

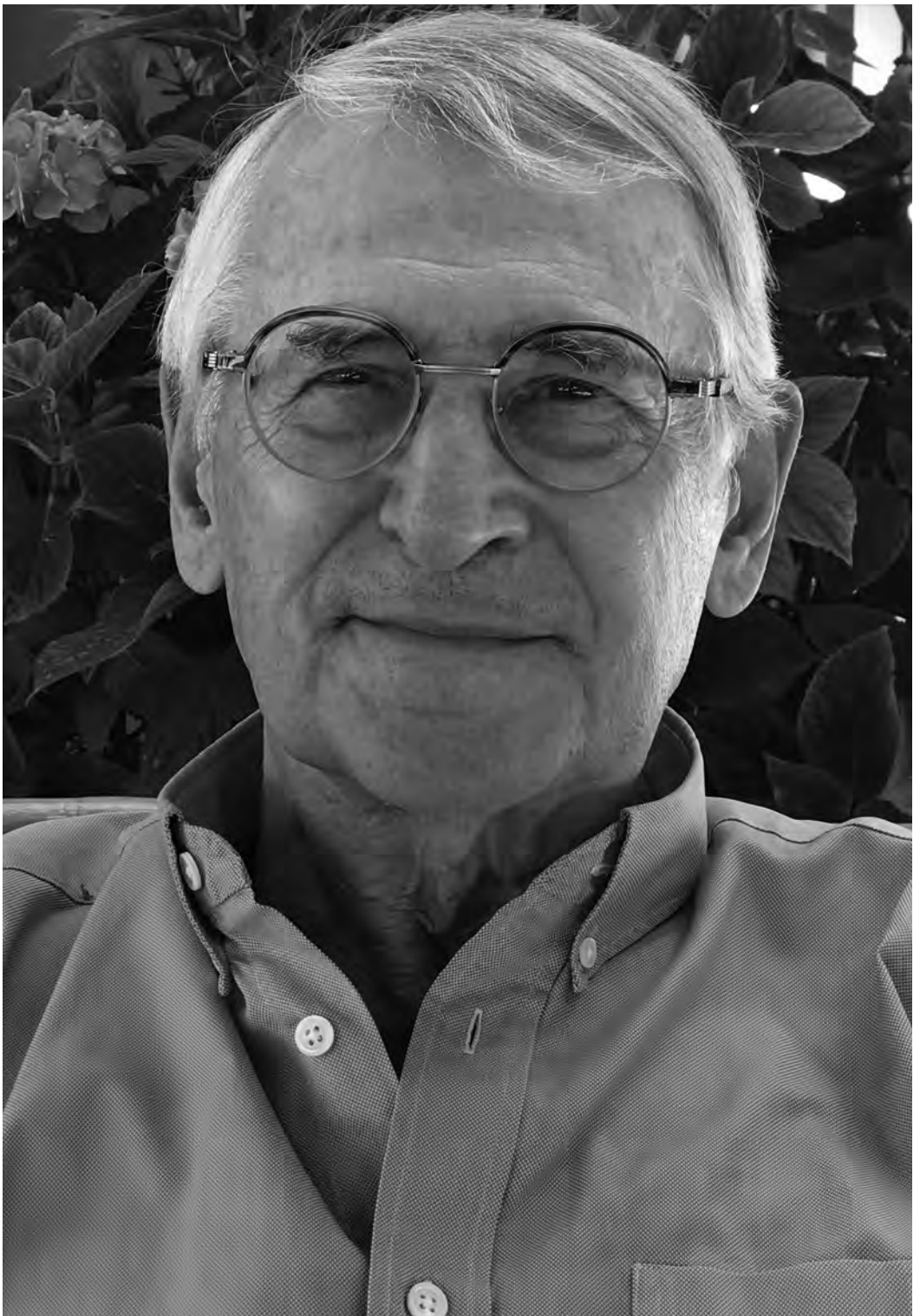


UNIVERSITATEA DIN BUCUREȘTI
MANFRED F.R. KETS DE VRIES

Doctor Honoris Causa

MANFRED F.R. KETS DE VRIES
DOCTOR HONORIS CAUSA





Asked whether he has found what he has been looking for, Manfred F. R. Kets de Vries says, "Of course not! Will I ever? I hope not. I like to keep on exploring and learning. If you stop learning, you're dead. The older I become, the more I realize how little I know. I was much surer of myself when I was younger. At my stage in life – now I'm beyond my expiry date – the thought of what to leave behind for the next generation has become increasingly important. We always need to ask ourselves, what are we doing for others? What impact have we had on other people's lives? To me, that responsibility is more than ever relevant. My hope is to end up with not too many regrets. At the same time, I think, like Hans Christian Andersen, that 'life itself is the most wonderful fairy tale'.



Laudatio | Manfred F.R. Kets de Vries

Stimate Domnule Rector,
Stimate Domnule Profesor Manfred F.R. Kets de Vries,
Stimate Domnule Președinte al Senatului Universității din București,
Doamnelor și domnilor,
Dragi prieteni,

La propunerea Facultății de Administrație și Afaceri, Universitatea din București are astăzi privilegiul de a onora, prin acordarea titlului de *Doctor Honoris Causa*, o personalitate de prim rang, un profesor cu o activitate recunoscută pe plan mondial, eminent specialist și membru al unor societăți de prim rang, domnul profesor Manfred F.R. Kets de Vries.

Una dintre ideile centrale, sau așa-numitul „fir roșu”, după care se ghidează viața personală și profesională a lui Manfred Kets de Vries ar fi „Totul este conectat”. Manfred Kets de Vries aduce o formă unică de gândire umanistă și științifică în lumea organizațiilor și a conducerii acestora. Mesajul pe care îl susține este că pot fi găsite explicații de ce liderii și organizațiile își pierd direcția și că există modalități preventive și de remediere pentru a trata organizațiile disfuncționale și de a le restabili sănătatea. Bazându-se pe aceasta, Manfred Kets de Vries a scris pe larg despre organizațiile sustenabil sănătoase și creative.

