



Human Dimensions Quarterly Newsletter Culture, Learning and Risk

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- [Imagination and Risk Perception](#)
- [Book Launch – For the Love of Zero, Human Fallibility and Risk](#)
- [Latest Research on Thinking with ‘The Gut’](#)
- [Keynotes](#)
- [Facebook Safety Leadership Group](#)
- [Blog](#)
- [Stepping Up to Risk and Safety Maturity](#)
- [Expression of Interest for Advanced Course in Leadership in Culture and the Psychology of Risk](#)
- [Visual Challenges, What do you see?](#)
- [Introducing Gabrielle Carlton](#)
- [Solutions to Visual Challenges](#)
- [Happy Christmas for 2012](#)

IN OTHER NEWS

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Imagination and Risk Perception



The importance of the imagination is foundational to the management of risk and safety. Whilst countless material is written on systems and technocratic aspects of understanding risk, very little is made of the importance of imagination, especially in learning and visualizing the unexpected.

For some time now the military has understood the importance of imagination in learning (Williams, T., (2009) Understanding Innovation, Military Review, July-August). Williams comments that ‘the bureaucratic mind-set frustrates imagination and inventiveness’. Williams comments that the fear of failure limits innovation and argues that leaders need to ‘think big thoughts’ if

they are to make successful innovation possible. Whilst not condoning the notion of war, it would seem crazy if the only organization that could imagine and innovate was the Taliban.

The temptation in industry is to develop complex systems to the detriment of imaginative thinking. With the complexity of systems comes cognitive overload, ‘tick and flick’ and the ‘flooding’ of human consciousness. We often observe this in risk and safety systems development. In Australia in safety, the unquestioned quest for harmonization has quadrupled the associated paperwork. It seems that no one is able to stop and take stock of what the continuing expansion of risk and safety systems is doing to productivity and the psychology of organisations and learning.

The research shows that there are very clear limits to just how much the human brain can process (Norretranders, T., (1999) The User Illusion, Penguin, New York). Yet, it seems that safety associations and professionals are so obsessed with legal and regulatory aspects of risk and safety that they have lost the plot on person-centred safety.

Robinson states (Robinson, K., (2011) Out of our Minds, Capstone, West Sussex): ‘If a fire alarm sounds and all the staff head for the car park muster point, there is no organisation left in the building, it’s all in the car park’. He comments that, the seductive machine metaphor of the industrial period is simply not satisfactory for the humanization of organisations. When it comes to the management of risk and safety, our systems need to serve people not people serve systems.

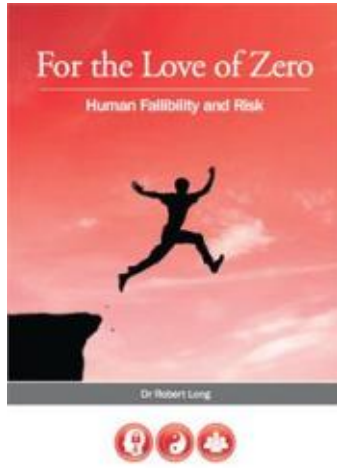
The more organisations systematise the management of risk, the more they lock in thinking about risk. Rather than toolbox talks being about imagining possibilities they have become a process of ticking boxes and making announcements. Rather than conversations on site being dialogue about possibilities they seem more focused on compliances. Rather than supervision being about learning, it seems supervisions has become more about policing systems. Then, when the unexpected eventuates, everyone’s imagination is surprised. The response is often, ‘I had no idea that could happen’ or ‘I could never imagine that someone would do that’.

Much of our imagination operates in our non-rational mind and our subconscious. There is very little discourse in the safety sector about these elements of human decision making. In the rationalist world of systems overload, the activity of daydreaming and play are devalued. Yet, a vivid imagination is required to consider possibilities in risk. The ability to foresee possibilities is perhaps a much more valuable asset in risk management than the ability to check boxes.

Unless there is a more imaginative approach to the understanding of human judgment and decision making about risk, there will be more surprises as humans continue to be bogged down in systems.

