



Living in the Questions

The 2006 Global MindChange Forum

by Rinaldo S. Brutoco



Editor's Note: At each Global MindChange Forum Academy President **Rinaldo Brutoco** has presented closing remarks that frame the spirit of the gathering's panels, talks, and events. Within the constraints of time such a speech can capture only a few such highlights. Nonetheless, this impromptu summary each time has woven the diverse programmatic threads into an eloquently coherent tapestry of meaning.

This week's *Viewpoint* excerpts his words as it inaugurates a publishing cycle based on last month's Third Annual Global MindChange Forum. In the coming weeks, for the particular benefit of those who were unable to join us in Evanston, we will offer transcripts and synopses of the presentations made by individuals and groups who contributed to the various themes that held the attendees' attention so firmly over three days and four evenings.

We hope you not only enjoy the series and share your views with us, but that you also will join us in person next year.

3RD ANNUAL GLOBAL MINDCHANGE FORUM



WORLD BUSINESS ACADEMY
Rekindling the human spirit in business

Knowledge Is Power

The Wholistic Business Model for Success



The poster for this conference says, "Knowledge is Power: The Wholistic Business Model for Success." If you didn't notice, we tried to create a dropping object that hits a pond and ripples outward. That object is actually the planet Earth. The purpose of the graphic was to try to give a sense that if we could co-create a holistic business model for success, then the Earth and all that's on it is seen as the living laboratory of not just the knowledge, but also all the emotions we hold dear. We would see that through the medium of business, represented by water, we could ripple out and change all that is around us.

When we began the conference on Tuesday, I asked everybody to think about this question: Does one get to the holistic business model for success by knowing what the answer is, and promulgating it?

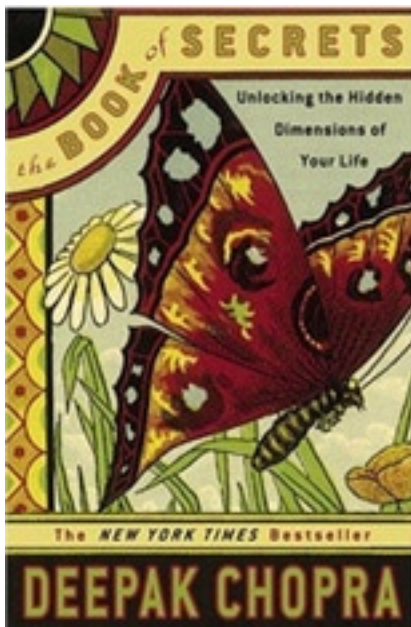
Together with each of you we hoped we could co-create the answer. To do that, we had to stay in the question.

The poet Rainer Maria Rilke said: "Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves. Like locked rooms or books that are written in a foreign tongue, the point is to have and live everything. Live the questions. Now perhaps you will then gradually without noticing it live your way some distant day into the answers."

We pointed out in the welcoming letter that we sent to all of you that this meeting occurs at a time of impending crisis in which there is also exciting opportunity. We listed what some of the crises were. So if we started there we would see a world that is rapidly fracturing. We would see pain. We would

see horrific images like the ones of the victims of violence in Rwanda [shown by conference speaker Sir James Laws of [Knightsbridge International](#)]. Mankind's capacity for inhumanity to our fellow man and woman knows no boundaries. But we also said that if we focus on the opportunities we see the power of individuals joining together; we see the future success of enterprise being defined in a new way. We invited you to come to help us examine what those questions and those new ways might be.

We were joined by Dr. Deepak Chopra. One of the favorite books both of Deepak and myself is *The Book of Secrets*, which Deepak wrote two years ago. When he was a child in India there was a desire, a belief, that enlightenment could be achieved and secured by speaking to, training and living with a guru or yogis, etc. Deepak ends the book by saying "Today enlightenment is no longer the goal of life. Not even in India. The most that any teacher can do is to open the door again. He can answer these three questions in the age-old way:



Viewpoint

Who am I?

You are the totality of the Universe acting through a human nervous system.

Where did I come from?

You came from a source that was never born and will never die.

Why am I here?

To create the world in every moment.

Who am I? Where did I come from? Why am I here?

If you'll notice, those are questions.

