

Behavioural Digest

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



“Should” is a Distraction By David Lees

Getting stuck on what people “should” be doing won’t help fix the problem. The only fix to something that people *should* be doing, is to check if they know they should be doing it.

What people are doing is supported by whatever the environment is providing them. If that’s not what they should be doing, it’s because what they’re actually up to is easier, more fun or less punishing than what you think they should be doing.

It is absolutely possible to coach people and train teams out of this hole. Start by focusing on what *is* happening instead of what we think should be happening.

Ghosts in the Machine By Howard Lees

I was recently introduced to a word that apparently stems from the emergence of dating apps: It is the word ghosting. It means stopping communication with someone with little or no notice, for no apparent reason. It has given me a word to describe what some business people do to me when I become too pushy, too annoying, too tiresome, too resistible. I’m left guessing. The sober truth is that there’s now only me in this conversation. Just me. Is that still a conversation?

Sympatric Speciation – Easy For You to Say! By Bryony Sherry

Susan Schneider discusses how behaviour leads to evolution, ultimately changing DNA. She gives examples of flamingos, robins and finches – where consequences have driven behaviour, leading to genetically based physiological changes. For example, greater flamingos rely on foraging shrimps and molluscs from mud planes and so they have developed a longer, curved beak more suited to this form of hunting.

Sympatric speciation is when a species evolves and separates due to the consequences in the local environment. Genes mutate and selection occurs based upon ability to survive and reproduce. Temperature, water, and availability of food are environmental factors that affect this compatibility. So, reinforcement (eating, reproducing, sleeping – think Maslow’s hierarchy of needs) leads to repetition of behaviours, eventually influencing evolution.

It is hard for me to say how this speciation will occur in the future – perhaps due to my lack of a PhD in biology. Perhaps we could see sympatric speciation within humans, with some developing camel-like bladders as a result of sitting in back-to-back meetings all day.

...In a Nutshell By Susan Prebble

Good leaders create and maintain a productive and happy workplace environment for all. Great leaders also collect feedback from everyone working in their environment and adjust accordingly. That’s about it...

Selfishly Sustainable

By Bryony Sherry

Most people want to help the planet. However, many of our day-to-day behaviours are incongruent with this goal. Research suggests that we are only likely to engage in sustainable behaviours when there is a selfish, personal incentive. For example, we're more likely to switch to an eco-friendly washing detergent if we can save money by washing at a lower temperature. In the same way, we're more likely to use eco-friendly dishwasher tablets because they contain fewer harmful chemicals than other options, rather than being motivated by the benefits to the planet. In both examples, we are motivated to change our behaviour due to the 'selfish' incentive, rather than the long-term benefits to the planet.

This is another example of basic behavioural science. If you want a person to change their behaviour, there needs to be a reinforcer which is personal and (relatively) immediate to the performer – whoever is 'doing' the behaviour. Humans are more likely to be motivated by short-term immediate benefits.

The Latest Virus – Passivity

By Howard Lees

We are selling tickets to our excellent annual conference. Our BMT conference has been inspiring young professionals for 20 years. Many of them have now become successful leaders. We have a long list of former ambitious young professionals who are now in high office. We are 'working' this list to see if we can attract the next generation to come and be inspired. I am amused by some of the responses I am getting from talented leaders who should know better. For example, "I will copy your flyer around," "I am busy that day so I can't come," "I really enjoyed those conferences," or "I can't take the time out right now." My point? I am asking you to send your stars to be inspired like you were inspired 20 years ago. What's happened to you?

"It is a wise thing to be polite; consequently, it is a stupid thing to be rude. To make enemies by unnecessary and wilful incivility is just as insane a proceeding as to set your house on fire."

- Arthur Schopenhauer

Behavioural Leadership Conference and Workshop 2024

Our two-day event comprises the Conference (15th May) and the Workshop (16th May). To mark the 20th year of Hollin, the theme in 2024 will be 'longevity'.

Visit www.hollin.co.uk to book tickets.

The Revenge of The Sunflowers

By Howard Lees

"If no-one is reading it then why bother writing it?" I got this comment from a couple of eminent folks when I recently suggested that they should write a book on their work-life experiences. These particular high-flying folk were previously at or near the top of the professional and business tree. These superstars from the past have been left feeling like meteors; they once lived in a much deserved world of attention, until now.

Any pragmatic person would assert that these eminent folks have a moral duty to explain how they did what they did, so that newbies can avoid the bear traps and all the other evil experiences. Unfortunately, life does not hand out that invitation. Today's upcomers seem to insist on learning the hard way, less keen on understanding the bear traps that ensnared their predecessors. Leaving the wise, old retirees with the only remaining option - observing the chaos from their luxury holiday home, with the comfort of their own (edited) accounts of their glorious careers.

Shades of BMT

- The powers of brinksmanship: You have to try it out a bunch of times before you can get good at it. Once you get good at it, you will rarely use it.
- If the first step is creating engagement, then what are the steps that will set up the right conditions to achieve this?
- "I can make a better omelette than any hen." – BF Skinner
- "It's not safe here to talk about safety. Any hint of dissent to the company processes is stamped on mercilessly."



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