



Human Dymensions Quarterly Newsletter Culture, Learning and Risk

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IN OTHER NEWS

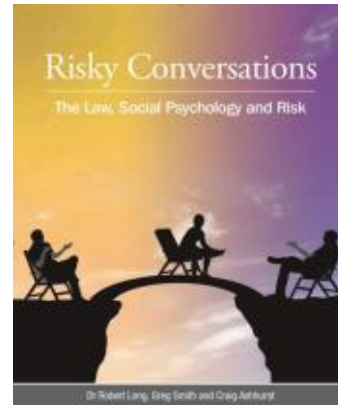
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Risky Conversations, The Law, Social Psychology and Risk

It is with pleasure we can announce the publication of book 5 in the series on the Social Psychology of Risk - Risky Conversations, The Law, Social Psychology and Risk. The book is the result of three days of conversations between Rob Long, Greg Smith and Craig Ashhurst held in February 2016. So, the project has produced 22 videos, a book and talking book.

Rob, Greg and Craig gathered together with Rick Long of InVision Pictures and recorded conversations on twenty two topics in risk and safety. The recorded conversations were transcribed by Max and Sylvia Geyer and then the three authors wrote commentary into the margins of the book. So, this has really been an interactive project and exemplifies the essence of what it means to engage in Risky Conversations. (Please see a page shot below)



The book is 160 pages and included in the \$49.95 is access to all 22 videos. In addition a talking book of all the conversations can be purchased for \$10.

The 22 video topics are:

1. Why book?
2. What is Risk?
3. Paperwork (currently public)
4. Due Diligence
5. ALARP
6. Wicked Problems 1
7. Wicked Problems 2
8. Macondo
9. BHP (currently public)
10. Pike River 1
11. Pike River 2
12. High-Vis
13. Training 1
14. Training 2
15. Quick Cut 1
16. Quick Cut 2
17. Dialogue
18. Diagnosis
19. Doability
20. Fear
21. Root Cause
22. Close

All Human Dymensions videos can be viewed here: <https://vimeo.com/humandymensions>

You can see a sample of two of the videos here: <https://vimeo.com/162034157>

The book can be purchased here: http://cart.humandymensions.com/?product_cat=books

A Sample of the introduction and Chapter 1 can be downloaded here: <http://www.safetyrisk.net/risky-conversations-the-law-social-psychology-and-risk/>

SEEK Workshop Melbourne 26,27,28 July 2016



The Social Psychology of Risk (Module 2)

Numbers are building quickly for the SEEK Program in Melbourne.

You can find out more about the SEEK Workshop here:

<http://cart.humandimensions.com>

[/?product_cat=workshops](http://cart.humandimensions.com/?product_cat=workshops)

You can download a flyer here:

<http://cart.humandimensions.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/SEEK-Program-Human-Dimensions.pdf>

The image and iconography in the graphic to the left is the cover of the 120 page manual. Participants receive the manual, compendium, a copy of the Greg, Craig and Rob's latest book, a range of practical tools to assist skill development in event investigation and access to all the videos associated with the new book.

The Program will be delivered by Dr Long, Gabrielle Carlton,

Craig Ashhurst and Andrew Thornhill.

Book Launch Melbourne 27 July 2016 4.30pm



Registration of Interest

A small and informal book launch will be held as part of the SEEK Program on Wednesday 27 July at 4.30pm. This will be held at South Melbourne Town Hall Community

Hub, 208-220 Bank St, South Melbourne.

The book will be launched by Kevin Jones (<https://safetyatworkblog.com/>) If you wish to attend you will need to email: admin@humandimensions.com places are limited to 20.

Breakfast Book Launch - Perth 11 August 2016 7.30am

Registration of Interest

A book launch will be held in Perth on 11 August 2016 at 7.30am at a place yet to be arranged. All three authors will be present. The launch will be in the form of a breakfast prior to a one day introduction to the Social Psychology of Risk training day.



If you wish to register for the book launch or one day program please email: admin@humandimensions.com

Definition of a Hazard and a Risk



I often get asked how I define a hazard and a risk, in the tradition of social psychology and so here they are:

Hazard: Object that is imagined to have the potential for harm.

Risk: The uncertainty associated with human action and the trust and faith required to suspend uncertainty to take that action.

I read recently in a book by Sukel (The Art of Risk) 'Any decision that could end poorly involves risk'.

The picture to the left is of Gabrielle running a MiProfile session for NSW Roads and Maritime Service. The 3 month project was undertaken across all regions of NSW with over 1000 participants.

