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ENRICO PRENESTI

THINK LEAN!
DISCOVER AND DEVELOP
YOUR LEAN MINDSET
VALUE, BOOST, PROMOTE
AND AFFIRM YOURSELF

Preface by

GANDOLFO DOMINICI



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«They think that intelligence is about noticing things are relevant (detecting patterns); in a complex world, intelligence consists in ignoring things that are irrelevant (avoiding false patterns)».

NASSIM NICHOLAS TALEB



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PREFACE

I am delighted to write a preface to this very interesting and particular book written by Enrico Prenesti. The reason of my delight is that this book can be considered as a further development of my first study on Lean production and Lean thinking.

At the beginning of my scholar research experience I studied the Lean production system as a PhD student at the University of Nagasaki in Japan, writing my PhD thesis on this topic. In particular, I focused on the anthropological roots of the Toyota Production System to the Japanese culture. Japan has been an isolated country for centuries and, as a consequence, has developed a unique culture able to overcome the difficult environmental situations faced by Japanese people. As I wrote almost twenty years ago (in 2003) in my PhD Thesis (later published in a book titled: *From Business System to Supply Chain and Production in Japan. Lean production and its roots in Japanese culture*, VDM Verlag, 2010) the Japanese culture created a business climate that is deeply different from that of other industrialized economies. It is not by chance that the manufacturing and management techniques, later defined “lean” by MIT authors, were born and raised in Japan. Indeed, since these approaches are deeply linked with the Japanese culture, in order to understand Japanese Lean system, we first have to understand what Japanese do and how they do it.

This book goes beyond my research, focusing on how to use the Lean system to create a functional mindset to survive and prosper in the difficult times we are living.

This book describes the lean as a process to liberation from the standardized and damaging mind schemes that oppress us and our society. Through this process of self-consciousness awakening we may unshackle not only our mind but the entire society by enabling the critical consciousness and thinking.

What was created as an approach to industrial efficiency is transformed in this book into a path towards personal and social liberation from the chains imposed by postmodern society.

The global unilateral social pressure, boosted by the propaganda on mass media and enforced by government regulation, aims to create a standardized human being.

The reason of this standardization is that a standardized human is easier to be controlled. Indeed, according to a basic principle of cybernetics (i.e. “*the science of communication and control of machines and living organisms*”⁽¹⁾) and in particular to Ross Ashby’s Law of Requisite Variety⁽²⁾, standardization of the controlled is necessary to gain full control. In cybernetics the “variety” is a measurement of the number of possible states of a system (therefore including social and human systems) and, according to the Law of Requisite Variety, *for a system to be stable the number of states that its control mechanism is capable of attaining (its variety or complexity) must be greater than or equal to the number of states in the system being controlled.* In other words, the more variety has the controlled system the more difficult (or better to say impossible) is for the controller to control it. It is therefore crucial for the controlling elites to foster a global standardized humanity that can be easily controlled, otherwise they would not be able to control billions of differentiated human thinkers.

Like in Marketing science, to sell a global product, with certain characteristics, we need a global consumer that is eager to desire and purchase that product (e.g. fast food, smart phones, clothes, etc.). Therefore, it is crucial for multinational corporations to obtain a standardized global consumer to whom will be possible to sell the same products globally.

It is for this reason that, in our society controlled by multinational corporations, we observe (and suffer) a growing pressure toward a unilateral standardization of people and society. In a liquid society⁽³⁾ where there is no difference among individuals the control becomes easier. The unilateral laws of the so called “politically correct” are tools for the standardization of the postmodern

(1) N. WIENER, *Cybernetics: Or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine*. Paris, (Hermann & Cie) & Camb. Mass. (MIT Press) ISBN 978-0-262-73009-9; 1948, 2nd revised ed. 1961.

(2) W. R. ASHBY, “Requisite Variety and its Implications for the Control of Complex Systems”, *Cybernetica*, 1 (2) 1958.

(3) Z. BAUMAN, *Liquid Modernity*, Polity Press 2000.

humanity. As well as digitalization is another tool for control, making it more simple to create algorithms to monitor and forecast human behavior.

This book describes a corridor to achieve a critical thinking mindset utilizing also the tools of neuro-linguistics programming (NLP) and proposing an effective way to model the mindset according to Lean Thinking principles.

It is very interesting how Prenesti analyses the mindset of the industrial Lean Thinking approach for a wider use to personal growth and improvement. Since, as I described in my abovementioned earlier research, the Lean thinking of Toyota Production System is deeply rooted in Japanese culture, we may say that this book describes a “*Japanese way to enlightenment*”.

We have seen in the recent years how the process of social control had a dramatic acceleration with the pretext of the Covid-19 pandemic and in recent times of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the consequent “sanctions war”. Using the well-known metaphor of the “*Boiling frog*” (often and wrongly attributed to Noam Chomsky) the heat of the pot drastically increased in recent years causing many frogs to jump out of the pot without being prepared to that change. Hence people need an approach to survive outside their comfort zone.