So we started with some questions. I have gotten to know Dean Dipak Jain [of the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University] over the last couple of years. I have come, as you also have, to be very impressed with the quality this man. As we listened to Dean Jain on Tuesday I was fascinated by his commitment and his values-driven orientation. I was impressed by his feelings and sensibilities, and I was most extraordinarily impressed by the way in which he ended his talk. In introducing him I noted that the Kellogg School has been considered for many years now as being one of the top business schools in America. It's the number one school according to at least one major publication. Dean Jain has brought a new form of leadership to this institution and he did it by asking lots of new and interesting questions.

The only advice he gave us, at the end of his talk, was not the answer to any of the questions. The final slide, he said, contained what he wanted us to know and remember that Kellogg stood for. His final slide spelled the word "love."

That raised a question. How and why could a man of such renown choose this word? What motivated him? What is he driving at? In effect, he asked a question by making a statement. The implied question is, "If Kellogg is all about love, does that imply that we all have some portion of the answer within us?" Or,

"Is it Kellogg's job to bring that answer out in all of us?"

It's interesting to consider that the difference between what we do, and what we are capable of doing, would suffice to solve most of the world's problems. I am not the first person to say that. Mahatma Gandhi said it. I think the reason he said it was that he wanted us to recognize that human society is not held back because we lack the tools necessary to create the solutions. Gandhi's statement raises yet another question. Why? Why, if we have the tools to literally create heaven on Earth, have we chosen to create the collective barbarism which still infects our species? Many believe this is destroying our planet and, most important, it is deadening our souls.

It's a question.

The famous head of IBM, Thomas Watson, who is not exactly known for a touchy-feely approach to the world of business, had this question. He made it as a statement, but I'll show you where the question is. He said, "To be successful, have your heart in your business and your business in your heart."



**Deepak
Chopra (left)
and Kellogg
Dean Dipak
Jain**

Viewpoint

It raises a question: How does one have heart in business? Does that have something to do with the possibility that love was the appropriate slide to represent Kellogg? If it did represent Kellogg what would it mean to those of us who went through the three-day experience we've just completed?

I am really delighted because the experience I completed, and I had the pleasure of completing with each of you, really felt like a new learning experience. People shared their wisdom, even the chief of the Navy, who made the comment, "We're just gonna try things. If it doesn't work we blow it up! That's our business anyway."

A lot of business people think that's not a bad way to approach things. If it doesn't work you blow it up metaphorically. He meant *really*, I think. The point is, it's about a question, because if you knew for a fact it was going to work it wouldn't be a question in the first place. There'd be nothing to blow up.

Many years ago I asked my long-time friend Wayne Silby, the founder of the Calvert mutual funds, "What is your job exactly, as chairman of the Calvert Group?"

He said, "Oh, it's real simple. I have the greatest job in the world, Rinaldo. My job is to sit in the middle of the room, have lots of ideas, have lots of questions, and have no attachment to what the answers might be. That's what chairmen do."

He defined a new form of business leadership. And that's what we tried to co-create here at Kellogg — a new form of business leadership.

I met Wayne through Bob Schwartz, then the New York Bureau Chief of *Time magazine*, who assembled a large number of people to ask and answer questions. From that group the following things directly occurred: in very short order I and four other people put our Rolodexes together and invited a bunch of our friends to Gold Lake, Colorado. We thought they were business leaders of the future. We started an organization now called SVN, the Social Venture Network. Directly out of that meeting, a couple of years after we started SVN, I and 12 others started an organization called Businesses for Social Responsibility or BSR, which I think right now is an \$8- to \$10 million-a-year non-profit consulting arena. The third thing that came out of that was another organization called the World Business Academy.

Each of those things, and I would humbly submit that BSR, SVN, and the World Business Academy, together, have been trying somewhat successfully to push through the complacency to the place where the world of ordinary commerce meets the Divine. That's the answer, I would suggest, as to why the last slide in Dean Jain's presentation says the word "love."

At the end of the day all of us are capable of an incredible amount of love. I want to use that term, love, in a way such that each of us can feel good. It can encompass the emotions we feel toward our families, our friends, our partners, our spouses, our significant others. But I think the word is so much more powerful, and holds much more meaning than that. Love is about the idea of holding in our hearts at the same time compassion, clarity, and commitment. Most of all, it connotes an immense desire, deep down, that we do



wish for others to prosper more, just as we wish the same for ourselves. So business is redefining the word 'prosper.' Notice that that words "prosper," and "prosperity" encompass the kinds of information you have heard in the past three days. I think that anyone will prosper (in the traditional sense of the word) who cares to learn from what Hazel [Henderson] and her panel shared on the topic of sustainable investing.