Semiotics in Risk Workshop - Expression of Interest

Canberra 6-8 September 2016

The study of semiotics is foundational to the Social Psychology of Risk. Semiotics is the study of signs,

symbols, signifiers, what is signified and significance. Semiotics works in the individual and collective unconscious and makes up 'the consensually validated grammar' of language and discourse in organisations. Semiotics should not be confused with only the study of semantics, although words do matter. Semiotics understands that messaging and all communication and intertwined with the values, attitudes and beliefs in organizing. Semiotics seeks to understand the many ways people come to belief and meaning through unconscious 'codes' and rules embedded in many communicating 'devices'. Semiotics is interested in how meaning and purpose is 'absorbed' covertly and unconsciously rather than what is contained in overt communications policy. Some questions to consider:

1. What do risk tools such as matrices really communicate?
2. How are reductionist beliefs transferred through investigation models?
3. How does a pyramidal or hierarchy of controls semiotic influence the assumptions of safety culture?
4. Why is the concept of emergence or wicked problems so foreign to risk and safety?
5. What do populist models in risk and safety communicate about human agency?
6. Does our organizational communications strategy right frame and prime the right message?
7. What are the by-products and trade-offs in ineffective and poorly considered semiotics?
8. How do semiotics communicate and set the collective unconscious?
9. How does spin, propaganda and mis-information work?
10. Does our method, model and language in risk and safety hold together and communicate with consistency at all levels of cognition?

These are just some of the questions that are tackled in the program.

The Program will be delivered by Dr Long, Craig Ashhurst and Gabrielle Carlton. Program outcomes are:

1. Understanding how semiotics communicate to the unconscious.
2. How signs, symbols, text as symbol and cartographic work.
3. Making and communicating things of significance.
4. Who is a signifier? What is signified?
5. Understanding pitching, framing, priming and anchoring messages.
6. Navigating the semiosphere.
7. Developing a sophisticated communications strategy for developing risk maturity and risk intelligence.
8. Developing semiosis and purpose in verbal, oral and written communications.
9. Understanding culture as the collective unconscious.
10. Understanding how archetypes influence outcomes.

The program is introductory and suitable for anyone seeking to improve communication and maturity in risk intelligence in their organization.

If you are interested in the proposed Semiotics in Risk Workshop in Canberra 6-8 September, please register your interest here: admin@humandymensions.com The cost for the 3 day program will be \$1650 and participants will be issued with a Certificate through the Centre for Leadership and Learning in Risk. Participants will receive a comprehensive manual, a range of semiotic tools and a copy of the latest book, *Risky Conversations, The Law, Social Psychology and Risk*.

Off LinkedIn



Where to have Mature Conversations, Discussions and Learning about Risk and Safety.

After years of abuse on LinkedIn, I've jumped off. What an abusive unprofessional medium. If ever anyone wanted to create a methodology for a dumb down pooling of ignorance, LinkedIn is the method. Unfortunately, the worst examples of abuse came continually from people in Safety. Unfortunately, social media is constructed to entrap people into what Postman calls 'the dyadic cycle' (Crazy Talk, Stupid talk).

There is an alternative. There are about 250 professionals on the closed Safety Leadership Forum using facebook. The group included plenty of solid research and diversity of discussion in risk and safety and news in the social psychology of risk. The discussion is civil, mature and moderated in respect for all and integrity in disclosure. The group is only joined by application and recommendation so, if you would like to join please contact rob@humandymensions.com and we can join you up.

Research News

The Power of Cautionary, Speculative and Open Questions

It seems strange that so much of risk and safety is consumed with paper-based systems when many other system forms are valid (auditory, cartographic, visual, special, cultural artefacts etc). Why is it that the risk and safety industry is so preoccupied with paper-based systems when those very systems are often used against them in court?

One of the most effective systems for helping people think critically about risk is the simple but skilled conversation. So much time is spent in the risk and safety industries on paper-based systems and so little on how to help people have effective conversations. Three modes of questioning are so neglected because the industry is consumed by 'telling' not listening and asking. These three modes of questioning are: The Open Question, The Speculative Question and the Cautionary Question.

The Open Question

The open question seeks a story and avoids the one word answer. The open question can be a straight forward as: 'Can you tell me about?' 'Can you step me through what you are doing'? Of course, the climate must be right for open questioning. If people feel they are under investigation or being policed it won't matter how you ask the question, you will get as brief an answer as possible. In the context of risk and safety, the open question is the greatest tool in undertaking a verbal risk assessment.