People in our society need to get out from the comfort zone of standardized thinking given by the mass media and the society, by eliminating “waste” of useless “ready-made” stereotypes and mindsets, in the same way a production plant must eliminate production waste in terms of work in process inventory and squandering of resources. The book analyses the mental waste and puts forward the language as the key skill to advance personal improvement. According to the Japanese principle of “*Kaizen*” (continuous improvement) the book describes how continuous learning attitude can become a habit.

Reading this book may be useful as a self-help manual for survival and create the premises of the right mindset to better understand the dramatic changes of the turbulent time we are living. In other words, it is a management book that goes beyond company management to encompass self-management. A survival book for our times.

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INTRODUCTION

There is a lot of talk all over the world about quality, even in everyday language, for example with reference to *making a qualitative leap* or the importance of *life quality*. Just about the quality of life, the field is open to the most disparate considerations, the result of different cultures, ideologies and sensibilities. We commonly lead unnatural lives doped by harmful and pathogenic artefacts. We live in a frenetic and stressful society that prevents the reflexive pauses of psychophysical recharge and renewal, assimilating humans to inexhaustible electromechanical devices. Social conventions and binding rules too often guide behaviours, also because the vast majority of people prefer to adapt (becoming accomplice) or climb (becoming protagonist) to social systems, rather than working to improve them. Almost everything is distorted and devalued by social forces, so that the access to one's authenticity is limited by a pressure that pushes people to achieve worldwide social homologation. Globalised society members are imbued with economic paradigms that determine wealth and poverty independently of the merit and value of each individual. Workplaces demand fidelity and dedication, jeopardising dignity, safety of people, who are hypnotically led to confuse an employer with God. Education systems, instruction systems, economic, financial and monetary paradigms, workplaces' and families' dynamics must be radically reviewed all over the world. In order to achieve these goals it is necessary to renew the way of thinking and of getting emotional, dismissing competitive logics to favour those cooperative, so as to stimulate closeness and acceptance rather

than division and rejection. Self-esteem, self-love and autonomy must be the keywords with which nurturing each growing and developing person. It is useless to deal with breakthrough topics such as environmental safeguard if people are then incapable in acting for self-protection.

The creative revolutionary rebel who dwells in each person is domesticated, with good or bad manners, by the diktats of cohesive and widespread dominant lobbies that work to concentrate and strengthen their power at the expense of the power of single individuals. With the aggravating circumstance that dishonest people attract each other and join together to strengthen themselves, while honest people do not, preferring to play their game independently, discretely and lonely. Dishonest people are like many cancers, they metastasise. Dishonest people are very often engaged in recruiting new followers into their hellish underworld, while the honest ones are not recruiters (they do not proselytise) neither manipulators (they do not enchant) or blackmailers. The result of these different trends is that noisy and cohesive minorities predominate over silent and scattered majorities.

Nevertheless, the honest and transparent people are like growing forests, they develop themselves silently, but anyway inexorably.

Sadly, humans usually establish fortified and immutable *comfort zones* – a safe mental space, also called *zone of apparent certainties*, where there is no risk but no growth either – hindering creative approaches to *personal development*. A comfort zone is not a physical area surrounded by a secure wall we have built around us, but it includes both our daily routines, beliefs and way of thinking. The real risk is that a comfort zone can become the perfect excuse not to do, not to dare, not to risk, not to grow and, ultimately, not to live. Fear of the unknown keeps anyone in the comfort zones, like captives on the death row of a jail. Therefore, we drag colourless, odourless and tasteless lives on the cast of the ancestors of which we feel faithful guardians (this condemns to the endless repetition of transgenerational patterns if there is no awakening of awareness).

Anyone deserves to feel blameless, hence to feel innocent and escape the widespread culture of blame, and to move relentlessly toward his/her self-realisation with self-determination.

Anyway, most people are good at settling for, bowing to situations without negotiating or fighting, giving up their position, denying their values and needs in order to complain afterwards that life sucks. The good news, although committing, is that each of us is the promoter and the guardian of his/her own wellness and freedom, no one delivers at home such conditions. Each of us is responsible of his/her own current psychophysical condition, and no one can be delegated to improve it. Life is an unstoppable transformation process, a work in progress, anyone changes albeit not interested or aware of it. Each of us is requested to juggle in more or less satisfying rather than annoying daily stuffs, but a daily space for introspection, reflection and planning must be found, in order to obey the law of becoming. Then, let us examine a way to come out strengthened and stably renewed from the asphyxiating greyness of the ordinary life. Starting from a brief critical analysis of the existing.

The terrifying and enslaving vortex that is currently engulfing humanity is the long wave of millennia of transnational lobbyist despotism of usurious bankers. Any type of dictatorship has outraged and bloodied the world over millennia. Mass media continue to insist that people need work. This is categorically wrong. People need security, equity, peace, and opportunities according to the matrix generated by critical and plural thinking and by the natural need of self-affirmation.