I honestly believe that the people who would take and truly apply the *EconForecast* to their business decisions are actually getting a significant advantage. They will prosper more in the traditional sense, more than they would had they not had access to this information. But prosper, as you have seen it used in the past three days, means something far more than that. In this context I would define "prosper" as having the opportunity to see how first-rate thinking, melded with first-rate information, arrives in an envelope. That unique combination of thinking and information is precisely the envelope which ultimately holds the answer to the question, "What is the holistic business model for success?"

Oliver Wendell Holmes observed that, "The greatest thing in the world is not so much where we are, but in what direction we are moving." I share that with you in the spirit of the direction I have honestly felt us move. I would ask each of you to honestly tell yourself, did you feel that you were a little bit moved? Once? Maybe twice? Or maybe, the entire time you were here.

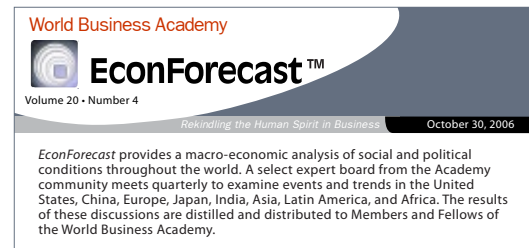
I think most of you will respond, if you honestly ask that question, that you were in fact moved. I know I was. I know that I could not have heard Bill Herren's story — American Vision Windows — well enough if I was just sitting in a quick luncheon meeting in Rotary. Of course it's a great story. The man is living on a park bench for seven years. He's homeless. And he creates a company with hundreds of employees and \$35 million worth of sales. 45% of his business is from word-of-mouth referral. We found him because one of his customers referred him to us, and said "This is an *interesting* guy!"

Bill Herren is building a culture of love for his employees. It's working so well he has gone from being a homeless alcoholic to now wanting to change our perception of what the nature of business is. And he's very profitable, by the way. He has an EBITDA any one of us would love to have.

So it's not about our trading values and our caring just to achieve results. It's about getting the results because of the values and the caring. That's what values-driven leadership is about. I think the conversation yesterday with George Zimmer is a classic example.

I first met George Zimmer almost 17 years ago when he joined the Academy. He asked me if I would go on his board. He wanted to go public. In those days, Men's Wearhouse was a \$64-million a year regional tailored clothing chain coming out of Houston.

Today, it's a \$2.2 billion business, has never lost money one quarter that it's been public, and has a culture where its employees vote it to be one of the 100 Best Companies to work for in America, as judged by *Fortune* magazine.



What did you hear him talking about? You heard him talking about a culture of values.

Here is the true inside story. When George first asked me — and we subsequently asked Michael Ray to join us — to go on the board, the exact business proposition he gave me was the following. He said, “Rinaldo, if I can get the culture of the Men’s Wearhouse to act like and be what you are writing and talking about in the World Business Academy, I can go from a small regional clothing company to a billion-dollar company. In the process I can create a lot of fun with my friends, and show the whole world it can be done.”

That was the offer.

He went way past a billion, and notice that the goal has not changed. In fact, now the goal has become: Can we find a way to institutionalize the culture, so that when George is no longer doing what he does, it isn’t unique to him? Rather, it will be found within this central “being” of the whole system.

He gave an interesting statistic. I was the first outsider on the board that included only George, his father, his brother, and the president of the company. Now it’s a Fortune 1000 company that’s traded on the New York Stock Exchange. The statistic is that the majority of the board now are Academy members, including Deepak Chopra, myself, Michael Ray, Bill Sechrest, and George, of course.

That was not a transition we made in one day. It has been building for a long time. If you think we haven’t met unbelievable resistance at many key steps along the way, you’d be underestimating the challenge. If you think everything we wrote about and talked about worked the first time, it didn’t. When our theory wasn’t as fully informed by marketplace reality as it needed to be, to George’s credit, in good faith we worked to overcome it and fix it.

I can honestly say that company represents, now in its sixteenth year of being public, the best case study of what these values do in the marketplace. I can give you others, by the way. That’s not the only one. It just so happens that one is really appropriate for this meeting at Kellogg.

I would like to share with you what Mollie Young [of Nametag, International] cited as her biggest “lesson learned” when she sat on the CEO leadership panel. She said, “We’ve learned to declare a state of interdependence. Not a declaration of independence.”

