

# *Leadership with a Spiritual Foundation*

*Continuum of Consciousness  
and Knowledge of Non-Duality:  
How can this knowledge help  
unfold professional excellence and  
leadership qualities?*

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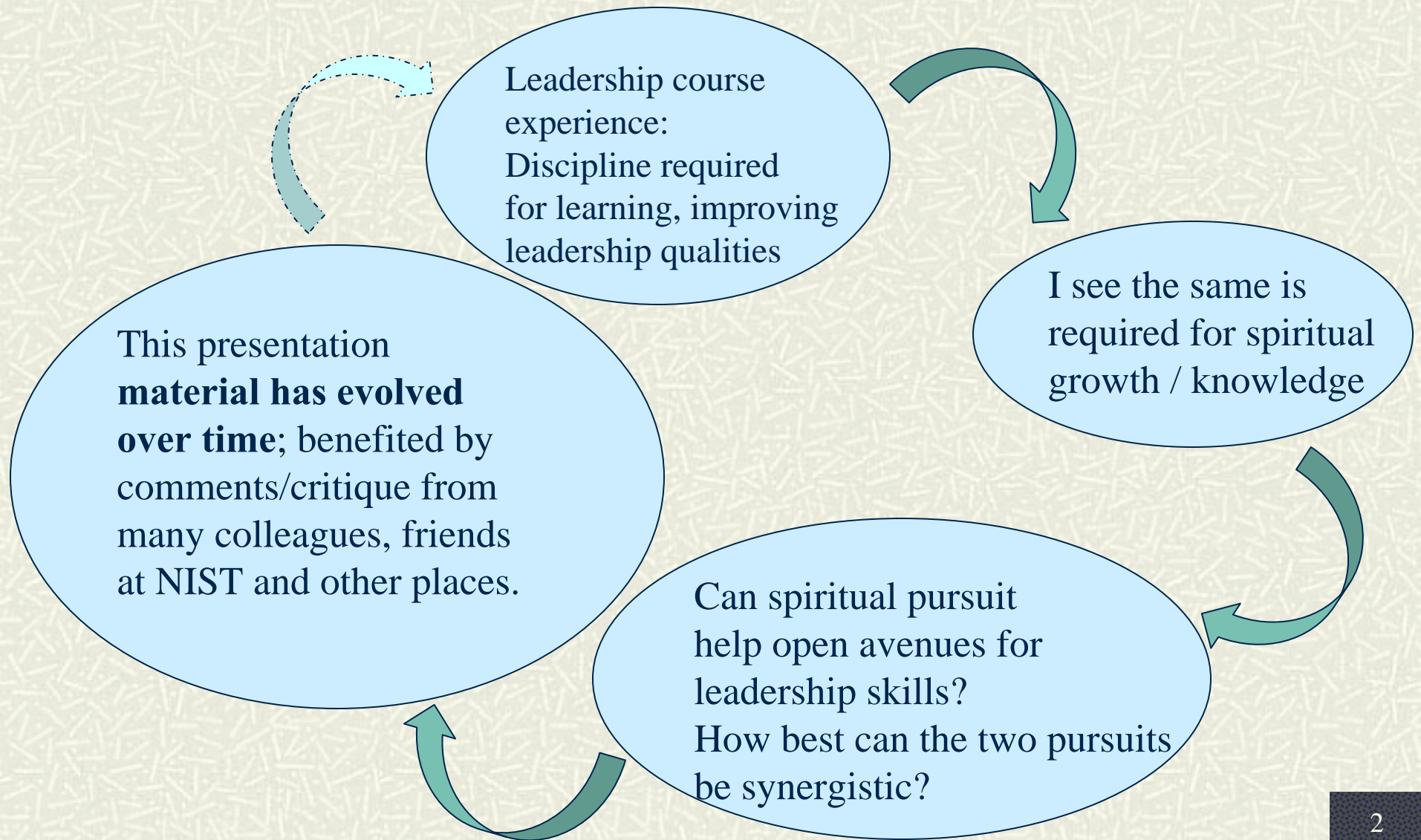
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# Learning Experience Model

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# Common Spiritual Enquiry

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- # **Who am I?**
- # **How do I overcome:**
  - **Sense of inadequacy**
  - **Suffering , fear, anger, despair ...**
- # **How do I do my best in seeking excellence?**
  - **Clarity, Confidence, Creativity, ...**
  - **Exactness in knowledge**
- # **How can I be unconditionally and truly happy?**

Student is not interested in stop-gap solutions; seeks knowledge that creates great inner harmony for a life time!



