

The Human Givens Charter

*For everyone who looks
at how human affairs are run
and thinks, 'We just cannot
go on like this!'*

Contents

How to apply the universal law of living things to the current crisis.....	3
The Human Givens Charter	4
The Feast	5
Why institutions get sick	6
How institutions tend to inhibit human development	8
Valuing knowledge	11
Our innate needs and resources	13
How the autistic thinking style of governments ensures continual crises	16
Target Obsession Disorder	17
Words that paralyse thought	19
The lack of large, high quality organising ideas	20
Thinking big intelligently	22
The need for ‘species thinking’	24
When the dog owner does the barking	25
Shedding responsibility but not authority	26
The plague of experts who aren’t	28
Where does new knowledge come from?	32
The human givens audit	33
The leaders we need	36
Further information	36
References, notes and asides	41

How to apply the universal law of living things to the current crises

TO ORDINARY, intelligent people, the governments of the world seem all at sea. It is clear that, in all the different ways in which they try to deal with the complex problems of the world, they are missing an essential element: that of the psychology of human nature, which is programmed into us from our genes (hence we call this the human givens). These givens can be straightforwardly expressed as needs and resources – and meeting the one, and correctly using the other, are key to global mental health.

The Human Givens Charter derives from the universal law of all living organisms: That, to survive, each living thing must continually maintain and rebuild itself by taking in appropriate nourishment from the environment. The existence and survival of all life forms depend on this. The specific needs of each species' are genetically programmed in to drive every member of it to fulfil its potential. When these innate needs are met well in the environment it flourishes.

None of us can escape this universal law while we are alive. It is the key to emotional health and clear thinking and, as such, we must take account of its truth in everything we do, including how we die. Every policy and plan should derive from being underpinned by this principle. It ensures fair and wholesome management of human affairs. The prime purpose of government therefore is to ensure that the innate physical and emotional needs of the people it serves are met well.

The Human Givens Charter, and the pages that follow it, are intended to unpack what this means and provide an opportunity for us all to step back and look at the bigger picture.

The Charter

IN THE light of this knowledge about the innate human needs and resources we all have a duty to help our health, educational, economic and social organisations implement concrete plans for:

- Maintaining an environment where people can feel secure and go safely about their lives
- Ensuring basic physical needs — for food, unpolluted water, pure air, space to exercise etc. — are reliably available
- Creating a social climate that takes account of each person's need for autonomy and volition, where they can take individual responsibility for as many aspects of their lives as possible.
- Encouraging and protecting environments and activities to enable children and adults to feel emotionally connected to others, experience and enjoy friendship and intimacy, in the family and beyond, and feel valued by the wider community.
- Providing the conditions (but not prescribing the method) for the cultivation of a culture where all children and adults can find meaning and purpose in life by being stretched mentally and physically in healthy ways.

Three implications

1. It follows from the Human Givens Charter that the various departments of government and public services should, at the very least, ensure that their activities do not prevent the people they serve from getting their innate emotional needs met. A clear distinction between 'needs', which are either physically or psychologically necessary, and 'wants', which arise from greed and conditioning, should always be held in mind.
2. To the extent that any leader or organisation fails to help people more fully meet their innate human needs they are contributing to the generation of mental and physical illness, the rate of increase of which is literally placing the survival of our species in jeopardy. (Mental illness primarily arises when the innate psychological needs of an individual are not being met in balance.)
3. If our lives are to have meaning and purpose we need to be stretched and understand the three main ways in which this is achieved. They are: i) By being needed and serving others (as in raising a family, teaching, caring, working in teams for a common goal etc); ii) By stretching ourselves mentally or physically (as in learning new skills, getting better at sport, scientific endeavour, developing a craft or art form, expanding our general knowledge and applying it); iii) By connecting our core being to a force larger than ourselves (as in a philosophical, political, religious or spiritual project).

The Feast

AFTER YET another disastrous project that resulted in higher taxes and more hardship imposed on the people, a wise man let it be known at court that he was a master chef. One day he announced a feast at which he would prepare the most delicious new food. The King and all of his advisers were invited.

When the various dignitaries arrived, full of anticipation, the food was presented in great style. But it proved to be disgusting.

“What is this abominable, poisonous mess you are asking us to eat?” cried the outraged guests. “You’re making us all sick!”

“This is my latest recipe. I made it up as I went along, putting in at random anything that came to hand – if it seemed like a good idea.”

“That’s absurd!” the King and all his advisors shouted at once. “That’s no way to prepare a meal.”

“I agree,” said the wise one before making a hasty exit, “But I thought it would be interesting, nonetheless, to try out a recipe based on *your* way of doing things.”

Why institutions get sick

YEAR BY YEAR the rates of mental illness in the United Kingdom are rising.¹ In parallel with this, people are becoming increasingly disillusioned with the institutions that run our society, those responsible for mental or physical health, finance, education, policing, the legal system, governance, foreign policy, the armed forces, the utilities, farming and fishing. Trust in these institutions has fallen away dramatically.² When politicians obtain and maintain power by encouraging the raising of emotions in the people around them, and promoting ‘feelings’ and ‘belief’ above thought, tyrannical government is not far behind, and some people sense this.

Furthermore, large numbers of people are unsettled by what they see as corruption in politics, financial institutions, industry and business, the hypocrisy within traditional religious institutions of all faiths and a corrosively cynical media, the output from some sections of which often seems devoid of moral sensitivities and to be fuelling a perverse breakdown in civil behaviour between strangers.³ At any one moment the inhumane way all of the above institutions often work is causing massive distress to individuals, families, or sometimes even whole regions.

A new idea

The Human Givens Charter provides a positive vision of how this situation could be changed for the better by practical people inspired by a larger ‘organising idea’ than any of those currently in fashion.⁴

Whenever there is widespread uncertainty in any field a new organising idea is needed to bring clarity and a wider perspective to any difficulty. An organising idea is one which pulls information together so that our minds can make sense of it. And a viable new idea always has to be big enough to encompass and create a context for the earlier ideas that attempted to make sense of things or tackle a problem. The quality of any organising idea is determined by how much of reality it reveals – the richer the resulting pattern in the mind, the more ‘true’ the organising idea is likely to be. You can recognise a true organising idea by seeing whether it reduces complexity.

It is when we forget that the *way* we look at any situation is dependent on an active effort of imagination and thinking that confusion flourishes, mistakes are made and harm inadvertently done. We are not mechanical recording instruments looking out on a fixed world. We organise what we see through what we believe we know.

All the various organising ideas in our own head (and at large in the wider culture) play an active role in shaping our perception and thinking, and thus guiding our actions, individually and as a society. If it is effective, a new

organising idea will be able to explain the anomalies caused by existing disparate, and often conflicting, ideas or practices. And the clearer things become, the easier it is to find solutions.

The human givens approach to understanding human behaviour is a relatively new organising idea. It arose out of a solid basis of fundamental research and ever-increasing scientific knowledge about human biology, behaviour and psychology – and a genuine interest in how best to put such knowledge to practical use for the sake of both individuals and society in general.

Since most people react in conditioned ways to events, it requires a particular set of skills and qualities in order to see what has never been seen before and thereby produce a new organising idea. And these are not necessarily the same skills that are needed to introduce an idea to enough people to enable it to take hold.

A perfect example of this is the case of Ignaz Semmelwiess. He was a Hungarian physician whose work in the mid 19th century demonstrated that if doctors washed their hands before attending to pregnant women they could drastically reduce the number of women dying after childbirth (at the time doctors and medical students routinely moved from dissecting corpses to examining new mothers without first washing their hands). However, he spent years trying to convince his colleagues of his findings and was eventually driven mad because they couldn't (or wouldn't) see what he was going on about. Now, of course, we know his organising idea was correct and hygienic behaviour in hospitals has saved millions of lives.⁵

The human givens approach to understanding human behaviour is equally significant – perhaps more so. It arose out of a lengthy research programme into psychology and behaviour that began in 1992 and was primarily devoted to improving the psychological treatment of mentally disturbed people.⁶ The findings were that emotional suffering only occurs when innate emotional needs are ignored. We all know that when basic *physical* needs are not met, poverty, disease and early death result so of course physical needs are paramount. The human story, for the majority, has always been one of continual struggle to survive the elements and feed ourselves, but people also wither if their *emotional* needs are not met. When people don't feel secure, have little autonomy, lack status in the community, are not getting their attention needs met in appropriate ways, lack intimate relationships or social connections with others, are not being physically and mentally stretched and have no sense that life is meaningful, they commonly become stressed, angry, anxious or depressed. This can easily spill out into violence against themselves or others. Individuals who want to do their work well and take pride in it operate almost all the institutions and services that come in for criticism from the people they are meant to serve. Unfortunately, too many too often feel frustrated by the lack of freedom and responsibility they are given to do a good job. Research

shows that similar levels of disillusion about the institutions of power are found in all countries around the world.

It is clear that the myriad problems we are facing today are primarily psychological and behavioural in origin, coupled with a lack of knowledge. Ideology, belief and passion are no substitute for knowledge of what needs to be done in any given situation. That is why this Charter, which derives from the first genuinely practical holistic school of psychology, was written. Each year thousands of professionals attend seminars and workshops throughout the UK to study the implications of this work for relieving psychological distress and improving the way we educate children and perform social work.⁷ A common reaction to the human givens approach that they express is that it ought to be more widely known about in all fields and that it should influence management at the highest levels and politics, not just the people working at the proverbial ‘coal face’ of the caring professions.⁸ New insights, however, take time to overcome entrenched habits of thought and behaviour – and time is short.

The following pages explain our understanding of how the current situation has come about, the psychological basis of it, and our suggestions for initiating improvements.

How institutions tend to inhibit human development

Over the last nine thousand years, since tribal peoples began to settle in villages and towns, leaders have arisen to defend and administer territory, control trade and collect taxes. They became chiefs, warrior kings, pharaohs, emperors, etc. and their relatives and descendants often formed an aristocracy which in some cases in some cultures lasted hundreds of years.⁹

Whenever these kings created periods of comparative stability, other power structures that could satisfy the innate human need for status proliferated in all areas of human activity: religion, law, war, crafts, business, education, health etc. This process was as inevitable as ice crystals forming when the temperature drops. As populations rapidly grew, the people at the top of each hierarchy devised laws and systems to help themselves maintain power and counter the tendency towards complete anarchy. The most thoughtful of leaders managed to minimise the excesses of cruel and greedy behaviour and harness human creativity and cooperation for the greater good. (As one would expect, the great *intellectual* discoveries and achievements of earlier civilisations mostly occurred during periods of relative order and tranquillity because it is difficult to reflect, think and plan constructively when one is hungry, sick or frightened and has to concentrate on survival. But it has also been observed that great *technological* progress is made in times of war and disaster – necessity being the mother of invention.)

As cultures expanded, the possibilities enabling yet more people to satisfy their own need to exercise power grew too – every king needed an army, and every army needed a hierarchy to run it.

The more complex a kingdom’s administration became, the more its functions divided and specialised, for example, into tax collection and road building. These functions also generated their own power systems and the chance to gain status and exercise influence, both at home and far away. As trade flourished, merchant princes and guilds associated with building projects, crafts and manufacturing goods arose too, each with their own hierarchy based on skills, wealth and patronage.

The religious life of the people, that originally arose out of Mankind’s need to answer questions about the meaning of life and our place in the cosmic order, provided further opportunities for power structures to develop and priesthoods did not hold back from seizing them. As cultures became more complex, the animism and shamanism of tribal people were superseded and more formally organised religions and philosophies developed like a veneer over the primitive magical forms of thinking that still survived. (Much modern behaviour is still governed by primitive beliefs, superstition, magical thinking and animal reactions.¹⁰) Most of us, but especially representatives of institutions, like bishops, judges and politicians, pontificate about civilised behaviour – saying “this is civilised” and “that’s uncivilised” – but such judgments are not as secure as we all pretend. Even the most ‘civilised’ among us have, in certain contexts, been shown to behave like primitives.¹¹

For a long time the churches, monarchy, parliamentary institutions, and the legal and educational institutions of this country were a source of pride. People trusted them, boasted about them – until recently a politician’s stock-in-trade phrase, when an institution was found wanting, was to say that, “It may not be perfect but our such-and-such is the envy of the world”. This doesn’t wash any more. Trust in institutions, trust that is earned and deserved, the cement that binds civilised people together, has almost completely crumbled away.

Any organisation set up for a useful purpose may quickly become an institution and lose touch with its proper function. Since the foundation of city-states, people with authority have abused the powers invested in them – every office at every level is vulnerable to corruption, to ‘jobs-worths’ and to takeover by petty tyrants.¹²

It is in the nature of institutions that they cannot react in flexible, appropriate ways to changing circumstances in the way that individuals or small groups can. By and large, the bigger the institution, and the more power held at its centre, the more inflexible it is. This inflexibility can feel like mindless malevolent cruelty to those on the receiving end of its actions. The story of the destruction of the British fishing communities is just one example. The helplessness of the

fishermen and their families in the face of their livelihood being heartlessly and unfairly taken away by the European Union was heartbreaking for many people to watch. It remorselessly resulted in the break up of families and increased suicide and drug abuse in those previously proudly independent people.¹³

In a way, our institutions are a symptom not of civilisation but of failure. They are nothing to be proud of. Indeed, it would be more appropriate if we were ashamed of them because they are an obvious visible sign of how primitive and uncivilised our behaviour mostly is. Clearly they sometimes perform necessary functions but they are the social equivalent of the barbed wire used to corral and contain wild animals – there to contain our excesses and stop us becoming completely degenerate, destructive and out-of-control, just as prisons are needed to house dangerous, antisocial, criminal people. Institutions exist because we can't trust each other to be honest, fair and humane towards one another, or act from a real knowledge about how to behave. This is all well and good when the circumstances mean that people are so awful nothing else can be done – barbed wire has its uses, the soldiery has to be knocked into shape – but the trouble with an institution is that it can't think. Like barbed wire they do little more than set limits (which is perhaps why our present collection of them in the UK has the nickname 'nanny state'¹⁴).