Why? Well, Willis Harman said something very well in this pamphlet we gave you called *Why the World Business Academy?* He said:

I firmly believe that there is no single factor more critical to influencing whether or not we achieve a humanely, ecologically, and spiritually satisfying future for this society and for humanity in a free, aware, responsible, and vital private sector, profit and non-profit. In all the ways discussed above and more, business will have a shaping effect on the future. The Academy’s self-imposed task is to bring as much enlightenment as possible to that shaping.



Mollie Young

So it's not about achieving enlightenment, as Deepak correctly noted at the end of *The Book of Secrets*. It's about *seeking* enlightenment. Or, to break the word down, seeking the opportunity to bring light within.

I share this with you at the end of this delightful meeting because I think sometimes in business we get a little outcome-driven. We're a little too quick to get to the payoff. Even when we follow the triple-bottom line approach of people/planet/profits, it can at times become a little bit formulaic. As was brought up on the first day by a gentleman from Granger Corporation, sometimes you get to the point where you don't even know how to do your accounting, because you don't know how to book that insubstantial *something*.

In Bill Herren's case that unknown "something" would be the fact that his employees love him, and his customers can't wait to send their friends there. There's no place on his balance sheet for that asset. Yet it's the principal asset of his business. In fact, remember Bill's mission statement: "Through unmatched customer service to revolutionize the lives of our customers, and by doing that changing the lives of the people who work here."

Bill said he was motivated by his own personal Christian beliefs. Over the last three days we've brought Buddhism, the Hindu culture, Christianity, and the Muslim world into the conversation. In none of those dialogues were we ever confused between what those were — religious data points — and the central question we started with: What is the *spirit*?

...Interesting word, the spirit. At one point Dr. Richard King, who is an amazing man in his own right (a former dean of a business school in California; twenty-some years at King international; and successful in business and academe), said, "You've got to be careful with the S-word (spirit) even when people take and define characteristics that are essential to them."

Spirit seems to mean something about *who* we are when we look at those three questions that Deepak put at the end of *The Book of Secrets*. I am going to share with you a couple of clues Deepak offered us. They concern how we can get a better understanding of how we might experience that spirit. He put it at the *beginning* of *The Book of Secrets*! A few minutes ago, I gave you the ending of the book. Now, here's the beginning.....

It's called "The Wisdom We Are Already Living."

"Number 1: You have a higher purpose."

I don't think anyone disagrees.

"Number 2: You are in communion with the whole of life."

I think we've all experienced that.

"Number 3: Your awareness is always open to change. From moment to moment it senses everything in your environment. You feel acceptance for all others as your equal, without judgment or prejudice."

If you don't feel this, you would then begin to question, "Why *not*?"

That happened today. For example, some of the speakers questioned, "What is it about this clash of cultures that is developing with the Muslim world, that leaves us fearful of going unarmed into certain places, and yet knowing we

must go?" "What leads us, as we hear of terrible traumas yet don't know for sure that we can address them, to feel we must go out and try to heal them?"

To continue with Deepak's writing:

You seize every moment with renewed creativity, not clinging to the old and outworn. Your being is cradled in the rhythm of the universe. You feel safe and nurtured. Your idea of efficiency is to let the flow of life bring you what you need, and you've learned that forced control and struggle are not your way. You feel a sense of connection with your source [and I think that's the S-word]. You are committed to giving, as the source of all abundance. You see all change, including birth and death, against the backdrop of immortality. Whatever is unchanging is most real to you.

I'd like to read one other thing from Willis's pamphlet because I think it helps tie all of this together. "Even as these questions are raised, the main features of a new vision are becoming apparent. For however real the problems of the world may be, a negative problem-focused obsession is not the most desirable basis for decision and action. The great achievements of industry and technology, of private enterprise and democracy, did not come about through focusing on the negative conditions from which humans were attempting to escape, but rather through an entrepreneurial response to the vision and the challenge of making things better. Similarly the best reason for involvement with issues of social change and global development is the positive challenge of creating a better world than the one we know."

Having known Willis so well until the day he died, I can assure you the better world he thought of was the world where spirit touched the Earth.

As you go through your daily experience from this point forward, you could ask a question like, "What do we do?" And that certainly comes up when we listen to the panel on Global Reconstruction. "What do we do? Do we have the courage? The commitment? The willingness to put ourselves on the line? Or at the very least, can we do what Bill Gates is doing? Can we give part or all of our time when we're ready to get past the earning-money stage?"