# Leadership Qualities

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- Exhibits personal efficiency, competence, honesty
- Provides strong guidance to his/her team
- Tries to create an environment in which team members feel enthusiastic and motivated
- Acts courageously and sensitively to deal with difficult situations
- Understands others and communicates effectively
- Exhibits dynamism
- Sets achievable but challenging goals
- Focuses on delivering results
- Puts organizational goals above self interest
- Has a good sense of humor and interacts cheerfully

# How Do We Bridge the Two?

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- # How do we go from a “spiritual” vision of reality to nurturing “extraordinary” leadership qualities**
- # We first go into the spiritual questions**
- # Then we will go back and explore how the leadership qualities can be reinforced from the spiritual knowledge**

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# The Spiritual Knowledge: Non-Duality & Pure Consciousness

# A Traditional Source of Knowledge

## # Canonical texts

- **Veda (four Vedas: Rig Veda, Sama Veda, Yajur Veda, Atharva Veda)**
- **Upanishads – Spiritual essence of Vedas (Vedanta)**
  - Over 100 upanishads
  - Major ones: Aitareya (RV), Brhadāraṇyaka (ŚV), Īṣa (ŚV), Taittirīya (YV), Kaṭha (YV), Chāndogya (SV), Kena (SV), Muṇḍaka (AV), Māṇḍūkya (AV), Praśna (AV), Śvetāśvatara (YV)
- **Bhagavad-Gita (Vedanta)**
- **Mythological stories:**
  - Ramayana
  - Mahabharata



# Mahavakyas – Grand Pronouncements

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Tat tvam asi	You are that
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“that” = Brahman = Pure Consciousness



# Mahavakyas – Grand Pronouncements

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Tat tvam asi	You are that
Aham Brahma asmi	I am Brahman

“that” = Brahman = Pure Consciousness

# Positive Emotional States

Calm  
Tranquil

Hope  
Anticipation

Relaxed  
Serene

Respect  
Awe

Confident  
Competent

Adequate  
Accomplished

Articulate  
Witty

Kindness  
Warmth

Love  
Compassion

I-ness (Ego) – False / Inadequate notion of the self

# Negative Emotional States

Frustration  
Anger  
Depression

Fear  
Apprehension

Sickness  
Injury

Disrespect  
Insult

Tension  
Stress

Thirst  
Hunger

Inadequacy

Separation  
Loneliness

Hot  
Cold

I-ness (Ego) – False / Inadequate notion of the self



# Pure Consciousness

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- # **It is the true nature of each one of us**
- # **Every one of us is reflected in it**
- # **All animate beings and inanimate objects are reflected in it**
- # **It makes NO judgments about**
  - **“our” physical features**
  - **“our” emotional state**
  - **“our” intellect**
  - **“our” accomplishments**
  - **“our” worldly possessions**

# Pure Consciousness

- # It imposes no distortion on the objects that are reflected in it**
- # It has no attributes of its own**
- # If you were to identify one – a dominant attribute can be said to be “compassion”**
- # Then you may proceed and ascribe many other attributes to it that all make sense – how?**

# Pure Consciousness & Non-Duality

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- **Wave and Ocean**
- **Ornament and Gold**
- **Furniture and wood**
  
- **Pure consciousness is the substratum from where all animate and inanimate objects derive their existence**
- **Metaphor of the flawless mirror 😊**



# Mahavakyas – Grand Pronouncements

Satyam jnanam anantam Brahma	Truth-Knowledge- Limitlessness is Brahman
Sat chit ananda Brahma	Truth-Consciousness- Bliss is Brahman
Nitya suddha chaitanya atma Brahman	Ever-presence -Purity- Consciousness is Brahman

Brahman = Pure Consciousness

# Mahavakyas – Grand Pronouncements

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<p>Prajnanam Brahman</p>	<p>The one entity where knowledge- knower- known retain one common identity is Brahman.</p>
<p>Prajnanam = Jnana, Jnata, Jnatru</p>	

Brahman = Pure Consciousness

# Pure Consciousness – Other Attributes

From before the beginning of time

Limitless; Beyond end of time

Blissfulness

Inexpendable

Indestructible

Without a second

Unattached  
(independent)

Non-dual

Fearless

Ever-present

Free of impurities

Free of distortion

Tranquil; peaceful

Existent

All knowing

All pervasive

Complete

Self-illuminated

Contemplate if these attributes are true of pure consciousness, and in turn attributable to the true self?



