

Abstract

Göteborg University  
School of Economics and Commercial Law  
Department of Business Administration  
P.O. Box 610  
SE-405 30 Göteborg, Sweden

Author: Thomas Andersson  
Language: English  
ISBN: 91-7246-219-1  
Doctoral Thesis, 2005  
248 pages

**Managers' identity work  
- Experiences from introspective management training**

The study takes its point of departure in the complex relation between "being yourself" and being manager, i.e. the struggle between what one ought to do as a representative of an organizations and what one want to do as a person. Introspective management training constitutes one extreme of focusing on the person in this matter, i.e. managers should develop their own unique leadership style upon "who they are". The influences on managers from this type of management training are not self-evident considering the complex relation mentioned in the beginning. The study therefore aims at describing how introspective management training influences practicing managers. To reach that aim six managers representing three different organizations were followed during and after their participation in an eight month long introspective management training.

For the managers in the study, the introspective training was mainly an arena for identity work. Identity work meant dealing with conflicting identities, elaborating and developing identities, roles and role transitions, and struggling to fit into different discourses, rather than finding the "true self". The identity process is complex and is influenced both by direct interaction with others "here-and-now" and by the "generalized other", which goes beyond "here-and-now". Identity work and role transitions are important parts of management considering the relational aspect of both identity and role. The introspective management training seems to have a potential on the personal level for the managers, but the organizational gain is more doubtful. There is a need of reciprocity during the process to enable an organizational enhancement together with the manager's personal development.

**Key words:** manager, identity, role transition, management training, self-knowledge, interaction, reciprocity