

Can Guardian Angels Teach Us Anything?



Disclaimer: *Believing in guardian angels is by no means a prerequisite to learn about what the whole idea or notion of them can teach us.*

I have often written and referenced what I call the dimensions of self (intellectual, physical, emotional and spiritual). I have stated that we give greater attention to our intellectual and physical self much more than to our emotional and spiritual self. In fact, the world we live in encourages it. Yet, we should know that all four dimensions of self are of equal importance, and they should all receive, as much as possible, the same weight or amount of attention.

This month I would like to focus on the emotional and spiritual dimensions, and yes, I will use guardian angels to help make my point.

Let me start by telling you a story.

My Dad

My dad was a great guy. He was what I would describe as a rock solid man, who loved us (my mom, brother and me). He devoted his life to supporting our well-being. Like so many of his generation, he demonstrated that devotion most often by being a good provider. Dad was a man of integrity. He believed in God. He never went to church but made sure he drove us there on Sundays. He worked hard, and we could always count on him. He was a deep thinker. He loved to read, and spent much of his spare time at home.

Dad survived a major heart attack when he was 68. Although he still got around reasonably well afterwards, he never really fully recovered - he required oxygen for the three years prior to his death on his 71st birthday in 1984.

About four months after his death I was sorting through some of his things. Much to my surprise, I came across a letter that was addressed to me. The date indicated that he wrote it shortly before his death. I had no idea of its existence until I found it tucked away amongst some of his papers. He had to have known I would perform this task and certainly intended for me to find it.

It began with some very complimentary remarks about me and went on to point out how, "it very

often falls to the older son in the family – the responsibility for not only his own family but to 'look out' for the interest of his parents." He went on to say how much he loved mom. He made the point quite strongly that we would all be together again 'one day,' - "that a thousand years is but a wink of an eye in eternity."



It was the concluding sentence of the letter that I particularly wanted to share - and I quote: **"I will delegate certain guardian angels to watch over my loved ones."**

I was overcome with emotion. I had been given a gift. My father had spoken to me from somewhere beyond this life from a place I could not see, touch or experience in any way. Or could I?

In that moment I felt this incredible warmth envelop me. It felt as if my father were right there beside me. Was it his spirit, was it my imagination or was it something else?

After reading the letter a couple of times I gathered myself, folded it twice, worked it back into its envelope and put it in a safe place where I could easily access it again.

Now understand, I grew up in a Catholic home, went to a Catholic school and heard about guardian angels on a regular basis. I was told that we all have guardian angels that are always with us, who look out for us and guide us through life. So of course this resonated at a deep place within me.

A poll that was published in Time magazine about three years ago revealed that 69 percent of Americans believed in guardian angels, and 46 percent of that group believed they have a personal guardian angel. Of course there is no real scientific evidence for the existence of angels. The only "evidence" we have for their existence is long religious tradition, and stories from the Bible, as well as the many anecdotes from people who believe these spiritual beings have affected their lives. Ultimately believing that guardian angels actually exist is most often a matter of faith. Many who believe, have offered their opinions on what a guardian angel's role can be in a person's life, and even how you can enlist their help.

"Guardian Angels are thought to be spiritual beings that are assigned to assist people here on Earth in various ways. Whether there is one angel per person, one angel for several persons or several angels for one person is open to question. But whether you believe in them or not, or whether you want one or not, believers insist that you do have a guardian angel."

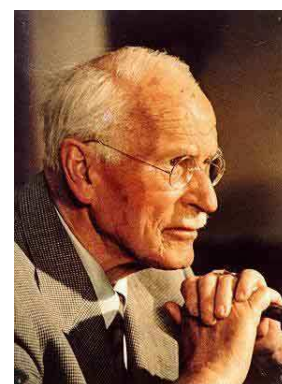
Remember me saying that I had folded the letter twice, put it back into its envelope, then put it in a safe place where I could easily access it again? Well, that was back in early 1985. Since that time, there have been a number of occasions where I simply took the letter out of its envelope and read it just to remind me of my dad.