To date, as recent wars and atrocities and the invasion of Iraq by the USA and Great Britain show, institutions of government have not managed to prevent wars and other large-scale atrocities from occurring. Indeed, when governmental institutions are taken over by psychopaths, such as Adolf Hitler or Saddam Hussein, they make war more likely. In addition, because it has no central 'brain', an institution can't take responsibility for what it does. Scapegoats have to be found when things go wrong.

Another, perhaps more subtle, difficulty is that implicit in the existence of institutions is a denial that humankind can progress other than by following their diktats. Obvious examples from history include the idea spread by the Catholic church that only Catholics could get to heaven¹⁵ and the belief of the British establishment in Victorian times that it had a divine right to rule the world.¹⁶ Today we see the equally lopsided idea, blindly believed by most Americans (and many outside America), that the American style of free market capitalism should operate everywhere.¹⁷

Curiously, despite the problems institutions can cause, people easily become emotionally attached to those with which they are familiar. They can even become proud of them and, like members of cults, assert that their belief systems are somehow superior to the belief systems of rival institutions.¹⁸

This combination of disaffection with the target-driven nanny state and its institutions, together with increases in our 'blame' culture, emotionalism, divorce rates, mental illness, addiction, violence and disrespect for laws, are not

unconnected. They follow from the lack of a generally shared understanding as to what constitutes the purpose of life and what really motivates people. Unless something is done about this our current systems will continue to drive down our collective mental health, and institutional madness will continue to undermine the effectiveness of government and destroy the country's infrastructure. Then collaborative society itself could collapse.

There are people, of course, who assert that our lives have no purpose. They believe that life and the evolution of consciousness are just the random results of meaningless evolutionary processes. We take a very different view. Our approach to the concept of purpose is that it derives from the cherishing of nature's rich endowment to each one of us – what we bring into the world. It must be further enriched, so that it is of benefit to more than just ourselves, and be passed on. This requires us, firstly, to understand what that endowment is.

Valuing knowledge

The following ancient story exquisitely encapsulates our current situation.

A seeker after truth was walking along a remote mountain path when he noticed a stone on which the words 'turn me over' were written. He picked up the stone and turned it over. There, in beautiful script, was the following question: 'Why do you seek more knowledge when you don't make use of the knowledge you already have?'

We know that knowledge about how to survive and improve the way we live on this planet has been gathered for tens of thousands of years through the efforts of many people. Some of this knowledge has been widely adopted, some only appreciated by a few, nurtured and passed on whenever possible, and some has been lost and has had to be rediscovered.¹⁹ But all of this *learnt* knowledge could only be assimilated if it first related in some way to another form of knowledge, a form that is *innate* in us, which has evolved over millions of years, from the possibilities inherent in the universe.

This ancient innate knowledge must always be our starting point. It is the genetic inheritance of all healthy newborn babies. In our daily lives it is expressed in the form of physical and emotional needs as set out in the Human Givens Charter. When a baby's *physical* needs for sustenance – milk (food and drink), air, space, warmth, light, touch, etc. – are met in the environment, it means that this inner knowledge has been appropriately connected up with outside physical reality and the baby can physically grow. Likewise when a baby's innate *emotional* needs – for security, attention, love, connection to others etc. – are met by people around them, their personality can develop (because, in effect, more of their potential to become fully human is being fulfilled).

By making sure that each person's innate knowledge patterns are matched up

well, in a balanced way, to the sensory reality of the external world, we enable people to be physically and mentally healthy, and thus we benefit the whole species by raising the quality of humanity. That makes it easier for our species *consciously* to evolve further (which, it seems, might be the direction in which evolution is pushing us²⁰).

Working to refine the way that children and adults act to meet their innate needs is a necessary service to humanity, an easily understood common purpose that anyone could sign up to. It is our collective responsibility, one we address in this charter. This is because the ‘givens’ of human nature cannot be gain-said. We cannot avoid them any more than we can avoid breathing. Recognising this, and working to ensure that people’s innate needs are met, therefore supersedes lesser efforts that derive from conditioning, ideologies and biases based on race, religion, territory, habit, wealth or any political system.

An obvious example of the necessity of this approach on a *large* scale is that of the tragic situation endured by Israelis and Palestinians. This painful and bloody conflict will never be resolved until there is a genuine acceptance *on both sides* that neither side can win and that peace depends upon the innate needs for security, autonomy and status – which are human givens – being met for both communities.^{21 22}

A *small*-scale example (but with huge implications) is what happens when the attention needs of children are not met in a well-balanced way, perhaps because of watching too much television and not conversing enough with parents and peers, in ways conducive to healthy development. This has a damaging effect on the development of children’s brains and negative long-term consequences for their future lives as intelligent, capable social beings.²³

With these types of example in mind (and they can be endlessly added to) we can see that the fundamental reason for disaffection with institutions – whether of religion, academia, finance, law, government or the various civil services – is the growth in the number of people who intuitively sense that these organisations are not properly, and fairly, meeting human needs. Indeed, institutions often seem to work actively *against* people getting their needs met (and therefore against nature). The consequence of the widespread ignorance of this is that ideologies fill the knowledge gap and infect the body politic, which further corrupts institutions. The results of their rampaging influence we can see all around us: the breakdown in families, the rise in acquisitiveness, criminal behaviour, violence, mental illness, and, on the international stage, violent conflict between peoples, gross exploitation of the poor nations by the rich and powerful, and the wilful, mindless destruction of the one and only environment that can sustain us.

The purpose of The Human Givens Charter is to help interested people analyse this situation dispassionately and see what they can do to stop the rot

and reform our institutions to make them less centralised, more humane and more open to the creative thinking processes that could improve our lot. This requires, first of all, a significant number of people to audit the institutions that they work for or have contact with, to see how well or badly these bodies are contributing to the meeting of people's needs. Then their findings need to be made known and acted upon by common consent.

If we want improvement doing such an audit is unavoidable. Fortunately it is not difficult to do, it just requires a change of focus on questions asked, though it will require a great effort from many people to bring about the necessary practical reforms to enact the findings. Clearly an institution cannot do a 'needs' audit on itself. It would be as absurd as expecting a vain person to give an objective assessment of how beautiful they were and as dangerous as asking a brain surgeon to operate on his own brain. No government could monitor its own progress in an unbiased way. The effort has to come from outsiders who, after the limitations of institutions become more clearly understood, must have effective alternatives ready. These would need to be modelled on organic prototype organisations already up and running with those operating them ready to mentor the necessary reforms.

Our innate needs and resources

These needs are not difficult to appreciate since we all share them. As human animals we are born into a material world where we need air to breathe, water, nutritious food and sufficient of the right quality of sleep.²⁴ These are our paramount physical needs. Without them, we quickly die – as many people do in parts of the world where clean water is scarce and food is in short supply.

We also need the freedom to stimulate our senses and exercise our muscles. In addition, we instinctively seek sufficient and secure shelter where we can grow, reproduce ourselves and bring up our young in safety. Our physical needs are intimately bound up with our emotional needs.

Our fundamental innate emotional needs are:

- security – safe territory and an environment which allows us to develop fully
- attention (to give and receive it)
- a sense of autonomy and control
- feeling part of a wider community
- emotional intimacy – to know that at least one other person accepts us totally for who we are, 'warts 'n' all'
- a sense of status within social groupings

- a sense of competence and achievement (which comes from successful learning and effectively applying skills – the antidote to ‘low self-esteem’)
- access to privacy so we can reflect on, and consolidate, experience
- a sense of meaning and purpose – which comes from being ‘stretched’ in what we do and think.

If these needs are not met as we grow up, we easily become needy, greedy, angry, anxious and depressed – forms of emotional arousal that, when we are in thrall to them, reduce our humanity and lead to all the miseries and cruelties in the world. When it is more widely recognised that one of the main responsibilities of every type of human group, from the family to the largest institution, is to help ensure that the physical and emotional needs of every child and adult with which it is engaged should be met, life will be more rewarding in every way.

Our innate resources

Fortunately nature also programmed us with ‘guidance systems’ to help us meet our needs. These are our innate resources and they include:

- The ability to develop complex long-term memory, which enables us to learn and add new knowledge to our innate knowledge
- The ability to build rapport, empathise and connect with others
- Emotions and instincts
- Imagination, which enables us to focus our attention away from our immediate emotional responses and solve problems more creatively and objectively
- A curious, conscious, rational mind that can check out emotions, question, analyse and plan (a left brain hemisphere activity)
- The ability to store and develop knowledge – that is, to understand the world through metaphorical pattern matching (an unconscious, right brain hemisphere activity)
- An observing self – the awareness of being aware: that part of us which can step back from our intellect, emotion and conditioning and be more objective (a frontal lobe activity)
- The ability to dream, which allows us to metaphorically discharge unexpressed emotional expectations from the day just gone thus freeing the brain to deal with the next day’s emotionally arousing concerns, thus preserving the integrity of our genetic inheritance.

These needs and resources are explored fully elsewhere²⁵ but, even in this truncated form, it is possible to see how many of them could be used to provide a simple yardstick for gauging the effectiveness of an institution, political

policy, company or service: in other words, how well it measures up to the criteria of meeting the given physical and emotional needs, rather than thwarting them. We can check, via this means, whether schools and universities are working in tune with the way nature designed us to learn, and whether institutions dealing with mental and physical illnesses, disabilities, social problems (addiction, poverty, antisocial behaviour, crime), law and policing, as well as organisations responsible for the financial and material wealth of society, are aligned to the human givens. It is all a question of balance and any organisation not working in alignment with the givens of human nature is likely to have gone off the rails and be damaging to society in just the same way as an individual who goes off the rails causes chaos in the local community.

The kind of institutional damage we mean can be seen in almost any workplace. Many people today feel paralysed and prevented from using their initiative, employing their skills to the full and taking responsibility for what they do, with the result that they can only make a minimal contribution to the organisations they work for, as their need to have some control and be stretched is gradually conditioned out of them. (This can start in childhood in those families where children have everything done for them and so are not encouraged to take responsibility for their actions.) Almost anywhere you look the real work is done by only a handful of people, those who manage to retain a degree of control over major elements of their work life, all the rest could be seen as ‘hangers on’ and should not be classed as workers at all. Due to the fact that status tends erroneously to be equated with power (i.e. management roles, conferring power over others), institutions reward through promotion, and thus promote dissatisfaction and incompetence.

The well-known Peter Principle states that employees rise up the ladder to the point where they spend less and less time doing what they can do well, and more and more time doing what they can’t do well, after which they progress no more. Thus the useful work is accomplished only by those employees who have not yet reached their level of incompetence.²⁶ The others, meanwhile, may become more and more stressed, as they fail to achieve what is expected of them. This is particularly a problem in institutions where responsibility for tasks is centralised.

The consequence is that fewer and fewer people develop the higher human qualities society needs. That is why so many government projects and private businesses fail.²⁷ And those ventures that do prosper do so because of the efforts of a handful of people who carry the majority.²⁸

It seems that, when fear or hunger is removed as a motivation to excel, many people take the easy option and do as little as possible. So there is a shortage of people of quality, even at the highest levels. Moreover, this system of incompetence protects itself by making it legally difficult to hire and fire. (If

employers try to insist that underperforming, lazy people do the job properly, they can now be accused of work-place harassment at great expense to themselves, but little inconvenience to the employees.²⁹⁾

Because excessive rules and regulations imposed by successive governments have effectively leached away individuals' sense of personal responsibility for good behaviour, ironically more and more of us feel it is OK to cheat the system. Many overstretched GPs, for example, do, for a variety of reasons, collude in fraud by writing sick notes for 'patients' who pressure them, even when they know the person is not sick.³⁰ Growth in irresponsibility and moral cowardice can be seen in all professions, as can the disastrous consequences.³¹ Yet it is the very design of the institutions we all subscribe to that makes such consequences inevitable.³²

How the autistic thinking style of governments ensures continual crises

Every badly governed country is highly visible and self-publicising. (It seems that the more corrupt and inhumane a society is, the more in thrall to the cult of personality it becomes.³³) Good government is invisible.³⁴ When everything is running smoothly we don't need to know how it is done or who is doing it, just as we don't think about our cars when they are working properly – we take them for granted and get on with our lives.

But in the UK and many other countries things are not running smoothly. Far from it. Government is highly visible and so are the personalities working in it – which on its own is a bad sign. And that is largely because our government (which itself has been corralled by the European Union) operates from a centralist philosophy that believes it should take to itself ever more power and control over our lives.³⁵ The big problem with this, from the psychological perspective, is that, by forcing the population to conform to its centralist ideology, and binding people to it with invasive rules and regulations, government is impinging directly on a fundamental human need: that of feeling one has autonomy, volition and a degree of personal control over events and circumstances.³⁶ (The only people getting that need met are those making the rules to control the rest of us!) This obsession with centralising power – 'control freakery' – arises in many other institutions, thereby ensuring that they clumsily harm whatever they influence. And it can always be seen when management is out of touch with the reality of a situation and divorced from doing productive work.