Manfred F.R. Kets de Vries este un gânditor fundamental în studiul detaliat al vieții organizaționale. Domeniile sale specifice de interes sunt leadership-ul, evoluția carierei, stresul la nivel executiv, antreprenoriatul, afacerile de familie, planificarea succesiunii, managementul intercultural, construirea de echipe de înaltă performanță, coaching-ul la nivel executiv și facilitarea transformării și schimbării organizaționale. În munca sa, depășește provocările superficiale ale afacerilor, organizațiilor guvernamentale și non-profit și solicită investigarea surselor mai profunde de energie și a forțelor motivaționale care conduc acțiunile umane. Pe lângă munca sa ca profesor și psihanalist practicant, Manfred Kets de Vries este fondatorul Centrului Global de Leadership INSEAD (IGLC). În 2003, la începuturile sale, IGLC s-a bazat pe rezultatele cercetărilor lui Kets de Vries și pe experiențele sale cu sectorul de management. Cărând, IGLC a devenit unul dintre primele centre de dezvoltare a leadership-ului din lume care a abordat legătura dintre conștientizarea de sine și eficacitatea la locul de muncă. Activitatea de înființare a acestui centru

a condus la atingerea unor noi culmi în cariera lui Kets de Vries. Înainte, Manfred Kets de Vries s-a concentrat mai mult pe partea „întunecată” a conducerii și a organizațiilor. În calitate de director fondator al IGLC, interesul său s-a concentrat mai mult pe întrebarea cum să facem oamenii talentați să își atingă noi potențialuri. Manfred Kets de Vries a inițiat *The Challenge of Leadership*, un seminar de dezvoltare profesională a directorilor executivi, un program de un an pentru zona de CEO, aflat acum la cea de-a 30-a ediție.

Pentru a facilita transformarea oamenilor, IGLC a devenit, de asemenea, unul dintre primele centre care a introdus o metodologie de *coaching* de grup pentru schimbarea personală și organizațională. De la începuturile sale, zeci de mii de participanți la INSEAD au experimentat sesiuni de *coaching* de grup. Mai mult, conceptualizările lui Kets de Vries despre zonele mai întunecate și mai strălucitoare ale leadership-ului s-au răspândit în întreaga școală. El a sprijinit, de asemenea, dezvoltarea *Centrului de Cercetare pentru Dezvoltarea Leadership-ului* de la ESMT, Berlin, o școală de afaceri cu creștere rapidă, care era pregătită să recunoască puterea *coaching*-ului de grup în dezvoltarea și schimbarea la nivel de executiv.

Manfred Kets de Vries este recunoscut pentru că a readus noțiunea de „zonă dreaptă a creierului” în organizații. Influențele factorilor psihologici, emoționali și sociali au devenit subiecte fierbinți, care generează un mare interes în domeniile economiei și finanțelor comportamentale. Subiectele „soft”, precum comportamentul organizațional și conducerea autentică, vor câștiga tot mai mult respect și interes. Cu toate acestea, la mijlocul anilor 1960, când Kets de Vries a pornit în călătoria sa intelectuală, integrarea a două paradigme diferite — știința managementului (viziunea economică neoclasică a organizațiilor cu accent pe raționalitatea umană) și studiul psihanalitic al comportamentului uman, în toate variațiile sale (orientarea clinică) — a reprezentat o abordare nouă și foarte controversată.

Manfred Kets de Vries a fost unul dintre primii gânditori care s-a îndepărtat de metoda standard de predare a studiilor de caz bazată pe relații publicate oarecum simplificat (și de obicei „curățate”), deși a scris el însuși peste 100 de studii de caz tradiționale, pentru a se concentra în schimb pe munca și viața oamenilor reali în sălile de clasă sau seminarele

sale. Paradigma clinică a lui Kets de Vries se bazează pe patru premise fundamentale:

- Există o explicație logică pentru modul în care oamenii acționează – chiar și pentru acțiunile care par iraționale. Dar pentru a înțelege acest lucru – pentru a găsi „firele roșii” – trebuie să fii un fel de detectiv organizațional.
- O mare parte din viața mentală – sentimente, frici și motive – se află în afara conștientizării noastre. Deși ascuns de gândirea rațională, inconștientul uman afectează (și în unele cazuri chiar dictează) realitatea conștientă și chiar bunăstarea noastră fizică.
- Nimic nu este mai important pentru cine este o persoană decât felul în care reușește să își regleze și exprime emoțiile. Emoțiile colorează experiențele cu conotații pozitive și negative, creând preferințe în alegerile pe care le facem și în modul în care relaționăm cu lumea.
- Dezvoltarea umană este un proces complex inter- și intrapersonal; toți suntem produse ale experiențelor noastre trecute, iar acele experiențe, inclusiv experiențele de dezvoltare oferite de îngrijitorii/educatorii noștri, continuă să ne influențeze de-a lungul vieții.

În calitate de educator, Kets de Vries a primit de șase ori premiul pentru profesor MBA distins al INSEAD. A ocupat posturi de profesor la Universitatea McGill, École des Hautes Études Commerciales, Montreal, Școala Europeană de Management și Tehnologie (ESMT), Berlin și Harvard Business School. A ținut prelegeri la instituții de management din întreaga lume. Financial Times, Le Capital, Wirtschaftswoche și The Economist l-au evaluat pe Manfred Kets de Vries printre cei mai importanți gânditori din domeniul management din lume și printre cei mai influenți contribuitori la managementul resurselor umane. Kets de Vries este autorul, coautorul sau editorul a peste 50 de cărți. În plus, Kets de Vries a publicat peste 400 de lucrări academice sub formă de capitole în cărți sau articole.

Kets de Vries este primul beneficiar din afara Statelor Unite al premiului *International Leadership Association Lifetime Achievement Award* pentru contribuțiile sale la cercetarea și dezvoltarea leadershipului (fiind considerat unul dintre cei care au pus bazele leadership-ului ca domeniu

și disciplină). A primit un premiu pentru întreaga activitate în Germania pentru progresul în educația zonei executive. Asociația Americană de Psihologie l-a onorat cu „Premiul Harry și Miriam Levinson” pentru contribuțiile sale la Consultarea Organizațională. În plus, este beneficiarul „Freud Memorial Award” pentru munca sa de a promova interfața dintre management și psihanaliză. De asemenea, a primit și „Vision of Excellence Award” de la Institutul de Coaching Harvard. Kets de Vries este primul beneficiar al Premiului Dominique Héau de la INSEAD pentru „Excelența educațională inspirațională”.

Niciodată mulțumit pe deplin, Kets de Vries întreabă constant: „Ce urmează?” Laitmotivul, încă o dată, este explorarea conexiunilor. Alăturarea științei managementului și a conceptelor psihodinamice-sistemice a creat o conexiune puternică care le permite oamenilor să înțeleagă dezvoltarea propriei identități.

