

Behavioural Digest

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Behavioural Leadership
Conference and Workshop
May 15th & 16th 2024
Manchester, UK



Don't Go Thinking You Can't Assert By Bruce Faulkner

Last week, someone said to me, "I don't know how to assert." I almost agreed with them and then I remembered a story that suggests an alternative narrative.

You are looking forward to tonight. It's time to celebrate your partner's promotion. Just as you're about to leave work, your boss appears. "Hey, we just got this request and I need you to get them a response tonight." Now two people have expectations of what you'll be doing tonight. You're going to assert with one of them and they are going to be disappointed.

So, you can assert. But there're times when you're not pleased with the choice you made. That's a signal that you're going against your values and feelings.

Cultivating a healthy assertive style is about setting limits and addressing behaviour that you disagree with. Don't make people read your mind. This isn't about being right or trying to get your own way. It's about expressing your needs, wants, and feelings directly and honestly. Take a breath, count to 3 and express how you're feeling. This is bound to change the environment.

...For The Times They Are A-Changin' By Howard Lees

I was recently pulled up by someone about my description of something having extraordinary levels of 'pith'. They asked, "What's so pithy about it?" The definition of the word 'pith' is 'a soft dry white substance inside the skin of oranges and some other fruits'. Another definition is 'the essential or most important part of something'. I suppose I was simply going for 'the essence of something' as my definition. There's a lot of pith about.

I was challenged to write a digest piece containing pithy lines from famous songs, so, buckle up, here they come:

- 'It may be raining but there's a rainbow above you'.
- 'A man (or woman) hears what he (or she) wants to hear and disregards the rest'.
- 'Caught between the longing for love and the struggle for the legal tender'.
- 'You can check out anytime you like but you can never leave'.
- 'The secret of life is enjoying the passage of time'.

Lastly, one of my all-time favourites that applies to everyone in business: 'If your time to you is worth saving, then you'd better start swimming else you'll sink like a stone'...

*"Don't mess with other people's minds. It's unreliable. It's not necessary. And, it's none of your business anyway."
- Aubrey Daniels*



[Click here](#) to join the BMT group on LinkedIn.

Plan Ahead

By Lynn Dunlop

I was asked the other day about how to stay consistent with new behaviours in the face of distractions. I suggested that environmental changes are the way to go. Setting up social consequences will help - like arranging in advance to meet a friend at the gym. So will removing distractions and replacing them with more easily available and immediate things - buy blueberries at the supermarket and don't buy chocolate. Place those blueberries on the kitchen counter and place any less healthy snacks at the back of the highest cupboard or just don't buy them so you must leave the house if you really want them. In short, I said, I think it's about planning ahead for predictable distractions and building a strategy in advance for overcoming them.

In the workplace, these things can look like:

- Putting time into preparing for conversations to make it more likely we are skilful in the moment. (Improvising key conversations based on 'knowing what we want to get as the result' is the equivalent of keeping cookies next to the tea kettle.)
- Having a shadow tool wall for storage so that it's as easy as possible locate the right tools at the right time, to put them away again afterwards and to see if any tools are missing.
- Asking people privately in advance of a Teams meeting if they will put their cameras on and turn off their other distractions so that this meeting can be 20 minutes long.

Relying on willpower in the moment is unlikely to be a successful strategy. Instead, plan ahead.

Shades of BMT

- Senior people focused on how to perform a task have forgotten how to lead.
- Great leaders have well-developed relationships with their teams so people do the right things no matter where they're working, home or office.
- Build high trust with teams and correspondingly people do the right things, in the right way, in the best interests of the business.

2024 Behavioural Leadership Conference

The latest Behavioural Leadership Conference and Workshop were held in Manchester, May 2023. Both days were a great success in sharing ideas, behavioural leadership and wisdom.

"There was a great selection of speakers, very engaging and enthusiastically delivered. They kept my attention all the way to the end, which is amazing for a conference."

Tickets are now on sale for the 2024 Behavioural Leadership Conference and Workshop. We are in the process of looking for speakers from a wider range of backgrounds than we ever have in the past. If you have an inspirational leader in mind, please email bryony@hollin.co.uk.

[Click here](#) to buy tickets, or email info@hollin.co.uk.

Time To Get Out

By Bryony Sherry

Gaslighting is a term which has gathered attention online in recent years; it is shared as an indicator of a toxic relationship. Being gaslighted is being lied to and manipulated so you question your sanity. Gaslighting and other psychologically degrading tools have no space within healthy relationships, within the home or work – or anywhere else.

Have you ever tried to consistently raise a concern and then been made to believe that either there is no problem, or you caused it?

If you find yourself in a venomous environment or have been the victim of manipulation or any other psychological mind games, it may be time to leave. Behavioural science offers techniques to change the environment, to influence other people's behaviours for the good of all. Sometimes, the quickest and most painless solution to avoid being gaslit is to remove yourself from that environment and find somewhere else, a better place where you and your skills are valued.

Too close for comfort?

By Rachel Edwards

At a recent workshop one of the participants was musing about it generally being easier to deliver feedback to his family and friends, than to colleagues at work. We went on to talk about why he thought that was – perhaps with close friends and family his relationships were good, there's often many years of positive shared experiences and time in each other's company that makes delivering direct feedback possible.

In the workplace, an early aspect of leadership strategy may be to galvanise or accelerate relationship building; to deliberately speed up what would typically take a while to develop. If high performing teams require robust reciprocal feedback now, we don't have 20 years for it to occur naturally, or not occur at all!