There are psychological reasons that explain why these things happen. Political leaders do not usually set out deliberately to do damage. Most start off fundamentally decent. Yet they frequently seem to lack psychological self-insight and so rarely develop an objective knowledge of what is really needed in given

situations. Hence their reliance on ideology, which is a poor substitute for knowledge and so often has explosive consequences.

When assessing the psychology of the processes by which those who run institutions attempt to fulfil their obligations to us, we see that the characteristic type of thought they use is ‘straight-line thinking’. (This is a term coined by someone with Asperger’s syndrome – high functioning autism – to describe his inability to monitor and prioritise numerous streams of information, put them in context and react flexibly to them in the normal way.³⁷)

There is now a term, ‘caetextia’, that describes the inability to read context found among all people across the autistic spectrum, including those high functioning individuals of high intelligence in certain specialised areas.³⁸ A caetextic person suffers from context blindness, an inability to keep track of multiple interconnecting variables and to reprioritise any change in those variables by referring to a wider field that contains the history of them. This causes them to resort to one of two mental modus operandi: logical, straight-line thinking or thinking by random associations. Because they can’t adjust quickly to situations and feel disconnected from people around them they tend to suffer constantly from anxious feelings, autistic rage, depression and poor sleep when their routines are disrupted or their wishes are not met.

In politics it is caetextic thinking that unleashes the deluge of initiatives, decrees, targets, official ‘guidelines’ and political correctness that make the lives of the working population so difficult.³⁹ In management it is straight-line thinking that fuels the continuing weed-like growth of paperwork, reports and demands for information that are only obscurely related to the work the organisation was set up to do. A system like this tends “to meet any new situation by reorganising, and a wonderful method it can be for creating the illusion of progress while producing confusion, inefficiency and demoralisation.”⁴⁰ We see this in the insistence by straight-line thinkers on the meeting of targets. Typically, administrators gather information about how well targets are met, or apportion blame when they are not, and debate how to change the targets. (This behaviour now passes for management and decision making in the public sector and in other large organisations.)

Target Obsession Disorder

What we like to term Target Obsession Disorder (TOD) seldom leaves the headlines, whether the targets are concerned with cutting down waiting lists in hospitals and other medical services, increasing the percentage of children in schools who reach a certain standard of literacy and numeracy by a certain age, or getting a higher percentage of young people into university. TOD creates more layers of bureaucracy to manage it, mountains of paperwork and form

filling, and undermines the balance between work and effectiveness.

When the people the organisation is supposed to be serving become secondary to the targets, which they always do, chaos and a huge waste of time and resources inevitably follow. Staff morale falls through the floor and dissatisfaction from the ‘customers’ flies higher and higher. This is most eloquently described in Professor John Seddon’s brilliant book, *Systems Thinking in the Public Sector*, about the failure of our social services to deliver what they are supposed to.⁴¹

In professions like social work some surveys show that client contact time has been reduced by up to 80% because of paper (and email) work. Research recently reported that, whenever a politician declares that his department is going to cut ‘red tape’, it always gets worse! When an obsession with collecting information (which of course is another autistic trait) dominates the activity of an organisation it quickly overrides the actions of people who are trying to get real work done. In hospitals this target driven reductionist approach means patients’ real needs are pushed further down the priority list;⁴² in schools even more children fail to get a basic education⁴³ and our universities are dumbing down to meet the targets set for them.⁴⁴ The lack of real organising ideas in politics is evidenced by the fanfare with which New Labour introduced targets in the NHS, schools and elsewhere, only to follow up some years later with their next big idea, which was to do away with targets! But by then the damage was done.

Running any complex organisation is a holistic operation. When targets become the main tool of management they encourage a grotesque lopsidedness in the organisation. This is because they are primarily aimed at one aspect of a problem, such as cutting down the waiting list for hip operations in a hospital, so the inevitable consequence is that you imbalance the organisation of the rest of the hospital.⁴⁵ In just the same way, if teachers are told what to teach, and have to follow a rigidly prescribed curriculum, their need to be involved in creatively awakening the understanding of their pupils, through their own enjoyment of being stretched by the subject they are teaching, is frustrated. And *nobody* benefits when teaching stops being meaningful for the teacher.

Likewise, when the balance in the attention exchange between teacher and pupil is lost, because the material being taught is not connected up to each pupil’s existing knowledge, or there is too much emotional arousal in the class, a teacher cannot react in flexible ways to the needs of each individual – which is serious because every child is unique, and being flexible when teaching is vital.

Setting targets, however, is great for producing statistics, which people with Asperger’s syndrome often love. Sometimes it can seem that putting a spin on statistics is all that politicians and higher civil servants are doing.⁴⁶ They appear

to the rest of us to operate a primitive, illogical, ‘government by appearance’ strategy, compounding even further our appearance culture. They protest otherwise of course, but of ‘knowledge’ and ‘thinking things through’ there is little sign that ordinary citizens can recognise. Instead, most politicians and their servants involve themselves in “ceaseless activity to grapple with the unacknowledged consequences of yesterday’s mistakes”.⁴⁷

For example, when government departments *do* ask for input, in an effort to do better, they tightly restrict the way in which that input can be given, thus undermining the endeavour by making it difficult for people who could really be useful to contribute. New Labour’s much touted public relations programme, the ‘Big Conversation’, launched in 2003, is one such example.⁴⁸ Another is the way the National Institute for Clinical Guidance (NICE) tightly specifies the form in which evidence can be submitted which, by its very nature, preclude other, perhaps more useful, information from front-line practitioners being considered.

When obsessive straight-line thinking drives government and its administration, it is hugely cavalier with our money (no politician is made to suffer from wasting £millions of our tax revenues; the worst that can occur is getting voted out⁴⁹). It also disempowers those people who are trying to get on with useful work. And the high levels of frustration and stress that autistic forms of government cause ultimately impacts on the mental health of us all. (The international dimension is even more autistic, as is daily demonstrated by the mayhem done to the smooth running of industries and social affairs by the centralising policies of the EU. These are seeping steadily into every facet of life in Europe and undermining our innate need to control our own law making and the ways we conduct our social and business affairs.⁵⁰ Without autonomy, people become slaves, as anyone knows who has been ‘chained to their desk’ by the endless form-filling demands required by EU legislation.⁵¹)

Words that paralyse thought

A technique used all the time by political managers or administrative ‘spinners’ to give the appearance of action is that, whenever they want to impose another untried recipe for doing something, they dress it up with abstract nouns – words with no substance that make people feel good or certain about what is being said. For example, ‘evil’, ‘truth’, ‘freedom’, ‘wealth’, ‘change’, ‘choice’, ‘respect’, ‘potential’, ‘innovations’, ‘modernisation’, ‘spiritual’, ‘values’, ‘principles’, ‘progress’, ‘success’, ‘quality’, ‘enterprise’, ‘ethics’, ‘standards’, ‘democracy’, ‘terror’, ‘aspirations’, ‘education’, ‘equality’, etc.

These words hide ignorance, protect territory and are used to persuade and manipulate. For all these reasons they are therefore beloved of self styled ‘experts’. Sometimes called ‘plastic words’⁵² they are known as nominalisations

by linguists. Nominalisations actively muddle clear communication because, by pretending to refer to something concrete, the people using them create a feeling in the listener that something meaningful is being said when it isn't.

Political speeches are marinated in nominalizations. Who could fail to agree with the leader of the opposition's fatuous policy declaration, "I believe it is natural for men and women to want *health, wealth and happiness* for their families and themselves"?⁵³ Or Prime Minister Tony Blair in his 2001 election manifesto pledge? ("Millions of hard-working families want, need and deserve *more*. That means more *change* in a second term, not less – to extend *opportunity* for all."⁵⁴) And who could not be puzzled by President George W. Bush's assertion that America had "... delivered *freedom, liberty and democracy* to Iraq"⁵⁵ as if these vague, abstract concepts were food aid. (The nominalisations are in bold italic.)

The problem with this type of word is that, because it contains no concrete information or meaning, the reader or listener has to go on an inner search and pattern-match to what it means to them personally, based on their own past experience. Inevitably, such a word will mean different things to different people – one person's 'aspiration' is not the same as another's.

Once the word is pattern matched in our brain it becomes a perception that is then automatically 'tagged' with an emotion. Our emotions are stirred but not connected up to anything tangible. However, it is largely an unconscious process and so we are not usually aware it is happening. Which is why politicians use nominalisations a lot – they are words that can mesmerize and influence people but cannot serve to pin politicians down. In this way (because they contain no real information) nominalisations hinder thinking and communication. This abuse of language confuses and frustrates those not inoculated against it.

The lack of large, high quality organising ideas

A flourishing organisation grows in an organic way. Its structure is determined by organising ideas that are big and flexible enough to encompass all conceivable eventualities. To succeed, everything has to be in place at the right time: people, skills, money, geographical location, the required technology and infrastructure, and the need (market) for its product or services. When an organisation is running well it is because the people in it share similar perceptions about *what* they are doing, *why* they are doing it, and *how* best to do it. Such perceptions derive from organising ideas.

To some extent the degree of refinement of shared perceptions in any group can be used as a measure of how advanced it is. Conversely, crude shared perceptions are a mark of the primitive nature of an organisation or society. For

example, when only crude perceptions (beliefs and ideologies powered by straight-line thinking) are imposed on us by government, government interventions inevitably fail.⁵⁶

As we have seen, an organising idea is always needed to shape our perception and our thinking. This is because we organise what we see and experience through what we believe we know.⁵⁷ Thus an organising idea determines *where* we look. It guides our research. All human undertakings operate from organising ideas and, if we are learning, we are continually refining and updating them to understand the world. Real understanding comes from the type of thinking that produces organising ideas large enough to make sense of the detail. (This, of course, takes considerable effort. It stretches our mental faculties.) A new organising idea that is any good is always bigger than earlier ideas and able to explain the anomalies that previously caused confusion.

Progress comes from this type of thinking. For example, like Ignaz Semmelweis, Florence Nightingale came to understand the relationship between cleanliness and health, and then managed to reduce the fatality rate among wounded soldiers in the Crimea from 40% to 4% by introducing basic hygiene practices and improved sanitation.⁵⁸ This was her big organising idea. As the idea spread it refined earlier ideas about the importance of cleanliness to health.

Organising ideas that are useful, however, can be lost again. Because of bad management and government interference NHS hospitals in the UK today badly need a 'Florence Nightingale'. Hospital Acquired Infection (HAI) caused by poor hygiene practices affects 300,000 people *a year*.⁵⁹ Over 5,000 die unnecessarily of it each year in Britain alone and it contributes to the death of a further 15,000. It costs the NHS more than £1 billion a year and loses at least 3.6 million bed days.⁶⁰ (Many doctors believe the true fatality figures are worse because doctors are so ashamed to record HAI as a cause of death.⁶¹) This far exceeds all fatalities inflicted by terrorists throughout the whole of Europe *and* the USA *over the same period*.⁶²

When individuals and groups don't refine their organising ideas they become set in their ways and operate mechanically out of conditioned habits and emotion. Their plans and efforts are likely to be self-defeating because they have difficulty assessing changing circumstances. This is because, like rats in a maze, they are incapable of seeing the bigger picture. And, prior to them instigating changes in an organisation, the chances are that there was a degree of functionality in it. This is because, when people are given responsibility and left to their own devices, human ingenuity can usually make things work in a 'good enough' way. But when straight-line thinkers, especially those suffering from caetextia, force unnecessary changes on organisations, they invariably make processes more bureaucratic, less efficient and less humane. And when such people have power it can be dangerous for the rest of us. (Hitler, for example,

had autistic psychopathy.⁶³)

A good example of what we mean by this is that, when schools are designed and managed in a straight-line way – without taking into account how to realistically work in tune with the bio-psycho-social requirements of how children learn and teachers teach – the requirements for a successful teaching environment cannot be met. The end result of this is that whatever level of functionality the school previously had becomes destabilised.

We believe that this kind of approach to tackling problems has played a large part in the rising levels of disenchantment, dissatisfaction, mental illness and crime and violence in our society.

The opposite of *caetextic* thinking is *organic* thinking. All human groups are living organisms. All the separate systems that go to make up a living organism must have independence and must interrelate. The human body, for example, contains many organs and, if the whole body is to work well, the heart, kidney, liver, immune system and so on, have to operate to some degree autonomously but, if any one part is impaired, it will affect the totality. You cannot change one system in the body without impacting upon others: so, when a liver becomes diseased, it makes us sluggish, affects our mood and impairs our ability to think clearly. (The best doctors are those with a holistic approach to diagnosis.)

We see organic thinking just as clearly in the practice of psychotherapy. To effectively help an emotionally distressed person, a psychotherapist must take a flexible, organic approach and look at their patient's life in the round – his work situation, how much control he feels he has, the quality of his intimate relationships and friendships, the status he perceives he has, his diet, and whether he is being satisfactorily stretched (physically and mentally) to maintain a sense of meaning and purpose. Therapists who know how to help people get their unmet needs fulfilled better produce good, lasting results in the quickest time.⁶⁴

Organic thinking is concerned with how interrelated elements of any given set of patterns work together. It looks at how instigating change in one part of a system impacts on other aspects of the system. It also asks, would a change *really* make the system more effective? (If it ain't broke, don't fix it!)

