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Human Economics: An Emerging Science that Supports Spirituality in the Business World

A conversation with Darwin Gillett

Recently I had an enlightening conversation with Darwin Gillett, President of [Gillett Associates](#). Gillett Associates emerged in 1981 initially providing corporate direction and productivity improvement services to multi-national corporations. This was achieved in part through Dar's pioneering work on strategy development processes. By the 1990's Gillett Associates evolved to mentor business owners using a framework of corporate direction, strategic corporate governance, Human Energy Capital, living values, and collaborative management. Approximately ten years ago, Dar developed the concept of Spiritual Capital that he explains eloquently in his booklet, "SPIRITUAL CAPITAL: Building Vibrant Businesses that serve Shareholders and Humanity".¹ He holds a BA in economics from Yale University and a MBA in Business Economics & Finance from the University of Chicago.

Dar's definition of spirituality is free of religious dogma. He views the sense of purpose people feel, above and beyond any material gain, at the heart of their spirituality. The other component of Dar's definition includes human connection with one another and all living things. He has successfully demonstrated that spirituality can be "harnessed" in the business environment as well as any other resource. His model involves incorporating Human Economics with Material Economics in business.

Human Economics & Human Energy Capital

Capital has been the source of wealth within a company and has historically taken the form of physical (material) capital, and more recently of intellectual capital. Human Economics is an emerging field that integrates and balances the traditional economic "equation" with deeper and emerging non-material dimensions. It manifests through human relationships, individual and corporate purpose, collaboration, creativity and innovation. Individuals are viewed and treated as whole and central to the business organization. The human resources of a business are recognized as the core of organizational success based on Human Energy Capital.

Human Energy Capital is expressed as the energy that flows through humans and our relationships, especially when we seek and are supported toward self-actualization and expression of our full range of talent. Human Energy Capital can be

further refined as Intellectual Capital and Spiritual Capital -- essentially the mind, heart and spirit each of us brings to our work environments or businesses.

Dar has stated, "Human Economics goes beyond material economics' focus on material assets and transactions. It addresses the human relationships that make up the company. These relationships and the human energy that flows through them are the essence of the organization, the foundation of the fully energized organization and the true source of competitive advantage."²

Spiritual Capital

The concept of Spiritual Capital builds upon Dar's definition of spirituality. In his explanation of this concept, Spiritual Capital has three components: emotional energy; heart power; and will power. Emotional energy captures enthusiasm, fun and spontaneity that results in workers who are creative, authentic and productive. Since emotional energy encompasses a range from positive to negative, it can be balanced constructively with heart power. Heart power has been underutilized in traditional business settings but as knowledge and service industries flourish, a desire to serve others, work among a team and form strategic business alliances leads to greater financial success while supporting the spiritual needs of people within an organization. Heart power manifests as passion, integrity, caring, courage, trust, and faith among business leaders, employees and customers. Will power is what it takes to get results - to make it happen. The three complement each other effectively and lead to the competitive advantage sought by so many businesses.

The business model based on Material Economics places shareholders in the highest esteem based on their ability to provide physical resources; customers, then employees follow in order of importance. In Human Economics, the priorities are shifted as exemplified by Bill Catucci. Mr. Catucci was the CEO who brought Unitel, a Canadian telecommunications company, back to life in the mid-1990's. He provided leadership based on purpose, serving the whole and being guided by values in combination with strategic governance, business process redesign and measurement. This resulted in Unitel becoming the leading telecommunications company in Canada and recipient of the Canadian Quality Award in 1999. In three years he was able to quadruple the company's worth to \$1 billion by re-energizing the people within the organization.³

It has been exciting to learn there is movement afoot that acknowledges and capitalizes on spirituality in the workplace. Since most adults in our society spend large portions of our waking hours focused on work and many of us do not find work fulfilling, the idea of becoming self-actualized through a full expression of our passions and talents in work and life is appealing. Often during coaching sessions, a client will discuss the challenges of balancing his or her work (as an employee or business owner) with other dimensions of life - there is almost a compartmentalization of work and other aspects of life resulting in a struggle to manage these opposing forces. The emerging science of Human Economics and Spiritual Capital shift the traditional work paradigm to unite all of the dimensions of a person's life.

1 Gillett, Darwin. "SPIRITUAL CAPITAL: Building Vibrant Businesses that serve Shareholders and Humanity". Available from the Institute for Human Economics' website: http://www.humaneconomics.org/members_download.htm. Members have access to articles written by Dar. Membership is currently free.

2 Gillett, Darwin. From Institute for Human Economics' website on 3/17/05: <http://www.humaneconomics.org/abouthe.htm>.

3 Gillett, Darwin. "Bringing a Company Back to Life - The Role of a CEO" . At Work. May/June 1999. Available from the Institute for Human Economics' website: http://www.humaneconomics.org/members_download.htm. Members have access to articles written by Dar. Membership is currently free.