

Foreword

There are three main reasons why I believe Dr Jagdish Parikh's book *Managing Your Self* is a significant contribution to the literature for the practicing manager. The first one has to do with the fact that the agenda of business has changed. During the decades just after World War II, the main issue was how to cope efficiently with the pent-up demand in the market, but since the early eighties (or even earlier) the issue has become one of restructuring and revitalizing our corporations. At the beginning of the first time period, analytical skills dominated the profile of the successful manager – we had to be able to select rationally from among many growth options. In contrast, the tasks of today require additional qualities: like imagination, inventive-ness, and the capability to understand systems of ever increasing complexity. These qualities – part of a larger shift in our methods of perceiving and capturing reality – build on powers of the personality we have ignored in business for a long time: the power of intuition and management of one's self. Most managers readily admit that decision-making or judgement is a complex mix of analysis, incomplete knowledge and intuition. This shift, with the emphasis being put on intuition, creates a new context in which a good number of managers do not know how to function.

The second reason is that the number of managers who are disenchanted with their work appears to be increasing. They not only fail to get the satisfaction they rightfully should expect from their jobs, but often they find that they are not able to develop their full potential as human beings.

Even managers who, by traditional measures, are unusually successful in their jobs show deficiencies in other areas: while their one-track determination enabled them to become well-paid top achievers, they have great difficulties functioning well in, say, family

life and in the community at large. More and more managers seem to yearn for a better equilibrium as human beings, even though it is often difficult to speak about it openly.

Jagdish Parikh's book addresses both clusters of issues. It contributes to answering the question of how to manage the self in order to achieve a healthy balance between the different levels of our existence. In addition, it tries to shed some light on the question of how to reach a high level of performance essential in the context of accelerating change and uncertainty. For this purpose, he introduces the concept of *management by detached involvement* which is a timely contribution to management thinking and practice.

The third distinctive feature of Jagdish Parikh's book is that he has not tried to make an academic book out of this complex subject but rather, he has given a personal testimonial which, having profound value, has also the inevitable limitations of this type of work.

Jagdish Parikh is well equipped to write such a guide to self-management. Although he was born and raised in Asia, he received an important portion of his education in the West. Having access to a plurality of cultures is an advantage when writing a book which tries to build a bridge between such different worlds. Furthermore, the author is calmly able to combine the inspiration of an international executive teacher with that of a successful businessman, thereby adding a fundamental dimension to his testimonial and credibility. He also understands the language codes of the practicing manager.

Jagdish Parikh has been an adjunct faculty member at the International Institute for Management Development (IMD) and, for a number of years, at one of IMD's parent institutes, the International Management Institute (IMI). His book is largely derived from his pedagogical experiences during these years and the rich interaction he has had with executives from around the world. I sincerely hope to see his book as well received as his teaching has been in the classroom.

Dr Juan Rada
Director General of IMD
Lausanne, Switzerland
September 1990