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# INTRODUCING YOU TO YOU

Dr Bob Murray is a co-founder of the international consultancy Fortinberry Murray. He is the author of 10 books. The latest, published this month, is “Leading the Future” (Ark Publications), co-authored with Dr Alicia Fortinberry. He was the facilitator for the much sought-after workshop, *The Science behind building an effective GRC Culture*, at the GRC2015 Conference. The workshop looked at the importance of interpersonal relationships within an organisation as a foundation for effective leadership and influence.



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**Introduction:** *This article connects directly with what recruiters have been saying about what organisations need from a GRC professional. Murray’s article addresses the underlying psychological properties of that sought-after quality of stakeholder engagement. The GRC professional has to be able communicate and extend their influence sideways and upwards, all the way to the board level, in order to ensure that when resources are being allocated, that adequate resources are set aside for organisations’ GRC infrastructure. However, Murray highlights the importance of the individuals understanding themselves and how they interact with others first so that they can make the necessary changes on an individual level, before they can move to making changes at a board level.*

INTRODUCING YOU TO YOU — WELL, I want to correct that. AS A behavioural neurogeneticist and a psychologist I may be the best one to effect the introduction. Come in and let’s talk a while.

First, and most importantly, let me tell you that you are a relationship forming animal. You are genetically driven to seek out and retain supportive relationships. In fact some 80% of all your DNA and your neurobiology (what goes on in your genes and your skull) are geared, in some way to achieving that end. It is as fundamental a drive as eating, mating and seeking shelter.

Your worst fear is social exclusion or abandonment. That can come in many forms. Part

of the grief of the passing of a loved one is the sense that we have been abandoned. The survivor, whose husband or wife has died after a long marriage, will likely die shortly afterwards. A poignant example is Johnny Cash who only survived a short time after his wife June Carter died.

And death of a loved one is by no means the only form of exclusion. Losing one’s job is another. The chances of having a heart attack go up exponentially each time you are laid off from your job because you feel excluded from your work “tribe.” And we are starting to find that being “unfriended” on Facebook or other social media has something of the same effect and can lead to profound depression and even physical illness. →



We scientists are finding out so much more about you, almost by the day. Many of the old certainties that we believed have been banished like the Norse Gods to their own Valhalla.

You are not rational, in fact facts, and reason (despite all the appearances to the contrary) play a very little part in your decision making process probably none at all. Your decisions are based on your genetically-driven predispositions interacting with your past experiences, your present context, your neurophysiology and even the microbiota of your gut. These forces work together at incredible speed. The amygdala, a part of the brain directly involved in decisions, works in nanoseconds. The result is that you arrive at a decision long before you're aware that you made it. To tell the truth research has shown that the worst way to make a decision is to carefully weigh the pros and cons and examine the facts—even the “big data” facts. Going with your “gut” results in a better decision over 65% of the time.

Yet, of course, the opposite is what you're told to do—you're advised “to weigh the options.” You try to appeal to facts and reason and trust that people will respond to your GRC initiatives by “doing the right thing.” That's one reason why 70-90% of those initiatives fail to deliver in the way they were intended.



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You're also a learning machine. The human brain was constructed to learn. It's one of the main reasons we come to work (money languishes at # 13 on the list). When you stop learning your systems start to prepare you to die. The cessation of learning is very closely linked to Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia. The longer you continue to learn the longer you live. Your biological system gets an immune system-boost reward for doing what comes naturally—like eating food that's good for you.

You're a status-driven creature. You may not see yourself that way, but you are. You see having status as akin to having safety—which it is since all societies strive to keep those of highest status safe. We seek status in the form of acknowledgement and praise. Both of these give the brain shots of dopamine and oxytocin, two powerful reward neurochemicals. Dopamine makes the brain work smarter, faster and more creatively. And also makes you feel happier and more satisfied with life. It strengthens the immune system, with oxytocin it bonds you to those who give you the praise and acknowledgement.

Maybe instead of reason and punishment you should try praise and acknowledgement to get others to comply.

You probably don't do change very well. That's not surprising since the prospect of change goes

through the same neural pathways as physical and emotional pain. Others will tell you that you ought to “embrace change.” Don’t listen. You can only really accept change if those that you value want you to, or if that’s what it takes to strengthen the relationship with them.

People will do as you suggest if they are committed to the relationship with you, or if they see you as part of their real or potential support network.

You are attracted to those you have most in common with—not, as the old adage had it, to opposites. In fact the more you have in common with other people the more that you see them as part of your tribe and the more likely you are to collaborate with them (or to stay happily married to them). That’s something that most of the executives you are liable to work for have yet to grasp as they urge more and more cooperation and collaboration.

Perhaps you need to work a bit harder at finding what you have in common with those that you set out to influence.

You are inventive. Very inventive. And yet you only innovate when you feel safe. When you feel threatened or stressed you only wind up doing more of the same, maybe harder, but not innovatively.

Maybe as a GRC professional you need to look at why people are not changing their behaviours in the way you want them to.

You are designed to ‘work’ for a maximum for 10 hours a week. Really. Beyond that you become stressed. But you can ‘work’ longer hours if that work involves learning or being with people you



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like. Then your neurogenetic system doesn’t see it as work at all, but fun. Once more it’s the dopamine and oxytocin effect. The ‘work’ brings the neurochemical reward you strive for.

Oh, and don’t worry about aging. Modern research has shown that everyone ages at their own pace and largely it’s a psychological phenomenon. If you see yourself as young and vital you will be no matter your chronological age. Don’t accept other people’s assumptions, or worry about what they say regarding how you “ought” to “be at your age.” You really aren’t that age anyway.

Finally the latest findings indicate that time itself is not what we thought it was. I don’t mean gravity’s bending of the space/time continuum (thereby proving that Einstein was right) which received a huge amount of publicity recently. No I mean a much quieter series of studies which showed, to everyone’s surprise that time literally slows for those who live for the moment. Time rushes, you literally age faster, if you look forward to things in the future. In reality now is all you have, and now is all you will ever have. Live for that, and live long and happily with the person I’ve introduced you to. And with the people around you. •••

*Murray’s article highlights that it is important to understand why individuals behave the way they do before you can have any hope to bring any effective change to an organisation’s culture . If you are interested discussing this topic further and find out how some of the above principles can be effectively applied to your organisation, so that your GRC frameworks can an effective impact all the way to the board level, please contact the Managing Director at: [naomi.burley@thebegrinstitute.org](mailto:naomi.burley@thebegrinstitute.org)*