It wasn't until the fall of 2001, when I had begun the fight of my life, the fight to stay alive as my lungs slowly deteriorated, that that letter took on a whole new and important meaning for me. Each time I read it during the two years preceding my double lung transplant - and I read it frequently - it gave me great comfort. It turned out to be one of the ways I was able to hold on to the HOPE that I would receive a transplant in time to save my life. Yes, I wanted to believe in guardian angels back then, believe that there was a guardian angel beside me, giving strength and support during what, in retrospect, has been the most difficult period of my life to date. Yes, during that time I believed!

Believe me when I say that when you are deathly ill, expecting to die but do not want to die, you grasp on to those things, beliefs, rituals and people that gave you comfort growing up and that give you reassurance now or even the hope of survival. It could be a guardian angel, a priest, a rabbi, a minister, a prayer or God.

So What Do I Believe Now?

I do not believe in the whole idea of a "winged spiritual being" who is assigned to walk or hover by my side, guiding and protecting me or, for that matter, you. However, I do not think it ends there, nor is it that simple. I believe there is a positive force that exists within us that, under the right set of circumstances, we can tap into to give us guidance, direction and strength in our lives.



Carl Jung the Swiss psychiatrist believed that we all have a personal, as well as a collective unconscious. He distinguished the collective unconscious from the personal unconscious in that the personal unconscious is a personal reservoir of experiences unique to each individual, while the collective unconscious collects and organizes those personal experiences in a similar way for each member of a particular species. That is to say, the collective unconscious is unique to the species - sort of "hot wired" into our genes, and passed from one generation to the next.



We have learned since, that through various forms of meditation and/or through our dreams, we can call upon our personal unconscious, enabling us to bring our unconscious into the conscious realm of our lives. This often results in powerful insights into how to live our lives in ways that we would not be able to discover simply by relying on our conscious thoughts.

“Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life and you will call it fate.”

~ Carl Jung

This ability sometimes enables you to make the kinds of decisions that can dramatically change your life in some very positive ways.

Jung would say that this is a part of the emotional dimension of our lives. Although at times, it may feel like something spiritual is taking place. Can that possibly be the case?

Many, when they develop the ability to meditate effectively, especially if it is what is called directed meditation, believe that it is in fact their spirit guide or personal guide that is speaking with them from somewhere other than this reality. I am hypothesizing here but perhaps it was in early man's experiences with

meditation or dreams that the idea, myth or notion of guardian angels was born and grew from there.

Carl Jung, I suspect, would likely explain it by referencing to what he discovered in his research. In fact, he stated that, **“the angel personifies something new arising from the deep unconscious.”** He means here that the angel “symbolizes” something newly discovered about the self.

This is just pure conjecture on my part, but I wonder if one of the reasons why Carl Jung was drawn to his research had to do with what he actually read or heard about guardian angels? Interesting thought, don't you think?

So Where Are We, Where Do We Go From Here?

It is really not that important whether you believe in one or more of guardian angels, spirit guides or personal guides, none of which, we are reminded, has ever been definitively proven, or whether you believe in the personal and collective unconscious and the practiced ability to connect with them, which Jung documented in his research. What is important is knowing how and possessing the skill to open up to what you believe through some form of centering, meditation, prayer or guided dream interpretation knowing that it offers an almost unlimited source of emotional and spiritual growth that will overlap in positive ways with the other two dimensions of self.

Consider taking the time to continually explore the emotional and spiritual dimensions of your life. Give them the same time and dedication you would give to your intellectual, physical self and watch what happens!

Is There Something More

A Spirit World?

So far everything I have just offered in the way of an explanation, in my opinion, does not quite account for what I experienced when reading the letter from my dad? In fact, if I really think about it, there have been a number of what I will call experiences over the course of my life that I find really hard to explain within the context of this discussion or for that matter in our conscious lives, day-to-day. I would bet that many of you could say the same. So is there something more, a spiritual world perhaps?