Why don’t you send us an email and tell us what your organization is doing in an innovative and imaginary way in safety and risk management. admin@humandimensions.com

Book Launch – For the Love of Zero, Human Fallibility and Risk



The second in the series on risk by Dr Robert Long was launched at the Wayside Chapel Kings Cross Sydney on 14 December 2012. The book For the Love of Zero tackles a range of issues associated with the ideology of zero harm. The book discusses the values and by-products of zero ideology and the need to connect ideology with belief. Binary opposition thinking associated with zero ideology and the need for a more mature and sophisticated sense of goal setting are discussed in the book. To purchase your copy go to: www.humandymensions.com

The Wayside Chapel is known for its innovative and human-centred approach to helping some of the most disadvantaged people in inner Sydney. The venue was chosen not only for its relevance to the issue of risk but also because Graham's brother (who wrote the foreword) is the CEO of the Wayside Chapel. To find out more about the Wayside Chapel or to support their work go to: www.waysidechapel.com.



Graham Long, the CEO of the Wayside Chapel (Kings Cross) who wrote the foreword to the book, is animated in launching the book.



Graham, Alan (MC) and Aiesha



Rob chats to Roscoe from Joint Action about the book.



Rob responds to the launch and thanks visitors and supporters



Listening to the speeches



Michael (Risk and safety Mining and Shearing) chats to Rick (Safety Expert Marine Cranes)



Gabielle (Senior Consultant and Trainer Human Dymensions) with Michelle and Robyn

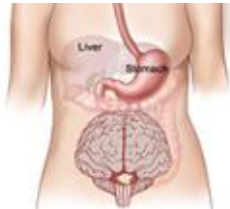


Celia (Executive Assistant Human Dymensions) and Mark (Civil Contracting)



Garry (Commercial Construction) expounds on the current trends in over regulation in the industry

Latest Research on Thinking with 'The Gut'



The idea of thinking with the gut is nothing new. Many ancient religions and philosophies believed that some form of decision making originated in 'the gut'. Some of this thinking is discussed in the Human Dymensions One Brain, Three Minds Workshop. The One Brain Three Minds Workshop enables participants to better understand human decision making and develops skills in observation and conversation about risk. The latest issue of NewScientist (Young, E., Alimentary Thinking, *NewScientist*, 15

December, 2012) discusses the idea that the nature of the stomach and internal organs influences decision making.

Young comments: 'Your body contains a separate nervous system that is so complex, it has been dubbed 'the second brain'. The enteric nervous system (ENS) actually controls much of our mental well being. The ENS has been described by some scientists as 'The Second Brain'. The ENS can work independently and in conjunction with the brain but mostly influences decision making unconsciously. The ENS has over 500 million neurons and produces a wide range of hormones that gather around 40 neurotransmitters that bear a similar structure to neurotransmitters in the brain. What are these neurotransmitters doing in the gut?

It appears that 'feeling sick' or 'off colour' transmits signals directly to the brain that influence decision making. Stress and distress affect the gut in a unique way and produce a hormone called ghelin. Ghelin not only can make you feel well, it also stimulates hunger and reduces anxiety and depression. Maybe that's why we feel better thinking about a piece of chocolate? Certainly, such gut-brain relationships explain why fatty foods make us feel good. Maybe leaders need to understand more about food, diet and conviviality if they want to see better decision making at work? Maybe there is much more to the idea that we have 'gut instincts'. It appears there is much more to learn about how people make judgments and decisions about risk and safety that have been influenced by the work of "The Second Brain".

Keynotes

Human Dymensions present a range of training programs and keynote addresses on culture, risk and learning. Some presentations available for your conference or leadership development program are:

- One Brain Three Minds, The Key to Understanding Human Judgment and Decision Making
- Developing 'Risk Intelligence', the Key to Influencing Others
- Your Talk Matters, the Importance of Pitch, Framing and Priming of Safety Messages
- Safety Leadership and the Psychology of Risk
- Risk Makes Sense and Person-Centred Management of Risk
- Rejecting the Ideology of Zero as a Guide to World Class Safet

If you would like a presentation for your organisation for either a 'lunch and learn' session or as a conference keynote, please contact: admin@humandymensions.com