Each one needs to be who s/he is, beyond depowering judgements, social labels, working roles, homologating pressures, and unreasonable and constrictive social constraints.

Instead, to express oneself anyone is forced to search one's own existential way of self-realisation against current limiting society. We are all unprotected against injustice, as in the Middle Ages. Little has in fact changed since then in term of uncertainty of law, arbitrariness and abuses; we can, as at that time, find freedom only as a sentiment, as a relentless belief, as an interior condition, since at the socio-political level we are dominated by an increasingly tightly organised technocratic world dictatorship. To govern you need a common enemy against which to concentrate the attention and the forces of the population: if it is not there, it must be invented to distract, frighten and tire people. People's boundaries are continually violated and the selective permeability of the invisible membrane that encloses and delimits each one is

continually forced. Backward and oppressive social systems, driven by transnational lobbies in the hands of genealogies of hooded plutocrats, anchored in the sanctioning management of the community, favour enslavement by determining asphyxiating and harmful living and working conditions, disrespectful of individual authenticity and detrimental to the rights of expression and the evolution of individuals. Malcolm X (born Malcolm Little, also known with his Islamic Name El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, African-American Muslim minister, human rights activist and popular figure during the civil right movement, 1925 – 1965): «Nobody can give you freedom. Nobody can give you equality or justice or anything. If you're a man, you take it». Within the current economic-financial paradigms, incomes, annuities and savings are essential. Impoverishment is rampant, thanks to the misuse of money and finance and the inaccessibility of both incomes and annuities. The recourse to credit grows and this makes many people irreversibly subjected to a coercive system due to those who have been able to invent banks, money, and usury loans. The reality is that every nation is indebted to all its citizens, not vice versa as someone undertakes to make us believe in every way. Unfortunately, a general anaesthesia of consciences quenches dissent and facilitates the phenomenon at all levels.

This essay aims to deliver to readers a self-help guide to allow the self-analysis and the modification of the own mindset developed over time. Let me inform or remind you: the majority of your thoughts and emotions have been developed copying uncritically someone – typically, parents, relatives, and teachers – and, moreover, are inherited from your ancestors (as stated by transgenerational psychology). Moreover, mainly due to mass media (radio, television, internet, and so on) activities, it is hard enough to distinguish news by fake news, truth from bullshits. This interferes with the possibility of forming autonomous thinking. Ancient layers of experiences lie within you, but this is not really you. Each one needs a deep inspection and a radical revision to feel free from foreign neuropsychic material stored in one's subconscious mind.

The mindset determines hellish or heavenly conditions of life, while dedicating oneself to personal development and transformation is the only natural way of living, in accordance with the inescapable principle of becoming.

Social systems, well organised in dominant sects, strive to make the planet unliveable by imposing slave living standards. Nevertheless, everyone

contributes to the global functioning with one's own attitude and behaviour. Improvements are hence possible knowing at first neurolinguistics and adopting a specific transformative dictionary, which is typical of the ontological life coaching approach to change. What you know can save you, whilst what you ignore can kill you. Change and personal development are complex issues and usually require guidance to implement. Let me be your guidance and let yourself be embraced and permeated by new viewpoints for new passionate challenges and new mentally ecological goals.

Self-protection is the keyword I want it acts as reader's dashboard spy lighting the path towards a creative, prosperous, and healthy life.

The increase in impositions that people are currently undergoing is impressive. The social order continues to be maintained by dint of obligations and prohibitions. Adhesiveness and devotion are, in fact, the first unavoidable unwritten requests that every social aggregation imposes on its followers. The result is a society of isolated, neglected, unheard, hostile, oppressed people, ready to let themselves be massacred by a master who pretends to protect and save them but who, in reality, submits them in order to exploit them. The result is a society of confused, frightened, submitted, robotised people, convinced that they are guilty and deficient and that they have to continually obey to someone, who knows why. No limits. No chains. No addictions. No owners and slaves. No subordination, only parity of dignity and rights. No hierarchies. No oligarchies. No elites and elitism. No occult potentates, who are self-crowned titans of the world. No totalitarianism. No plutocrats. No deceptive virtuality. No robotisation and homologation of people. No crumbling of rights, because rights are not concessions. No to social systems that favour debt and impoverishment. No deceptive finance. No to loan sharking. No to the steep power of the banks. No pestilent underworld.

A bright thought of Henri-Louis Bergson (French philosopher, 1859 – 1941) can light a path of self-development: «Fortunately, some are born with spiritual immune systems that sooner or later give rejection to the illusory worldview grafted upon them from birth through social conditioning. They begin sensing that something is amiss, and start looking for answers. Inner knowledge and anomalous outer experiences show them a side of reality others are oblivious to, and so begins the journey of awakening. Each step of the journey is made by following the heart instead of the crowd, and by choosing knowledge over veils of ignorance».

Let me refer you what Jack Welch (American business executive, chemical engineer, and writer, 1935 – 2020) states: «Change before you have to». Getting by and surviving is enough for you? I believe not. Therefore, full speed ahead!