Thinking big intelligently

The absence of organic thinking is placing the very survival of our species in jeopardy. And the suitability and quality of the organising ideas that humanity operates from is the reason. All the trends outlined so far – the increase in mental illness and drug addiction, rise in family breakdown, poor schooling, the alienation people feel towards the institutions of law and government, centralisation, and the harmful effects of using ever more sophisticated technology to stimulate greed in people for commercial and private gain – relate to that. And

these dispiriting trends are occurring in rich countries because of the large gap between rich and poor. A small gap between the richest and poorest in a country means a happier, healthier, and more successful population.⁶⁵ The materialistic achievements and success of the Western world were based upon straight-line thinking, on a model of reality that presumes that we can always have access to massive amounts of energy, minerals, and other sources of wealth such as pure air and water and fertile soil. It is clear to scientists around the world, however, that the planet's resources are finite – undeniably limited.⁶⁶ It is also clear that the rate at which these resources are being used up is rapidly accelerating because other parts of the world are now copying the Western way of generating wealth.⁶⁷

The Western model for wealth generation is based upon innate, and therefore natural, animal selfishness – that we can take (grab or steal) from the earth whatever we need, *or want*. When we first evolved, our situation was such that this didn't matter much. It is by such behaviour that all mammals find a niche in which to survive. But as we advanced our impact on the landscape and the planet's resources did start to matter, even though, for a while (since the most rapacious modern technologies took a while to spread), the dangers weren't obvious, except to the most farsighted of individuals. Now, as populations have increased and technology has advanced exponentially, everything has changed. One doesn't have to be a pessimist to sense the problems piling up. The financial crash of 2008 was just an overture for what is to come. The speed at which second and third world countries can now develop and become advanced technological cultures themselves is a fraction of the hundred years it took America. Now that the billions of previously poor are getting in on the act and rapidly developing their technology, they are becoming greed-based market economies too. And, as this can happen in a decade or less, it is placing a rapidly rising demand on the planet's limited resources. The further tensions that this will generate will no doubt result in similar major crises to the current financial one.

Just as when an individual can no longer get their needs met and their model of reality fragments and they become mentally ill, so large populations can become emotionally aroused and behave in insane ways. Other crises will occur as resources actually begin to run out. Signs appear long before, just as in mental illness. In the case of our economy, the pressure will mount and the pretext for economic bullying, theft on a vast scale and war over diminishing resources will increase.

Because the Western economic model is dependent upon economically weaker countries providing it with cheap natural resources and labour, it doesn't matter specifically where this *modus operandi* first starts to fragment. The economies of all countries are now so interdependent that the pressures will

impact upon them all. If we carry on as we are, with greed predominating over cooperation, we will see a collapse into chaos. And this is likely to happen sooner rather than later.

The bottom line is that any future economic crises will be largely due to the autistic thinking style of modern governments. This has a strong tendency to blindly assume that all problems can be solved in impulsive random ways or ways that worked in the past, or by imposing on people more and more social and financial control mechanisms, or by ignoring problems altogether and leaving them for future generations to solve. Governments are also drawn to unrealistic fantasies that a new development in technology or new cheap energy source will come to the rescue and save everything,⁶⁸ which is analogous to an individual buying lottery tickets in the hope of averting a financial crisis.

One has to be realistic about (without being overwhelmed by) the many problems facing us. There is a long list of them, it is true. *Whoops! Why everyone owes everyone and no one can pay*, the brilliant book by John Lanchester, gives a description of the current financial crisis and the madness of modern capitalism with razor-sharp insight, brilliant clarity and a refreshing dose of humour.⁶⁹ The greenhouse effect is currently causing concern.⁷⁰ Starvation and poverty are increasing for millions of people.⁷¹ Diseases that are to a large extent containable are not being contained because of economic greed.⁷² Our overuse of antibiotics is setting us up for ever more virulent virus infections, leading scientists in many countries to predict massive death tolls from major epidemics.⁷³ We degrade the environment, poison soils around the world and are speeding up erosion.⁷⁴ Pollution is contaminating our food supply, whether harvested from the seas or the land, and making it less nutritious.⁷⁵ Rubbish is ubiquitous. And so on ...

The need for ‘species thinking’

That these problems await us cannot be denied. But it is possible that the build up of psychological pressure they are causing in us will lead to an evolutionary breakthrough, a leap to a more refined form of thinking.

The Human Givens Charter is intended for people who wish to cooperate in designing practical ways to approach the situation from a human givens perspective. Perhaps the more we, and our institutions, are prepared to be fit enough to cope, the more likely our species is to survive.

Like many thoughtful observers today we really do sense that we are talking about the survival or extinction of the human species. If we are to enhance our consciousness and survive, we must first look to our psychology and behaviour to see how we might rise above the primitive ‘greed’ of identifying ourselves with our country, our ‘people’, our race. We have instead to develop something

that might be called ‘species consciousness’. This could well be the next evolutionary step we need to take, precisely because it builds upon the natural instinct we already have, to protect and promote the survival of our family. Species consciousness would lift us above the ‘them and us’ public policies that currently hold our leaders entrapped.

On first thought, the idea of species consciousness may seem somewhat self-ish, as though we are promoting our species in preference to others. But we suggest that this is not so, because it taps into another natural template – the instinct for cooperation.⁷⁶ Early in our evolution, people wanted to protect their own *families*, and they realised they could only do so by making alliances with non-family members in the vicinity. They formed *tribes*, and that is how society evolved. We became instinctively social animals and this is now innate in us. We know this because when people are not emotionally connected to the wider community, they suffer emotional distress.⁷⁷ If we now start thinking about protecting our own *species*, it becomes apparent that the only way we can do so is by looking after all other *species* that occupy the planet, and forging effective relationships with them. So *species* consciousness taps into a natural template – to look after our own – and should lead organically to *planet* consciousness and to caring for the planet as a whole.

When the dog owner does the barking

Large organisations – including ones involved in governing our economic and political affairs – cannot thrive if centrally directed. “The people closest to the work know the work best.”⁷⁸ A well-run organisation, and a well run country, has disciplined local autonomy combined with a willingness to experiment, own up to error and move on.

This was well explained by Professor John Kay in his book *The Truth About Markets*. “Most decisions are wrong. Most experiments fail. It is tempting to believe that, if we entrusted the future of our companies, our industries, our countries, to the right people, they would lead us unerringly to the promised land. Such hopes are always disappointed ... even extraordinarily talented people make big mistakes.”⁷⁹

After discussing the failure of people who had tried to run organisations and companies in a centralist manner, Kay goes on to say that pluralism and discipline are the keys to the success of a market economy: “Because the world is complicated and the future uncertain, decision making in organisations and economic systems is best made through a series of small-scale experiments, frequently reviewed, and in a structure in which success is followed up and failure recognised but not blamed: the mechanisms of disciplined pluralism.” Organisations flourish, he says, wherever it is recognised that the job of the leader is to appoint good people and trust them to do the job, introduce pluralism,

and at the same time to impose discipline, through audit and accountability.

Socialism failed because it substituted centralised direction for disciplined pluralism and because it could not stop individuals from taking advantage of the power that they enjoyed to feather their own nests.

Government agencies and large businesses face exactly these problems. Indeed, the ways capitalist economies fail are often similar to the ways in which socialist economies fail. When greed is seen as the motivation behind a company's performance, then managers are more inclined to steal from companies. The common response to such corruption, and the in-efficiency it encourages, is to set targets and reward or punish by reference to the targets. But managing by targets doesn't work. As Kay says, "This is the system that worked so badly in the Soviet Union. It worked badly for two main reasons. One was that the centre did not have sufficient local information to set the targets effectively. The other was that the targets could only imperfectly reflect the centre's real objectives. These problems arise whenever target setting is tried, in public sector activities such as health and education, in the regulation of utilities or in encouraging executives to maximise shareholder value. The same fundamental difficulty arises in each case. If the target setters had enough information to set targets appropriately, they, not the people on the ground, would be the effective managers of the business. So the managers aim to meet the targets, not the objectives of the targets."⁸⁰

Shedding responsibility but not authority

Managing by targets produces the appearance of market disciplines without the substance. "Real contracts are voluntary, mutually beneficial agreements between autonomous agents. And it is only possible to make such contracts in competitive markets where there are creditable alternatives for both buyers and sellers. These arrangements often attempt to shed responsibility but not authority. They enjoy their best chance of success when there is a genuine readiness to delegate power – as when authority to set interest rates is given to a *central* bank (like the Bank of England). They are least likely to work when there is no real intention of devolving authority ... The alternative is to try to align the interests of the various players.

People who work in health and education, on railways and in water companies, have selfish and material concerns like everyone else, but they also, for the most part, want to provide these services effectively and efficiently. Corporate managers were once concerned to promote the interests of shareholders, and of their business – and generally still are, though some, having been told that greed was the driving force of the market economy, believed it and discovered that very little would be done to stop them helping themselves to the company's money. The objective is not to design institutions that are robust to self interest

but to stimulate elements of behaviour that are not purely self-interested. These are divergent objectives: in structures designed around self interest, self-interested behaviour becomes adaptive.”⁸¹

It is contrary to the instinct of most politicians to allow diverse sources of control. Their natural instinct, coming from primitive greed for power and status, is to centralise control and so expand their own territory. So, if leaders are to introduce disciplined pluralism, they have to go against these primitive instincts in the interests of society at large, as Kay explains. “Disciplined pluralism is contrary to the natural instincts of most political or business leaders. For politicians to support it requires them to struggle with their own inner natures. When governments make economic policies, their constant inclination is to suppress pluralism and to override discipline: to favour new ventures that the market will not accept or old industries that the market has already rejected. Frequently, they succumb. This is why the record of government economic intervention, even in rich states, is generally poor.... Centralised structures cannot cope easily with the normal fact of economic life, that it is very difficult to determine what the right thing to do is and the best recourse is to try many things on a small scale and see which few work. Pluralism necessarily conflicts with uniformity. But if government structures genuinely allow pluralism and decentralised authority, variability in the quality of what is provided is inevitable. It is tempting to argue that everyone should receive ‘the best’ but the consequence is that ‘the best’ will not be very good. If everyone to whom power is delegated makes the same decision, there is no pluralism and no real delegation. ... Disciplined pluralism in public services requires that there be careful audit – of outcome, not of contribution to process. Disciplined pluralism requires that there be real accountability for these outcomes, of a kind which is only possible when agents have the autonomy which makes them genuinely responsible. The corollary of autonomy is research-assessment exercises, school league tables, hospital performance measures and rigorous accounting standards and corporate-governance rules.

“Performance can be compared because other people are trying to achieve the same goals.... ‘Discipline’ is perhaps not quite the right word: it is the recognition of error, not its punishment, that matters. Centralised structures find this hard. The democratic will, or the heroic leader – politicians or chief executive – can rarely conceive of making a mistake and still more rarely wish to be told of a mistake. Apparent failures must be failures of implementation, for which those engaged in implementation are responsible. The result is a culture of blame in which it is difficult – and personally costly – to admit mistakes, and therefore few mistakes are admitted to: hence, there is no process of retreating from mistakes or abandoning mistakes. The simplest means of not being blamed for a mistake is not to make a decision. This is a common recourse.

Organisations in decay are often simultaneously authoritarian and indecisive.”⁸²

From the human givens perspective an analysis such as Professor Kay’s leads us to think it likely that if a process of managed, systematic decentralisation of authority does not begin soon, our quality of life will deteriorate further and we will become even more dominated by tyrannical processes. To undo the damage currently being done by centralised control of our civil and financial affairs, control should be given back as close as is reasonably possible to the people affected. Local councils should be given back their autonomy; governments in Europe should become more independent of the EU. We need to appoint good people and trust them to do the job. Which brings us to a problem: who are good people?

The plague of experts who aren’t

Another huge vulnerability in modern times is that, as a species and as a society, we now have no straightforward way of assessing expertise. This vulnerability is a consequence of history and, to appreciate this, we need to step back into the past for a moment.

Human and prehuman species were driven to evolve as social creatures because we were tasty morsels for the larger meat eating animals.⁸³ The only way we could survive was to band together in groups. We had no choice. We cooperated or we were cast out on our own to be eaten. It was in the context of social, family-based communities, constituting no more than about 150 people, that the human species evolved.⁸⁴ (This optimal size is instinctive and once the number of people in an organisation exceeds 150 its efficiency and sense of community drops away.) In each group different people had different skills and aptitudes and this was plain for all to see. If you were a good cook, everyone could tell and enjoy the results. If you were good at building shelters, it soon became obvious and people would seek your help and advice.

Expertise has always existed. Each person has different knowledge, skills and different degrees of professionalism. In ancient times expertise was easy to recognise and readily accessible when needed. The whole tribe would know who were the best hunters, tool-makers, fishhook-makers, childminders, and so on. It would also know who was best at sorting out certain types of medical problems with herbs, who was good at setting broken bones and who had the most wisdom and authority to sort out relationship difficulties and conflicts. Thus genuine expertise was widely valued within the community.

Our vulnerability today is that, in the complex society we live in, made up not of loose gatherings of 150 individuals but of millions of people, we cannot rely upon our own observation of human capabilities or on local knowledge to assess expertise. To overcome this, we devised various systems that were, in

effect, ‘badges of status’ to indicate who is or is not an expert.