The Cautionary Question

The cautionary question is often an 'if then what' question. It can sometimes be combined with a speculative question but essentially seeks to put caution into the mix. For example; 'have you thought about possible interruptions?'; 'what happens if pedestrians come into the area? If that happens then what can you do?'

The Speculative Question

The speculative question is usually a 'what if' question. It seeks to help the person 'entertain doubt' and imagine possibilities. It may be structured something like this: 'So, what if time runs out, and you have to work in the dark?'; 'What if that let's go, and can't hold your weight?'; 'What would happen if the wind picked up?'

The purpose of these questions is to learn and listen not to wait to 'tell'. The key to asking effective questions such as these is to suspend one's agenda, get rid of the checklist and phone and orient yourself towards the other person and hear how their are thinking and what they believe.

The Science of How We Vote

A fascinating piece by Jennifer Richler in the June Issue of The Scientific American Mind demonstrates that we tend to vote by personality and cultural 'type. The article discusses how WEIRD (Western Educated Industrialised, Rich and Democratic) people vote compared to non- westerners. The article discusses interesting differences between cognitive style and voting patterns particularly according to emotional and analytical thinking styles.

Lessons Learned from Radicalism, Fear, Extremism, Fundamentalism and Terrorism

The latest issue of Scientific American Mind (SAM) (May/June 2016) has a lengthy exploration of the social psychology of extremism, radicalism and terrorism. Extensive research shows that the dynamics that fuel harm to others is not just about psychopathology but much more about a righteous cause, emotional isolation and binary thinking. The lengthy discussion echoes much of the research conducted into the Nazi atrocities of WW2 by Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson and Sanford in The Authoritarian Personality (1950) (TAP). What TAP demonstrated was that all of us are capable of harm to others given the right social psychological and cultural context. Meissner (The Assault on Authority 1971) also demonstrated how the work of the Nazis was not about people who were 'monsters' but rather efficient public servants following policy under the pressure of a cause and propaganda. A recent movie worth watching on Auschwitz is Son of Saul.



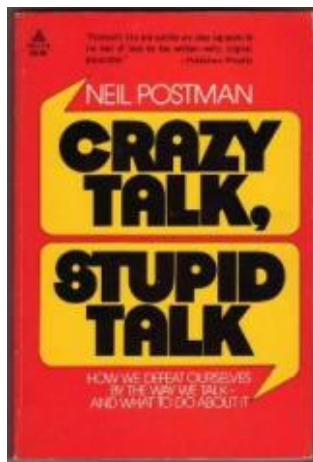
In the SAM article Reicher and Haslam discuss the key factors that help foster the capability to abuse and harm others. These are:

- Binary Oppositionalism, either-or thinking.
- Having a cause that transcends the value of human/people who are not in that cause.
- A lack of critical thinking.
- Being isolated even though part of an organization.
- To dis-identify with those they are harming, in the name of good.
- Thinking of those who oppose, as the enemy. (In and Out Groupness)
- Making the cause to harm others as justified by a higher noble and honourable cause.

- Maintaining a language and discourse in simplistic understanding of social complexities.
- Upholding aspirations of a utopian perfect future, through language of perfectionism.
- Espousing the good of one group in order to justify harm to disbelievers.
- The polarization of problems and solutions. Despising talk of paradox.
- The amplification of the cause through, propaganda as truth.
- The marginalization of academia, research and complexity as irrelevant. (Usually the academics are the first killed in any revolution).
- Attribution of meaning to numerics and systems over humans.
- Building a narrative of surveillance.
- Belief that one is in a special group and somehow exempt from the same values one preaches.
- Distancing emotions from those who are to be harmed, justified by the righteous cause.
- Creating a bureaucracy and system that normalizes the cause over the well being of others. Humans are seen as part of a system, not that a system serves humans.

It is important in this research to understand that these factors act collectively and unconsciously on groups and individuals so that people individually and collectively don't know they are either abusive or harming others. Indeed, operating under what Postman calls 'The Dyadic Cycle', so prevalent in the abuse on social media.

Suggest Reading



Sherry Turkle (2015) *Reclaiming Conversation, The Power of Talk in a Digital Age*. Penguin Press, New York.

This is a brilliant book that challenges the fixation of this age on technology-as-saviour and 'I share, therefore I am'. Rather than being a Luddite, Turkle demonstrates how much of social media is anti-social and anti-learning. Turkle shows that collecting 'likes', 'connections' and 'friends' is neither friendship nor social and diminishes our capability to be resilient.