# Value of Knowing the Self

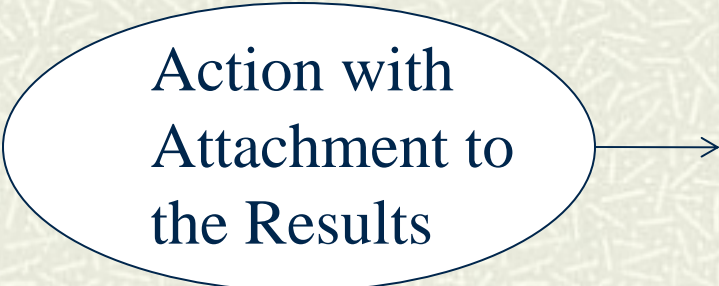
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- # It is a knowledge that your mind does not create**
- # It is there to be understood**
- # When it is revealed you become one with it**
- # At that time, all your doubts fade away**
- # How long does it take to get there?**
- # When you understand its value, you find that patience and perseverance are your natural companions.**

# Action with Attachment

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Action with  
Attachment to  
the Results

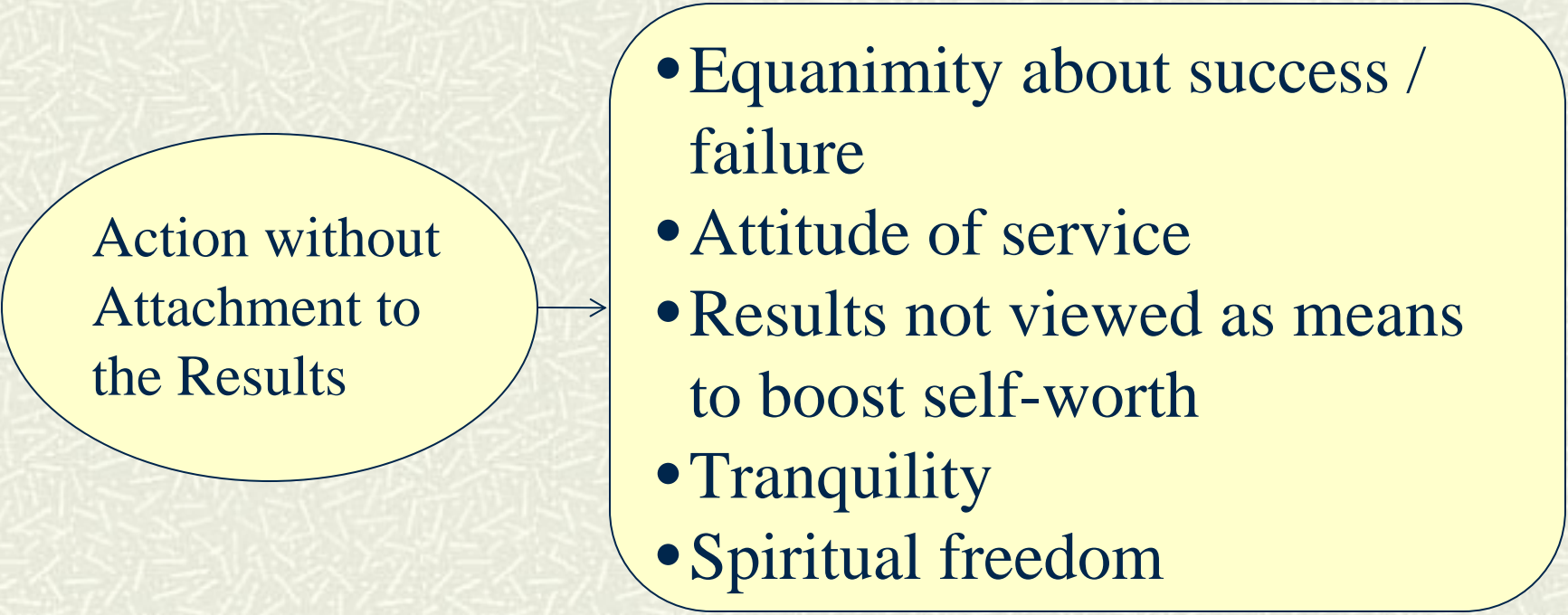


- Anxious about success / failure
- Excess of elation / regret
- Anger / frustration / fear
- Impediment to freedom from “karma”
- Impediment to spiritual freedom