Întrebat dacă a găsit ce căuta, profesorul spune: „Desigur că nu! O voi face vreodată? Sper că nu. Îmi place să continui să explorez și să învăț. Dacă încetezi să înveți, ești mort. Cu cât îmbătrânesc, cu atât îmi dau seama mai mult de cât de puține știu. Eram mult mai sigur pe mine când eram mai tânăr. În această perioadă a vieții – acum depășind data de expirare – gândul la ce las în urmă pentru generația următoare a devenit din ce în ce mai important. Întotdeauna trebuie să ne întrebăm ce facem pentru ceilalți? Ce impact am avut noi asupra vieții altor oameni? Pentru mine, această responsabilitate este mai relevantă ca niciodată. Speranța mea este să sfârșesc cu nu prea multe regrete. În același timp, cred, precum Hans Christian Andersen, că «viața însăși este cel mai minunat basm»”.

Prof.univ.dr. Răzvan-Mihail Papuc
Decan, Facultatea de Administrație și Afaceri,
Universitatea din București

Dear Rector,
Dear Professor Manfred F.R. Kets de Vries,
Dear Mr. President of the Senate of the University of Bucharest,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Dear friends,

At the proposal of the Faculty of Business and Administration, the University of Bucharest has today the privilege of honoring, by awarding the title of *Doctor Honoris Causa*, a leading personality, a professor with a world-renowned activity, eminent specialist and member of several first rank societies, Professor Manfred F.R. Kets de Vries.

One of the “red threads” that runs through the tapestry of Manfred Kets de Vries’ personal and professional life is “Everything is connected.” He brings a unique form of humanistic and scientific thinking to the world of organizations and leadership. The message he champions is that explanations for why leaders and organizations go astray is discoverable; and that there are preventative and remedial ways to treat dysfunctional organizations and restore them to health. Building on this, he has written extensively about sustainably healthy and creative organizations.

Manfred F. R. Kets de Vries is a seminal thinker in the clinical study of organizational life. His specific areas of interest are leadership, career dynamics, executive stress, entrepreneurship, family business, succession planning, cross-cultural management, building high performance teams, executive coaching, and the facilitation of organizational transformation and change. In his work, he goes beyond the surface-level challenges of business, government, and non-for-profit organizations, and calls for investigation of the deeper sources of energy and motivational forces that drive human actions. In addition to his work as a chaired business school professor and practicing psychoanalyst, Manfred Kets de Vries is the founder of the INSEAD Global Leadership Centre (IGLC). In 2003, at its inception, IGLC was based on Kets de Vries’ research findings and experiences with executives. Soon after, IGLC became one of the first leadership development centers in the world to address the link between self-awareness and effectiveness in the workplace. The work of setting up this center also created a tipping point in Kets de Vries’ career. Before, he focused more on the darker side of leadership and organizations; as the founding director of IGLC, his interest became

more focused on the question of how to make talented people even better. He introduced *The Challenge of Leadership*, a CEOs recycling seminar, a 1-year Program for CEOs, now at the 30th edition.

To enable people transformation, IGLC became also one of the first centers to introduce a group coaching methodology to personal and organizational change. Since its inception, tens of thousands of INSEAD participants have experienced IGLC group coaching sessions. Moreover, Kets de Vries' conceptualizations about the darker and brighter side of leadership spread throughout the school. He has also supported the development of the Center for Leadership Development Research at ESMT, Berlin, a fast-growing business school that was ready to recognize the power of group coaching in executive development and change.

Manfred Kets de Vries is recognized for bringing the “right side of the brain” back into organizations. The influences of psychological, emotional, and social factors have become hot topics that generate great interest in the fields of behavioral economics and behavioral finance. “Soft” topics such as organizational behavior and authentic leadership are gaining increasing respect and interest. However, in the mid-1960s, when Kets de Vries embarked on his intellectual journey, the integration of two different paradigms—management science (the neo-classical economic view of organizations with its emphasis on human rationality), and the psychoanalytic study of human behavior in all its variations (the clinical orientation)—was a new and very controversial approach.

He was one of the first thinkers that moved away from the standard case study teaching method based on the somewhat simplified (and usually sanitized) published accounts (although he wrote more than 100 traditional case studies himself), to focus instead on the work and lives of the actual people in his classrooms or seminars. Kets de Vries presents the clinical paradigm as based on four premises:

- There is a logical explanation for the way people act—even for actions that seem irrational. But to make sense of this—to find “the red threads”—you must be something of an organizational detective.
- A great deal of our mental life – feelings, fears, and motives – lies outside our conscious awareness. Though hidden from rational thought the

human subconscious affects (and in some cases even dictates) our conscious reality and even our physical wellbeing.

- Nothing is more central to whom a person is than the way he or she regulates and expresses emotions. Emotions color experiences with positive and negative connotations, creating preference in the choices we make, and the way we deal with the world.
- Human development is a complex inter- and intrapersonal process; we are all products of our past experiences, and those experiences, including the developmental experiences given by our caretakers, continue to influence us throughout life.

As an educator, Kets de Vries has received INSEAD's distinguished MBA teacher award six times. He has held professorships at McGill University, the École des Hautes Études Commerciales, Montreal, the European School for Management and Technology (ESMT), Berlin, and the Harvard Business School. He has lectured at management institutions around the world. The Financial Times, Le Capital, Wirtschaftswoche and The Economist have rated Manfred Kets de Vries among the world's leading management thinkers and among the most influential contributors to human resource management. Kets de Vries is the author, co-author or editor of more than 50 books. In addition, Kets de Vries has published more than 400 academic papers as chapters in books and as articles.

Kets de Vries is the first non-US recipient of the *International Leadership Association Lifetime Achievement Award* for his contributions to leadership research and development (being considered one of the world's founding professionals in the development of leadership as a field and discipline). He received a Lifetime Achievement Award from Germany for his advancement of executive education. The American Psychological Association has honored him with the 'Harry and Miriam Levinson Award' for his contributions to Organizational Consultation. Furthermore, he is the recipient of the 'Freud Memorial Award' for his work to further the interface between management and psychoanalysis. In addition, he has also received the 'Vision of Excellence Award' from the Harvard Institute of Coaching. Kets de Vries is the first beneficiary of INSEAD's Dominique Héau Award for 'Inspiring Educational Excellence'.

Never quite satisfied, Kets de Vries constantly asks, “What’s next?” The leitmotiv, once again, is exploring connections. Bringing management science and psychodynamic-systemic concepts together created a powerful connection that allows people to understand the development of their own identity.

Asked whether he has found what he has been looking for, he says, “Of course not! Will I ever? I hope not. I like to keep on exploring and learning. If you stop learning, you’re dead. The older I become, the more I realize how little I know. I was much surer of myself when I was younger. At my stage in life – now I’m beyond my expiry date – the thought of what to leave behind for the next generation has become increasingly important. We always need to ask ourselves, what are we doing for others? What impact have we had on other people’s lives? To me, that responsibility is more than ever relevant. My hope is to end up with not too many regrets. At the same time, I think, like Hans Christian Andersen, that ‘life itself is the most wonderful fairy tale’.”