Gradually this system developed; special clothing, membership of a guild or, if you were part of the ruling aristocracy, a coat of arms, marked you out. Today we allocate status and worth through academic qualifications such as degrees, diplomas and doctorships, through membership of trade associations, and by honour systems of one sort or another (including ‘celebrity’ and displays of wealth). We replace real knowledge about who has expertise with the letters following a person’s name, or the uniform they wear or the jargon they use. This approach would have worked well in small communities because the status would still be correlated with expertise and easily tested for. The master blacksmith was so regarded because everyone could see he could do his job well.

But, in our society today, status is mostly awarded, or claimed for, without our being able to observe whether a person really has expertise before we employ them. Because we have become an *appearance* culture, instead of a *knowledge* culture, the badge is now more important to people than the knowledge or skill that the badge was originally intended to denote. We are faced with the fact that, because somebody has qualifications in architecture, or law, or medicine, it does not mean they are a competent architect, lawyer or doctor.⁸⁵ And if someone appears to have great wealth, it does not mean they have actually earned it. (He may have inherited it, or be a conman.) This causes great problems.

If a person wants psychotherapeutic help for a family member suffering depression, status will often determine which professional or organisation is approached. Someone might think that the Tavistock Clinic in London is the place to go, because it enjoys high status within the NHS. Yet the main type of therapies practised at the Tavistock derive from the arid theories of psychoanalysis and are not helpful for depressed people, as they tend to deepen and prolong depression.⁸⁶ But how can a member of the general public know that? The Tavistock Clinic’s perceived status in this case is no guide to expertise and effectiveness. Unless someone points out to them that ‘the emperor has no clothes’ the only two ways to find out are either by trial and error, which is usually costly, or by becoming an expert in the field themselves.

The system of badges of status leaves us at the mercy of one another – as much as our ancestors were at the mercy of those hungry predators in the wild. (The lists of the victims of pension fund scandals, the people Dr Shipman killed or people wrongly convicted because of incompetent lawyers or judges, are enough to illustrate the point.)

Our first line of protection is to recognise that the possession of symbols of status does not automatically denote expertise. We must intelligently question whatever is done on a case-by-case basis whenever it is practical to do so. The common-sense rule is: it is always what people *do* that counts, not what they say they can do. Once it is widely understood that status is not correlated to

expertise it is possible to look for better criteria by which we can ascertain people's abilities. We should find objective proof – real evidence – that a particular person has the expertise they claim. Recourse to litigation when things go wrong is not a reasonable course of action.

We cannot afford to accept any longer the simplistic notion that, if somebody claims, or is given, 'status', they have expertise. The fact that someone decides to go into politics, for example, does not make them competent to run a country, conduct a war in our name or make alliances with other countries which could undermine our ability to operate freely and flexibly.

We have all been through the teaching system and know that there are some teachers who are naturally talented and inspiring communicators. We also know that there are some with far higher academic qualifications, who are walking disasters. So, to reform the way our children are taught, we would need to assess expertise *and* choose the right people to be trained to be teachers in the first place. The same is true of psychologists, psychiatrists, architects, builders, solicitors, judges and accountants. The increasing emphasis on academic ability, when inappropriate – another instance of straight-line thinking – over natural talent and practical experience exacerbates the problem.

The academicization of the nursing profession, for example, means that on an eighteen month course a student nurse can spend less than an hour and a half on learning about taking a patient's blood pressure and temperature and a whole afternoon studying poverty in Russia.⁸⁷ Nurses now are taught very little anatomy in their courses, and the importance of hygiene and how to make sure patients don't get bed sores is given a low priority.⁸⁸ As one sister described it, many new nurses emerge from their theoretical training courses picturing life in the hospital, "at a computer or with a doctor on his rounds. They are horrified to discover that 90% of the time is doing things for patients."⁸⁹ This is a terrible indictment of nursing colleges since the main purpose of nursing is to do for the sick what they cannot do for themselves; it is a very 'hands-on', caring activity.

Likewise, half of the doctors in this country now are unhappy in their career choice because their work does not challenge them in a satisfying way, nor does it meet their needs.⁹⁰ Their unhappiness adversely affects their patients.⁹¹ Some lack crucial competencies. Doing well academically at medical school does not itself confer the interpersonal intelligence necessary to be a good doctor.

A similar dilemma also now applies in policing. In the 1960s, for ideological reasons, politicians decided that police forces should no longer have authority resting on "the broad basis of the consent and active cooperation of all law-abiding people",⁹² preventing crime just by being visibly embedded in the community ('bobbies on the street'), but should mainly react to crime *after it*

has happened. Policing has now become a largely desk-bound bureaucracy that takes its authority from the Home Office. Just as many nurses have lost touch with the needs of patients, many policemen, snowed under with paperwork, have lost touch with the concept of serving the community more informally.⁹³

We need to stimulate enlightened self-interest by recreating a consciousness of vocation. A sense of vocation involves the idea of service and young people should be encouraged to consider these three questions: What are my talents and abilities? How can I best develop them? And in what role can I put them to the service of the community?

In the same way that exercising our bodies keeps us physically healthy, it is a given that the human brain thrives only when it is being put to good use. People who stretch themselves, develop their mental abilities and make a contribution to society are, on average, physically healthier and emotionally happier.⁹⁴ We need to shift consciousness away from ‘How can I *get from* others?’ to ‘How can I *serve* others?’

We daily see examples of politicians all over the world, driven to appear busy, dreaming up harebrained schemes in committee rooms in the hope that they will improve the running of their country. If they get elected, they can institute such schemes in ways that significantly affect us all. This is no different from someone with little knowledge of cooking making up random recipes and getting other people to eat the disgusting result (as the story we recounted in our opening pages described).⁹⁵ They do not often admit that what they are proposing is experimental, yet there is no meaningful comeback when it goes wrong. All they do is blame anything or anyone but themselves rather than admit to experimentation and try to learn and do better next time. (This costs taxpayers £billions.) Because political parties operate from ideologies – straight-line thinking again – politicians, especially those suffering from cae-textia, find it hard to objectively consider whether what they are doing will *really* help more people to get their needs met (which is actually the only reason for employing them).

Their problem, and consequently ours, is that without an organic analysis, based on the givens of human nature, sound knowledge and large enough organising ideas, any change our political parties try to bring into being is likely to fail. And not only fail, but make things worse. We see this in the running of the railway system, the utilities, the social services, the NHS, the postal services, the education system and so on.

Where does new knowledge come from?

“A characteristic of almost all human societies is the general belief, hallowed by institutions and uncritically accepted, that something must be:

- convenient;
- plausible;
- believed;
- allowed by precedent;
- accepted as true;
- capable of ‘proof’ within confines laid down by self-appointed authorities or their successors;
- admitted by some established body of experts: otherwise it is not allowed to be ‘true’.

The fact is, of course, as we can immediately see once we pause to analyse it: An idea, scheme, or almost anything else, really needs no other qualification than that it *is* true.”⁹⁶

To tackle the difficulties for reform outlined in this charter requires new ways of thinking about them. We must therefore keep in mind that innovative ideas almost always come from outsiders – people who are generally perceived as ‘oddballs’. The reason for this is not hard to see. People who fit easily and comfortably into existing mores and institutions are less likely to be motivated to question the assumptions, ideas and procedures by which these institutions are run – not least because they would assume that to do so would risk their future career advancement or security.

There are countless examples in history of the most important new ideas and knowledge coming from people who were considered odd and who didn’t fit in with the conventions of their time.⁹⁷ Socrates, for example, never held an official position but was a self appointed tutor to the brightest young men of Athens. His use of reason and logical argument to identify the basis of ethical behaviour so frightened the authorities that he was executed for corrupting the young. His pupil, Plato, went on to develop and transmit his ideas and they eventually became the inspiration behind Western civilisation.⁹⁸

Isaac Newton is generally regarded as one of the greatest scientists who ever lived but he was very much an eccentric loner, as intensely interested in the occult as he was in mathematics and the laws of physics.

Albert Einstein developed his theories of relativity whilst working as a patent clerk in Zurich. He was in that job because he was regarded as too strange to be employed as a teacher.

Charles Darwin, the most influential biologist who ever lived, never held an

academic post, was thought of as a slow student, and wrote up his theories of evolution at home.

From the world of engineering, literature, business and economics too, there are countless examples of ‘outsiders’ introducing new ways of doing things, often to initial ridicule. So we should not reject out of hand ideas emanating from people who do not enjoy high status conferred on them by membership of prestigious institutions. Amongst all the undeniable nonsense that emanates from ‘oddballs’ and outsiders are likely to be found the innovative ideas that will enable knowledge to advance and society to recover from its current malaise. It is also for this reason that the people who audit the effectiveness of institutions must come from outside institutions.

The human givens audit

There are three main types of thinking that need to be checked for. *Autistic* thinking by our decision makers is the biggest source of blinkered solutions which are causing us more problems than they solve, but nonetheless it usually springs from good intentions.

However, there are two other styles of thinking that can come to dominate an organisation that are not so well intentioned, *psychopathic* thinking and *cult* thinking.

A survey published in 1996 found that one in six UK managers is a psychopath.⁹⁹ The classic signs of psychopathy that these managers exhibited were: emotional coldness, bullying, deceit, lack of remorse and love of risk. As these people intimidate, ingratiate and charm their way to more senior positions in an organisation, they will often employ other psychopaths to fill lower managerial roles. This can result in a culture of bullying which undermines the mental health of ordinary staff members.

The third style of ill-intentioned thinking that can come to dominate an organisation to the detriment of its members and, ultimately, the wider public, is cult thinking.¹⁰⁰ Cult thinking is not, as many people assume, confined to strange minority ‘religions’. It can be found in businesses and political movements and in academic, educational, psychotherapeutic, scientific and sports organisations as well. Typically, in organisations run on cult lines, there is a progressive attack on the members’ needs for autonomy, for connecting to the wider community and having a stable family life, combined with a perverse abuse of the need to be stretched.

The cult-making process can be quite subtle. In a business with this affliction, special company outings and weekends away from one’s family for staff members only (to ‘foster company spirit’), is one such technique. Others include: repeated (indoctrination) lectures extolling the company’s commitment to its

workers in return for staff loyalty; the expectation that responsibility to the company (to be a good company man or woman) must supersede family responsibilities; the creation of an atmosphere of insecurity by expelling or demotion of scapegoats for trivial reasons; encouraging a cult of personality around a 'leader' etc.

Any company, institution, political party or religious grouping that progressively undermines the ability of the people involved with it to get their needs met is actually regressing them to a state of infantilism: the very opposite of the human givens approach.

From a human givens perspective, the way to begin to understand an organisation is first to be clear about what its *real* function is. That involves specifying what needs it is supposed to be meeting and what its actual effects are on its customers/clients and staff. These have to be set out in concrete terms (i.e. not in nominalisations).

In a company, for example, the needs of customers, staff and shareholders have to be given equal priority. If the needs of one group are met without equal attention being paid to the others, we know we are back dealing with straight-line thinking and therefore that the organisation will ultimately fail. From such a perspective it is easy to identify delinquent companies, governments and institutions. Generally speaking, in a non-greed driven world, the larger the organisation, the more people's needs it should be meeting in order to justify its existence.

It is important that all parties connected with an organisation get their needs met *in balance* through what it does. This 'looking both ways at once' aspect has to be incorporated into the process when changes are recommended. (It is because this is not happening at present that psychopathic personalities often terrorise their way to positions of power in our institutions, using fear and intimidation to create a bullying culture that, as well as damaging the people working in it, further alienates the institution from the rest of society. The handmaiden of tyranny is always emotional arousal. When politicians obtain and maintain power by encouraging raised emotions in the people around them – by using terms like 'war on terror', 'weapons of mass destruction', 'anti-social behaviour', 'global warming' (all nominalisations that mean different things to different people) – and promote 'feelings' and 'belief' above thought, tyranny is the inevitable result.

Management's urgent task, therefore, is to ensure that the organisation flourishes in a way that serves both the people *outside* it (that it was set up to help), and the people *inside* (who work for it). A way of assessing how well the psychological needs of both groups are taken into account should be built into the system. This would ensure that any change of structure or practice instituted in the organisation does not impinge on these needs. Facilitating align-

ment with the human givens should be at the core.

In assessing the health of an organisation, people with proven relevant expertise need to design and operate a human givens *needs* audit appropriate to that organisation. Simultaneously, a human givens psychological *resources* audit should be carried out. That means, for example, seeing if an institution is stimulating a healthy use of imagination in its workers and clients (rather than unhealthy greed or worrying) or whether or not cult-like behaviour is being induced.

No political or ideological interference with the assessment should be tolerated, nor any that stems from any other vested interests. By doing a human givens audit, using the most comprehensive up-to-date knowledge available, we can identify and measure how well an organisation is working to satisfy human needs. And the dangers for the wider society that arise when an organisation is working against the givens of human nature will be more easy to identify.

The human givens approach to institutions will reveal what should be added to, or subtracted from, the way they are managed in order to balance and improve them. In the course of time some institutions may need to be abandoned as too unwieldy and difficult to change. For example, the NHS is in such a management shambles that the only way forward might be for a new, properly managed, pluralistically organised health care system to gradually grow up alongside it. As that happens, the dead weight of the NHS centralised organisation could be slowly shrugged off like a snake shedding its skin. (If this seems inconceivable now we only need to look back a few decades to the USSR which seemed to most people at the time such a permanently entrenched power system. Now it has gone, a mere footnote in history.)

