Part I

Enlightenment in Theory
A Lofty Notion

Preface by Peter ten Hoopen

‘How can you pass on to your readers things you don’t know?’

‘They are not things I do not know. Everything written there is in my soul, is part of it, they are lessons that I have learned in the course of my life and that I try to apply for myself. I am a reader of my own books. They give me something that I already knew, but of which I was not conscious.’

Paulo Coelho, The Zahir

Enlightenment is a lofty notion – and who are the authors, that they may speak of it? Are they that enlightened themselves? No, unfortunately, there is still a long way to go. The title of this work therefore reflects not pretence but aspiration. To further banish any suggestion of self-aggrandisement, let me divulge the trade secret of gurus and management trainers worldwide: we teach what we need to learn.

The subject matter suggested itself to me because I am a seeker. Not in the sense of ‘desperately seeking’, but in the sense of ‘living consciously’ – conscious of our connectedness with all living things, of connectedness with our own personal destination. This seeking began around my twenty-fifth with a three year journey to India¹, and was later continued, with varying degrees of application and varying results. My only right to speak derives from this seeking. All seekers have a right to speak, because others learn so much from the accounts of their inner journeys, of their hope and despair, their discoveries and disappointments, the rocks on the path, the sun on the skin.

Stimulated by the strong undercurrent of enthusiasm for the theme of enlightened leadership that I encountered in conversations with friends in the corporate world – like Charles Handy² I found no dearth of hungry spirits out there! – I set off on this path by taking a good hard look at myself, by listening to the voices of masters, in person and in writing,
and by pairing those impressions with my twenty-five years of experience in consultancy and communication — many of them devoted to helping shape and communicate corporate personality. Since joining up with Fons Trompenaars, serving as Senior Consultant for Trompenaars Hampden-Turner, I have been able to hone my thinking on the whetstone of multiple realities in a great variety of cultural spheres. Many insights were gained from often intense group sessions and individual work with people from fifty different countries, and of course from discussions with Fons, whose vast experience and clear-headed thinking has been a great source of inspiration. Our shared fascination is the relationship between the corporate personality and the personalities of those who give the organisation its face and voice, and are responsible for its stance in the world.

Building on these insights I have developed a structured approach to personality, the Chakras of Leadership, to shed light on personal aspects of leadership, and make it easier to come to grips with them. The companion ‘Chakra Test’ website (see www.chakratest.org) aims to provide users with new insights into core aspects of their personalities, by looking at the way they apply their life energy. It helps them answer fundamental questions such as: am I a more or less whole being, or do I neglect certain aspects of my personality? What do I really expend my energy on? Is that energy exerted positively or negatively? And which aspects of my personality show most potential for growth? Ideally, the Chakra Test is used in a coaching environment, in the context of leadership development.

A more elaborate version reserved for consultancy clients is being developed to chart the personality of organisations. It compiles the input of all participants, and provides an image of the current corporate personality juxtaposed with the desired personality. This juxtaposition graphically reveals the aspirations of the organisation. Because aspirations are the hidden drivers behind every energy application, the Chakra Test for Organisations is an effective tool for those directing change processes in organisations, especially mergers and acquisitions. Incidental use is indicated for ‘personality-critical’ processes, such as hiring key employees, outsourcing, and reorganisation. Once what I call the ‘energy economy’ of the organisation as a whole has been charted, the results of subsequent individual Chakra Tests give all or selected participants an opportunity
to see how well their own aspirations and energy focus match those of the organisation.

**THE SURVIVAL OF THE HAPPIEST**

The goal is to create organisations in which people can discover and develop their full potential – not just because *such organisations will be the sole survivors in the new struggle of the fittest*, but also because it will create more happiness in the corporate environment, in my accounting a valuable goal by itself.

Very soon, in fact, happiness may well be the *most valuable* goal, even in a strict fiscal sense. In a world of freely moving talent, the talent will go where it is most happy. Ever more frequently we see highly talented people accept pay below their maximum earning potential to join organisations they love, respect, or simply feel at home with. This changes the rules of the game, certainly in the sectors where human contributions are most vital to the bottom-line.

Which forces us to consider: who really are the fittest these days? The ‘lean and mean’ shops that manage to pay the lowest hourly wage, no medical? The ‘world class combatants’ (as one of my clients once demanded to be portrayed) that squeeze the last ounce of juice out of their work force by setting ever higher performance targets? The companies, according to Canadian management-guru Harry Mintzberg, home to over half of all the employed in the USA, where people are scurrying around hectically, living in mortal fear of being fired?3

Fons and I – and in fact all of us at Trompenaars Hampden-Turner – believe that a case can be made that the happiest are the fittest, and that in the corporate world, what is really playing now is *the survival of the happiest*. Create happiness, or lose it.

This book grew from great mutual respect, joy in co-operation, and a shared conviction that being pragmatic should not preclude dreaming, and that dreaming should not preclude practical application. Our joint ambition is to enhance your capacity to dream of a better world, and provide tools that help you make this dream become reality.