Prof. Răzvan-Mihail Papuc, Ph.D.
Dean, Faculty of Business and Administration
University of Bucharest



Biographical | Manfred F.R. Kets de Vries

Manfred F.R. Kets de Vries brings a different view to the much-studied subjects of leadership and the psychological dimensions of individual and organizational change. Bringing to bear his knowledge and experience of economics (Econ. Drs., University of Amsterdam), management (ITP, MBA, and DBA, Harvard Business School), and psychoanalysis (Membership Canadian Psychoanalytic Society, Paris Psychoanalytic Society, and the International Psychoanalytic Association), he explores the interface between management science, psychoanalysis, developmental psychology, evolutionary psychology, neuroscience, psychotherapy, executive coaching, and consulting. His specific areas of interest are leadership (the “bright” and “dark” side), entrepreneurship, career dynamics, talent management, family business, cross-cultural management, succession planning, organizational and individual stress, C-suite team building, executive coaching, organizational development, transformation management, management consulting.

The Distinguished Clinical Professor of Leadership Development and Organizational Change at INSEAD, he is Program Director of INSEAD’s top management program, “The Challenge of Leadership: Creating Reflective Leaders,” and the Founder of INSEAD’s Executive Master Program in Change Management. He has also been the founder of INSEAD’s Global Leadership Center. As an educator, he has received INSEAD’s distinguished teacher award six times. He has held professorships at McGill University, the École des Hautes Études Commerciales, Montreal, the European School for Management and Technology (ESMT), Berlin, and the Harvard Business School. He has lectured at management institutions around the world. *The Financial Times*, *Le Capital*, *Wirtschaftswoche*, and *The Economist* have rated Manfred Kets de Vries among the world’s leading management thinkers and among the most influential contributors to human resource management.

Kets de Vries is the author, co-author, or editor of more than 50 books, including *The Neurotic Organization*, *Leaders, Fools and Impostors*, *Life and Death in the Executive Fast Lane*, *The Leadership Mystique*, *The Happiness Equation*, *Are Leaders Made or Are They Born? The Case of Alexander the Great*, *The New Russian Business Elite*, *Leadership by Terror*, *The Global Executive Leadership Inventory*, *The Leader on the Couch*, *Coach and Couch*, *The Family Business on the Couch*, *Sex, Money, Happiness, and Death: The Quest for Authenticity*, *Reflections on Leadership and Character*, *Reflections*

on Leadership and Career, Reflections on Organizations, The Coaching Kaleidoscope, The Hedgehog Effect: The Secrets of High Performance Teams, Mindful Leadership Coaching: Journeys into the Interior, You Will Meet a Tall Dark Stranger: Executive Coaching Challenges and Telling Fairy Tales in the Boardroom: How to Make Sure Your Organization Lives Happily Ever After, Riding the Leadership Roller Coaster: A Psychological Observer's Guide, Down the Rabbit Hole of Leadership: Leadership Pathology of Everyday Life and Being A CEO Whisperer: Meditations on Leaders, Life and Change, Quo Vadis: The Existential Challenges of Leaders and Leadership Unhinged: Essays on the Ugly, the Bad, and the Weird. Two books are in press, entitled *Leading Wisely: Becoming a Reflective Leader in Turbulent Times*, and *The Daily Perils of Executive Life: How to survive when Dancing on Quicksand*.

In addition, Kets de Vries has published more than 400 academic papers as chapters in books and as articles (including digital). He has also written approximately 100 case studies, including seven that received the Best Case of the Year award. He is a regular writer for various magazines. Furthermore, his work has been featured in such publications as *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Fortune*, *Business Week*, *The Economist*, *The Financial Times* and *The Harvard Business Review*. His books and articles have been translated into more than thirty languages. He writes regular blogs (mini articles) for the *Harvard Business Review* and *INSEAD Knowledge*. He is a member of seventeen editorial boards and is a Fellow of the Academy of Management. He is also a founding member of the International Society for the Psychoanalytic Study of Organizations (ISPSO), which has honored him as a lifetime member.

Kets de Vries is the first non-US recipient of International Leadership Association Lifetime Achievement Award for his contributions to leadership research and development (being considered one of the world's founding professionals in the development of leadership as a field and discipline). In addition, he received a Lifetime Achievement Award from Germany for his advancement of executive education. The American Psychological Association has honored him with the "Harry and Miriam Levinson Award" for his contributions to Organizational Consultation. Furthermore, he is the recipient of the "Freud Memorial Award" for his work to further the interface between management

and psychoanalysis. In addition, he has also received the “Vision of Excellence Award” from the Harvard Institute of Coaching. Kets de Vries is the first beneficiary of INSEAD’s Dominique Héau Award for “Inspiring Educational Excellence.” He is also the recipient of two honorary doctorates. The Dutch government has made him an Officer in the Order of Oranje Nassau.

Kets de Vries works as a consultant on organizational design/transformation and strategic human resource management for companies worldwide. As an educator and consultant, he has worked in more than forty countries. In his role as a consultant, he is also the founder-chairman of the Kets de Vries Institute (KDVI), a boutique global strategic leadership development consulting firm with associates worldwide (www.kdvi.com).

Kets de Vries was the first fly fisherman in Outer Mongolia (at the time, becoming the world record holder of the Siberian hucho taimen). He is a member of New York’s Explorers Club. In his spare time, he can be found in the rainforests or savannas of Central and Southern Africa, the Siberian taiga, the Ussuri Krai, Kamchatka, the Pamir and Altai Mountains, Arnhemland, or within the Arctic Circle.

