

IIMK/WPS/79/MC/2010/18

**Ben Franklin's Precepts of Virtue:
Or, Anxiety and Desire in Self-Management**

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Benjamin Franklin identified thirteen 'precepts of virtue' in his autobiography as the essential moral tools of self-management. While these moral precepts may have been initially identified in the colonial era, they are still useful for the theory and practice of management. It is therefore important to bring these precepts into the main stream academic literature on 'self-management' by making a case for the uses of literary texts as important intellectual sources in the theory and practice of management. Franklin's formulation of the precepts of virtue then represents an important case study in self-management and the modalities of 'prudential' decision making in a world marked by change and uncertainty. The analogies between the existential challenges that Franklin worked-through in his time and the contemporary world are many in number. It is also possible to argue that Peter Drucker's interest in self-management is an important theoretical analogue to that of Franklin given that they both represent a form of American pragmatism and the role of self-management in mediating decision-making in the contexts of diplomacy and management. Franklin's notion of 'prudential' decision making is also of relevance since it can serve as an 'antidote' to the propensity to 'act-out' unconscious conflicts in the process of decision-making. This, incidentally, is also a focus area in recent studies in the psychoanalysis of decision-making, leadership, and organizations. It is therefore important for decision-makers to re-visit Franklin's notion of virtue as 'good habits' rather than let themselves get confused through the metaphysical invocation of the Good in management theory, and then lapse into cynicism, despair, and 'learned helplessness' when they are not clear as what they must do in a given situation.

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