Instead of Managerialism: From What Goes on Inside Our Heads to What Our Heads (and Bodies) Go on Inside of – the World between Us

John Shotter

Review Essay
Theodore Taptiklis: Unmanaging: Opening up the Organization to its own Unspoken Knowledge

Theodore Taptiklis is a former McKinsey & Company consultant who, over the course of a 40 year career in business and organizations, undertook a wide variety of roles, including board member, senior executive, strategist and change manager, business development manager, and worked also in a variety of line-management positions as both an employee and as a professional advisor. He characterizes his professional life during that time as a progression from, not only a position of arrogant certainty to one of increasing ignorance, but also as one from realizing the all-consuming pervasiveness and insidiousness of traditional management doctrine (managerialism) to the possibility of more authentic and liberating ways of experiencing organizational life. The starting point for this process of ‘unmanaging’ ourselves, he suggests, is what we can notice each moment in our experience of the activities occurring between us in our everyday lives – a move from understanding our own practices as outside observers of them to engaged participants within them.

Key words: managerialism, utterances, responsiveness, systems thinking, life events