Professor Simon S. M. Ho

Welcome Remarks at the "Managing Oneself" Video Series Launching Ceremony cum Seminar

23 September 2021 Auditorium, Lee Quo Wei Academic Building, Yuen Campus, HSUHK

Dr. Julia Wang, Dr. Ricky Szeto, Prof. Bradley Barnes, Ms. Sandy Lau, Panel Moderators and Speakers, Fellow Colleagues, Friends and Students,

Welcome to the "Managing Oneself" Launching Ceremony, organized by Peter F. Drucker Academy Hong Kong, co-organized by The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong, and sponsored by the Wai Yin Association.

"Managing Oneself" is a timely topic during the yet-uncontained pandemic, a truly global challenge that many of us in this hall have ever faced in our lifetime. As the human society has encountered unprecedented economic, political, societal and technological changes, we always ask: What and how should our young people learn to face future changes, uncertainties and challenges?

In fact, it is very difficult for us to predict how the world would be in 2050, especially when AI technology can mimic a human body, brain and mind. Coupled with big data, AI will have a huge impact on people's work and life.

Many of the current professions will undergo drastic changes and employees have to be retrained if they do not want to be replaced. Much of the work that are un-structured and requires creativity and high level of human interactions will likely stay for some time. The pandemic has almost transformed the labour market landscapes and new abilities are being recognized and valued. For instance, new careers such as KOLs or micro-business entrepreneurs are opening up many more opportunities for the younger generations.

Managers have to unlearn and relearn how to manage not just new normal but also new technologies. Work of the future may require totally different skill sets and knowledge base and we, as educators, should stay tuned to new demands of the world and offer timely accommodations in programmes to these demands.

In doing so, it all boils down to a fundamental question of "how we manage ourselves", a question that is so hardcore, so fundamental and will not change despite what hit us now and next.

In Peter Drucker's original writing of "Managing Oneself", he emphasized several intertwined questions that are still so relevant today:

- What are my strengths (and weaknesses)?
- How do I perform?
- What are my values?
- Where do I belong?
- What should I contribute?

As you would agree, critical thinking is one of the most important core transferrable competencies in the 21st century. Critical thinking allows us to develop a deeper understanding of oneself, including one's strengths, weaknesses, personality, value system and life goals. And when you are able to understand and express yourself, you can then become who you truly are. This will increase your genuine relationships with others and you will be able to make a bigger impact on the world. Machines cannot do this – a machine does not have a soul. And that is what make us human.

Computers generally don't fail, human sometimes do. It is by struggling through the up and down times and understanding our weaknesses, we can develop our persistence and resilience against adversity. Instead of reprogramming like a computer, we look inside ourselves, learn, discover, rediscover and adjust continuously throughout our life.

With big data and machine learning, the algorithm will monitor your every step, breath and heartbeat, and will understand you better than yourself on many aspects. These days AI and big data can make optimal recommendations to us easily (e.g. which food items you take on the menu or who you should marry with). If you are happy to surrender all decision power to algorithm, then you can be doing nothing. However, if you still wish to retain some control about your existence and future life, you need to run faster than algorithm and know yourself before they do. And if you want to run faster, you have to leave your comfort zone, and do not bring too much luggage and burdens. You need to be flexible, adaptive and responsive to future unknowns. And to rediscover yourself continuously.

For many of our university students, university life is the best opportunity to seriously discover yourself (asking "who am I?") and your value system. You will encounter ups and downs during your university life. All these experiences offer you opportunities to learn and grow -- to discover, rediscover and adjust yourself.

I believe that HSUHK's unique "Liberal + Professional" education model is one of the most effective way to cultivate individual students' critical thinking and other key qualities, also knowing that each student has his/her own learning style and habit. Following our education mission, we share the same vision of the Drucker Academy in supporting and empowering our students to get ready for future work and life.

I trust the discussions and sharing today would be very fruitful to all of us here. Thank you.