This effort at reform will employ knowledge from many disciplines. There is a great deal to take into account. For example, sociological knowledge – such as how the greater disparity in wealth in a society directly correlates with health, longevity, crime and violence on our streets¹⁰¹ (because the violence in our streets is simply the mirror image of the institutionalised violence that prevents people getting their needs met¹⁰²) – should be incorporated. Any long-term view cannot ignore the fact that violence proliferates in any society when its institutions prevent people from flourishing.

The leaders we need

If government and its institutions are to improve, better ways to assess the quality of people who run them must be found. The current means of selection, which depends on how well a person performs on sound bite driven television, is clearly too chancy.

An old king once married a young woman who, after a while, started to pine for the excitement of the marketplace in the nearby town, which was some miles away. She loved to shop. The king eventually said she could go, provided she went with his trusted retainer, Nasrudin. So Nasrudin set off one morning walking beside the beautiful young woman who rode on his donkey.

The journey took four hours. Then she shopped until the market stalls closed and then she chatted with her women friends in the town. The consequence was that the king spent a very anxious night worrying about his wife who he had expected back the same day. He was exasperated when Nasrudin, with the king's wife riding his heavily laden donkey, turned up the next morning. Nasrudin apologised and said by way of explanation that he couldn't get his donkey to travel any faster.

The next time the wife said she wanted to go into town the king ordered a young man who had a fast strong horse to take her. So the queen mounted the horse with the young rider and they rode off in a cloud of dust, leaving the king confident he would see his wife again 'ere nightfall.

But she didn't return that night, nor the next. Nor the next, or the one after that. In fact she returned with the young man a week later. The king turned to Nasrudin and said, "I realise now how your donkey is much more reliable than that horse."

"It's not the means of transport you should be looking at," said Nasrudin, "It's the quality of the person you ask to use it."

This story illustrates vividly the concept of quality, and that it is the quality of politicians and civil servants individually, not their policies, that our attention should be focused on. They should have the spare capacity to work disinterestedly for the whole community and sufficient humility to be able to draw upon the expertise of other people. And, as said earlier, we must not mistake status for real knowledge. In future the *quality* of the people we elect to represent us as Members of Parliament will have to be emphasised, rather than their hypothetical plans for 'change' being the criteria. We should be highly suspicious of plans that have never been tried and tested and that are not secured in any genuine knowledge base. If individuals are sound, they will harmonise easily

with what needs to be done, as happens in any successful enterprise. Our current problem is one of an abundance of unsound, even mad, people in positions of power. When real knowledge exists, political parties do not have to indulge in dreaming up new manifestos, ‘spinning’, arguing amongst themselves and splitting up into factions.

There is an interesting parallel between the worlds of psychotherapy and politics. Each of the hundreds of different models of therapy have little bits of truth in them which they institutionalise and try to operate in isolation from, or opposition to, other models. The same thing happens in politics. It is clear in psychotherapy that all of the models cannot be right (hence the evolution of the human givens approach which subsumes what techniques and insights are useful within a larger organising idea that explains why they are effective). Likewise, the various different political approaches cannot be right. Traditional parties align themselves along a left to right dimension. Those on the left seek to protect the rights of the majority at the expense of the individual, whilst those on the right seek to protect the rights of the individual at the expense of the majority. Each party recognises some human needs, but by failing to recognise others, which also need to be met in balance, they only succeed in destabilising society further when they attain power. When everyone can see what needs to change, and how, we can set about doing it. The human givens needs audit gives us a benchmark against which to measure all plans and policies.

With the human givens project, we will not, as failed reformers in the past have done, merely claim that we have a wonderful idea for how to reform institutions, and demand support for untested theories. Our effort should be demonstrable in the real world. Those already involved with the project have begun researching solutions for some of the major problems we have discussed, starting with those in the mental health professions. We have already developed a new form of psychotherapy that operates from the human givens approach, which is proving more effective than existing models, as we would expect since it derived from bigger organising ideas. (MindFields College is teaching this approach throughout the UK and Ireland and more than 200,000 professionals have already attended seminars and workshops on it.)

People working with these ideas are already showing how mental health can be improved relatively easily by helping those people suffering severe mental illness more effectively.

They can show how they are lifting depression, resolving trauma (including post-traumatic stress disorder) and other anxiety conditions, work with people who are self-harming, addicts and angry people. Even psychotic patients are routinely being treated more humanely and, in the majority of cases (if they are reached early enough), can quickly become functioning members of society again, without any need to take mind-damaging medications for the rest

of their lives.¹⁰³

As the demand for this approach to primary care mental health services spreads, we envisage that it will have a positive effect on other approaches that will either adapt to it or have to be abandoned.

Research is also underway into how education can be improved through the adoption of human givens principles in schools and universities. So far, many head teachers and other educationalists have responded enthusiastically to these new ideas and are implementing them in a variety of different schools.

To show how children and young people could be better educated using the human givens approach, we need to encourage those schools that are already working in tune with human nature and how people learn, and develop more of them. Teaching children at their own pace in a way that stimulates their curiosity (as a small minority of innovative schools are already doing) will demonstrate that pupils can learn in an organic way and achieve higher standards of emotional maturity and clear thinking than current practice expects of them. They will also gain a knowledge base for life that conventional institutions currently don't provide.

This project will also reveal how those teachers who intuitively work in tune with the human givens (as many do, even if they don't call it that), enhance their own skills and derive more satisfaction in the process. A school that employs organic thinking, where the people responsible for its effectiveness on a day-to-day basis are free to run it, will ask whether a particular change will *undermine* the teachers' sense of volition or *increase* it. Will it bring down their stress levels by making them feel more in control, or will it raise them by minimising their control input? Will it give them status or take status away? Will it make their work more meaningful, so that they look forward to each day at work, or make them feel like drudges? If a change doesn't meet teachers' needs as well as those of children, it won't benefit either group. Teachers and pupils and the school as a whole end up functioning at seriously sub-optimal levels.¹⁰⁴

This is just the start. Now the human givens project is also attracting people to it who are thinking about ways to manage our economic, legal and political systems more effectively by attuning them more closely to real human needs. There is, of course, a huge amount of work still to be done and the resources of many gifted people will be needed to help to plan for the reformation of institutions on a national scale. But we believe it is incumbent upon our generation to do whatever we can to ensure the survival of our species.

Further information

If you would like to find out more about the human givens approach, and how it is already being used to beneficial effect in a wide variety of fields, please visit: www.hgi.org.uk

You might also like to read the following books or subscribe to the *Human Givens* journal – all are available at: www.humangivens.com.

- *An idea in Practice: Using the human givens approach*, Human Givens Publishing Ltd. (2008). ISBN: 978-1-899398-96-6 (Shortlisted for Mind Book of the Year award 2008).
- *Human Givens: A new approach to emotional health and clear thinking*, by Joe Griffin and Ivan Tyrrell, Human Givens Publishing Ltd. (2004). ISBN: 1-899398-317

More information is also available on MindFields College's website at: www.mindfields.org.uk

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If you have found the HG Charter inspiring and thought provoking, please forward details of the website (www.humangivenscharter.com) or this document itself to as many people as you can who you think may also find it interesting.

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*“Civilisation means, above all,
an unwillingness to inflict unnecessary
pain. Within the ambit of that definition,
those of us who heedlessly accept the
commands of authority cannot yet claim
to be civilised men and women.”*

Harold Laski, *The Dangers of Obedience*

Notes, references and asides

Why institutions gets sick

1. Ferri, E., Brynner, J. and Wadsworth, M. (2003) *Changing Britain, Changing Lives: three generations at the turn of the century*. Institute of Education.
2. In a report published in January 2004 by the Independent Review of Government Communications, Professor Tait revealed the following “melt-down of public trust”. Nationwide surveys suggest only 19% of the public in the UK now trust politicians to tell the truth. ‘If trust in politicians and participation in elections continue to decline, it is no exaggeration to say that the whole democratic process is under threat,’ he said. 71% now trust the Post Office, 53% trust schools, only 22% trust the civil service and 13% trust the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly. When asked whether the government of the day would put the national good above party gain, 39% believed so in 1974, but by 2002 the figure had fallen to 16%. This lack of trust is leading to a lack of engagement, especially among the young. Only 16% of voters under 25 took part in the 2001 general election.
In 2009, five years after that report was published, a general survey conducted for The Royal College of Physicians, *Trust in Professions 2009*, showed further dramatic falls. Only 13% of the public in the UK now expect politicians to tell the truth and many other groups experienced falls in public trust, including: trade union leaders (down from 45% to 38%), civil servants (48% to 44%), the police (65% to 60%), and clergymen and priests (74% to 71%).
3. Lane, R. E., (2000) *The Loss of Happiness in Market Democracies*. Yale University Press.
4. Griffin, J. & Tyrrell, I. (2003) *Human Givens: A new approach to emotional health and clear thinking*. HG Publishing.
5. Hanninen, O.; Farago, M.; Monos, E. (September–October 1983), Ignaz Philipp Semmelweis, the prophet of bacteriology, *Infection Control* 4: 367–370. “Only the clinical facts proved him right during his lifetime; the triumph of bacteriology which began after his death made him not only the ‘savior of mothers’ but also a genial ancestor of bacteriology.”
6. This research began in 1992 and was sponsored by the European Therapy Studies Institute (ETSI).
7. See: www.mindfields.org.uk for details about MindFields College.
8. Tyrrell, I. & Griffin, J. (Eds.) (2007) *An Idea in Practice: Using the human givens approach*. HG Publishing.

How institutions tend to inhibit human development

9. McNeill, W. H. (1991 edition) *The Rise of the West: A History of the Human Community*. Chicago University Press.
10. Wheen, F. (2004) *How Mumbo Jumbo Conquered the World*. Fourth Estate. “A Gallup poll in June 1993 found that only 11 per cent of Americans accepted the standard secular account of evolution, that ‘human beings have developed over millions of years from less advanced forms of life, but God had no part in this process’; 35 per cent thought that humans evolved over millions of years, but with divine guidance; and 47 per cent maintained that ‘God created human beings pretty much in their present form at one time within the last 10,000 years or so’ – the creation story as told in the Book of Genesis. Other polls at about the same time discovered that 49 per cent of Americans believed in demonic possession, 36 per cent in telepathy and 25 per cent in astrology; and that no fewer than 68 per cent approved of creationism being taught in biology classes.”

11. The underlying psychological rule that ensures this will always be so is: 'emotional arousal makes us stupid'. When strong emotions arise our higher brain (the neo-cortex) is virtually disabled and we resort to the circuitry of the limbic system which operates out of an 'all or nothing', 'black and white', 'fight or flight' mode. This retreat into animality happens easily, which is why even the most intelligent people can be blinded by greed, become unreasonably angry or anxious, or fall in love with someone quite inappropriate for them.
12. This was memorably summed up by Augustus De Morgan (1806–1871), an English mathematician, who wrote this popular ditty in his book, *A Budget of Paradoxes*. "Great fleas have little fleas, upon their backs to bite 'em, and little fleas have lesser fleas, and so on infinitum. And the great fleas themselves, in turn, have greater fleas to go on, while these again have greater still, and greater still, and so on."
13. The health impact on communities suffering the decline of fishing can be dramatic – drug abuse, depression, and removal of local schools due to depopulation all damage healthy coastal communities. Between 1993 and 2000, Buckie suffered a 62% decline in fisheries employment, Fraserburgh 30% and Peterhead 24%. For a story of one Scottish community see, *Marine Times*, 8th February 2004 "Stitched Up" by John Kinsman (correspondent in Grimsey, Hebrides, Scotland).
14. Government ministers encourage people to learn to love the 'barbed wire'. "In your own interest, learn to love the nanny state," said Tessa Jowell when she was Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. Reported in *The Times*, 2 January 2004.
15. Before Vatican II, the Church consistently taught that only Roman Catholics had a chance to be saved and attain Heaven. Followers of other Christian denominations and of other religions would be automatically routed to Hell for all eternity. For example, Pope Innocent III (circa 1160 –1216), considered one of the greatest popes of the Middle Ages, wrote: "There is but one universal Church of the faithful, outside of which no one at all can be saved." Pope Eugene IV, (1388 –1447) wrote a Papal bull in 1441 titled *Cantate Domino*. One paragraph reads: "It [the Church] firmly believes, professes, and proclaims that those not living within the Catholic Church, not only pagans, but also Jews and heretics and schismatics cannot become participants in eternal life, but 'will depart into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels' [Matt. 25:41] ... "It was not until 1964 that the Catholic church allowed for members of other Christian denominations and believers of non-Christian religions a potential for salvation.
16. Brazen Victorian patriotism and feeling of divine importance were summed up in the very popular verse composed by Arthur Christopher Benson, son of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and put to marvellous music by Edward Elgar. It is still, rather incongruously, sung with passion at the last night of the Proms:

