

Information Summary -

"Honesty: the Best Policy"

(Rob Fijlstra and Harry Wullings, 2004, Cyan,UK)

This is a very challenging book, addressing an honest, aware approach to seeing change as a friend, not as an enemy.

For example, the authors see the 21st century as a difficult time for:

- Control freaks
- Perfectionists
- Rationalists
- Planners
- Security seekers

"Self -realization requires responsibility and social awareness. For otherwise there will emerge an overblown self -realization in the shape of self -overestimation, navel contemplation and egocentricity."

There are parallels between the thinking of the authors and those of Charles Handy and others who address the need for new ways, new approaches, albeit informed by the past, so as to avoid repeating past mistakes.

In a chapter entitled "The Anatomy of The Fib "the incremental move from truth to part -truth, concealing awkward or unpalatable facts, is described, showing how in some organizations, promotion depends on an ability to massage facts, so that only "good stories" come out in the Press, on TV, on the internet, etc.

This playing with the truth has consequences; arrogance, authoritarian and corrupt behaviour become the characteristics of those who control organizations where truth is negotiable.

These characteristics lead to what is known as "masking "; in order to preserve the status quo and annihilate any real or perceived challenge to the established order of things, those in charge adopt a variety of masks to maintain unquestioning obedience. Sample masks quoted in this chapter include:

"*The Know it all*" reasons from his own assumptions and enjoys entering into a debate with the objective being to polarize things. He wants to win and prove he is the strongest.

"*The Boaster*" compensates a fragile self-image by making out reality as better than it is. The boaster is constantly living above his station and presents himself as better than the rest.

"*The Control Freak*" wants leadership and control, to hold the reins. The ruling thought is 'Trust is good, control is better'.

The authors conclude this chapter with a review of the decline in human values -

"We have suppressed the human measure and an increasing amount of energy is used in fear-directed survival patterns; conservatism, egocentricity and opportunism. Intuition, spontaneity and raw honesty have suffered as a result" (page 46)

It is not long before those living this 'masked life' lose touch with reality and become immune to any concerns about truth, honesty or social responsibility. Loyalty is demanded from employees but is not returned, self-interest rules and no responsibility is accepted for any actions or consequences of actions undertaken.

This book ends with a chart, which explores the interactions of:

- ❖ Corporate aims (not to be confused with corporate mission!)
- ❖ Cultural Elements
- ❖ Behavioural Criteria and elements of
- ❖ Desired Behaviour

END OF SUMMARY