# Action without Attachment

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Action without  
Attachment to  
the Results



- Equanimity about success / failure
- Attitude of service
- Results not viewed as means to boost self-worth
- Tranquility
- Spiritual freedom



# Attitude Towards Results of Actions

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Actions and results of actions (together with our senses and sense-objects) are qualities that reside in nature;  
Actions are interactions within qualities of nature and they produce results that are in-turn qualities of nature;  
Knowing thus the one who is endowed with true knowledge of the self remains unattached.

*(Bhagavadgita, Ch. 3)*



# Meditation Centered on Knowledge of Non-Duality

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## **Observable effects:**

- # Breathing deep and rhythmic**
- # Entire body relaxed and free of tension**
- # Mind is free of envy, anxiety and fear**
- # Lucidity (intelligence, clarity)**

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# Leadership Qualities: Bridging Leadership with Spirituality

# Spirituality in Every Day Business Life

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- ✦ **A personal ability to prepare well for the envisioned outcome**
- ✦ **Realize that the outcome depends on many factors – some not in your control**
- ✦ **Good networking, listening, and tuning in to know where opportunity is**
- ✦ **“Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity” – old saying**
- ✦ **Outcome is best when concerned participants shape it with sincerity, intelligence, and hard work**
- ✦ **Open mind towards the outcome as it unfolds even if it does not seem to be what you anticipated or planned for**

# How Do We Bridge the Two?

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**# Example: A leader needs to compete with the rivals**

- **To obtain funding from sponsors**
- **To be the first to publish a new scientific discovery**
- **To gain market share for her company's product**

**# How can you be spiritual and still compete?**



# How Do We Bridge the Two?

## # A leader needs to compete with the rivals:

- To obtain funding from sponsors
- To be the first to publish a new scientific discovery
- To gain market share for her company's product

## # How can you be spiritual and still compete?

- **Overarching purpose: Improving “Quality of Life”**
- **Honest hard work – high quality proposal or product**
- **Represent your team's achievements honestly**
- **Promote your company's product based on its true merits over rival's product**
- **Equanimity: Emotionally balanced in success and in failure**

# Example: Two Rival Teams

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- **Two teams competing for an NSF grant**
- **Both have historical contributions to the field and have high reputation**
- **The new research grant will potentially enable the next breakthrough**
- **How does a team leader deal with the situation as it unfolds:**
  - **Stress of competition**
  - **60-hour work weeks**
  - **Can you take in success with humility?**
  - **Can you gracefully cope with failure?**
  - **Due respect for the other team (your rivals)**

## How Does the Flawless Mirror Analogy Help?

- # **Team leader of Group A is the spiritual type**
- # **She meditates, contemplates on spiritual thoughts**
- # **The mirror analogy informs her of many pertinent things**
- # **All actions, thoughts, ideas, people are qualities of nature**
- # **Hard work, attention to detail, clarity, creativity**
- # **All of it is reflected in the mirror of pure consciousness**
- # **Her true nature is the tranquil pure consciousness**
- # **Sustains equanimity in the face of success or failure as the situation unfolds**

# In the event of ultimate success

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- # Gets the grant and the research efforts succeed and truly lead to the breakthrough**
- # Team is in the limelight and gets press world-wide**
- # She maintains equanimity**
- # Congratulates / rewards / recognizes team members**
- # Knows the events in nature unfolded in a specific way to bring about the success to her team**



## In the event of ultimate success (contd.)

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- ✦ **Research staff, guest scientists from many countries, their unique skills – all qualities of nature**
- ✦ **Rival team also worked hard but was oblivious of some key clues – again qualities of nature**
- ✦ **She begins to focus on the next steps to advance the research – new direction, new problems**
- ✦ **All qualities of nature; all reflected in tranquil pure consciousness**
- ✦ **Overarching goal: Improvement in Quality of Life (for people stricken by a disease under study)**

# In the event of failure

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- # Grant did not come thorough**
- # Her team worked hard and really produced a substantial, high quality proposal**
- # She stays calm**
- # Addresses team members' concerns**
- # Starts engaging everyone in what next steps they should follow**
- # Most team members see research field as inexhaustible**

