

# Behavioural Digest

No. 121 - September 2020

Escape the Too Hard Box:  
The new book by Howard Lees is  
on sale now  
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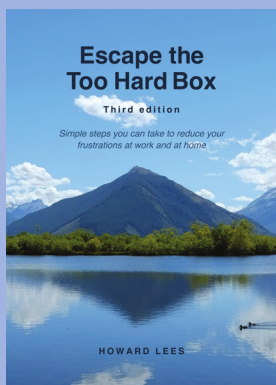


## Witty and Insightful

By Rachel Edwards

I've got a stack of books on my 'to read' pile; some of which never get near the top because something more interesting grabs my attention. Howard's new book 'Escape the Too Hard Box' is a classic example of a book that went straight to the top of the pile – witty, insightful and easy to read, he presents a slice of reality that feels uncannily close to home. A frequent comment about his previous books has been "Did he write this with me in mind?". I think this latest book will be no exception.

As many people face an altered workplace, new working arrangements or even a chance to try something different afforded by these unprecedented times, the timing of this book is serendipitous. A focus on do-able things to try to affect our own behaviour and ultimately those around us for the better is an opportunity not to be missed.



The new book by Howard Lees is out now. [Click here to read a sample](#), and to order your copy.

## It's Not A Bl\*\*dy Syndrome

By Collette Murray

I've shamelessly "stolen" this title from Dr Terri Simpkin, and anyone who, like me, has been to one of her workshops or read any of her work on Imposter Phenomenon will understand why. Throughout all her work Dr Simpkin clearly and concisely explains the difference between a syndrome and a phenomenon. Imposter Phenomenon is so much more than the feeling of self-doubt we can experience when doing something new, and can be highly debilitating. It is something that recurs no matter how many successes, accolades and achievements you've managed to notch up. The message is simple: Embrace feeling out of your comfort zone when trying something new; it means you're learning. But if we continue to perpetuate the myth that this makes us impostors, then we risk marginalising people who have the real deal. As always, these things are far more complex when you take a deeper look.

## The Power Gradient Conundrum

By Water Hufnagel

'Share of voice' is the term that describes how much of a conversation each participant takes. So, if four people talk in a group for an hour and spend 15 mins each, the share of voice is equal, and the power gradient is flat. If one person talks for 70% of the time and the rest 10% each, then the share is unequal, and the power gradient is steep.

In David Marquet's book *Leadership is Language*, he discusses the enormous risks of allowing conversations in workplaces to be dominated by hierarchy. The resulting power gradients stifle considerable amounts of business-critical feedback or even just the most obvious and necessary response to their bosses' verbal behaviour.

# Sir Ken Robinson, 1950 – 2020

Sir Ken Robinson sadly died in Los Angeles on the 21st August; he had cancer. He was Professor of Arts Education at Warwick University for 12 years and during this time he led a national commission on creativity, education, and the economy for the UK government. He made the point that outdated methodologies in education hinder the development of children, and beautifully articulated this in his TED talk “Do schools kill creativity?” It is still the most watched TED talk.

I went to see him talk in London some 8 years ago. His lecture weaved in and out of education, creativity, and learning methods. Everything he said was accentuated with his brilliant sense of timing and his use of classic scouse humour. After the show he signed his book for people, teasing them with typically charismatic anecdotes. If you have not seen his TED talks, I recommend them wholeheartedly.

## 12 Quotes from Sir Ken Robinson

1. “If you’re not prepared to be wrong, you’ll never come up with anything original.”
2. “Imagination is the source of every form of human achievement.”
3. “Human resources are like natural resources; they’re often buried deep. You have to go looking for them, they’re not just lying around on the surface. You have to create the circumstances where they show themselves.”
4. “Creativity is as important as literacy.”
5. “We have to recognize that human flourishing is not a mechanical process; it’s an organic process. All you can do, like a farmer, is create the conditions under which they will begin to flourish.”
6. “I meet all kinds of people that don’t enjoy what they do. They *endure* it rather than *enjoy* it. I also meet people who love what they do. They say, ‘This is me, what I do speaks to my authentic self’.”
7. “We should be teaching students, not subjects. Teaching is more like gardening than engineering.”
8. “Life is not linear, it’s organic.”
9. “A three-year-old is not half a six-year-old.”
10. “We have sold ourselves into a fast food model of education, and it’s impoverishing our spirits and our energies, as much as fast food is depleting our physical bodies.”
11. “Do organisational leaders know if they are making the best use of the talents already available to them?”
12. “Every day, everywhere, our children spread their dreams beneath our feet, and we should tread softly.”

# The Bureaucratic Death Star

## By Manish Makwana

Form filling, archiving documents and other forms of admin seem to be taking more time than ever. I recently picked up a book about bureaucracy, *The Utopia of Rules* by David Graeber. One striking concept I’ve learned is that many attempts to reduce bureaucracy actually end up increasing it! This becomes obvious on reflection - how many of us have been sucked into committees on business improvement that consume nearly as much time as the issue they are attempting to solve?

Bureaucracy - as in soul-destroying paperwork, rigid systems and unnecessary rules - is often formed out of a power imbalance between an authority and those governed by that authority. Graeber describes how those without power must engage in ‘interpretive labour’ (a.k.a. empathy), while those with power can simply exercise that power and introduce some new rules to enforce their thinking. This understanding offers immediate potential. Start with empathy, especially if you are in a position of power or authority. Then begin cutting the red tape of bureaucracy. Or risk being mired even further in more paperwork!

# Do Something You’re Bad At

## By Doris Smith

When we’re young, we are often bad at things. Dancing, public speaking, maths, - this is a pretty endless list of things we try when we’re young and either pursue or stop doing as we grow older. It’s easy as an adult to stick with doing the things we know we’re good at, but is it wise?

By trying something new as an adult - something we already know we’re not likely to excel at - that experience helps make us better teachers and coaches.

Also, if we seek out opportunities to make mistakes for fun, we get better at recovering from making them when it really matters.