she met Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, a revered teacher of *bhakti* or devotional yoga, and became his student. "The broadness of how Prabhupada spoke was very attractive to me," she says. "When he spoke about Jesus as also being our guru—that type of religious inclusive understanding really hit home."

Twenty-five years later, Rukmini and her husband, also a *bhakti* practitioner, decided the time had come to leave ashram life and earn a living. "We sat in our car, not knowing what to do," Rukmini remembers. "We didn't have a clue about finances. So we offered a little prayer: 'May the rights doors open and the wrong doors close.' Mostly, doors kept slamming in our face. We were like rats in a maze, forced to go in directions we'd never imagined and had never planned."

> Every endeavor is tainted by some imperfection, just as fire by smoke. Do not give up the work born of your nature, however imperfect.
>
> Bhagavad Gita 18.48

The maze led them first to renting a small freestanding kiosk in a shopping mall where they sold a limited inventory of handmade arts and crafts. That kiosk led to another, and in 1994, they opened their first fully stocked store in Reagan International Airport, which they named As Kindred Spirits.

"We had no idea what we were doing," Rukmini says. "We just kept reciting this little prayer and then sitting back in amazement at how things were snowballing." Their first store did well, and within a year, they opened a second in Virginia and then a third the following year just a few blocks from the Pentagon. For the past six years, their stores have been included among the top 100 Retailers of American Crafts.

Rukmini points to three factors that validate her choice to go into business. One is the visceral satisfaction of seeing customers connect with spiritual teachings in her stores. "I can put a beautifully illustrated Bhagavad Gita in my store near the Pentagon or a book by Thich Nhat Hanh such as *Peace Is Every Step* and watch those books go into the hands of people leaving for places like Afghanistan. It's immensely rewarding." The second is the convenience of owning a home close to their stores, which allows her to perform daily services before work. The third is financial independence, which has permitted her to take time off for interfaith projects. She sits on steering committees for the Washington National Cathedral's women's programs. She serves as cosponsor, along with the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, of an annual series of Vaishnava-Christian dialogs. As representative for Hinduism to the Interfaith Conference of Washington, D.C., she is called upon to speak at international events such as the United Nations Global Initiative of

Women Religious Leaders. These many avenues of interaction with other religious communities fulfill her and enrich her daily meditations.

When asked what challenged her most coming out of an ashram, she answered in terms of balancing the material and spiritual sides of her life. "I wake up and I'm at war with the forces of time. It's a constant struggle," she says, "with nature pushing in different ways. The Bhagavad Gita describes three *gunas* or qualities of behavior: goodness, passion, and ignorance.[3] Sometimes you're pulled in one direction, sometimes in another. I want to be working in goodness, and that's a daily battle. I mean, I'm a grandmother—and I've made such little progress, really, internally. Jung talks about the energy of youth, and the flip side is the cynicism of old age. So maybe we can avoid becoming cynical old people. Those are the aspirations of my heart."

"The Christian terminology hits home for me," Rukmini said. "I feel so much like I'm in a place of desolation, and I long for *consolation*. I want to hear the voice of God. I want to be used as an instrument of God. Rumi uses the image of a hollow reed—to be a hollow reed and have the voice of God blowing through you. I feel that's the goal of my life, but I'm so far from there, from hearing God's voice and having my own realizations at every moment, and I want that so badly. That's what I live for, and I fear complacency. I love what I'm doing, owning stores and connecting with beautiful handwork made by talented artists—that also feeds my spirit. But it doesn't go as deep. If I could do anything for the next two weeks, I'd fly to India and go on retreat to read and study and chant and try to hear the voice of God—to get some communication from the other side.

She described the sensation as "an anxious yearning to see God." Bhakti-yoga texts view God not as an impersonal force but as a transcendent person who is visible to bhaktas (advanced yoga practitioners) whose only desire is to serve Him with devotion. Bhaktas experience "anxiety in separation" (*vipralambha*), which provokes an exquisite longing that is exalted in sixteenth-century Bengali avatar[4] Chaitanya.

> O my Lord, when will my eyes be decorated with tears of love
> Flowing constantly when I chant Your holy name?
> When will my voice choke up,
> And when will the hairs of my body stand on end
> At the recitation of Your name?
> O Govinda (Krishna, the Divine), feeling separation from You
> A moment seems to me like twelve years or more.
> Tears flow from my eyes like torrents of rain
> And the world is vacant.[5]

Rukmini's devotion to a personal divinity should be studied by those seeking to inspire employees. It has moved her to noticing treasures in the details of life and to

[3] *Gunas*: Qualities of material nature, akin to primary colors, which mix in various proportions to create the landscape of human behavioral patterns. *Gunas* are described in Chap. 14 of the Gita.