E-mail: manfred.ketsdevries@insead.edu

Websites: www.ketsdevries.com and www.kdvi.com



Curriculum vitae | Manfred F.R. Kets de Vries

MANFRED F.R. KETS DE VRIES

Distinguished Clinical Professor
of Leadership Development and Organisational Change, INSEAD
Raoul de Vitry Chaired Professor of Leadership Development Emeritus
Founder, INSEAD Global Leadership Centre (IGLC)
Chairman of the Kets de Vries Institute (KDVI), a strategic human resource
consultancy firm

CANADIAN PSYCHOANALYTIC INSTITUTE

Psychoanalytic Training, 1977–1982. Membership granted 1982.
Clinical seminars at the Canadian Psychoanalytic Institute and the Allan Memorial
Institute (part of the Royal Victoria Hospital of McGill University). Four years of
supervised clinical work. Psychoanalyst in private practice since 1982.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY, Graduate School of Business Administration

Doctoral Degree in Business Administration (DBA), 1968–1970

Specialization: organizational behavior (focus on applied psychoanalysis and
management policy). Doctoral dissertation: *The Entrepreneur as Catalyst of
Economic and Cultural Change* (dissertation committee members: Abraham
Zaleznik, C. Roland Christensen, and Everett Hagen)

Master's Degree in Business Administration (MBA), 1966–1968

International Teacher's Programme (ITP Certificate), 1966–1967

UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM

Doctoral Examination in Economics (Econ. Drs.), 1963–1966

Teaching Certificate in Accounting and Management Control, 1965

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

European School of Management and Technology (ESMT), Berlin
Distinguished Visiting Professor and Director of the Center for Leadership Development Research since 2008

INSEAD

Distinguished Clinical Professor of Leadership Development and Organizational Change, 2012–

The Raoul de Vitry d'Avaucourt Chaired Professor of Leadership Development, Emeritus

Founder/ Director of INSEAD Global Leadership Centre, 2003

Holder of the Raoul de Vitry d'Avaucourt Chair in Leadership Development, 1992–2012

Director of the Raoul de Vitry d'Avaucourt Chair in Human Resource Management, 1987–1992

Full Professor, Organizational Behavior and Management Policy, 1984–1985

HARVARD UNIVERSITY, Graduate School of Business Administration

Visiting Professor, Social Psychology of Management, 1983–1984

European Institute of Business Administration (INSEAD)

Visiting Professor, Organizational Behavior, 1982–1983

Ecole des Hautes Etudes Commerciales (HEC), Montreal

Visiting Professor, Organizational Behavior and Management Policy, 1980–1981

McGill UNIVERSITY, Faculty of Management

Full Professor, Organizational Behavior and Management Policy, 1980–1985

Associate Professor, Organizational Behavior and Management Policy, 1975–1980.
Awarded tenure: 1979

Visiting Professor, Organizational Behavior and Management Policy, 1974–1975

HARVARD UNIVERSITY, Graduate School of Business Administration

Research Fellow, Production and Operations Management, 1973 – 1974

European Institute of Business Administration (INSEAD)

Assistant Professor, Organizational Behavior, 1971–1973

Harvard University, Graduate School of Business Administration

Research Fellow, Social Psychology of Management, 1969–1971

Research Assistant, 1968–1969

MISCELLANEOUS TEACHING

Finnish School of Technology, Euro Forum, Netherlands School of Business, Rotterdam School of Economics, Visiting Professor Stockholm School of Economics, Visiting Professor Higher School of Economics. Master Classes all over the world.

CONSULTING

Consultancy on strategic human resource management and organizational design and transformation with many of the leading companies in the world.

Executive development work with such organizations as ABB, Accenture, Aegon, Air Liquide, Alcan, Alcatel, Bain Consulting, Bang & Olufsen, Bonnier, BP, Deutsche Bank, DMGT, L. M. Ericsson, GE Capital, Goldman Sachs, Heineken, HypoVereinsbank, Investec, KPMG, Lego, Lufthansa, McKinsey, NAB, Nokia, Novartis, Novo Nordisk, Rank Xerox, Russian Standard, SAB, Shell, SHV, Standard Bank of South Africa, Troika Dialog, Unilever, and Volvo Car Corporation.

Educating and consultancy in more than forty countries

Executive coaching: originator of the clinical group coaching methodology

Chairman of the Kets de Vries Institute, a boutique strategic human resource consulting firm. the Kets de Vries Institute (KDVI) is a consulting firm that specializes in organizational development and transformation. The organization works extensively with top teams and boards in world-leading organizations to improve leadership effectiveness and alignment around a common strategy.

Programme Director, INSEAD: *The Challenge of Leadership: Creating Reflective Leaders*

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Society for the Advancement of Management Studies (SAMA) since 2002

Elected Fellow, The International Family Enterprise Research Academy (IFERA) since 2001

Elected Fellow, The Academy of Management since 2001

MESO: The Organization for the Integration of Micro and Macro since 1992

Member, Research Group on Leadership Practices since 1990

International Society of Political Psychology since 1988

Founding Member, International Society for the Psychoanalytic Study of Organizations (ISPSO) since 1986

Corresponding Member, Paris Psychoanalytic Society since 1986

International Psychoanalytic Association since 1982

Canadian Psychoanalytical Society since 1982

Canadian Psychological Association since 1977

American Psychological Association since 1974

Member of the Advisory Council, Hillary Institute since 2006

Founding Advisory Board member, Leadership Research Network, 2008

EDITORIAL WORK

Editorial Board Membership:

Administration & Society

Indian Journal of Training & Development

International Journal of Human Resource Management

Leadership Quarterly

European Management Journal

Inoclastic Papers

Organizational Dynamics

Socio-Analysis

Organisational and Social Analysis

International Journal of Entrepreneurship, Lectures & Education
Organisational and Social Dynamics
Journal of World Business
International Journal of Entrepreneurship Education
International Journal of Management Practice
Strategic Direction
Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal
Group & Organization Management
Journal of Family Business Strategy

REVIEWER

Academy of Management Journal
Academy of Management Review
Administration & Society
Administrative Science Quarterly
American Review of Public Administration
British Journal of Management
Human Relations
Journal of Management Studies
Leadership Quarterly
Organizational Dynamics
Organization Studies

COLUMNIST

Columnist *Het Financieele Dagblad* (the major Dutch financial daily newspaper)

ACADEMIC AWARDS & HONORS

In April 2016, Manfred received the **Life Achievement Award** of the German education industry for 2016 (LAA). In 2016 the prize was awarded for the 10th time.

This is the German website which documents the award: www.life-achievement-award.com. The LAA is the most important award for a lifetime achievement in the sector for further training and professional development. It honours people or educational organisations which rendered outstanding service to further education and training.

In October 2015 Professor Manfred Kets de Vries was the first recipient of the INSEAD **Dominique Héau Award for Inspiring Educational Excellence**. The award recognises INSEAD professors who have demonstrated exceptional dedication to INSEAD's educational mission. Its recipients embody Dominique's legacy of enduring passion for programme delivery, pedagogical innovation, and mentoring of colleagues and managers at different career stages.

In October 2012 Professor Manfred Kets de Vries received an **Honorary Doctorate** from the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (RANEPA) at IBS-Moscow. During this year dedicated to the year of Holland and Dutch-Russian friendship the event was opened with short speeches by the Vice-Rector of the Academy of the Russian President, Sergey Myasoedov and the Dutch Ambassador. Previous honourable doctorate titles have been bestowed upon Stanley Fisher (the former Director of the World Bank) and to Professor Leszek Balcerowicz (world famous economist and the former Polish Prime-minister and minister of finance).

