

# Behavioural Digest

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## When Good People Do Bad Things By Howard Lees

A colleague sent me this quotation: “Ethical Drift is defined as an incremental deviation from ethical practice that goes unnoticed by individuals who justify the deviations as acceptable and who believe themselves to be maintaining their ethical boundaries. Ethical drift escalates imperceptibly until even major breaches are rationalised as reasonable” (A Kleinman).

We have been utilising ‘shaping’ as a tool to assist education for many years now. Shaping moves education forward in small incremental steps in order to reach a desired goal that would be impossible to achieve in one vertical stride. Shaping is a deliberate and constructive act; it is a process.

Ethical Drift is essentially a similar process but this time, and over time, it works to gradually strip ethical behaviour, ultimately leading to unethical acts, and even destructive acts. It covertly eats away at the very character of the good professional person whose ambition is to do good things for people and in turn, do good things for society. This does not mean that these people have become evil people; it’s not a transformation, perhaps it’s more an evolution in imperceptibly small steps. For sure, if you notice someone with this affliction, take care informing them. Perhaps use a gradual shaping technique, infusing more and more morsels until they eventually see the light.

## Virtual Safety, Real Safety By Lynn Dunlop

There is a difference between safety compliance and safety leadership. The right amount of safety compliance is both necessary and important. However, safety compliance measures alone will not keep people safe; this requires safety leadership. When safety compliance becomes demanding past its usefulness, it becomes a distraction. This is Virtual Safety.

Real Safety is achieved via the primary chain of command (director – area manager – site manager – supervisor - worker). With Real Safety, distractions to working safely are removed and necessary bureaucracy is lean.

## Sunflowers By David Lees

Have you ever heard the term “they’re such a sunflower?” It’s used to describe a person who presents a lovely view of themselves to their bosses/clients, and looks pretty bad from the other side, which is where most of the rest of us are. A pang of recognition may have been triggered there because it’s sadly a very common affliction for people operating in a hierarchy.

Having a think, there are times when many of us may have been a bit sunflowery, reflecting on these moments is a good opportunity to act a little bit more collaborative and generous, such as noticing the good stuff people do each day. The downstream impact of that may be that by building up the team, instead of an individual, the whole organisation looks stronger, and suddenly instead of one expert, there are many to garner confidence in.

# BMT- Is It Just a Matter of Common Sense?

By Bryony Sherry

One of the key concepts in behavioural science, and specifically with BMT (Behavioural Management Techniques) is the ABC model. Antecedents lead to behaviours and behaviours lead to consequences, and consequences lead back to behaviours. For the sake of any new readers, an antecedent is an attempt to produce a behaviour (successfully or not). A behaviour is anything that you say or do, and a consequence is any effect of said behaviour. Now, this is simple. However, the key to behavioural science is the attention to detail. Remember, this is an application of science which stipulates objectivity and reliability.

Attention to detail is integral to the success of applying BMT to the real world. Classifying behaviours using ambiguous and subjective labels, such as 'lazy' or 'bad people skills', simply will not work. This is where the concept of 'pinpointing' comes in, where behaviours are specified. For example: 'handing in reports a day after the deadline', and 'walking out of the room immediately after someone asks you a question', are examples of pinpointed behaviours. From here, we can better understand the attempted antecedents and the array of consequences surrounding individual behaviours.

When we do something every day, we run the risk of running on autopilot, where we are not making conscious decisions and lack a mindful presence. Practicing mindfulness in the workplace means different things to different people. Being mindful of the pinpointed behaviours you observe and applying the same level of detail to feedback which you deliver will elevate your performance as a human. We all know that there are things which act as prompts (antecedents) to behaviour, and most people will have by now realised that behaviours have consequences. This is common sense. On the other hand, BMT relies on a mindfulness and a motivation to understand on a much deeper level. This comes with practice - not instinct.

# Don't Believe Everything You See And Hear

By Susan Prebble

Now the flood waters of social media are lapping around our necks. I ask, are people more influenced by influencers than they are by experts or facts? I think that this emerging tendency to believe online bullshit is now bleeding into businesses and more and more people are reading and being affected by hurtful or damaging material without spending time checking for facts. How much time do you spend on social media in a typical day? The latest data for 2022 says the average time spent on social media worldwide is set to hit 147 minutes per day. That's two hours and 27 minutes every day. It is the highest ever recorded. Is this data reliable? It also begs the question, what did people do during the days before social media flooded our lives? How did they use that two hours and 27 minutes?

# Deliver Us Our Daily Reinforcers

By Jonny Bennett

Some folks acquire their daily dose of reinforcement by doing their jobs. Other folks acquire their daily dose of reinforcement by not doing their jobs. It's possible with the latter 'type' that not doing their job actually requires more effort than would be expended just doing their job in the first place. Maybe there's a yearning for attention that requires the non-producers to maintain a daily narrative that fixates on how busy they are, telling everyone else how valuable they are etc. This pantomime can quickly become tiresome for the other folks that are happy just doing their jobs and receiving their due amount of daily natural reinforcement.

# Enlightening Ideas

By Bryony Sherry

It's winter, it's the classic time for reflection as we stare at our own reflection in the window which is now bouncing back at us due to the lack of light outside. Seasonal changes can affect our wellbeing and in turn our happiness within our working environment. It is wise to adapt our routines to avoid SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder), a seasonal depression associated with reduced sunlight in winter months. As the days become shorter, our lives can become illuminated by adding walking trips outdoors to our daily routines. Don your warmest coat and hat and go for a short walk with a colleague. Pick someone warm and illuminating!

# Shades of BMT

- There's a massive difference in being a success in your head and being a success in everyone else's head.
- When people like you, they forgive your weird idiosyncrasies. When people dislike you, they go straight for your weird idiosyncrasies.