

# Piyush Pandey

Chairman and National Creative Director

## 'Laugh and let laugh'

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**Piyush Pandey, Chairman and National Creative Director, Ogilvy & Mather India.**

### **What does spirituality mean to you?**

It means adding joy to someone's life, in any way, making others laugh. It is about a spirit of living. The joy that comes with it is like telling God that I am doing at least a little bit of what You probably wanted me to do.

### **Do you believe you are guided and protected by a superior force?**

I guess I am. When I look at where I am, at the state of affairs of people that matter to me, there is a bit of a feeling that someone up there likes me and at times it motivates me as a sign that I must be doing something right.

### **Do you believe you have a special mission or purpose in this life?**

I never asked myself that question and I think that is why I was able to do what I did. How and why one was created, the Creator would never uncover, so I did not want to let my small brain be troubled by such huge questions. I do not believe in predestination though. I think there is a general direction and then it is up to you to make things happen. Of course I try to use the talent I was given beyond the

professional world, for instance with the Jaipur Foot Foundation that I am actively involved with, or the campaign against polio with Amitabh Bachan. And that gives me tremendous satisfaction.

**What is spirituality for you in your day to day life?**

I am a god fearing man, and no matter where I am, no matter what I do, I take a few minutes to pray every day. Funnily enough, it takes place when I have a bath. And I always thank the lord for the time up until that prayer and for more joy around. I guess He has been listening...

**What is the role of spirituality in the world of advertising?**

In the office people say they hear me before they see me because I laugh so loudly. We evaluate the success of the office in terms of levels of laughter. So to me it is about seeing people happy, enjoying the journey, sharing a passion. Somewhere along the line, it has some spiritual context to it. Laughter therapy is even catching up in the West. When coming to the question of encouraging consumerism and materialism through our profession, I think there are two distinct issues: one is ethics, and of course one should not make false promises, and the other is the responsibility people have to take when they consume. We should not overestimate our power in that respect. Human beings are a bundle of intangible emotions and it is up to them to decide what is good for them and what is not.

**Can you tell us about a unique experience that changed or shaped your spiritual beliefs?**

I never had a major shift in my belief system because I did not depart from zero or reached one hundred. I never asked myself complicated questions about life and my feeling is that if one goes too deep, we reach questions about the cause of so much death, poverty, suffering and so on. And to that, there are no definite answers.

**What are your spiritual inspirations?**

What people seek from a spiritual state of mind is what I was lucky enough to get on a platter while growing up. There was a lot of laughter at home. Nothing was ever imposed in terms of religion. But the value system and the practice that are mine come from home.

**If you were to be reincarnated, what would you like to be reincarnated as?**

I grew up in two rooms and a half with ten other people, without ever knowing what the word privacy meant, and no one ever felt the place was small. So no matter what, I would have to come back with the same quality of people around me. I have such a sense of belonging with them.

**If there was one question you could ask god, what would it be?**

Life is designed to come with many ups and downs. That is the way it is and questioning it won't change anything. So I'd rather just deal with life as it comes, trying to do what gives me joy and to the people I interact with. My philosophy is simple: no questions asked, just enjoy the path!

**What is your idea of happiness?**

A good hearty laugh.