The idea of multitasking has always been a nonsense, divided attention is divided attention and Turkle makes it clear how the myth of multitasking is strongly connected to depression, anxiety and trouble in reading emotions of others (and self). Turkle shows that social media is responsible for a loss in empathy and creates disconnectedness. Turkle says (p. 37) 'the thrill of 'risky talk' comes from being in the presence of and in close connection with your listener'. Or as Buber noted in I-Thou, 'meeting' others.

Neil Postman (1976) *Crazy talk, Stupid talk, How we defeat ourselves by the way we talk – and what to do about it*. Delta Books, New York.

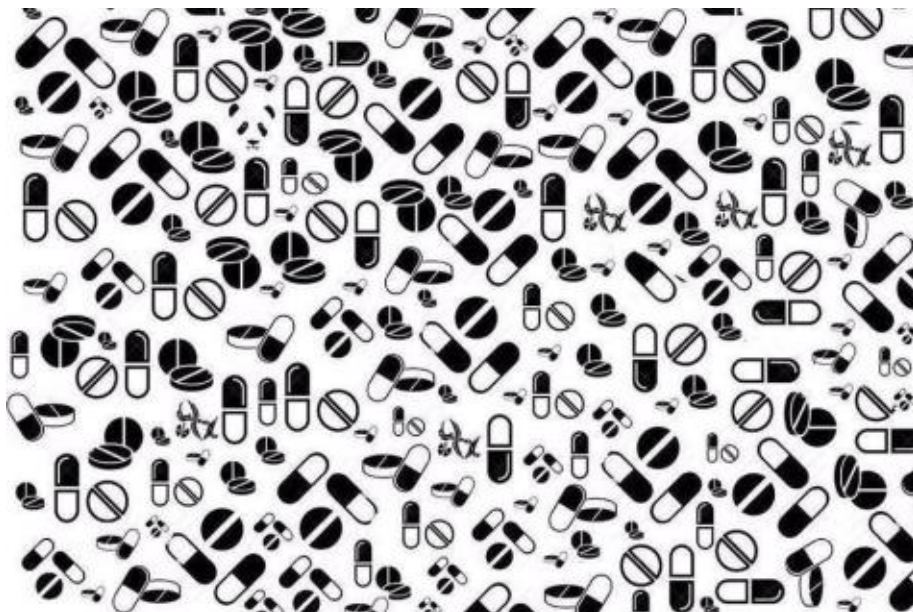
I recently re-read this classic work of Postman and it is a delightful easy read. Postman's writings on education, technology and linguistics should be in every risk and safety bibliography. I remember first reading Postman (*Amusing Ourselves to Death* and *Teaching as a Subversive Activity*) in the 1970s and being delighted with how clear he articulates the challenges of learning, relationships and institutionalized mis-education. In this book Postman discusses the importance of the 'semantic environment' (what Lotman later called the 'semiosphere') and how words, language, metaphor shape discourse and frame and prime how we treat others and understanding learning.

Patrick Hollingworth (2016) *The Light and Fast Organization. A New Way of Dealing with Uncertainty*. Wiley, New York.

I picked this book up in an airport and read it in about an hour. A very easy read written by a mountain climber using that metaphor and associated learnings to help the reader better understand uncertainty and risk. Based on the VUCA principle (volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity) Hollingworth shows that travelling lightly (physically and bureaucratically) augers well for resilience and tackling risk. He compares the 'expedition style' of management with the 'alpine style' showing that innovation, agility and creativity are defeated by excessive and tightly-coupled systems.

Book Competition





As always when a new book is launched it is a mad rush to get a freebie, this competition is no different. First in best dressed for the **first 5** who find the Polar Bear in the pic below.

You will need to scan and post to admin@humandymensions.com and include your snail mail address. Have a look at the time your received the Newsletter and most book prizes go within the first 10 minutes. Remember this Newsletter goes to over 1500 people across 45 countries.

Associates, Links and Blogs

[Safety Risk Blog](#)

[Risk Intelligent by Hayden Collins](#)

[Human Connexions by Dee Henshall](#)

[Human Rysk by Dennis Millard](#)

[Resilyence by Gabdrielle Carlton](#)

[Dolphyn by Rob Sams](#)

[Framework Group by James Ellis](#)

[Viamax Consulting by Max Geyer](#)

[My Safety Thoughts by Greg Smith](#)

[safetyatwork Blog by Kevin Jones](#)

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