Carl Jung stated that our psyche is not entirely confined to space and time in his discussion about death. He used the example of some people having dreams or visions that predict the future. Why our psyche is not confined to space and time it seems cannot be easily explained.

How do we account for that ability? I choose to believe that there is a spiritual world for lack of another phrase, an element to our very existence that cannot be explained away through scientific research. And if we are receptive to it, we can open up whole new possibilities for our lives and perhaps, even for a life in the hereafter?

Coach Ladd



350 Billion Reasons Corporations Should Care.

Leaders maximize profit by delivering focused corporate visions stakeholders can believe. But in the new economy, inspiring stakeholders is not an easy thing to do. According to Deepak Chopra, in an ABC interview regarding his new book, the Soul of Leadership, approximately 11% of U.S. workers are engaged in their work, 61% are somewhat engaged and as many as 27% are completely disengaged (who come to work to make other people unhappy). These disengaged groups, according to Chopra, costs the US economy \$350 billion.

That's 350 billion.

Deepak Chopra teaches leadership courses to corporations through business schools around the world including one at the Kellogg School of Business in Chicago, Illinois (which is one of the most respected business schools in America). Let's apply Deepak's thinking to that of a large

organization, with say, 30,000 employees. This company will look something like this:

- Emotionally Engaged in What They Do – 11% or 3300 employees
- Disengaged in What They Do – 67% or 20,100 employees
- Actively Disengaged / Come to Work to Make Other People Unhappy - 27% or 8100 employees

That totals 28,200 disengaged employees. That's the vast majority of people in this corporation. 28,200 people who are not oriented to what they do. Think of the impact this phenomenon has on the efficiency of corporations. According to Wolfgang Haufe, Professor of Business Administration at the Maastricht School of Management in Maastricht, Netherlands, disorientation can cost as much as 25% on your efficiency meter. "Management by Directives and Management by Exception counteract orientation in organizations. Disorientation leads to collisions and collisions lead to internal conflict, which in turn leads to loss of company internal efficiency."

In a world dominated by volatile economies, pressure for growth on a quarterly basis, and now, as we see above, skeptical employees, one wonders how leaders succeed. Presenting an engaging future to stakeholders is a leader's job, but with

these factors looming, rallying the troops to fight another battle can be a very daunting task.



Don't Forget the Customer

This skepticism doesn't stop at the company's doorstep. The numbers above do not include customers and members of general society. It seems reasonable to assume however that an organization of 30,000 people, using the example above, has an enormous impact on its customers and on general society.

The customer example is obvious. Take a customer experience with a Telcom. If someone calls a cell phone carrier to identify an over-charge on a phone bill and a disengaged employee is the one who takes the call, chances are that the disengaged employee won't care whether the customer is happy or not, and at the end of the call the customer won't feel as if the company has satisfied the original concern. In fact, the customer might be left to feel as if the problem was actually the customer's.

General society is a little less obvious but potentially very real.

Think of general society as people who aren't customers but customers in the waiting. Think of the impact bad customer experiences have on the world. If this is happening with the majority of customers who are interacting with the majority of employees, and the above percentages suggest exactly that, chances are there's an unhappy person or two, or three, or a thousand, or hundreds of thousands. They go to work just like everyone else after having a bad customer experience. Their negative view of the world spreads like a cancer. You get my point.

Inclusive Means Everybody

Employees are just one part of the equation, and although customers are the reason companies exist, there's so much more to its stakeholders. In a typical corporation, stakeholders can include our shareholders, executive and distributors, managers, staff and sub-contractors, and suppliers, customers and general society. Each of these stakeholder sub-groups has an important perspective of what their world should look like, and their world is part of the corporation's world. So the question remains. With so many challenges facing leaders, and with so many perspectives waiting to challenge a leader's every move, how can leaders engage, and more importantly, how do leaders keep people engaged?

Create a Belief System

Leaders inspire by showing people a better future. If people are inspired, they're engaged. They trust in their leaders and follow them, but unless people see results, skepticism infiltrates their thinking and they withdraw.