In October 2011 in the presence of the President of Slovenia, Mr. Danilo Türk, Manfred Kets de Vries received a **Doctor Honoris Causa** title from the IECD Bled School in recognition of his contributions for his 'outstanding contribution to creation and integration of knowledge and leadership development for a better world'.

Also in October 2011, Manfred also received the **Vision of Excellence Award** during the Harvard McLean Hospital/Harvard Medical School Coaching Conference.

In September 2010 Manfred was honoured by the Dutch Psychoanalytic Institute in Holland where he was presented with the **Freud Memorial Award**, in acknowledgement for his exceptional work on the interface between psychoanalysis and organisations.

Manfred was unanimously voted to become a Distinguished Member of the **International Society for the Psychoanalytic Study of Organizations (ISPSO)**

in December 2009. This is a rare honour, so far only conferred to three other members (Harry Levinson, Harold Bridger and Gordon Lawrence).

International Leadership Association (ILA) inducted Manfred Kets de Vries, alongside Bernard Bass & Joseph Rost (posthumously), Warren Bennis, James MacGregor Burns, and Frances Hesselbein into the **Leadership Legacy Project** and he was given a **Lifetime Achievement Award** in November 2008.

Diploma category Best Books for Entrepreneurs in 2006 for *The New Russian Business Leaders* published with Alpina Business Books.

International Leadership Association (ILA) Distinguished Leadership Award, presented November 2005 for his contributions to the classroom and the board room.

Distinguished Scholar Speech, Academy of Management, Consulting Division, Denver, 2002

Elected **Fellow of the Academy of Management**, 2001

2001 **Harry and Miriam Levinson Award**, Division 13, Consulting Psychology

Appointed **officer in the order of Oranje Nassau**, 1997

Received the **Critics' Choice Award** 1995–96 for *Life and Death in the Executive Fast Lane*

Distinguished Scholar Speech, Academy of Management, International Division, Atlanta, 1993

At the International Leadership Association's 10th conference in November 2008 Manfred was inducted into the Leadership Legacy Project of the ILA and given a **Lifetime Achievement Award**.

Received **five times the annual teaching award** (1987, 1989, 1990, 1992, 1993) teaching core course in the MBA program at INSEAD during the period 1987–1993; nominated for the teaching award for core courses in 1988, 1991

Taught highest rated elective, **Harvard Business School**, 1983–1984

Consistently named the **top-rated teacher** at **McGill University**, Faculty of Management, 1974–1985

RECEIVED THE FOLLOWING AWARDS FOR CASES:

European Case of the Year Human Resource Management/Organisational Behaviour Category Award 2005 for *Alice in Wonderland: A Different Approach to Organisational Change*

European Case of the Year Human Resource Management/Organisational Behaviour Category Award 2002 for *The House that Branson Built: Virgin's Entry into the New Millennium*

European Case of the Year 2001 for *Banking on Change*

European Case of the Year Human Resource Management/Organisational Behaviour Category Award 2000 for *British Petroleum: Transformational Leadership in a Transnational Organisation*

European Case of the Year Overall Winner Award 1999 for *Branson's Virgin: The Coming of Age of a Counter-Cultural Enterprise*

European Case of the Year Human Resource Management Category Award 1998 for *Branson's Virgin: The Coming of Age of a Counter-Cultural Enterprise*

European Case of the Year Runner-Up Award 1996 for *Branson's Virgin: The Coming of Age of a Counter-Cultural Enterprise*

European Foundation for Management & Development Award 1995 for *Branson's Virgin*

European Case of the Year Award 1993 for *Carlo de Benedetti: The Builder*

European Case of the Year Award 1991 for *Richard Branson and the Virgin Group*

Listed in *Who's Who of the World, Marquis, Who's Who in the World, International Who's Who in Medicine, Dictionary of Business and Management Scholars and Research, Dictionary of International Biography, Who's Who in the Management Sciences*

Featured in *The New York Times, The Financial Times, The Herald Tribune, The Los Angeles Times, The Economist, Fortune, Wall Street Journal, Wirtschaftswoche, Le Capital, Harper's, and others*

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“Waking the Bear: ‘Danonizing’ the Bolshevik Biscuit Factory” (A), (B)

“Datronics” (A), (B)

Video: “BP: Transforming the Corporate Mind-Set”

“British Petroleum: Transformational Leadership in a Transnational Organization”

“Bang & Olufsen”

“Banking on Change” (A), (B)

“Peter Dunham” (A), (B)

“Branson’s Virgin: Coming of Age of a Counter-Cultural Enterprise”

“Richard Branson: The Iconoclastic Entrepreneur”

Video: “Virgin: Entrepreneurship in Action”

Video: “Virgin: Creativity & Leadership”

“New Age Consulting (NAC): “Cronus” in Organizational Life”

“Percy Barnevik and ABB”

“Percy Barnevik: The Corporate Transformation Wizard”

Video: “Percy Barnevik: The Corporate Transformation Wizard”

Video: “Percy Barnevik and ABB”

“The Bull Market” (A), (B), (C)

Audiotape: "Clinical Perspectives on Management: Psychoanalysis for Organisations" (also in Dutch)

"Rusk"

Video: "The Leadership Challenge"

Part I: The Two Faces of Power

Part II: Organisations on the Couch (also in Dutch and French)

"Visual Systems" (A), (B)

"Carl Zeiss Jena: Managing Catastrophe"

"Johan Tobler" (A), (B)

"Refaat El-Sayed and Fermenta"

"After Abbe: The Bonnier Group in Transition"

"Valtex Inc."

"Anton Dreesman: The Rise and Fall of a Dept. Store Dynasty"

"TW" (A), (B), (C)

"Ernest Saunders and Guinness"

Video: "Ernest Saunders and Guinness"

"Hollywood in the Alps"

"The Bottema Homecoming"

"J. Edgar Hoover and the F.B.I."

"Paul Hardy" (A), (B), (C)

"The Nadia Corporation"

"Carlo De Benedetti: The Builder"

"Albert Speer and the German War Effort"

"Waterman's Francine Gomez"

Video: "Interview with Francine Gomez"

"John Ridgway's School of Adventure"

"Lawrence of Arabia"

"Andre Citroen"

"Roberto Calvi: The Man with the Eyes of Ice"

"Top-Danmark"

Video: "Top-Danmark: Managing a Strategic Turnaround"

"Eli Black & United Brands"

"The Dunor Company"

"Mallika Sarabhai: Managing Diversity"

Video: "Interview with Mallika Sarabhai"

CURRENT RESEARCH INTERESTS

My principal interest lies in the interface between psychoanalysis/dynamic psychiatry, evolutionary psychology and management. Specific areas of research include leadership, organizational stress, career dynamics, entrepreneurship and family business, cross-cultural management, executive coaching, and the process of organizational transformation and change.

CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

Aurora Forum Good Will Ambassador: The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative seeks to empower modern-day saviors to offer life and hope to those in urgent need of basic humanitarian aid anywhere in the world and thus continue the cycle of giving internationally. The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative is Gratitude in Action.

Governor of the Hillary Institute: *Its mission is to recognize, reward and nurture great leaders currently in play, who will provide answers to such challenges as climate change, poverty, disease, peace and justice, given the equivalent of New Zealand's Nobel Prize for Leadership.*

HOBBIES

Fly fishing for trout and salmon, hunting, sailing, hiking, hunting, mycology, reading, film and opera, membership in the New York Explorers Club.



Article | Manfred F.R. Kets de Vries

FINANCIAL TIMES
March 5, 2021



Life & Arts

The CEO whisperer: 'Every leader needs a fool'

Management thinker Manfred Kets de Vries on the secrets of staying grounded at the top

March 5, 2021 12:30 pm by Michael Skapinker

"Everybody is normal until you know them better," Manfred Kets de Vries tells me. As a leading explorer of top executives' psyches, Kets de Vries has, for decades, had a close-up view of what drives those at the top, and what dark thoughts lurk behind their domineering facades.

The 78-year-old professor has written more than 50 books and 400 articles and book chapters, many of them examining leaders' narcissism, how they are affected by their early relationships, and what that does to their communication — or lack of it — with their loved ones and staff. I observe that not many people

have, as he puts it in his most recent book, combined John Maynard Keynes's "dismal science" with Sigmund Freud's "impossible profession".

"Not many people are as crazy," he says. While trained in classical psychoanalysis, along with a Harvard MBA and doctorate, he says that when it comes to encouraging self-reflection in his top-executive students, "I do anything that works. I'm not a holy man."

We are talking over video from our kitchens, mine in north London, his up a mountain outside Grasse. He has chosen to sit out the coronavirus pandemic in his farmhouse there, finding it a more congenial base than his Paris apartment.

This is not to be one of those Zoom lunches where the two sides order a takeaway. In an email the week before, Kets de Vries tells me that he will be having a four-course meal, partly cooked by his Swedish wife, Elisabet Engellau, his co-teacher at the Fontainebleau-based business school Insead and "somewhat of a two-star Michelin cook", supplemented by specialities from nearby Cannes. I have, in my kitchen, tried to match Engellau's efforts, in quantity if not in skill.

Both our kitchens are gleaming with winter sunlight. He introduces me to two wines he will be drinking. He holds up a glass of white, 2016 Chablis Grenouille, and then a glass of red. The executives on one of the seminars he runs at Insead decided they needed something to bind them together afterwards, so they bought a vineyard in Mendoza, Argentina, and gave him a small share. He holds up the bottle: Alpasión Grand Malbec. The label carries the fingerprints of everyone in the class, and his.

He and Engellau bought his starter, foie gras, the day before from Ernest Traiteur, one of their favourite Cannes food places. "This is the best foie gras I know," he says. I have a home-made bowl of hummus.

Kets de Vries was born in 1942 in Nazi-occupied Holland. "Food has always been a very important thing in my life because there was not much available in the war. My mother had to go on expeditions, very dangerous actually, to get food, to do some trading with the farmers on the other side of the country."

*Very quickly, you find yourself
in a hall of mirrors ... And people
who don't tell you what you want
to hear, you fire. So you get into
this echo chamber...*

I have done some reading about his family, his maternal grandparents and mother, and his Jewish father. The website of Yad Vashem, the Holocaust remembrance centre in Jerusalem, lists Kets de Vries's grandparents, Florian and Emilie Houtman, and his mother, Henriette, as "righteous among the nations" — non-Jews who saved Jews during the war. His grandfather, a Dutchman, had lived in Germany, where he had married and had two girls. The family moved to the Netherlands in the 1930s, where both daughters married Jewish men. During the occupation, his grandparents hid up to 10 Jews in the farmhouse.

"I was not very conscious of it, but I was a danger, of course, because I was a small kid and I could talk when the police would pass," he says. "My mother was very much affected by it. [After the war] she talked all the time about it. With my grandfather, a strong memory I have is sitting with him listening to the radio about the Nuremberg trials." We are barely a quarter of an hour into our conversation. His voice is faltering.

"I think it has affected me. What can I do? I run this little seminar at Insead, for example. Maybe 21 people I take every year. [They are] maybe responsible for 100,000 people. If I can make them a bit more humane, a little more effective, it can have a trickle effect into the rest of the organisation. That's my fantasy. You have to dream."

At 17, Kets de Vries began his association with Harvard, attending a summer school there. After studying economics in the Netherlands, he headed back to the US and to Harvard Business School, where someone suggested he take "this funny course by a man named Abraham Zaleznik: psychoanalytic psychology and management theory".

Zaleznik was one of the pioneers of examining management through a psychoanalytic lens. Kets de Vries was initially awed by him. "Coming from a European setting, professors were always very glorious. Everybody else always called him Abe. I called him Professor Zaleznik. Partly it's the Dutch culture. In the Dutch culture you had the polite form and the not-so-polite form. I always called my father in the polite form, my mother in the informal form."

He had hopes of a Harvard career. His teaching was highly rated. But the business school refused him a full-time job. He was too close to Zaleznik, who had fallen out with the school's organisational behaviour professors. "Academics can be very good at character assassination."

His wife appears with his main course, sea bass with beurre blanc sauce, whose ingredients include lemons from a tree in their garden that they brought back

from Tajikistan. I hold up the sea bass I have baked: a Greek dish with tomatoes, bay leaves, lemon and honey.

We return to his academic trajectory. Over the years, his wife has persuaded him that the Harvard rejection was for the best. He has spent his career at Insead, with an 11-year stint at McGill University in Montreal. If he had won a post at Harvard, he would have had to fit into its framework. “At Insead and McGill I was free. As long as I performed, I could do what I wanted.”

What he wanted was to be a “corporate pathologist”. He has written about how some narcissism can be helpful in a leader. How does one stop that from progressing to someone like Donald Trump, whom he calls “a malignant narcissist”?

“This is the most difficult question to answer.” As soon as you become a leader, he says, you are surrounded by liars. People tell you what you want to hear. “Very quickly, you find yourself in a hall of mirrors ... And people who don’t tell you what you want to hear, you fire. So you get into this echo chamber.”

