



Spiritual Principles in Strategic Alliances

WIIFM: What's In It For Me – The Alliance Manager?

(go to www.spibr.org/WIIFM_for_the_alliance_manager.pdf
for the most current version of this document)

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Why would an alliance manager be interested in using¹ spiritual principles and practices in the development and management of their strategic alliance?² My answer to this question is based on more than 20 years of experience³, and it is influenced by fundamental principles and probing perspectives, including self-actualization, spiritual awakening and being a transformational change agent.⁴ There is no guarantee that you will have the same results that I or others have experienced.⁵ The Universe uniquely individualizes life experiences and spiritual paths.⁶ However, as you embody spiritual principles and exhibit the resultant authentic behaviors, I can imagine you becoming more:

1. Naturally Connected – part of

Through simple spiritual acts, such as meditation, mindfulness, presence and awareness, we connect with self, others and the Universe. We are at ease with ourselves and with others. Whether we are in a large gathering or all alone, we are not lonely. We feel comfortable in our own skin. We are at peace. There is a certain ease others experience in our presence. This helps us authentically connect, which naturally fosters deep relationships.

2. A Practical Visionary – a seer

As we meditate and become more comfortable in the quiet presence of ourselves, we gain insight. There is something intrinsically powerful and wise at our core. Some spiritual teachers say that, given we are children of God and God is love, we must be love, too – at our core we are love. When we connect with our insightful wisdom coupled with love, it cannot help but inspire and enthuse us and others.

In quiet moments of reflection and meditation, we receive answers to our most vexing problems. As we deeply connect with the collective, we gain a vision of possibility. Given we are alliance managers, we are grounded in the practicalities of business. Thus, we can become practical visionaries, visionaries with our feet planted firmly on the ground. Our alliances are “where the rubber meets the blue sky” – where visions and dreams are realized *together*.

¹ Some people might object to the idea that we “use” spirit. Truth be told, as we *use* spirit, we end up being *used by* spirit; reciprocity is alive and well in the Universe.

² Given the spiritual topic teed-up in this document, you may need some context. To understand what I mean by spirituality, see www.spibr.org/spirituality.html and for my view on spiritual principles, see www.spibr.org/simple_truths.html. You might also want to check out two whitepapers focused on alliance management: one on the role (www.spibr.org/strategic_alliance_manager_role.pdf) and the other covering a transformational methodology that is simply focused on value (www.spibr.org/2-slide_methodology.pdf). These two documents will describe how spiritual principles and practices can be applied in the artful science of strategic alliance management. In addition, I have written a book *Spiritual Principles in Strategic Alliances: be the metaphor for metamorphosis; transform status quo mediocrity into greatness*, which was selected as a Best Practice by the Association of Strategic Alliance Professionals.

³ For a summary of my spiritual awakening framed in strategic alliancing, refer to www.spibr.org/joe_kittel_story.pdf.

⁴ Ref: Abraham H. Maslow; books that have influenced me (www.spibr.org/good_books.html); and *Change The World* by Robert E. Quinn.

⁵ Please read my spiritual disclaimer at www.spibr.org/spiritual_disclaimer.html.

⁶ Also consider another WIIFM document, with a different perspective on the value of spirituality, focused on how self-actualization can benefit both the alliance manager *and* his/her alliance – www.spibr.org/WIIFM_self-actualization.pdf.

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3. Improved Integrity – wholeness

We achieve great wholeness as we confront and heal personal integrity gaps. We increase in personal power as we align our thoughts, beliefs and actions. We no longer have anything to hide. We realize the value in confronting, rather than avoiding issues. This leads to greater **wholeness in life**, as we “love our work, work our love and live with devotion.”

4. Deeply Principled – doing what’s right

When we connect to and live from the truth within us, we are no longer living with the results of other people's thinking. As Steve Jobs said, we are no longer trapped by dogma.⁷ We intrinsically know what the next right thing is for all concerned. Often our unique insight causes us to take on difficult issues; our internal grounding makes this both possible and necessary. Highly ethical and principle-driven results naturally occur for us and our alliance.