# In the event of failure (contd.)

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- # **Regroup and change direction**
- # **There are other serious practical research problems that must continue to get attention**
- # **Her team is well qualified to push ahead and study them well**
- # **All qualities of nature; all reflected in tranquil pure consciousness**
- # **Nature holds limitless possibilities**
- # **Overarching goal: Improvement in Quality of Life (for people stricken by a disease under study)**

# What is Different Here?

- # **How is what we are discussing different from “plain old wisdom”?**
- # **Doesn't have to be different ... but may be it is ...**
- # **Person is anchored in a spiritual knowledge**
  - **Knowledge of Non-duality**
  - **Self knowledge – Pure Consciousness**
  - **The flawless mirror analogy – useful metaphor**
  - **Reinforces a Value System that is based on:**
    - ❖ **Non-injury to others in decision making**
    - ❖ **Remaining true to a sense of purpose**
    - ❖ **Ethics – Respect for fairness**
    - ❖ **Pursuit of excellence combined with hard work**
    - ❖ **Uncompromising in seeking exactness of knowledge**
- # **Spiritually enriched life – a sense of unperturbed inner personal calm independent of external events**



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# Questions / Discussion

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# Back-up slides and other notes

Anadi	From before the beginning of time
Ananta	Limitless; Beyond end of time
Ananda	Blissfulness
Avyaya	Inexpendable
Avinashi	Indestructible
Ananya	Without a second
Asanga	Unattached (independent)
Advitiya	Non-dual
Abhaya	Fearless
Amara	Immortal



Nitya	Ever-present
Nirmala	Free of impurities
Nirvikalpa	Free of distortion
Suddha	Pure
Shanta	Tranquil; peaceful
Sat	Existent
Sarvajna	All knowing
Sarva vyapi	All pervasive
Sampurna	Complete
Svyama prakasha	Self-illumined



# Spiritual Advice Tends to be:

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- ✦ **The source of your problems and inadequacies is in your lack of understanding of the true nature of the self.**
- ✦ **Contemplation, yoga, meditation are the means to get there.**
- ✦ **Seek constant refinement of spiritual knowledge.**

# *Upanishads* or *Vedanta*

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- # They reveal a knowledge that the ancient sages presumably heard**
- # The sages were convinced that every human unmistakably will hear the same revelation about the nature of the self when his/her mind makes the proper enquiry**

# The *Upanishads*' Revelation

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- ✦ **There is only one all pervasive pure consciousness**
- ✦ **This pure consciousness is whole, indestructible, and free of limitations**
- ✦ **For each individual, upon enquiry the self is revealed to be non-dual to and indistinct from pure consciousness**

# Conscious Tranquility

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- ‡ **The substratum of our existence is conscious tranquility**
- ‡ **Conscious tranquility pervades the universe**
- ‡ **It is the only entity that existed before the manifest creation came into being**
- ‡ **It remains unaltered in spite of creation and all its phenomena**
- ‡ **If creation ever ceases to be, conscious tranquility still prevails**



# Notes:

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## Abstract:

This talk is about spirituality that may underlie and inform one's leadership qualities or pursuit of excellence. The spiritual knowledge discussed is one that originated in ancient India thousands of years ago. It is a form of contemplative philosophy which explores the true nature of the self. It develops an understanding of the reality which underlies our perceived notions of who we are. In my personal spiritual practice, I integrate contemplation based on this knowledge with meditation and yoga. In this talk, I will attempt to share with you my understanding of all this, including questions such as "what is pure consciousness", "what is meant by non-duality", "who am I", etc. Then we will explore how leadership qualities and pursuit of excellence can be nurtured and reinforced based on the spiritual knowledge.

## Other notes:

The spiritual knowledge of non-duality was presumably "heard" by the sages in ancient India thousands of years ago. It was passed down the generations by a teaching tradition which was based on pupil-teacher enquiry and discourse. The tradition is based on a conviction that the knowledge reveals itself in every aspiring spiritual seeker, with some help from a compassionate teacher. Millions of people all over the world seek this knowledge to this day for their spiritual fulfillment. Along the way, the enquiry strengthens basic human values in the seeker, and eventually refines his/her thought process to reveal the true identity of the self. The disciplined seeker sustains the vision, seeks to remain humble at all stages, and finds suitable ways to channel his/her new found energies.