



[MONE] MANAGING ONESELF

Introduction

Managers tend to be action-oriented people and MBA programs probably accentuate such predisposition towards action, achievement and tangible results. However, while a practical orientation may be necessary for business people, it is not enough.

Eugene O'Kelly, CEO of KPMG, said that "the very busy-ness of business militates against reflection," which might create unexpected problems and difficulties. Reacting against standard management training which they described as a 'boot camp,' Gosling and Mintzberg have insightfully described the reflective mindset that leaders should possess: "These days, what managers desperately need is to stop and think, to step back and reflect thoughtfully on their experiences. Reflect means to refold, which suggests that attention turns inward so that it can be turned outward."

Many voices have described the current financial meltdown as a leadership crisis requiring a radical change in management education. Some of those voices asking for a change actually preceded the financial meltdown. According to Professor Badaracco from Harvard Business School, "MBA students perhaps need a little less in the way of quantitative tools and a little more in the way of good judgment and self-knowledge, as well as a deeper understanding of human nature. [...] Leaders should learn more about themselves if they want to succeed. In other words, before you set out to manage other people, you should look inside yourself and reflect on how well you can manage yourself. That takes time, and it is an unnatural act for action-oriented people. And you may not like what you see."

Readings, exercises, lectures, and cases presented in this course are meant to stimulate reflection about your own character, assumptions, beliefs, and values, which will inevitably impact your career.

In today's turbulent career environment, self-discovery is more important than ever for business professionals to develop their own agendas, carve out their own places, and develop the right skills and support networks. They must start there if they want to make a lasting professional contribution. In the words of management pundit Peter Drucker, managers today must be, first and foremost, "their own chief executive officers".

Objectives

This course intends to help you achieve a greater understanding of several main areas to help you advance in your never-ending process of self-development:

- yourself, including how your past has shaped your present and your goals;
- your character strengths and weaknesses;
- your relationship skills and attitudes;

Learning Outcomes

Students will develop a clearer sense of how they feel and think about management processes, having discovered taken-for-granted biases and tested some of their cherished assumptions. They will be more aware of their character strengths and weaknesses. They will review the basis of their relationship skills and attitudes.

Students will also work on a personal development goal that would like to pursue and will think with some detail about their intended personal and professional trajectory.

Competences

General Competences

- To resolve interpersonal conflicts quickly and profoundly without damaging the personal relationship, both inside the organization and in the immediate milieu of those involved (shareholders, customers, suppliers, etc.).
- To anticipate and evaluate particularly tense situations in order to maintain personal equilibrium and act objectively and coherently.
- To make and validate hypotheses on personal or business reactions to different decisions and circumstances in order to develop methodical, solid learning about oneself and one's organization.

To foster the leadership capacities of teams and companies, beginning with their own self-knowledge and an understanding of the different kinds of temperaments and the way they interact.

Content

The content and purpose of the course follows four key building blocks:

1. Self-discovery: self-awareness and self-regulation. Explore your biases, values, assumptions, emotions, habits, and reflect on how well you govern yourself to pursue your goals.
2. Other-discovery: empathy and social skills. Reflect on the quality of your connections with others and of your support networks.
3. Context: cultural and political skills. Reflect on your understanding of the context, different societal mores, and the impact of peer pressure and business culture.
4. Life purpose and values. Explore how you can find meaning in your career and how you can project your future in a compelling manner.



Methodology

The course is based on cases, exercises, and lectures. There will be several written assignments.

Cases from session 2 to session 6. As usual, please prepare each case individually, discuss it with your team, and come to class prepared to participate. We encourage you to reflect after each class on what have you learned about yourself in the discussion.

Learning log. We suggest that you keep a learning log about the implications of each class to your personal development. In short entries of few lines, you can answer one or more of the following questions: “How did the class discussion relate to me? Which concept discussed in class was most relevant to me? Why was it relevant to me? How can I apply the learning to my development goal?”

Written exercises. The course includes a number of written exercises designed to bring case discussions closer to home.

Peer coaching. Though it is not compulsory, we strongly recommend you to continue with the peer coaching you practiced during the Leadership course in Module 1. The carrying out of your role as both peer coach and coachee will provide you with novel insights about the themes of the course and will aid your process of self-discovery and personal growth in the areas that you choose to discuss. This exercise might be particularly helpful to determine and articulate the development goal. Moreover, you may decide to continue this peer coaching during the rest of the GEMBA in order to monitor and sustain the advancement in the envisaged development goal. You may find guidelines for peer coaching in the Appendix 1.

Evaluation

Quality of the different assignments.