*Land of hope and Glory,
mother of the free,
How shall we extol thee,
who are born of thee?
Wider still and wider,
shall thy bounds be set;
God who made thee mighty,
make thee mightier yet.*
17. Tracinski, R. W. (2002) *The Moral Basis of Capitalism*. Centre for the Advancement of Capitalism. The following example of economic and cultural imperialism illustrates the lack of balance in the system when one view prevails: "In many developing countries, local television programming has almost been eradicated. This is not because these countries cannot make their own programmes, or that they do not wish to do so; it is largely because the economics of programme making, combined with the agenda of American multinational advertisers, makes it almost impossible to produce local programmes. Just as America dumps

cheap commodities on developing countries, thus forcing locally produced commodities and goods to the wall, so television programmes are dumped on the Third World. The system works like this. A single episode of a hit television show such as *Alias* or *Dark Angel* may cost up to \$5 million to make. This money is recouped by selling the show to a single network in the United States and Canada. The European sales are pure profit. Once the American and European markets are sewn up, the programmes are dumped on Third World television stations according to a long-established formula for payment. The higher a country's per capita income, the higher it is on the ladder of 'development', the more it pays. Thus, while a British channel will pay something in the region of £200–250,000 for an episode of a high-rating show like *The Simpsons*, Malaysia may acquire the same show for less than US\$70,000 and Bangladesh for only US\$25,000. Thus a programme with exceptionally high production values is sold for peanuts, making it impossible for local programming, working on modest to minuscule budgets, to compete. Inevitably, local programming always looks inferior to imported shows. But programmes are not bought individually; they are bought in package deals. So a major proportion of the seasonal output of a local channel in a developing country may consist exclusively of the imported package. Moreover, each programme of the package will be subsidised or 'sponsored' by a multinational company: the programme will be associated with its name or with one of its brand products. As a general rule, American multinationals do not sponsor local programmes, even if they attract high ratings. They sponsor only those programmes – *Model Inc.*, *Melrose Place*, *Baywatch* – which promote the central images of American culture: the images of high consumption, of unrestrained freedom, of the young individual as the consumer. Thus,

television channels in countries with 'open economics', such as South Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Hong Kong, are totally dominated by American companies. These companies also fund frequent 'live concerts' (which come under local programming) in which imported American pop stars entertain the local audience, as well as sports events. When what is being shown on terrestrial television is combined with what is coming down from the satellite – 24-hour MTV, QVC (the 'Quality, Value, Convenience' shopping channel), old American movies on TMC, endless repeats of situation comedies on the Paramount Comedy Channel, and American reality and quiz shows – we get a more accurate picture of the almost total displacement of indigenous culture." From, *Why do people hate America?* by Ziauddin Sardar and Merryl Wyn Davies. Icon Books.

18. Deikman, A. (2004) *Them and Us: Cult Thinking and the Terrorist Threat*. (With an introduction by Doris Lessing.) Bay Tree Publishing. *Them and Us* is an updated presentation of Deikman's 1990 book, *The wrong way home*, and probably the best book on the ubiquity of cult phenomena, a way of thinking we all share in some measure. When we belittle others, shy away from dissenting views, rely on an inspiring leader, or simply go along with the group, we set ourselves on the path to cult thinking. Once we draw a clear line between *Them and Us* – whoever they are – we begin to lose our way, believing 'we are the chosen ones'. The antidote, says Arthur Deikman, lies in recognizing cult thinking in a wide range of institutions – corporate, political, religious, and educational – and in our personal responses. When we understand how easily we fall into patterns of defensiveness and accusation, we develop a more realistic view of the world and can respond more effectively to the attempted impositions of cult behaviour, hatred and terrorism.

Valuing knowledge

19. Burke, J. & Ornstein, R. (1995) *The Axemaker's Gift*. Putnam.
20. Donald, M. (2001) *A mind so rare: The evolution of human consciousness*. W. W. Norton.
21. Fortunately this is widely recognised. For example the 'PEACE Middle East Dialogue Group', calling on Palestinian and Israeli leaders to negotiate a peace settlement, make their first principle that, "The parties shall recognize each other as equals and declare that the same principles apply to both sides."
22. *The Missing Piece: New Approaches for Understanding and Addressing the Problems of the Middle East*. www.missing-peace.blogspot.com
23. Kotulak, R. (1997) *Inside the Brain: Revolutionary discoveries of how the mind works*. McMeel Publishing. The power of experience to shape the development of the brain hit scientists like a thunderbolt in the 1960s and 1970s. So startling were the findings considered at the time that for a while many scientists refused to believe it. Nevertheless, research by Torsten Wiesel and David Hubel, for which they won a Nobel Prize, showed that sensory experience is essential for teaching brain cells their jobs, and after a critical period, brain cells lose the opportunity to learn those jobs. That failure to learn is well known in real life. Even if a person's brain is perfect, if it does not process visual experiences by the age of two, the person will not be able to see, and if it does not hear words by the age of ten, the person will never learn a language. "These are very important insights," said Wiesel. "There is a very important time in a child's life, beginning at birth, when he should be living in an enriched environment – visual, auditory, language, and so on – because that lays the foundation for development in later life." With the exception of children with brain damage, the way they develop always depends on environmental influences and upbringing. Subsequent research has shown that mothers and fathers also

shape the brains of their infants through socialising them. Socialising small children boosts – and sets for life – their serotonin level. Serotonin regulates emotional intensity (among other things), which is why scientists colloquially call it 'the emotional break' and when parents and society do not ensure that a child is well socialised in the critical early years we are, in effect, programming the child's biology to operate more crudely. We know that, in many children, the biological need to solve problems through social collaborative activity is not matched up in their environment at the critical stages in their development. In such cases their brains neural networks adapt to develop other 'skills' that nature guesses would help them: the behaviour of the isolate or the dependent, or a simple regression towards aggressive behaviour and violence for example.

Our innate needs and resources

24. Griffin, J. & Tyrrell, I. (2004) *Dreaming Reality: How dreaming keeps us sane, or can drive us mad*. HG Publishing.
25. Griffin, J. & Tyrrell, I. (2003) *Human Givens: A new approach to emotional health and clear thinking*. HG Publishing.
26. Peter, L. J & Hull, R. (1969) *The Peter Principle: why things always go wrong*. William Morrow. The Peter Principle states that: In a hierarchy every employee tends to rise to his level of incompetence. Dr Peter provides an insightful analysis of why so many positions in so many organizations seem to be populated by employees who exhibit signs of incompetence. According to Dr. Peter useful work is only accomplished by those employees who have not yet reached their level of incompetence. Experience bears this out on a daily basis.
27. To take just one government example (revealed in the Bristol Royal Infirmary Inquiry Report), since its inception over 55 years ago no NHS Government White Paper has ever been carried through in its entirety. Examples from business of similar failures are legion.

28. That a few people tend to carry the majority is known as ‘Pareto’s Principal’. The principle that roughly 20 percent of something are always responsible for roughly 80 percent of the results is widely referred to in business and management circles. It is based on widespread observations in all kinds of organisations of the “vital few and trivial many”. The 80/20 Rule says that in any project a few (20 percent) are vital to its success and many (80 percent) are trivial. In sociological terms, 20 percent of the people own 80 percent of the wealth. In manufacturing 20 percent of the defects cause 80 percent of the problems. Project Managers know that 20 percent of the work (the first 10 percent and the last 10 percent) consume 80 percent of your time and resources. The 80/20 Rule seems to apply to almost anything, from people management to the physical world. A businessman knows that 20 percent of his stock takes up 80 percent of his warehouse space and that 80 percent of his stock comes from 20 percent of his suppliers. Also 80 percent of his company’s sales will come from 20 percent of his sales staff. 20 percent of his staff will cause 80 percent of his problems, but another 20 percent will provide 80 percent of his production. It works both ways.
29. People are becoming very expert at raising the spectre of legal proceedings with no just cause. The alarming rise in false claims of sexual abuse, for example, has been addressed by a Home Affairs Committee Enquiry on ‘The Harm Caused By False Accusations’, which came to the conclusion that, ‘The reasons for this situation have much to do with the mechanistic nature of modern law, which has little regard to whether changes made are actually beneficial to society.’ (As Charles Dickens wrote in *Bleak House*, “The one great principle of the English law is to make business for itself.”) But it is not just absurd laws that cause these problems, it is also the rise of our self-centred therapy culture, as Frank Furedi describes in his book of that title. “Most policy statements prefer a loose definition that includes conduct that is inappropriate, or “unacceptable”. It is behaviour that is interpreted as ‘offensive or intimidating’ by the recipient. Harassment can also be either ‘deliberate or unintentional’. When such a wide range of acts – clumsy gesture, bad practical joke, outburst of resentment – becomes causally linked to psychological illness, then fundamental forms of human interaction acquire a menacing complexion. “Widely accepted definitions of harassment, stalking and bullying insist that these acts are determined by the victim’s feelings rather than by the intention of the person who has caused the offence. Many companies have adopted policies on bullying and harassment, which allow the recipient to determine whether he or she has been injured. For example, the policy of leading retailer Marks and Spencer states that, individuals ‘have different levels of sensitivity and it is up to the recipient to decide whether they are experiencing behaviours unacceptable to them’. As the notion of unacceptable behaviour is typically left rather vague the range of individual acts that it can encompass becomes infinite. It is the individual’s emotion rather than any objectively defined criteria that ultimately define an act or an experience as harmful. This subjective interpretation of what constitutes a harmful act indicates that the heightened sense of injury that pervades contemporary society relates principally to harms that violate the emotion.” Furedi, F. (2003) *Therapy Culture: Cultivating vulnerability in an uncertain age*. Routledge.
30. See *The Times*, 22 December 2003. “Need time off work? Here’s a sick note, no questions asked”.
31. See, for example, the case of a Kansas City, Missouri, USA judge who was granted immunity from her mistake in neglecting to disclose her investment in a company over whose court case she was presiding. (*Kansas City Star*, “Immunity from mistakes disgusts former litigants” by Joe Stephens, 4 May 1998)
32. Sergeant, H. (2003) *Managing not to manage*. Centre for Policy Studies.

How the autistic thinking style of governments ensures continual crises

33. It is frequently observed, and visual news reporting from all over the world continue to illustrate it, that dictators make themselves highly visible with giant portraits and statues festooning public and private places to a ridiculous degree.
34. That good government is invisible was understood as long as 2,500 years ago. It has perhaps never been more beautifully expressed than in the Tao Te Ching: "How did the great rivers and seas get their kingship over the hundred lesser streams? Through the merit of being lower than they; that was how they got their kingship. Therefore the Sage, in order to be above the people, must speak as if he were lower than the people. In order to guide them he must put himself behind them. Only thus can the Sage be on top and the people not be crushed by his weight. Only thus can he guide and the people not be led into harm." (From *The Way and Its Power: The Tao Te Ching and its place in Chinese thought* by Arthur Waley, 1934.)
35. A recent example, following food scares in the UK, is the appointment of a commissioner, Sir John Krebs, as the head of the new Food Standards Agency, long promised by the Labour Government as a wholly independent body, which would exercise control over all aspects of food safety law. Almost simultaneously in Brussels, the EU Commissioner for consumer protection, David Byrne, announced that the EU was to take over competence over all aspects of food safety law throughout the EU. It would set up its own European Food Safety Authority and launch 84 initiatives. Just when Blair's New Labour government was announcing its own centralising agency, the EU was degrading it to a branch office of its own agency. For more examples, see, Booker, C. & North, R. (2003) *The Great Deception*. Continuum.
36. In order to be eligible for the Department of the Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) Farm Woodland Premium scheme, whereby farmers are subsidised to plant redundant farmland with trees, it is necessary to fill in every year of the 10 year payment scheme the same 5 page claim form, which in turn must be sent to both DEFRA and the Woodland Trust, who administers the scheme and makes the payments. This form actually requires a repetition of data gathered by DEFRA from other forms and most of it has nothing to do with the trees in question.
37. High Functioning Autistic (HFA) people, often termed as suffering from mild Asperger's syndrome, have many deficits over normal functioning. They tend to have an obsessive desire for sameness and repetition, find it difficult to adjust priorities, want to impose their own perspective on situations, lack the ability to empathetically connect to how others might react to their behaviour and have difficulty understanding that their behaviour affects how others think or feel. We notice that this level of autistic thinking characterises much of the policies and behaviour of politicians and bureaucrats. Perhaps higher level thinking and functioning is harder in groups, which therefore fall back to operating autistically, or perhaps careers which give opportunities for autistic people to thrive, like ones obsessed with rules and control, attract high functioning autistic people. It should be noted that when autistic thinking is combined with originality we get geniuses of the calibre of Einstein and Newton. These issues and many more are discussed in, Michael Fitzgerald's book *Autism and Creativity*. (2004) Brunner-Routledge.
38. www.caetextia.com
39. "Britain's red tape burden is 'out of control' and has soared to more than £30 billion according to the British Chambers of Commerce. The BCC's burdens barometer, which tallies the cumulative impact of the extra burden introduced since 1998, a year after the present government took office, shows

the effect of red tape to have increased sharply, even in comparison with a year ago. Then the estimate was £20.6 billion. These figures are all the more telling because they are compiled on the basis of the government's own regulatory impact assessment." *Sunday Times*, 7 March 2004.

Businesses are extremely concerned at the increasing levels of bureaucracy, regulation and red tape, which are having a detrimental effect on companies and stifling their ability to grow. The administrative burden imposes a reading requirement of close to one million words on entrepreneurs. Most of these items of legislation are accompanied by 'Guides' comprising more than 1/4 million words, not to mention the myriad of EU Directives emanating from Brussels. And yet all the 'Guides' carry a disclaimer that they are not 'legal interpretations' of the acts.

Together with the amount of legislative reading, small businesses are expected to complete almost 100 core forms per annum, to comply with the requirements of many State bodies. Many of these forms need to be filled out several times, particularly tax compliance forms, to take account of all employees and a number of mandatory returns. The number of questions per form can vary from 10 up to 100.