5. Peacefully at One – at one in the midst

The simple idea that we are one, all on the same team, becomes intuitively obvious. With this is the realization that individual and collective success occur together. This is how true greatness is achieved. We become more committed to the success of others and the alliance at large than to our own individual success. Paradoxically, this will end up bringing us great personal success; and more importantly, it will bring us joy and peace.

When we are in a state of peacefulness, strong emotions do not scare us. We become increasingly comfortable receiving and expressing intense emotions. Our peaceful presence allows us to deal with difficult issues in relationships. Our growing peacefulness allows us to be comfortable and adaptive in the midst of the chaos that is often present in and around our alliance. We are okay being “the eye of the hurricane.”

We realize that spirit lives in the collective, in the midst of our alliance. As we tune in, as we pay attention to the collective as a whole, we hear a voice speak to us. In spiritual matters, words often fail us; in this situation, we realize that *voice* is also *light*. The voice of the collective is shared light. The light of the spirit in the midst neutralizes issues and reveals opportunities. This light helps us rise above issues that would constrain us; it has transcendental properties. It is also transformational; it changes problems into insights and clears the way to find new opportunities. There is real power when we do our work by this shared light that lives in our midst.

If we are in fact one, then giving and receiving is one thing. When we give of our self to another, we are actually giving *to* our self. In alliancing I have tested out a counterintuitive and arguably dangerous act I call “self-obsolence.” If I strive to give to you my wisest ideas, if I try to make it so you no longer *need* me, mystical things start happening: you have a natural compulsion to give back; and so as I gain wisdom, and as you start *wanting* me, rather than needing me, my virtual presence naturally expands. As I empower you, you end up empowering me; and between us we create a virtuous cycle of growth and love. In the midst of the process of self-obsolence, I end up obsoleting my lesser self for my greater Self, and we all gain power.⁸ Such is the power that lives in empowerment.

6. Co-fronting Difficult Issues – loving confrontation

With awareness and loving presence we can bring up difficult issues and take the resultant discussion to a positive outcome. We practice loving confrontation as we stay mindful of our oneness. I find it helpful to repeat a definition of Namasté when I am in a difficult conversation: “The god in me sees and rejoices in the god I see in

⁷ Ref: Steve Job’s commencement speech to Stanford University’s class of 2005.

⁸ Actually, the writing of this document to you is an act of self-obsolence. The danger of this act is perceived to be career danger. It flies in the face of a common adage in business, “Knowledge is power, so keep it to yourself.” My experience has been the opposite. As I give freely of my knowledge and wisdom, it grows. It grows in the process of giving (in the act of teaching) and in receiving back from others.



you.” This reminds me that the person I am with is divine and that our relationship is eternal; this is a transformational perspective. Loving confrontation differs from conflict. The former is about *co-fronting* (or co-facing) difficult issues *in* a relationship, and the latter is about attacking another person. Given the reality of our oneness, loving confrontation makes absolute sense, and conflict makes no sense at all; conflict is insane.

Over time we end up learning to enthusiastically embrace hypocrisies and shadows – ours and our alliances’. We learn that by collaboratively facing (co-fronting) challenges in our alliance, we discover new insights and we uncover previously unseen opportunities. These insights and opportunities are hidden by personal hypocrisies and organizational shadows. Until a problematic situation (a shadow) is thoroughly acknowledged and fearlessly accepted, the window of opportunity remains shut and we stagnate; mediocrity prevails.⁹ However, with a loving perspective grounded in oneness, loving confrontation ends up becoming a fulfilling game of “hide and seek” – shadows hide valuable things and our shared light illuminates them.

7. Entrusted with Trust – trustworthy

A counterintuitive thing happens when we bring loving confrontation into a relationship; trust actually comes shortly thereafter. Loving confrontation *calls for* trust, and so trust comes; trust is a result of growth-oriented (loving) confrontation. So, as we deal with difficult issues and find insights and opportunities, trust will grow in our alliance. And, given that trust is *the* issue in any relationship, our alliance will be on its way toward greatness.

