

Centre for Spirituality and the Workplace



Re-Inspiring the World of Work

“Positively and strategically influencing the conversations and accomplishments about spirituality and the workplace globally”

October 2009

Re-inspiring the World of Work

The Centre for Spirituality and the Workplace is the first academic-based centre for spirituality and work in Canada and a world leader in the field. It exists to re-inspire the world of work – so that people can experience a profound depth in the nature and meaning of their own work and that of their organizations – so they are more aligned with their values; they're more connected with their purpose; and, they and their organizations are more productive and successful. Our intention is for all people to experience their work as a creative expression of their time here on Earth.

The Centre contributes globally by sparking and catalyzing an international network of organizations and individuals to collaborate on leading-edge research, innovative education, and initiatives that engage others in the inquiry of spirituality and work. All of it is nourished by our inspiration, encouragement, information, and rigorous thinking.

“Part of the narrative today of the condition of work is that it’s a place to go and earn your daily bread, but you have to give up part of your soul in order to do that. One thing we’re doing at the Centre is saying work can be a place that nourishes your soul and the souls of others, and that creates a much more sustainable individual and organization.”

Martin Rutte, Founder, and Chair, Board of Directors, Centre for Spirituality and the Workplace

Spirituality in the Workplace

We all hunger for a connection to something larger than ourselves. For many people that hunger is fed at home, at a place of worship, or through a personal spiritual practice. At the same time, many people wonder whether it's also possible to feed that hunger while they're at work.

At the Centre, when we say spirituality in the workplace, we mean a process of inquiry – one that enriches our intellectual, emotional and spiritual dimensions. We see this inquiry as an open, inclusive, and ongoing conversation that brings people together to explore. The conversation might include questions such as: How can we each bring our spiritual self to work and share it with our colleagues in a way that's respectful and accepting? How can we align our values and beliefs with the demands of our work? How can we use our work to find our meaning or calling in life? How can we nurture empathy and compassion in our workplace? What could we achieve in our work together if we were all connected to our true purpose, our deep spiritual calling?

As this conversation process evolves in workplaces it becomes broader and deeper, and can result in workforces that are aligned with a larger purpose, respect different religious, faith and spiritual practices, and are motivated to achieve meaningful goals.

World Leader

The Centre for Spirituality and the Workplace is a centre of influence in North America and the world. Housed in the Sobey School of Business at Saint Mary's University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, we actively collaborate with faculty and students at the School of Business, the Religious Studies Department, and in other disciplines. The Centre also works with leaders and workplaces, and other organizations in the field to explore the inquiry of spirituality and work.

Since the Centre's inception in 2004, we've taken significant steps towards re-inspiring the world of work. The Centre has:

- Built regular communications throughout the year with 800 people in 24 countries by email.
- Hosted two international conferences on Spirituality and the Workplace at Saint Mary's University.
- Reached out into the Nova Scotia community with 27 events in our speaker's series.
- Contributed to the development and implementation of two undergraduate courses at Saint Mary's University.
- Contributed to the publishing of more than a dozen research papers.
- Contributed to the work of four PhD students in the field of spirituality and work.

For more details about our accomplishments, please visit our website at www.spiritualityandtheworkplace.ca

Going Deeper and Broader

Looking forward, the Centre is being asked to go deeper and broader in its work – to increase its impact – to help change the way people and organizations work. We will devote our unique combination of entrepreneurial energy, academic discipline and global reach to four areas of leveraged activity.

Building and Nurturing Community

We will gather leaders together to share experiences and ideas about spirituality and work. The conversations will often be face-to-face, but they will also include virtual on-line interactions. Some will be large and public, others will be small and intimate – some will be at Saint Mary's University, others will take place in leaders' workplaces. For example:

The Spirituality and Work Leadership Learning Labs will be a special setting for nurturing new thinking, capacities and relationships among workplace leaders who are seeking to explore spirituality in their workplaces. Facilitated by Centre staff and leadership volunteers, and sparked by knowledgeable guests, the Labs will be a unique opportunity to reflect, explore and share – preciously rare activities in today's frenetic world of work. They will also be a source of support and community for leaders as they seek to transform their organizations ... and themselves.

Deepening and Sharing our Understanding of Spirituality and Work

We will conduct research studies, using methods from both business and academia, and we will gather stories of leaders who have made progress as evidence that can be used by others to make change. For example:

The Spirituality and the Workplace Leadership Stories Library will be an on-line collection of stories about leaders who have explored spirituality in the workplace and have transformed their organization (or part of their organization) as a result. The stories will serve as an inspirational resource for other leaders and students, and an archive for academics from which deeper research can begin. It will also serve as a focal point of a community of like-minded leaders through which they can connect with each other.

Introducing Students and Leaders to Spirituality and Work

We will develop and implement courses relating to spirituality and work that help transform leaders in their own lives and help them transform their organizations. The courses will be offered at Saint Mary's University and in workplaces. For example:

Religious Diversity in the Workplace is an interactive full-day course that will be offered to organizations to encourage reflection, conversation and understanding about people with different religious, faith and spiritual beliefs in the workplace. The course will use contemplation techniques and symbols, art and artifacts to spark conversation and learning.

Contributing Energy to an International Network

We will nurture and contribute energy to an international network of like-minded people through our global email list and our website, by collaborating on projects with people in other countries, and by assisting with the formation of centres like ours in new locations. For example:

www.spiritualityandtheworkplace.ca will be a hub of activity – providing information and sparking conversations and action – for people regardless of their location. People will be able to visit the site from all over the world to contribute information, research results and papers, ask questions, and participate in on-line discussions using blogs, videos and other methods.

Please Join Us

Please join us to re-inspire the world of work. We have a real opportunity to contribute to the change in the way people and organizations work. The hunger people feel for meaning and answers to the big questions in life has increased in our time. The door has opened wider to conversations about spirituality and work. We invite you to walk through the door with us.

Your donation will go towards deepening and broadening our work so that we can increase the Centre's contribution to workplace leaders and their organizations around the world.

“One of the alarming things is that many people who have had tremendously successful careers suddenly step back and say, ‘Why have I done all this?’ And it hits them, if you like, in the soul. And then they start to ask these questions, and they find that other people are asking these questions too.”

Dr. J. Colin Dodds, President, Saint Mary's University

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The Centre draws on the expertise and knowledge of members of its Advisory Board and Academic Advisory Board. The members come from Canada, the United States, England, Germany, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. For details, please visit our website at: www.spiritualityandtheworkplace.ca.

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