The regulatory forms are littered with warnings of penalties. While the 'warnings' may individually appear innocuous, they apply to forms containing complexity and carry the threat of fines or imprisonment. Some forms require a competent mathematician and in some cases a linguistic expert if they are to be 'complete and correct'.

The burden is that much greater on small business where the owner manager is wholly responsible for all aspects of the business and the people he or she employs. Every hour spent on form filling and adhering to regulations is one less hour spent on running the business. Recent OECD surveys confirm that the smallest companies – those with less than 20 employees – endured more than five times the administrative burden per employee than larger firms did, equating to an annual cost of 4% of turnover. More-

over, this can put off the potential entrepreneur or drive him or her unwillingly into the "informal economy". Regulations also impose burdens on the State itself through the need for the explanation and enforcement of often complex rules on businesses. A good deal of official time and energy in central and local Government is taken up by enforcing and applying regulations, therefore simplification would save time, money and staff effort for Government and for business. In a competitive environment, businesses already have enough to do in responding quickly to changing customer needs, to plan and monitor their financial, marketing, personnel and investment activities skilfully and flexibly. The impact of regulation takes its toll in diverting precious time and energy that would be far better used in generating products, services, and sales and, in the end, jobs.

(Adapted from the article, *Red tape stifling small business*, by S. Heaphy, published in January, 2004 by ISME, the Independent Business Organisation of Ireland.)

40. Caius Petronius A.D. 66.

Target Obsession Disorder

41. Seddon, J. (2008) *Systems Thinking in the Public Sector: The failure of the reform regime*. Triarchy Press. No one in Government, at any level, should be allowed to work without first absorbing the content of this book.

42. This observation has been made many times. One manager in a North London Hospital said, 'Decent, otherwise scrupulous people are pushed into conniving with Government into hitting targets at the expense of patient care.' Sergeant, H. (2003) *Managing not to manage*. Centre for Policy Studies.

43. While Education Secretary, Charles Clarke, said the government would have failed if adult literacy does not improve "massively" within five years. He said the way 7 million British adults struggled with basic sums was an "indictment of the whole way in which the education system operates." *BBC News Online*, 21 August 2003.

44. Ministers are again changing the criteria over which institutions can be called a university. Up until now, only institutions that carry out teaching and research could term themselves ‘university’. Now there are moves to allow teaching institutions and those specialising in only a few subjects to call themselves “university.” See “Ministers accused of dumbing down unis,” BBC News Online, 4 June 2003.
45. Sergeant, H. (2003) *Managing not to manage*. Centre for Policy Studies.
46. Whyte, J. (2003) *Bad thoughts*. Corvo Books. See pages 98–100 and 130–133 for a fascinating analysis of how the government officials use statistics to redefine ‘poverty’.
47. Hood, C. (1998) *The Art of the State*. Oxford University Press.
48. On 28th November 2003, the Government announced 13 questions for voters to answer in what Prime Minister Blair called “the biggest consultation exercise ever for voters.” But most of the questions were loaded. Voters were told they could respond through the official website which now doesn’t exist.
49. Take as one well-known example, the over budget European Fighter Aircraft, now known as the Eurofighter. Launched in 1985 as a European-built plane designed to fight a Cold War soviet MIG, it still does not yet exist, has split its design partners and has cost taxpayers £20 billion (£6 billion over budget). See “Air Farce One,” *The Sunday Telegraph*, 4 January 2004. Richard Lomax’s article, prior to his broadcast on BBC Radio 4 on 5 January 2004. The article points out that, for an equivalent spend of £20 billion, 169,491 new homes could have been built, 111 hospitals, 1,250 schools, 25 Millennium domes etc. Not one politician involved has ever been voted out because of his involvement in the project.
50. The EU “Social Chapter” which the UK opted out of in order to approve the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, was finally adopted by the Blair government following Blair’s announcement on 1 May 1997 after the General Election. The Social Chapter and the Working Times Directive in it have unleashed even more bureaucracy and costs on businesses.
- Much has been written about the EU drive to metrify the UK, in particular the case of greengrocer Steve Thoburn who wished to sell fruits and vegetables by the pound as his customers wanted him to. Loose goods must be sold in metric units now, although the prices can be quoted in both metric and imperial, and customers are allowed to order in imperial. The latest move is to “redenominate” the imperial pint to be 500 ml in order that it could still be sold and ordered as a “pint” in pubs.
51. A widely reported incident concerns the author Philip Pullman and perfectly illustrates how divorced from humanity bureaucrats can become when they design forms and demand that they are filled in to satisfy EU legislation. He received a formal letter from the merger taskforce of the ‘Competition Directorate’ investigating the merger of two French publishing firms asking him to fill in a five page questionnaire within three weeks or face a fine of 50,000 euros (£34,000). Not only were the questions poorly translated into English and impolite, but they also asked confidential details of his publishing contracts, none of which were with the two firms being investigated. He replied with a stern letter, suggesting that as he is a freelance writer he should charge them for his time, rather than being subject to a potential fine himself. He never heard from the Directorate again.

Words that paralyse thought

52. Poerrkson, U. (1995 English translation) *Plastic Words: The tyranny of modular language*. Poerrkson chose the word ‘plastic’ to describe nominalisations because of their malleability and the uncanny way they are used to fit every circumstance.
53. Statement by Michael Howard, the then leader of the Conservative Party, *The Times*, 2 January 2004.

54. This bizarre manifesto pledge can still be found on the internet at:
www.labour.org.uk/manifesto
55. Remarks by President George W. Bush at the 20th Anniversary of the National Endowment for Democracy, 6 November 2003. The president's use of language is legendary. In April 2003, when a reporter asked him what his message to the Iraqi people was, he replied. "You're free, and freedom is beautiful and, aah, you know, it'll take time to restore chaos and order ..."

The lack of large, high quality organising ideas

56. Government achievements (both parties) include the gradual destruction of our railway and road transport system, alienating the police forces from the population, dismantling family friendly taxation, wasting millions on massive IT projects, pursuing cruel asylum procedures, stopping people thinking by encouraging political correctness, letting the criminal justice system fall even further into disrepute, demoralising children by constantly moving the goal posts in the education exam system, giving away our sovereignty to the EU, increasing the number of civil servants to manage this ... and so on and so on. Without a sound psychological perspective of why this happens informing both the government and the governed, along with a will to change the way things are done, this situation will continue, whichever party is in power and however hard they all work, and however good their intentions are.
57. Bortoft, H. (1996) *The Wholeness of Nature*. Floris Books.
58. Gold, S. M. (1997) *Florence Nightingale: Letters from the Crimea*. Manchester University Press.
59. Sergeant, H. (2003) *Managing not to manage*. Centre for Policy Studies.
60. *ibid.*
61. *ibid.*
62. Although terrorism is not included in the US health statistics the FBI has tracked deaths caused by terrorists in the US since 1990. The high mark was reached in 2001, the year of 9/11 with a total of 3,047. The previous high was 1995, the year of the bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in downtown Oklahoma City, with 169. In no other year did the number exceed six, and in five of those years there were no deaths at all. The figure for Europe is much less (if you exclude the Balkan war crimes).
63. Fitzgerald, M. *Autism and Creativity*. (2004) Brunner-Routledge. This book gives a fascinating account of Adolf Hitler's autistic traits. It also describes how some of the most creative original thinkers were high functioning autistic people, including Socrates, Newton, Wittgenstein, Einstein, W. B. Yeats, Lewis Carroll and the great Indian mathematician Ramunujan. The eccentric behaviour of creative geniuses is often nothing more than the behaviour found in HFA people. The reason they go on to pioneer new ways of thinking and doing things is because they don't understand the world and other people around them in the way normal people do, so they have to ask questions, which they tend to do obsessively, and which therefore can lead to profound discoveries.
64. Griffin, J. & Tyrrell, I. (2003) *Human Givens: A new approach to emotional health and clear thinking*. HG Publishing.

Thinking big intelligently

65. Wilkinson, R & Pickett, K. (2009) *The Spirit Level: Why more equal societies almost always do better*. Allen Lane
66. For published reports and statistics, see the University of Michigan statistical database, www.lib.umich.edu/govdocs/stenv.html
67. *Ibid.*
68. *Ibid.* Even if we had, for example, a revolution in producing cheap energy – the so called energy from hydrogen dream – that dream itself is dependent upon organic energy to generate the release of the hydrogen energy. So there is no possibility of our world surviving, at this time, without access to organic energy, and yet that's one of the main resources that is rapidly running out.

69. Lanchester, J. (2010) *Whoops! Why everyone owes everyone and no one can pay*. Allen Lane.
70. University of Michigan statistical database, www.lib.umich.edu/govdocs/stenv.html
71. United Nations Human Development Report, 2002.
72. See *The New York Times*, 25 February 2004, by Michael Vines where the US federal response to the issue of how AIDS drugs are paid for in sub-Saharan Africa is announced.
73. “Safeguarding the Effectiveness of Existing Antibiotics is Essential,” a letter to President Bush from fourteen leading scientists published in the *Washington Times*, 10 September 2003.
74. See *The Guardian* (14 February, 2004) report by Tim Radford, ‘Soil erosion as big a problem as global warming, say Scientists’.
75. *Science*, 9 January 2004, Vol 303, Number 5655.

The need for ‘species thinking’

76. “Humans cannot flourish without other humans, ecosystems, and species, and nothing in a biotic community can flourish on its own. Likewise, communities (both social and ecological) depend on the existence of other communities. To be extracted from a community, human or otherwise, is to lack relationships and contexts that provide the meaning, substance and material for various sorts of lives.” Cuomo, C. J. (1998) *Feminism and Ecological Communities: An Ethic of Flourishing*. Routledge.
77. Christakis, N & Fowler, J. (2010) *Connected: The Amazing Power of Social Networks and How They Shape Our Lives*. Harper Press

When the dog owner does the barking

78. Welch, J. with Byrne, J. A. (2001) *Jack: straight from the gut*. Warner Books. Jack Welch was the chief

executive of General Electric, the most successful corporation of the 20th century. Its success was largely due to his programme of dismembering central planning and systematic decentralisation of authority.

79. Kay, J. (2003) *The Truth About Markets*. Allen Lane.
80. Ibid.

Shedding responsibility but not authority

81. Kay, J. (2003) *The Truth About Markets*. Allen Lane.
82. Ibid.

The plague of experts who aren’t

83. Bromhall, C. (2003) *The Eternal Child*. Ebury Press.
84. Dunbar, R. (1992) Neocortex size as a constraint on group size in primates. *Journal of Human Evolution*, 20, 469–493.
85. People have been wrongfully imprisoned solely on the basis of ‘expert’ opinion, as in the case of ‘The Birmingham Six’. More recently, after psychiatrists and psychotherapists have generated false memories of abuse in patients, they manage to convince people that sexual abuse must have occurred, even though there is no corroborating evidence. Prosecutions have gone ahead where these wild opinions are taken as facts and people end up in prison. The same has been happening with unexplained cot deaths – innocent mothers have been jailed. (Of course sex abusers and murderers should be taken to court, but only when there is concrete evidence of the crime against them.)
86. Efficacy studies repeatedly show it to be true that any form of psychotherapy or counselling that encourages worrying (emotionally arousing introspection) tends to deepen and prolong depression. See *Human Givens: A new approach to emotional health and clear thinking* for the explanation of why this happens.

87. Sergeant, H. (2003) *Managing not to manage*. Centre for Policy Studies.
88. *Prospect*, December 2002.
89. Sergeant, H. (2003) *Managing not to manage*. Centre for Policy Studies.
90. *The Times*. (25 January 2004) “Ethics police bogged down by tiniest tiffs”.
91. There is much research that confirms that the attitude of the doctor towards the patient, if positive, has a hugely beneficial effect. The opposite is also true. Ill people are very sensitively tuned to negativity. If a doctor’s tone and body language is miserable (even if he or she is saying all the right things) the patients are usually too anxious (emotionally aroused) to recognise that the negativity is not related to their own condition.
92. Quoted from the 1929 Royal Commission on Police Powers.
93. Hitchens, P. (2003) *A Brief History of Crime: The Decline of Order, Justice and Liberty in England*. Atlantic Books.
94. Blakeslee, T. R. (1997) *The Attitude Factor*. Harper Collins.
95. This is why politicians, when they can afford it, send their own children to the best schools, not the local ones their policies have ruined.

Where does new knowledge come from?

96. Shah, I. (2000) *Knowing How to Know*. The Octagon Press.
97. Weekes, D. J. and Ward, K. (1988) *Eccentrics: the Scientific Investigation*. Stirling University Press.
98. As Alfred North Whitehead famously stated, “All of Western philosophy is but a footnote to Plato.”

The human givens audit

99. Carter, R. (2000) *Mapping the Mind*. Phoenix Books.
100. Deikman, A. (2004) *Them and Us*. Bay Tree Publishing.
101. Wilkinson, R & Pickett, K. (2009) *The Spirit Level: Why more equal societies almost always do better*. Allen Lane
102. ‘Understanding the New Level of American Violence,’ by Jim Gilligan, presentation to the Harvard University Group on Mass Violence, 31st October 2003.

The leaders we need

103. Bentall, R. P. (2003) *Madness Explained: Psychosis and Human Nature*. Allen Lane.
104. Abbot, J. and Ryan, T. (2000) *The Unfinished Revolution – Learning, human behaviour, community and political paradox*. Network Educational Press. Highly recommended.



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