[4] *Avatar*: Literally, "one who descends," an incarnation of the Divine in human form.

[5] *Sri Sikshastakam* of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, verses 6–7.

attend to the possibilities that surround her at every moment. Power does not intimidate her, and she speaks truth knowing a higher force guides her life. She credits bhakti-yoga with helping establish clarity to her day. In particular, she speaks of the resource of daily practice and moving away from work in order to better engage with it. "It doesn't necessarily have to be done in a monastic environment," she says, "but it takes some disengagement from the world, some withdrawing, to be able to pursue that."

When asked how her yoga informs her day at work, she offers a simple example. "When I hear people in my stores talking about the latest episode of Donald Trump's show 'The Apprentice,' I just feel like I don't need this man's *sanga* [company]. I don't want him obscuring my vision. I don't share his modes of nature or his values, and my training tells me that people who think this is a role model for success are going in the wrong direction."

If management theory seeks to emulate natural sciences with quantifiable results and accurate measurements of human behavior, the stories of these three workplace yogis suggest how difficult that task can be. How are failure, uncertainty, and disengagement to be quantified as tools of management? Can measure be taken of immeasurable behavior such as divine intervention, grace, and a soul's aspiration to rejoin God in a transcendent world—inner states of being that Sonia Chopra, Kenny Moore, and Rukmini Walker accept as building blocks of a higher reality and which underlie their effectiveness at work?

Similarities outweigh differences in their stories. All acknowledge acquiring valuable skills from their years of spiritual training (one at home, one in a monastery, and one in an ashram) particularly with regard to refined communications and an awareness of deeper purpose in working environments. Chopra speaks of an equanimity that allows her to walk away from lucrative but objectionable assignments, knowing there are greater opportunities ahead. Moore credits spontaneity and improvisational techniques with accomplishing more than predictable business plans and mechanical models of operation. Walker reminds us that stepping back from the immediacy of the moment for chanting, contemplation, or a retreat can defuse tensions and bring clarity to on-the-job performance.

It is significant that none of the interviewees condemns American free market democracy. Perhaps they ascribe to Churchill's dictum that "democracy is the worst system in the world, except for all the others," and if so they have chosen to support the workplace by encouraging its spiritual reformation and not its overthrow. It is also significant that moving into business never diminished their faith. Rather, entering the "real" world seems to have brought them closer to their spiritual goals. All three have, by their own assessment, become empowered to look into adversity and find connections with a spiritual calling. Consultants and analysts would do well to study the cognitive dissonance these three encountered and examine how that tension became a rich source of insight into the value of their spirituality in the larger world.

The Future: Insight Before Oversight

Recent history has precipitated other efforts to reform the workplace. After the debacle of Enron and Arthur Anderson, for instance, the Sarbanes-Oxley regulations were implemented to impose on business stricter oversight, greater accountability, and transparency of operations. The heavier regulation of corporate practices was meant to create firewalls to future corporate malfeasance. In retrospect, it did little of the kind. Greed still rules Wall Street, as recent meltdowns have attested, and stricter oversight has stimulated even more cunning methods of circumventing regulations.[6]

For a business to survive and grow in the twenty-first century, insight must precede oversight. By the accounts in this chapter, that would begin by training executives to let go of the insecurities that since the inception of capitalism have bound us to acquisition and competition. That is a tough mandate, thoroughly un-American, but one that is facilitated by inspired exemplars of an enlightened life such as our interviewees. They are not naïve idealists: they work in businesses that range from $2 million to $7 billion per year in gross revenues, and all three know coworkers who have been devastated by falling profits and failing economies. Yet they share an expanded definition of profit as more than a bottom-line equation. From their perspective, profit is not the purpose of enterprise but a by-product of enterprise conducted with integrity and respect for the divinity of life.

A place for practitioner-business leaders such as the "workplace yogis" we meet here is slowly emerging, yet as Minister Emily Click cautions, "Teaching with a praxis model is messy" (Click 2003: x). People who practice anything that has a name—yoga, religion, and spirituality—are likely to be viewed as less than objective, conversional, different, and at odds with a business's financial purpose. Still, serious belief structures are no less disciplined than business courses and within their own environments also form effective executives capable of guiding larger employee populations. For yogis who choose to stay in the world, bringing spiritual skills to work goes beyond an exercise in political correctness. It is an interpretive challenge aimed at revitalizing business and industry and establishing their relevance in the twenty-first century.

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[6] "The Social Contract" epilogue to Peter Ressler and Monika Mitchell's acclaimed book *Conversations from Wall Street* offers two models of enlightened practice for the financial services industry that conform closely with precepts of the Bhagavad Gita (Ressler and Mitchell 2011: 197).

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