Obama is the classic example of someone who engaged by talking about a future dreamy in nature, and then for some reason known only to him, stopped engaging. It's like someone flipped a switch and he disappeared. Time has passed and every time I see people on TV talk about him there is a disappointment in their eyes, like someone has let them down.



Corporate visions are a natural tool to lead, but given the potentially disparate viewpoints of the stakeholder sub-groups mentioned above, getting everyone to stay engaged in the same vision is not an easy thing to do. But due to advancements in communication technology, leaders enjoy an unprecedented opportunity to lead all stakeholders to the same place, to truly change the course of a

corporation's future by engaging stakeholders, and continuing to engage them. They can do so by creating a belief system, one based on three core principles:

1. Show people a better tomorrow by creating a vision for the future WITH them
2. Show people this collectively created future by framing the vision inside stories stakeholders care about
3. Show people their input matters by measuring it, integrating it into strategies, and reporting it regularly

Make Your Vision Something People Can Believe

If an organization is driven solely by capital, its shareholders will be engaged but the rest of its stakeholders won't be. Chopra's numbers support this assertion. Wolfgang Haufe's numbers viewed in conjunction with Chopra's suggest that shareholders are suffering losses given the inefficiencies created by disengaged employees, and according to Dr. Sonia Bookman, Professor of Sociology at the University of Manitoba, the impact of this situation can easily affect a company's lifeline. "Consumer experience is at the heart of the brand. Positive experiences are central to establishing an ongoing relationship and building trust between consumers and companies. It keeps consumers engaged and involved,



The Personal Coach BULLETIN

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COACHING POINT

which is key to brand image and value, which is constituted as much from the company as it is from consumers' own participation."

To truly orient people to a company's vision, the content of its story must include something its stakeholders care about, and no, not just its shareholders, ALL of them - everyone from its shareholders to general society. Think of the numbers above and understand that orientation brings efficiency, which brings profit, which makes shareholders happy, and ultimately everyone in-between. According to Haufe, "To combat disorientation in organizations, plans need to be realistic and should come about with the involvement of the entire staff. It is desirable, in addition to the knowledge by everyone in the organization of the background data and the consequential strategic and tactical choices, that plans receive full support by all."

I first started working on the engagement concept way back in the late 80's as part of my graduate thesis called "Self Help Housing in Northern Remote Aboriginal Communities". Published in 1990, my work examined the potential for Aboriginal people to engage in construction of their homes. I entered the professional world as a young planner for an engineering firm and quickly realized that my passion for engagement would have to wait, the company's President blasting me in a meeting for introducing my work to

the company. I learned a lot from that moment. I learned that innovation has its time and that was not the time.

After a number of years, I ventured out on my own, starting up several professionally managed, high profile hospitality ventures, each managed with the greatest degree of inclusiveness. The belief in each of these businesses, by management, staff, customers and general society was palpable. I could see that it worked. People showed up by the hundreds to line up out the door each night because of belief in what we had created.



I have since applied this approach to our clients through OZZ media corp with similar results. Belief created a common understanding and respect for the company's vision. Belief created efficiencies unimagined before we worked with them. Belief created a very similar response in sales, event attendance, web hits and editorial responses from several credible media sources.

The world has finally caught up to this concept, in part because of the advancements in communication technology mentioned earlier, in part

because of the new economy, which has created the need to look at alternative approaches to doing business, and in part because of a new generation of leaders possessing the insight to make things better.

In the new economy, leaders maximize profit by delivering focused corporate visions stakeholders can believe - corporate visions that matter to everyone. Leaders who capitalize on this opportunity will see people line up to be part of their world, and in the not-to-distant future, we'll all wake up to see that belief systems are just as important to corporate success as computer systems.

Perhaps we'll also wake up one day to find out that Deepak Chopra has released another book, one that talks about a renaissance, one that sees all leaders engaged with people in a way we never imagined.

I certainly hope so, and I can give you 350 billion reasons why corporations should care.

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