Menu

Manfred Kets de Vries

At home in Grasse, France

Foie gras truffé
Sea bass with beurre blanc
Cherry tomato and avocado salad with Mont d’Or cheese
Lemon meringue cake
Espresso

Wine: 2016 Chablis Grenouille

Alpasión Grand Malbec

Michael Skapinker

At home in London

Hummus
Baked sea bass
Tomato and avocado salad with Lubborn Creamery English goat’s cheese
Fresh fruit salad
Fresh mint tea

Wine: Fish Hoek Chenin Blanc

He moves on to his next course: cherry tomatoes and avocado with Mont d'Or cheese. I have the same salad, with an English goat's cheese. What can be done to break into that echo chamber? "Every leader needs a fool," he says. Someone to tell them the truth? Who: the chairman, their best friend? "Your wife, your husband. And the fool should tell you you're full of shit, on a regular basis." Consultants? "Never hire a hungry consultant. Never." Because they will tell you what you want to hear? "Exactly."

I ask him about corporate greed and excessive executive pay. Are these overpaid bosses trying to fill an emotional hole? "It will never be filled. It's like taking cocaine. You need your fix all the time. It's actually quite sad. My father always said, 'you can only eat one steak a day'."

*Happiness is something
to do, someone to love
and something to hope for...*

What's missing in these people's lives? "To be very simple, they didn't get enough attention when they were younger." What can be done? "They could actually be helped by seeing a psychotherapist, spending some time with them." They could explore the meaning of their lives, he says. "What is meaning? I'll give you a little lecture. In the first place, it has to do with belonging, having good friends and family members. That's the most important thing. The second thing is having some purpose in life. I have a little purpose, I want to make a better world by helping some executives. The third thing has to do with competence. You're a writer. I'm a writer too and I get pleasure sometimes when I see a nice paragraph after bumbling around and trying to reconstruct things." Then there is choice, of a partner and career. The final requirement is "transcendence, to go beyond yourself", he says. "Happiness is something to do, someone to love and something to hope for."

Isn't the problem that many executives are sceptical about psychotherapy? Yes, he says, so these business leaders call it something else. "Why do you think everybody calls himself a coach?"

We move on to dessert. Lemon meringue cake for him from Lenôte, a pastry shop in Cannes, and fruit salad with a dollop of Greek yoghurt for me.

I observe that he has mentioned his father several times. He pauses and returns to the war years. "In Holland, all the Jews were picked up. And Holland was

very well organised, the percentage of people who were killed was extremely high, in spite of all the heroic statements made afterwards.” Because his father was married to a non-Jew, he was initially left alone. But then he was detained. Twice he was put in a holding camp, awaiting deportation to Auschwitz.

“My mother somehow, I think, bribed, or whatever she did, the camp commander and got him out. She spoke fluent German, remember she was brought up in Germany.” Other members of his father’s family did not escape. “They all ended up there, in ...” His voice trails off.

Unlike his mother, his father, who ran a textile company, never spoke about that time. “Having close family members — brother, sister — die, he couldn’t talk about it. Basically, he blanked it out. And it was not like he was resentful towards Germans. He built up a very good relationship with Germans. He was ready to forgive.”

His parents’ marriage did not survive. “I think my father was quite confused at the time. He fell in love with a Czech woman, he didn’t know what to do with himself. But he also must have felt very guilty because my mother saved his life. We saw him regularly. I was intrigued by the way he ran the company. He was a very good businessman, a very honourable businessman.”

The last thing you want in your garden is a wild boar. But tell that to the animal lovers. They think ‘these cute wild boars’. They’re not cute...

He switches to talking about his grandfather and the Polish teenager he hid, Nathan. “He stayed for four years or so. He became like a son to him.” Later, Nathan went to live in Israel. He had two children who both died young. “It’s a very sad story. I remember he came to my mother’s funeral. He specially made the trip from Israel to be at her funeral.”

He is looking tearful. He takes a sip of his Argentinian wine. He must often see, in the people he teaches, the events that shaped their lives, I say. “Oh, very much so.” He tries to get them to talk. “If you can tell your story to a sympathetic audience, it has a fantastic effect on you,” he says.

“I once broke my spine on top of a mountain. Normally change is very incremental. After that crazy accident, which was very painful, they say that I am somewhat of a nicer person.” He writes about the accident in his new book, *The CEO Whisperer*: on a trip to Siberia, his snowmobile driver, excited by a sighting of brown bears, failed to notice a crevice in the snow. One thing I’m not clear about: were they chasing the bears to see them or to shoot them?

He takes another sip of wine. “I’m a killer,” he says. I tell him animal-loving readers, who may already have been choking over his foie gras, will be upset. “My darker side. Really, I’m a closet zoologist and what I’ve discovered, obviously this maybe sounds like a rationalisation, is that I’m fascinated by bears.” To the point of shooting them? Hunting encourages countries to ensure animals’ survival, he says. “Your readers at the FT may get upset about it, but when you talk about the ability to have animals, what doesn’t pay doesn’t stay. And you saw that in Kenya. They stopped hunting — all the elephants got killed.”

He pauses. “By the way, I ate the bears.” He ate them? “Yeah, of course.” What do they taste like? “Like wild boar.” He gestures outside. There are five wild boars in his garden, he says. “I once shot a wild boar for dinner. I don’t know if you’ve ever had a wild boar in your garden.” No, I tell him, just squirrels and foxes. “Foxes are nothing compared to wild boars. They are bulldozers. The last thing you want in your garden is a wild boar. But tell that to the animal lovers. They think ‘these cute wild boars’. They’re not cute.”

I try to move on. “Final statement. Big bears eat young bears, for your information. They’re cannibalistic. But that doesn’t fit the Disney image.”

The next day he emails: “I hope that these expeditions (including my hunting for moose, deer, wild boar and bear) will not ‘derail’ the focus on my work activities. As I am not a vegetarian, my favourite food has always been the game and fish I collected (and that includes wild mushrooms).”

In his kitchen, he sips an espresso. I am drinking fresh mint tea. I say that he writes, at 78, quite pessimistically about old age’s physical deterioration. His father, he says, lived to 101. “He was lucky. He lived in his own house, he had someone taking care of him; it couldn’t be better, to be honest. I would sign up for that.”

But life is fickle. “I think about my accident at the top of the mountain. I broke my spine. I had four operations. It doesn’t take much.” His wife comes to say goodbye. She stands behind him, arms around him. “The best leaders,” he says, “are the ones who act and reflect. I sometimes ask them: ‘Can I see your agenda?’ And every moment is full. I ask them: ‘Are you out of your mind? Cross out some afternoons, walk around and think.’”

Michael Skapinker is an FT columnist

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Note

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