If we can't do that, can we do what Warren Buffett has done? He invested his riches by hiring the best executive team he could find, Bill and Melinda Gates. Both Warren and Bill realized that the bigger game began *after* they won the game we all thought we were playing.

I cannot stress enough how important I think that lesson is. Today, as you leave with these questions, I would hope that you did not focus on the question: "Am I as committed as the gentlemen at Knightsbridge International? Or, am I as determined to put cows in the pastures as Heifer International does? Am I as willing to create from nothing what Drazen Kapusta has done in Croatia? Am I willing to redefine the Executive and MBA curriculum in a totally revolutionary way, as Ron Nahser is doing at Presidio? Am I willing to build a culture that is as powerful and impactful on the planet as Bill Herren or George Zimmer? Am I willing to be as committed to the public good as a Tom Gegax? Am I willing to share and give at that level? Am I willing to be that committed to my own life and process and health?"

Those are all good questions, but I don't think they are the real question. I think Katharine Graham said it well. "To love what you do and feel that it matters, how could anything be more fun?" So the questions that would rise above all the other questions, are, "How can I have more fun? How can I be more like my true self? How can I live my life with greater authenticity? How can I find the things that I can uniquely do? What is uniquely here for me to do that addresses all the other big questions?"

As you do that, as you keep asking those questions over and over, you will be helping, knowingly or not, to co-create the answer to what is the holistic business model for success. More importantly you will be an exemplar of how to enjoy it.

Gandhi had that immortal instruction, "You must be the change you wish to see." I believe that all of us, without getting graphic, would love to see a change from what we saw in the footage of Rwanda. If you are willing, as Rilke says, to be with the questions, if you are willing to hold a different vision of yourselves — not as people in the workplace — or, as Richard King said, "We're not human beings having a spiritual experience; we're spiritual beings having a human experience" — if you're willing to hold it that way in any point in your business career you're going to achieve a new level of greatness. I don't think we individually have to remake the world in order to do that. We need only be willing to hold our newfound awareness of the importance of the questions. In addition to that awareness, we have to be willing to hold a new level of trust.

I will leave you with a final thought. A spirit, given the opportunity to absorb, to be co-creatively part of this dialogue, is like a spirit soaring. All of us are spirits. And a spirit soaring from moment to moment is what I call the experience of "living in the leap" ...in the place of not-knowing, but aware of the fact that soaring is in fact the highest expression of who we are.

We are *spiritual* beings having a *human* experience. If we are spirits soaring from moment to moment, if that's our experience of living in the leap, I would like to give you one assurance I have learned in the last 40 years of my business career. There is only one precondition for flight. That precondition is trust. The trust I would ask you have to hold in your hearts is that what happened here the last three days *was* real. This *is* the number one business school probably in the world. Dean Jain *really is* the dean. Deepak Chopra *really is* one of the best selling authors of all time. You are *all* extraordinary beings. I can honestly say, I have taken flight with you. Our spirits soared together.

Thank you.

About the Author:

A leading international executive, writer and keynote speaker for over 25 years, **Rinaldo Brutoco** is widely recognized as a practical visionary, change agent and futurist. Rinaldo uniquely combines theory and practice to assist executives and organizations in adapting to change with “breakthrough” ideas.

An accomplished futurist, Rinaldo has served on the board of The Men’s Wearhouse, a \$2-billion-dollar retail sales New York Stock Exchange company, for over a decade from its initial IPO to the present time.

In 1986 he founded, and currently serves as President of, the World Business Academy. The Academy is a collaborative network of mindful individuals collectively exploring the leading edge of business and a pre-eminent publisher of new-paradigm business literature. He has also served on numerous non-profit boards including The Gorbachev Foundation, Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, State of the World Forum, the Center for Earth Concerns, Omega Point Institute and the Brutoco Family Foundation, adding to his ability to transform companies through a multi-disciplinary approach.

He is the author of a college textbook on nuclear energy, *Profiles in Power*, published by Simon & Schuster in 1996, and has been the contributor to, or principal author resource for, several other books including *Winning the Innovation Game* and *New Paradigms in Business*.

Rinaldo obtained a degree with highest honors in Economics and Philosophy in 1968 from Santa Clara University and a Juris Doctorate, Order of the Coif, from UCLA School of Law in 1971.