Facebook Safety Leadership Group



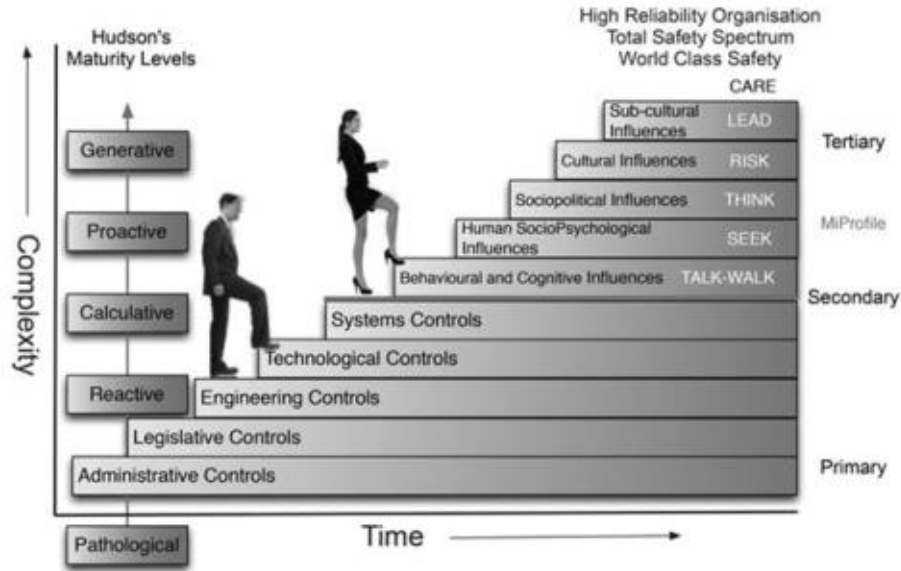
If you would like to chat with others about safety leadership and the psychology of risk, please join us on <http://www.facebook.com/groups/152071534818549/>

Blog



Dr Long writes blogs at: <http://www.safetyrisk.com.au/category/robert-long/>

Stepping Up to Risk and Safety Maturity



You will find the following map in the back of the new book, *For the Love of Zero, Human Fallibility and Risk*. The figure shows how the Human Dymensions WALK-TALK, SEEK, iTHINK, RISK and LEAD programs help organisations step up to risk and safety maturity. Each one of these programs addresses various aspects of human and organisational risk factors. Each program builds on the foundation of solid safety systems and extends organisations to reach greater maturity in the management of risk and safety. The programs are supported by the unique MiProfile diagnostic survey with full analysis and reporting supervised by Dr Long.

If you are interested in the WALK-TALK, SEEK, iTHINK, RISK and LEAD programs please contact admin@humandymensions.com

Contact Rob at admin@humandymensions.com if you would like to find out more about Human Dymensions programs.

Expression of Interest for Advanced Course in Leadership in Culture and the Psychology of Risk

For some time now a number of people have requested Dr Long deliver a public summer or winter school in Canberra in advanced programs offered by Human Dymensions in the Psychology of Risk. The idea is for people to fly to Canberra for a week long intensive program, including guided reading, lectures, presentations and assignments. Rob is currently seeking to have the course accredited at Master's level at ACU National where he is an Honorary Fellow.

If you are interested, please email admin@humandymensions.com and we will post you a unit outline. If there are enough takers we will run a winter school in Canberra in June.

Visual Challenges, What do you see?





1.



2.

Solutions at the end of this newsletter.

Introducing Gabrielle Carlton



Gabrielle Carlton has recently joined the team at Human Dymensions. Gabrielle specialises in advanced hazard management, the psychology of safety, human factors, safety leadership and workplace culture. Her work has taken her across many industries mainly in electricity generation and distribution, aged and disability in large residential facilities, property management, manufacturing, government bodies and corporations.

Gabrielle has more than 8 years of experience in the OHS industry, has been mentored by her father John, a Risk Engineer of some note with gaCSIRO. Gabrielle has also completed a Bachelor of Safety Science (psychology), Grad Cert of Risk Management, is an NLP practitioner and qualified Life Coach. She is also a Chartered Professional Member of SIA and is an accredited RABQSA OHS Auditor for Safety Management Systems.

If you would like to book Gabrielle for an engaging workshop or presentation please contact her on gabrielle@humansymensions.com

Solutions to Visual Challenges

1. It is hard to hold to either image, a large nosed face of figure holding out an open hand.
2. The same applies for this visual challenge. It is either a face or the word 'Liar' written in cursive.

Both of these challenges are based on the same principles as the Necker Cube, discovered in 1832 to Louise Necker. To finds out more go to: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Necker_cube

Happy Christmas for 2012



Finally we at Human Dymensions wish you a Merry Christmas and happy New Year.

Next Newsletter is March 2013.

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