8. An Illuminating Mirror – grateful and appreciative

As we come to understand the power of our light and the reality of oneness, we naturally tap into the astounding power of gratitude and appreciation. When we are grateful and express appreciation, we use our light, our attention, to see the greatness in another person or in another company, and we reflect their greatness back to them. Because just as we have a hard time seeing our own shortcomings, we also cannot clearly see our assets; we need each other’s light for this.

As I see it, gratitude is the most powerful form of communication. Gratitude is the paddle we use in the river of life to draw us closer to one another and align ourselves with Divine Will. We gain an ability to authentically and powerfully express deeply impactful gratitude, which will have the effect of drawing our alliance together and inspiring us toward collective grandeur.

We cannot say too much about the power of gratitude, the power in being an illuminating mirror to another.

9. A Creative Creator – full creative expression

Our creator created us to create. As we tap into the source of truth and light within us, as we use the transformational power of shared light in the midst of our alliance, as we openly listen to the voice of the collective in our alliance, we will become increasingly inspired. Great ideas will just come to us. And people throughout our alliance will seek us out for our creative influence.

10. The Metaphor for Metamorphosis – be the change

We will see things others cannot or will not see. We will become increasingly aware of the needs in our alliance. We will begin to understand Gandhi’s adage, “You must be the change you want to see in your world.” As we see deficiencies in our alliance, we will first go within ourselves and ask how well we are living that issue; we will embrace our own hypocrisies, knowing that’s how growth (love) begins.

⁹ Paraphrased from *The Power of Now* by Eckhart Tolle.



We will work to emulate the positive changes we wish to see in our alliance. If the atmosphere is one of scarcity and fear, we will strive to live with abundance and love. If there is a lack of trust, we will strive to be worthy of trust. We become the metaphor or symbol for the metamorphosis or change needed in our alliance – it has to start with us.

11. A True Servant-Leader – an authentic giver

Servant-leaders lead by serving and giving. That's actually all we have been talking about so far. Servant-leadership is a natural result of the embodiment of spiritual principles. Now it becomes easy, natural and authentic. All we really want to do is serve because we know it comes back to us. We serve and love and give, not because we are selfless, but because we are selfish in the truest way; we become Self-full.

12. Full of One's Self – greatest experience of self

You will acquire a true sense of self, true humility and true pride. You will gain a greater inborn level of confidence – not arrogance or grandiosity – but assertive grandeur. You will become full of Self. This Self, your innate grandeur, realizes you cannot do this alone: life and your alliance is all a “we thing.”

13. Increased Effectiveness – attract success

Increased effectiveness throughout the alliance is achieved indirectly via subtle but powerful nontraditional means. We establish a pervasive virtual presence throughout the alliance. We attract success and success-filled people.

Our alliance becomes a productivity community, a place where people come and feel at home. This will occur as the alliances timeless value-creating vision starts becoming realized. It is a lovingly-intense place where high trust allows constructive (loving) confrontation to easily occur. This home is not about fault-finding, it is about developing and extending our collective greatness. In such a place collective good and individual good are *one*. We become collectively and individually empowered as fears are faced, transcended and even embraced.

While this home is stable in its love there is a sense of bounded instability, or order at the edge of chaos. In such a place new opportunities naturally surface and are quickly assessed and developed. Given our alliance is becoming a catalyst for value-enabling growth it may end up constructively disrupting our own company. With its clear vision, collective persistence and tenacity become the norm and so “*no* is simply not yet *yes*.” We lovingly push through impediments to realize greater value. We regularly do the impossible.

14. Legendary – leave a legacy

What you will achieve in your alliance will become the thing of legends. Your alliance will accomplish an impressive and inspiring legacy that will forever move beyond status quo mediocrity. And, you will realize that you could not have done this alone. As in life, alliancing is a “we thing.”

Does this sound like it would be helpful for you and your alliance?